

Calico Rock Museum & Visitor Center City Council Report

January 2018

Visitor Contacts	December	2017 Total
In-House Visitors	320	20,837
School Program/Events	770	3,668
<i>Total In-House Visitors</i>	<i>1,090</i>	<i>24,505</i>
Museum Website Traffic	3,179	43,343
Explore Calico Web Traffic	1,917	20,319
Printing Press Café Website	2,721	28,975
Total Visitor Contacts	8,907	117,142

In the figures above, we share the number of in-house visitors and website traffic for both the month of December and the entire year. In 2017, we welcomed 24,505 visitors to Calico Rock. These are actual visitors that were counted in the Heritage Center, Art & Science Center, or at our public events. This is a staggering figure in-and-of itself. When you look at the website traffic, it is truly mind-blowing. Our websites are managed by GoDaddy which tracks visitors to our three sites. These visitors are unique clicks, so if, for example, Junior Watts visits the Calico Rock Museum and he revisits the museum website it is only counted once.

This shows the reach and power of web presence. Clearly, an on-site visitor has the potential to spend money in our local restaurants, shops and hotels and is the visitor we aim to attract. However, on-site visitors reflect alumni keeping in contact with their hometown, people whose interest in Calico Rock may lead to them relocating here, or visitors who gain information and will, hopefully, make a visit soon.

It's also important to note that when these visitors come to our sites, we are promoting all of our community's businesses. This is especially true of the 20,319 people who visited the website www.explorecalico.com. This website specifically promotes all of the businesses who hold a city business license.

Over the past year, the museum foundation operations have provided nearly \$125,000 in taxable sales which has translated into sales tax revenue for the city, county and state. The Calico Rock Museum Foundation is honored and privileged to work with you in providing essential visitor center services for the city and we look forward to working with you in the future.

As always, if you have any ideas, questions or concerns, please call me at 870-373-0083.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven Mitchell
Chairman
Board of Trustees

Visitor Contacts

In-House Visitors	1,048
Museum Website Traffic	3,716
Explore Calico Web Traffic	1,933
<u>Printing Press Café Website</u>	<u>2,917</u>
Total Visitor Contacts	9,614

Arkansas Museums Association Conference

The Arkansas Museums Association Conference daytime sessions will be held at the Calico Rock Museum & Visitor Center during the week of March 27-29. The conference will welcome an estimated 100 museum professionals from museums around the state. Museum members include Old Independence Regional Museum in Batesville, the Clinton Presidential Center, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, and the Old State House Museum. There are small and large museums in the organization.

This conference will be an opportunity for us to share our community, history and hospitality. The city and 20/20 have been invaluable partners in getting ready for the conference. We believe the positive experience these folks have in Calico Rock will build the number of visitors we have to our museum and community in the future.

American Countryside Radio

One of the main purposes of the visitor center is to promote Calico Rock and benefit all of our local businesses. In December, we welcomed Andrew McCrea, host of the nationally-syndicated radio program American Countryside, to Calico Rock. These interviews have led to a number of feature programs on our area. Again, this national exposure will help drive tourism which, in turn, will boost the economy for our local businesses.

Renovation Efforts

At the Calico Rock Museum, we are making some physical improvements that will help visitors find more information about Calico Rock, improve and refresh all of our history exhibits, and make the museum more accessible for our visitors. One of the biggest improvements is to our public restrooms. They are being completely remodeled and look very nice. All of these renovations are aimed at giving the city, our local businesses and our community the best facility we can offer for the services we provide.

As always, if you have any ideas, questions or concerns, please call me at 870-373-0083.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven Mitchell

Chairman

Board of Trustees

Visitor Contacts

In-House Visitors	1,196
Museum Website Traffic	5,237
Explore Calico Web Traffic	2,045
<u>Printing Press Café Website</u>	<u>3,626</u>
Total Visitor Contacts	12,104

Sanders Serves as Advocate in Washington, D.C.

Gloria Sanders, our executive director, was chosen by Arkansas museums to represent them in Washington, D.C. at the end of February to advocate for museums to members of Congress. While in Washington, Gloria received intensive training on advocating and public relations. She met with Representative Steve Womack and Senator John Boozman and with staff members of Senator Cotton and Representatives French Hill and Bruce Westerman. It was a high honor for her to be chosen to represent Arkansas and provided many opportunities to network with lobbyists, Congressmen, and other museum leaders from around the country.

Renovation Efforts

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Exhibit Updates

We recently received the beauty shop vanity that Jaclyn Smith used in *The Bootleggers*. It's a great addition to our collection. It's on display in the Murphy Gallery. We are working on a new exhibit on Norfolk Dam. We have a new exhibit on Winter Camp and complete updates for the Depot and School house. There are a lot of new things for visitors to see at the museum.

As always, if you have any ideas, questions or concerns, please call me at 870-373-0083.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven Mitchell
Chairman
Board of Trustees

Visitor Contacts

In-House Visitors	2,411
Museum Website Traffic	5,672
Explore Calico Web Traffic	2,767
<u>Printing Press Café Website</u>	<u>4,051</u>
Total Visitor Contacts	14,901

Arkansas Museums Association Conference Recap

There were 79 professionals from small, medium and large museums throughout Arkansas at our museum for the 2018 Arkansas Museums Association Conference the last week of March. During the conference, Gloria Sanders was elected to be AMA Vice President and Freda Cruse Hardison was awarded the 2018 AMA Volunteer of the Year Award. The reviews have been overwhelmingly positive for the museum, community, and our hospitality.

Media Contacts/Visitor Center Growth

In March, the museum and visitor center staff hosted former state tourism director Joe David Rice who wrote a wonderful article for *AY* magazine about Calico Rock. Over the winter, we also hosted a television film crew from AETN and have been working with a couple of other authors on articles about Calico Rock. One of our main objectives, through the visitor center, is to promote our community in the media, which increases tourism and benefits all of our local businesses.

Dedication of the Tomlinson Art & Science Center

We will be formally dedicating the Tomlinson Art & Science Center on Saturday, May 12 at 10:00 a.m. to Noon. Council members are invited to attend the dedication ceremonies. Miss Arkansas 2016 Savannah Skidmore will be the keynote speaker. Additionally, council members are invited to attend an invitation-only breakfast for donors and dignitaries at the Printing Press Café that morning at 9:00 a.m.

Tourism Outlook

We begin our tourism season this month with great hopefulness. The bridge construction is completed and there have been lots of positive press. We hope to have a banner tourism season this summer.

As always, if you have any ideas, questions or concerns, please call me at 870-373-0083.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven Mitchell
Chairman
Board of Trustees

Visitor Contacts

In-House Visitors	2,625
Museum Website Traffic	3,879
Explore Calico Web Traffic	1,901
<u>Printing Press Café Website</u>	<u>2,644</u>
Total Visitor Contacts	11,049

Spring Fling

In April, we hosted a new event we called “Spring Fling.” Despite less than perfect weather, the event was successful in raising funds for the museum’s summer educational programs. Sales for our local businesses saw an increase with tourists stopping along Main Street when they saw the street vendors. While events like this draw a smaller overall crowd than some events, anytime we can get people to stop and see what we have to offer is a huge win.

Educational Programs

We welcomed gifted and talented students from Cedar Ridge Schools in Newark this past month. The art and science center has really helped us increase the number of schools coming to the museum. The school groups are divided into three groups and rotated into three programs: an art activity, the crime lab detective in the science center, and a history activity in the museum. The groups also get to tour the museum exhibits. In addition, we will host elementary students one afternoon per week after school for a robotics program. It’s part of our continuing efforts to increase the opportunities to engage our local families in our history, science and art.

As always, if you have any ideas, questions or concerns, please call me at 870-373-0083.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven Mitchell
Chairman
Board of Trustees

Visitor Contacts

In-House Visitors	2,747
Museum Website Traffic	3,835
Explore Calico Web Traffic	1,903
<u>Printing Press Café Website</u>	<u>2,573</u>
Total Visitor Contacts	11,058

May Events

In May, we officially dedicated the Tomlinson Art & Science Center. Thank you for attending the breakfast and ceremony. We really enjoy having members of the council and city leadership at our events and appreciate it. We honored the service and sacrifice of our veterans and active duty personnel on Memorial Day weekend by showing the very powerful movie, *Taking Chance*, and having some special activities. We welcomed a lot of visitors in town for graduations and end-of-school activities, which was very nice.

Educational Programs

We continue to attract schools from around the state, gifted and talented programs in particular. We separate the students into three groups and rotate them through the science, art and heritage centers. We also began “Adventures in Science” toward the end of school. This will continue throughout the summer on Tuesday afternoons. The students will learn about robotics, mechanics, art, and various other science areas. We intend to incorporate historical topics into the hands-on learning program.

June Events

We look forward to welcoming folks who come to town for the annual Lions Club Rodeo and All-School Reunion. We are also working on artisan demonstrations throughout the summer and planning periodic special events to bring more people to town.

As always, if you have any ideas, questions or concerns, please call me at 870-373-0083.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven Mitchell
Chairman
Board of Trustees

Visitor Contacts

In-House Visitors	2,817
Museum Website Traffic	5,020
Explore Calico Web Traffic	2,732
<u>Printing Press Café Website</u>	<u>3,311</u>
Total Visitor Contacts	13,880

Summer Events

With summer tourism seasons underway, we have expanded our hours of operation for the Tomlinson Art & Science Center to Monday-Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Along with a few staff changes, we have seen increased visitors and increased sales. Every Tuesday, we are conducting “Adventures in Science” programs at TASC. We are averaging 10 students per week.

New Virtual Tour App

We have introduced a new app that is also available on our website that allows visitors to take a virtual tour of all of our museums, the East Calico Historic District, historic sites in town, and get visitor information. It’s another way for us to serve the businesses in our community and serve our visitors.

Genealogy Services

We are offering genealogy research services at the museum. In order to help pay for the cost of membership into Ancestry.com, there is a nominal annual membership fee. Membership gives the user access to our substantial database and one-on-one assistance. It’s been a great service and outreach program.

Native American Celebration

We are working diligently on our annual Native American Celebration on the second weekend of September. This year, we will commemorate the 185th Anniversary of the Trail of Tears in our area. All of the Native American events will be located along Main Street and on the hill. The EARA will be conducting their Mountain Man Rendezvous in Rand Park the same weekend.

As always, if you have any ideas, questions or concerns, please call me at 870-373-0083.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven Mitchell
Chairman
Board of Trustees

Visitor Contacts

In-House Visitors	3,018
Museum Website Traffic	4,163
Explore Calico Web Traffic	2,793
<u>Printing Press Café Website</u>	<u>3,419</u>
Total Visitor Contacts	13,393

Fall Events

School will start next week and we are preparing for a number of events. We are hosting the Calico Rock Elementary teachers for an in-service program this week. We have a number of art shows and crafts demonstrations. We will host the annual Native American Heritage Weekend on Main Street the first weekend of September. This is the 165th anniversary of the Trail of Tears, so we are working to honor their memory and recognize our Native American heritage. The same weekend, the Mountain Man Rendezvous will be held in Rand City Park.

Marketing and Promotion Program

Thank you for your confidence in supporting our new Marketing and Promotion program. We are working on the advertising campaign to promote Calico Rock in the Little Rock, Jonesboro and Memphis markets. We plan to implement the campaign for Fall and Spring.

Explore Magazine

We will roll out the first edition of the *Explore* magazine promoting Calico Rock and surrounding areas in September. Every edition of the magazine will include a centerfold listing all the businesses licensed to operate by the City of Calico Rock. This is yet another free service for businesses as part of our contract for visitor center services. The magazine will be free to the public and will be distributed in all of the Welcome to Arkansas visitor centers in the state and in local and area businesses. The seed money to begin this effort was provided by the grant approved at the last council meeting. This initiative will be self-sustaining going forward.

As always, if you have any ideas, questions or concerns, please call me at 870-373-0083.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven Mitchell
Chairman
Board of Trustees

Visitor Contacts

In-House Visitors	3,035
Museum Website Traffic	4,721
Explore Calico Web Traffic	2,633
<u>Printing Press Café Website</u>	<u>2,951</u>
Total Visitor Contacts	13,340

Road Scholars

The museum has become the point of contact for the Road Scholars program. We welcomed 100 Road Scholars during the month of August. These are professionals who work at visitors centers or in the tourism trade. Having the opportunity for them to experience Calico Rock gives them the information they need to promote our community to their visitors.

School Programs

In August, we conducted a professional development training for Calico Rock teachers before they headed back to school. We gave them a tour of our history exhibits, art gallery, science center, and classrooms with the hopes they will bring their students for programs this year. We also welcomed 50 students, teachers and parents from Mountain Home Christian School.

After a couple weeks break, we are restarting our Adventures in Science program. This is open to Calico Rock elementary students on Tuesday afternoons from 3:30-4:30 p.m. We offer hands-on programs in science, applied math, mechanics, robotics, arts and crafts, and exploring history. It's been the most successful educational programming we have ever offered.

Explore Magazine

The first edition of *Explore* magazine should be ready for distribution at your council meeting. The magazine has been approved by the Arkansas Department of Parks & Tourism for placement in all twelve of the state's visitor centers. It will also be distributed free through our community, as well as Mountain View and surrounding communities.

Native American Heritage Weekend

At the outset of the year, we made a conscience decision to focus our efforts in commemorating the 180th anniversary of the Trail of Tears. We wanted to solemnly honor the memory of those who lost their lives through this national tragedy, but also to celebrate the Native American culture. The remnants of Tropical Storm Gordan caused significant weather challenges. In spite of this, we planned a wonderful event that brought together seven Native American nations and shared the artistry of our Native Americans. It's impossible to predict or control the weather, but we had the facilities to provide alternate arrangements for the event.

After a number of years of coming to Calico Rock, the Early Arkansaw Reenactors Association decided to make the 2018 Mountain Man Rendezvous in Calico Rock their last. We appreciate the opportunity to welcome them and share the pioneer ways with the community over the years.

Calico Rock Museum & Visitor Center City Council Report

Serving the Community

It is an honor to serve our community, especially through the contractual relationship we have with the city. In 2018, we have expanded our operating hours of the visitor center to six days per week (Monday-Saturday). This has certainly benefited visitors who come to town without realizing so many businesses close on Monday. With the museums being open, we are able to welcome them to town, give them a restroom break, offer them some shopping and something to do, and then give them a positive feeling about our community.

We have begun publication of the *Explore* magazine that includes a FREE directory listing every business licensed by the city in the centerfold. This promotes every business with no cost to them. We also now offer a virtual tour of the museums and historic sites in the community through a partnership with On-Cell. This is proven to be a very useful tool for folks planning a visit to town. In the future, we hope this will be expanded to include an App.

Later this year, we will begin a low-wattage FM radio station that will broadcast visitor information continuously. This will allow us to serve visitors coming into town at whatever hour they pass through. It will let us serve our travelers 24 hours a day/7 days a week/365 days per year.

Since we began, we have always had one focus...Calico Rock! Our primary focus has always been, and always will be, preserving our history and telling our story. But, we have also always tried to be a good neighbor. Our visitor center contract lets us serve our local businesses and welcome folks to town. We are also the sponsoring organization for the Storybook Project and the Bridges program at the school. By being their sponsoring organization, they are allowed to use our tax-exempt status and structure so 100% of the money they raise can support their missions.

In order to recognize the work we do in the community, our board is exploring the opportunity to change our name to the **Calico Rock Community Foundation**. This would allow us to expand officially expand our mission to what we have really always done...help Calico Rock. The Calico Rock Heritage Museum and Tomlinson Art & Science Center will still be our primary focus, but this expanded view would allow us to be available wherever we are needed.

As always, if you have any ideas, questions or concerns, please call me at 870-373-0083.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven Mitchell
Chairman
Board of Trustees

Visitor Contacts

In-House Visitors	2,326
Special Events	2,216
Museum Website Traffic	4,787
Explore Calico Web Traffic	1,212
Printing Press Café Website	2,409
Total Visitor Contacts	12,950

September Special Events

In September, we hosted several special events through increased the number of visitors to town. With students from area schools and visitors, we had 1,200 guests attend this year's Native American Heritage Weekend despite the dismal weather. One advantage of moving the events inside is that they toured the museum and they shopped our neighboring businesses. Our Tuesday afternoon Adventures in Science program has been averaging 50 students every week for a total of 186 students.

In addition to these events, we welcomed Home School students, Calico Rock School students and the Road Scholars for programs and we hosted a Fish Fry that brought several people to the museum, despite the weather.

Explore Magazine

The first edition of *Explore* magazine has received extremely positive reviews. We originally planned to produce three editions every year, but have plans to expand that now to four editions per year. In addition to local reviews, the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism have really been impressed with the magazine. It is available in every state visitor center.

Calico Rock Business Brochure

Now that we have our own in-house communications team, we are working on several projects for the city and local businesses. One of these is a new brochure that has a map of Calico Rock and a listing of all our area businesses. This is being printed in-house so we can make changes to it quickly for visitors coming into town. Once again, there is no charge for a business to be listed, they only have to be licensed by the city.

As always, if you have any ideas, questions or concerns, please call me at 870-373-0083.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven Mitchell
Chairman
Board of Trustees

Visitor Contacts

In-House Visitors	1,423
Adventures in Science	220
Road Scholars	55
Trick or Treaters	200
Museum Website Traffic	4,900
Explore Calico Web Traffic	968
Printing Press Café Website	2,947
Total Visitor Contacts	10,713

October Special Events

In October, we hosted the Roads Scholars, Adventures in Science program, and Trick or Treaters on Main Street. Despite the rain, we had 200 trick-or-treaters!

A Growing Reputation

We also hosted three different groups from around the state that are beginning their own museums. In early October, Gloria attended the South East Museums Conference in Jackson, Mississippi. At the same time, I traveled to two towns in northern Missouri near the Iowa border. We both conducted workshops on how to revitalize a small town. Calico Rock has a growing reputation for the work we have done in economic revitalization, as well as our work in preserving our history. We had a couple from Missouri visiting this week who made the trip to Calico Rock because of our appearance on the American Countryside feature on the “U.S. Farm Report” broadcast.

Economic Development

As part of the expanded services we are providing the city, we have been working with a major manufacturer that is looking to locate a new plant that would employ up to 50 employees. We also helped locate a building for Inkspot Graphics, who plan to relocate at the first of the year. We are working on a packet of materials, that will include incentives from the city and state, that can be given to prospective businesses. We have a new website that promotes economic development you can visit at www.calicorockworks.com.

This winter, we are working on expanding our history exhibits in the Murphy Gallery and expanding the science center. As always, if you have any ideas, questions or concerns, please call me at 870-373-0083.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven Mitchell
Chairman
Board of Trustees