

APPENDIX

Testimony to the Assembly Tourism and Arts Committee

October 19, 2010

Denise Lanza, CPRP, MAS
President, Morris County Tourism Bureau
Assistant Deputy Director, Morris County Park Commission

Good morning ladies and gentlemen. My name is Denise Lanza and I am the new president of the Morris County Tourism Bureau, having also served on the board for the past 10 years. The Tourism Bureau is one of the most successful heritage and tourism organizations in New Jersey. We are nearing the completion of our certification as a nationally recognized destination marketing organization through the efforts of our executive director, Leslie Bensley. This organization has grown tremendously in the last 5 years owing in part to the NJ Travel and Tourism marketing grants. We are currently a non-profit affiliated with the Morris County Chamber of Commerce, having previously been a part of Morris County government, and a stand-alone agency.

The Tourism Bureau has a diverse board of community professionals, an interactive website, a visitors center with local resource information, a working tourism alliance of site representatives, a schedule of local walking tours, (which sold out this past summer), and a broad based membership program. This year, we were fortunate to receive our second cycle NJ Travel and Tourism grant. The 2010 portion allowed us, for the first time ever, to lead a huge collaboration with Discover Jersey Arts/Art Pride NJ Foundation, The NJ Council on the Arts, The Newark Museum, and Craftsman Farms in Morris County, to promote attendance at a major retrospective of Gustav Stickley's work in Newark and his home in Parsippany. Joint promotion of these exhibits included advertisements in The New York Times this past Sunday and appearing again this coming Sunday! This wonderful collaboration, which was spearheaded by the Morris County Tourism Bureau, gives us a template for similar endeavors. We showed ourselves and our partners that we can leverage investment dollars for broad regional impact – we CAN do it! The tourism bureau brings together attractions, local businesses, and community partners for win-win situations – the visitor receives a quality experience while eating at local restaurants, visiting historic, arts or eco-tourism sites, staying at our hotels, and shopping in our stores. The bureau is the only organization coordinating such efforts on a county-wide basis. We are the little economic engine that could.

Tourism can, in its own special way, contribute to the recovery of our state as residents become visitors. Morris County is NJ's Great American Get-Away. Our parks, golf courses, historic sites, theaters, museums, and special events attract thousands of visitors each year. We can and will continue to capitalize on our network of resources via partnerships and collaborations designed to enhance the visitor experience and provide critical support to our mostly nonprofit tourism site industry.

The Morris County Park Commission, specifically, has partnered with the Tourism Bureau for the annual Holly Days promotion – the time between Thanksgiving and Christmas when a variety of Morristown area tourism sites offer special programs, such as the Park Commission's

Gingerbread Show at the Frelinghuysen Arboretum. The Park Commission also sought the assistance of the Bureau for the Eastern US Figure Skating Competition held last year at our Mennen Sports Arena. We'll be working with them in the spring of 2011 when we host a portion of the NJ State Clean Communities Conference being held in Morristown.

A critical element missing in our efforts, which stalls our effectiveness, is lack of a stable source of funding. We cannot fully plan for 2011, for example, as we do not know if the second portion of our grant will be provided. This ambiguity impacts our ability to fully meet our mission. New Jersey does not follow the example of our neighboring states by ensuring that even a small portion of the hotel tax is returned to the local tourism organizations. A mandate for such funding would allow us to create business plans for the promotion of our local jewels. It would give us the ability to compete with our neighbors in Bucks County PA or the Hudson Valley area in New York. New York City is the number one port of entry for non-resident arrivals. New York State is the number one destination for overseas travelers. There is a critical mass of visitors just across the river and we need to take advantage of that.

At a strategic planning meeting last week, our board was advised that without the grant funding in 2011, our budget falls back to levels similar to 2007. We cannot continue to positively impact our local economy if we cannot get the message out. If 160 visitors create one job, then ladies and gentlemen, with proper funding, tourism in New Jersey can support 400,000 jobs and put billions of dollars into the economy of our state, (based on 2008 tourism numbers).

Thank you for inviting me today and thank you for your attention.

Please visit www.morristourism.org for examples of our efforts.

New ad campaign



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Sapp, Rebecca

From: Denholtz, Amy
Sent: Thursday, October 21, 2010 9:59 AM
To: Sapp, Rebecca
Subject: FW: state grant correction

From: Lanza, Denise [mailto:dlanza@morrisparks.net]
Sent: Tuesday, October 19, 2010 3:50 PM
To: Denholtz, Amy
Subject: state grant correction

Hi Amy - when I returned to the office, I verified my responses to the committee's questions with our Tourism Bureau executive director, Leslie Bensley. There was an error in my response to the state grant question. Rather than \$70,000 per year for the two year grant cycle, we received \$105,000 per year. This is a reduction from a previous amount of \$185,000. Again though the 2011 allocation of \$105,000 is in question. Please offer my correction and apologies to the committee for this error. Thanks. Denise



Good morning. I'm Bonnie Monte, the artistic director of The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey, located in Madison, and first of all I want to thank the Assembly for this opportunity to heighten your awareness of our remarkable institution, and the extraordinary benefits we bring to the state and nation.

One of my greatest frustrations as the head of the organization is the fact that people outside of New Jersey seem to know more about us than the citizens of our own state. For example:

- The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey is now the 7th largest Shakespeare Theatre in North America, out of what is estimated at over 400 Shakespeare companies
- We are the oldest Shakespeare theatre on the east coast; we will celebrate the company's 50th anniversary season in 2012, a venerable age for a theatre in America
- We offer more education programs than any other theatre in the state of NJ, and more than most in the nation, and have a national reputation as one of the best teaching theatres in America
- Our company serves 100,000 people annually through our many artistic and education programs
- Our economic impact on the region is sizeable. A study conducted in 2003, estimated our impact at \$9.0 million annually. We suspect that number has now climbed to over \$12.0 million, and we will soon be conducting a new study to attain a concrete, updated figure
- Our work serves NJ citizens in every county and attracts audience from the tri-state area and beyond; participants in our training programs come from across the nation and abroad. All spend money at local restaurants, hotels, and shops.
- In addition to our main stage in Madison, and our outdoor stage in Florham Park, we boast the largest touring company for students in the mid-Atlantic region, playing to over 35,000 students a year. That particular program, called *Shakespeare Live!* has played to over half a million students in its 14 years
- As the state's only recipient ever, of the prestigious NEA *Shakespeare in American Communities: Shakespeare for a New Generation* grant (which we have received seven times now), we are able to bring the *Shakespeare Live!* touring program to thousands of economically challenged students in both rural and urban schools at no or little cost to those schools
- The consistent world-class quality of our work on stage and behind-the-scenes in the classroom, has earned us a national and even international reputation, and we are regularly compared to and compete with institutions such as the Royal Shakespeare Company, the Shakespeare Theatre in the nation's capital, and the leading resident and visiting companies in Manhattan.
- We are the only NJ theatre ever to be featured on the cover of the prestigious magazine "American Theatre," which is distributed nationally and internationally
- We have, for many years, received Major Arts Organization status, as well as Citations of Excellence from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts



- Our work garners philanthropic support from across the state, but has also attracted funding from national philanthropies as well, including the prestigious Shubert Foundation in New York
- The renowned Folger Shakespeare Theatre in Washington, chose The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey as the first theatre outside the D.C. area, to pilot its 25-year Shakespeare Festival model program for students. That initiative has been so successful, that it has tripled in size since it was launched four years ago
- Our *ShakeFest* summer training program for teachers has not only helped changed the education landscape in NJ, along with our many other programs, but it has gone international. We have once again been invited to Athens, Greece to conduct the program for teachers from Greece, Turkey and Germany
- With the help of JP Morgan Chase, we will be introducing a new education initiative in the troubled Orange school district, starting later this fall
- Our *Next Stage Ensemble*, a second, smaller, summer touring company, brings shows to people who cannot come to us; to constituents in hospices, retirement centers, hospitals, etc.
- In 2002, we received a prestigious Strategic Partnership Grant of \$1 million from the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation in honor of our major impact on the state's culture and education landscape
- We currently conduct residencies in seven different schools in north Jersey and one in Manhattan
- We are featured regularly in major press both in print and online, including the NYTimes, the Wall Street Journal, the Star-Ledger, Variety. etc. bringing good press to the state, helping to serve as some kind of antidote to the unfortunate image of NJ as conveyed by phenomena such as the TV show *Jersey Shore*

All of what I have just listed are some of the achievements and facts about The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey, but they do not come close to conveying our deeper ripple effect – how our programs help create better citizens, promoting literacy, tolerance, creative thinking, collaboration, partnerships, a desire to learn, the desire to strive for excellence; I could go on and on. Suffice to say, I hope that some of things I have mentioned, have given you a better idea of what a treasure this institution is both economically and culturally and education-wise for the state of NJ.

