

Oklahoma Senate Committee on Appropriations

2015-2016 Performance Report

Will Rogers Memorial Commission

AGENCY MISSION STATEMENT:

The mission of the Will Rogers Memorial Commission, as adopted in 2010, is to collect, preserve, and share the life, wisdom, and humor of Will Rogers for all generations.

LEAD ADMINISTRATOR:

Tad Jones, Executive Director, P.O. Box 157, Claremore, OK 74018-0157; 918-343-8118 (office); 918-520-4307 (mobile); tjones@willrogers.com.

GOVERNANCE:

By statute, the Will Rogers Memorial Commission is comprised of seven members, one of whom is a lineal descendent of Will Rogers, unless no surviving lineal descendant of Will Rogers chooses to serve. Each member, including the Chair, is appointed by the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate. Each member is appointed to a six-year term and may be eligible for reappointment. Each serves without compensation. Each member holds office until a successor is appointed and qualified. Each is subject to removal in the same manner as other state officials not subject to impeachment. The current members of the Will Rogers Memorial Commission are as follows:

Phil Albert, Chair
Philip Hixon, Vice Chair
Jennifer Rogers Etcheverry, Secretary/Treasurer
Bill Biard
Wyatt McCrea
Jack Spinks

The Commission does not operate with set committees, by ad hoc committees can be formed if needed.

GOVERNANCE ACCOUNTABILITY:

Please see the accompanying approved minutes of the previous four regularly scheduled meetings, in addition to two special meetings, from the past twelve months. The Commission does have an attendance policy.

MODERNIZATION EFFORTS:

The Will Rogers Memorial Commission has adjusted the hours of operation at the Will Rogers Memorial Museum from 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. and closed Thanksgiving and Christmas. These efforts help save in personnel costs and electrical costs to help meet 20/20 requirements.

The Will Rogers Memorial Museum began charging a fee for admission in 2012. We netted \$56,246.92 in 2012, \$52,132.61 in 2013, and \$47,536.01 in 2014. Starting Jan 1, 2015, the Memorial decided to increase the admission fee rates by two dollars for each adult, and one dollar each for bus tours, senior adults, and military personnel. Also, in order to address the lower attendance numbers, the museum will be hosting new community events, educational programs, and promotions to encourage attendance growth.

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The Will Rogers Memorial Commission is now operating the museum store, which had been operated by the Will Rogers Memorial Foundation. We are working to make it a strong revenue stream for the agency, but we need to implement an online store to assist with state and national sales, membership and event tickets sales.

As of July 1, 2015, the Will Rogers Memorial Museums doubled the rental rates for the Memorial and the Birthplace as well as expanding rental options for birthdays and group gatherings.

With the help of the Long Ranch Capital Planning Commission, the Will Rogers Memorial Museum in Claremore will be receiving a new heat/air and airflow system that will dramatically improve the air quality of the facility for the protection of the artifacts and the comfort of guests.

The Will Rogers Memorial Museum in Claremore updated most of its lighting with L.E.D. and motion sensor lights to help save electrical costs to meet 20/20 requirements.

The Will Rogers Memorial is also working to digitize the entire collection for preservation and digital searches and requests.

CORE MISSION:

The Will Rogers Memorial Commission's core mission is to collect, preserve, and share the life, wisdom, and humor of Will Rogers for all generations. The Commission is not required to provide services that are outside its core mission. No other state agency provides exactly the same services that the Commission provides. The Commission does partner with other state-operated museums whenever and wherever possible and appropriate, such as in museum-standard conservation measures and consultation about collections management, best practices, exhibit design and installation, and educational programming.

PRIVATE ALTERNATIVES:

The Will Rogers Memorial Commission has been a proud agency of the State of Oklahoma since 1937 and there are no private entities in Oklahoma or elsewhere that provides the same service the Commission provides. The Commission partners with other museums, public and private, whenever and wherever possible and appropriate, such as in conservation services and consultation about collections management, best practices, exhibit design and installation, educational programming, and many other areas. The officers and director of the Will Rogers Memorial Commission continue to work with the Board of Directors of Will Rogers Heritage, Inc., a 501(c) (3) not-for-profit corporation operating publicly as the Will Rogers Memorial Foundation, to help support the mission of the Will Rogers Memorial Commission.