

From: Kim Kent <KKent@kentwool.com>

To: Veldran, KatherineKatherineVeldran@gov.sc.gov

Baker, JoshJoshBaker@gov.sc.gov

Date: 6/3/2016 5:43:31 PM

Subject: TCMU Budget Line Item

Attachments: TCMU Facts & Figures.pdf

STI_Children's Museum report FINAL.pdf

Josh and Katherine,

I serve on the Board of the The Children's Museum of the Upstate (TCMU) located in Greenville, South Carolina. In this year's Appropriations Act, we received a \$1million allocation as a line item in the Parks, Recreation and Tourism Budget. This budget allocation is the first of this size for our museum and we are thrilled that the General Assembly recognized our value as a driver of tourism in our state. I have included some information about our museum and our statewide impact in this email for your review. Below are some highlights of our impact and success and attached is a one-pager on TCMU and the 2012 Economic Impact Study for your complete review.

Briefly, it is our sincere hope that the Governor will also see the value in TCMU receiving state funding to continue our work to fulfilling its mission and contine our service to the whole state and, as you will see in our numbers below, to the whole country.

TCMU is the 7th largest Children's Museum in the country, 10th largest in the world and the first children's museum to be affiliated with the Smithsonian.

TCMU has six years of proven success attracting tourists:

- Annual visitation has grown from 98,000 in 2010 to 153,000 in 2015. We project to surpass 200,000 visitors in 2016 with an additional 50,000 served through our outreach programs
- Museum visitors come from all 50 states and more than one dozen foreign countries each year
- In 2015, 55% of all museum guests were visitors from outside of Greenville County
- In 2015, 17% of all museum guests were visitors from other states or foreign countries
- More than 19,400 school children visited the museum from 34 districts across North Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee and South Carolina
- In 2014, TCMU was named the first children's museum to be a Smithsonian Affiliate

Throughout our 6 ½ years of operations, less than 1% of TCMU's annual operating budget has come from government sources. This is not the norm for Children's Museums across the country. For museums in our budget category across the US, the average is 27.6% of their annual contributed income comes from government sources.

0% of our earned income has come from government sources. The norm is 33%. This usually comes to museums in the form of subsidizing tickets for school visits.

As you can see, we are a long way from the norm when it comes to receiving government support for our museum. We would be extremely grateful for any additional help in fulfilling our mission.

As I stated, I have attached the Economic Impact study done in 2012 by the Strom Thurmond Institute for Regional Dynamics & Economic Modeling at Clemson. We were able to reach out quickly and ask the author to plug our current numbers in the formulary and he sent the following summary:

- The economic impact of visitor spending attributed to the children's museum in 2015 is \$2,932,000. This is approximately a \$1,000,000 increase since 2012. A 34% increase in 3 years.
- The total estimated annual economic impact of the children's museum on South Carolina in 2015 is \$7,861,000 compared to \$4,977,800 in 2012. A 58% increase in 3 years.

Even more impressive than those numbers is the total economic impact since opening our doors in 2009 which is \$75,316,643.

TCMU and its leadership are extremely proud of these accomplishments and are strongly committed to continuing this great work for our state. We would appreciate the Governor's support of our efforts and would respectfully request that she not veto the line item allocation in the PRT budget but rather help us celebrate our success as a partner in growing tourism in this state.

Please let me know if you have any questions regarding this material or if there is any additional information that I can provide as you consider our request.

Best,
Kim

Kimberly V. Kent
Copper Dome Strategies, LLC
Principal

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone