

# Texas State Historical Commission

## **Friends of the Historic Sites Statement**

Preamble: We understand the need for cuts in the budget across the board in regards to the present economic problems in the State of Texas. With that in mind, we would like the Committee to consider the following:

- 1) The Texas Historical Commission has direct oversight over all Historic and Heritage sites across the State. If they were to be suspended for two years, what kind of damage would be done to these sites, those owned by the State and those that are not?
- 2) Tourism brings in revenue from all over the State as well as other States to our sites, both by visits to property owned by the State of Texas (Historic Sites), Counties where these sites are located, and along the different Heritage Trails throughout the State. The loss of revenue would hurt everyone involved.
- 3) The Historic Sites the Historical Commission oversees are fragile. They are historic Houses, Indian War Army Forts, Museums and much more. If there is to be a shutdown of these sites, all the funding and hard work by our Historical Commission could be lost. History Lost is lost forever.
- 4) The Texas Historical Commission has very few employees compared to other Agencies in the State Government. They are a very efficient professional organization. The loss of funding would mean the Staff in the Austin offices would have to leave and we would lose their experience. When funding comes back, we would have to hire new staff and basically start over.
- 5) The Historical Commission's Field Staff at our Historic Sites are dedicated to their Sites. These are people that 1) work on a pay scale much less than most private industry jobs for the same work, and 2) in the remote areas where most of our Historic Sites are located, would be hard pressed to find employment where they now live. Once again, after funding comes back, these people would have been lost to us and we would have to start over again.
- 6) If the Historic Commission is downsized or funding removed, what would happen with our Historic Sites under their control? Local County and City governments would be hard pressed to operate these sites. What if they cannot take them? Who would watch over and maintain these sites? Once again, History lost is gone forever.
- 7) THC Sites provide valuable educational platforms for students State-Wide. The loss of these would be disastrous for our schools.