
Committee Meeting

of

ASSEMBLY TOURISM AND THE ARTS COMMITTEE

"Testimony from invited representatives of New Jersey's tourism and arts industries on the importance and benefits of tourism, the arts, and historic preservation in the state"

LOCATION: Field House
Chester, New Jersey

DATE: October 19, 2010
11:00 a.m.

MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Assemblyman Matthew W. Milam, Chair
Assemblyman Jack Conners, Vice Chair
Assemblywoman Valerie Vainieri Huttel
Assemblywoman Alison Littell McHose
Assemblywoman Nancy F. Munoz



ALSO PRESENT:

Amy Denholtz
Office of Legislative Services
Committee Aide

Jillian Dempsey
Assembly Majority
Committee Aide

Kelly A. Comerford
Matthew B. Malat
Assembly Republican
Committee Aides

Meeting Recorded and Transcribed by
The Office of Legislative Services, Public Information Office,
Hearing Unit, State House Annex, PO 068, Trenton, New Jersey

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ASSEMBLYMAN MATTHEW W. MILAM (Chair): Good morning, everyone.

Actually, we want to welcome you to this area instead of me welcoming you. It's kind of part of my continuance of taking our Tourism and Arts Committee from Trenton -- getting them out of the halls from under the Gold Dome to actually bring us to the areas where our third largest revenue stream is being from. Tourism and arts is the third largest revenue stream the State of New Jersey has. And the time that we're in, with the State of New Jersey cutting government and cutting -- we also want to make sure we protect our revenue streams as well. We want to make sure we know the importance and make sure we get the proper dollars.

This is our third visit on the road. We started out in Assemblywoman Munoz's district, visiting with the Paper Mill Playhouse. That just opens our eyes, and it's something that wouldn't happen if we had to stay in Trenton a lot. We can have all the visitors we want in Trenton. Until we go to their own backyards and see what's going on -- then we know, when we are complete, what we need to continue to do. What happens is that we want to make sure those dollars are there, to make sure we market the great things that this state has.

I, myself, am Assemblyman Matt Milam, District 1, which is the extreme south, and I have Cape May County as part of my district, which is our shore communities. We know what we have in the shore communities, and we know we have our beaches that we need to keep replenished, our beautiful beaches that people will draw to. We could have all the great restaurants and everything in the shore communities. Unless

you have those beaches -- that people are still coming for them during the day-- It's the same part with North Jersey. North Jersey has great rivers and streams that need to be protected for the fishing that goes on. It's the skiing, it's the snowmobiling. But I want to hear what else is going on up here -- whether it is the tourism and the arts -- that way we know, when we have \$9 million to market, we don't have enough. We're going to need \$12 million, maybe \$14 million, when other states are spending \$40 million and \$50 million to market what they have to offer. I mean, there's nothing like sitting in our own living rooms and watching commercials for Pennsylvania, Maryland. Now we're even seeing them for Canada and California. Well, they should be watching what's going on in New Jersey. And that's what our Committee is here to see, so we know, when we go back, what legislation needs to happen to make sure we protect our third largest revenue stream.

Having said that, I am going to call on the Mayor of Chester Borough, Dennis Verbaro.

MAYOR DENNIS S. VERBARO: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: Thank you.

MAYOR VERBARO: Good morning, everyone. Welcome to the Borough of Chester.

Excuse my back, I'm going to try to reach out to everyone.

Is that okay?

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: This is your house. You can pretty much do what you want here. (laughter)

MAYOR VERBARO: I have to get closer to the mike.

I want to give a warm welcome to everyone. You're sitting in the Borough of Chester -- this is our Field House, we call it.

A warm welcome to the Committee, Chairman, Assemblywomen, Assemblymen. We welcome you.

To give you a sense -- and maybe I can touch upon -- because we do have some South Jersey people -- we're sitting in, obviously, Morris County, Borough of Chester. We are surrounded by the Township of Chester. Together, we're about 30 square miles and under 10,000 people. So the demographics are very strong for open space. We have a lot of set-aside land. You're in the Borough right now. This is our Field House. This is a great story from Open Space moneys. This used to be a fuel depot sitting right here -- a deteriorated fuel depot. We received State moneys from Open Space, and our local residents funded the building of this building. This is a community center today to all groups in the town community. We are adjacent to our beautiful Grove Street Park, which is another four acres that received some funding back in the early '80s from Open Space -- one of the early towns that received Open Space money.

Just a brief sketch, overview of Chester: People started coming out here in the late 1600s, started settling in the early 1700s; 1736 is our official date of settlement. We grew as an agricultural community. And in 1799, we were incorporated as the Township of Chester, and that was the entire area. In 1930, we split over the allocation of revenues into the Borough of Chester and the Township of Chester. And as probably most everyone knows, we were one of the few towns that has been looking at consolidation. That's a whole other topic. We've gone into formal talks about it. We're on hold right now because of the lack of revenue.

Chester has been many things over the course of the years, but we pride ourselves in our open space, our lands, and our forests. It's just beautiful out here.

And I would like to invite everybody to partake today -- the Committee and whoever else is going to join them -- to take a visit of some of our local structures. One is The Publick House. It's on the historical register of both the State and National Register. It was built in 1810 by Zephaniah Drake. It's an interesting building. I've already contacted the owner. He would be more than happy to give you a tour. If you're looking to have lunch, you could certainly have lunch there.

From there you can proceed to the Congregational Church that's right next door. It's the oldest congregational church West of the Hudson. Architecturally, it's very nice to take a tour of. From there, you can go out into our historic Main Street. And I think that would link to the theme that your Committee is going to talk about. From there, if you want to keep going, we can certainly go out to the farms. We are big on agritourism. And I think the Secretary of Agriculture was just here last Tuesday to award one of our farms, Stony Hill, with our corn maze-- And if you're looking to get rid of anybody, you can take them into the corn maze. (laughter) They will get lost, guaranteed. And we certainly have the Alstede Farms and other farms you can visit.

That's really a sense of Chester, to go out on those farms this time of year. For us, it's all about pumpkin picking and enjoying the outdoors, our Cider Mill, and so on and so forth.

The last site I would offer would be the old mill. I think it's the largest and oldest operating mill in the State of New Jersey. I'm not sure it will be open today, but we can look into that.

So behind the scenes I'm going to speak to Amy or whomever, because I'm going to leave in a few minutes. And if I can give you that contact information, the Committee can certainly make any decision you'd like.

Any questions of myself?

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: I just want to thank you for hosting this. I mean, it ended up being a beautiful day. I left a pretty good storm out of South Jersey today, coming up, which made me a few minutes late. But I do want to thank you for hosting us as part of our whole package that we do.

MAYOR VERBARO: The day is clearing, and it's a good day to enjoy outside.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: And, of course, the planning of the events afterwards -- I appreciate that as well.

MAYOR VERBARO: My pleasure, our pleasure.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: Thank you.

Before I have a roll call-- We actually have formats that we have to follow -- I get prodded on both sides here. I just want to recognize the Mayor-Elect of Chester Borough, Bob Davis.

Bob, do you want to say a few words, please?

Congratulations on Mayor-Elect.

C O U N C I L M A N R O B E R T D A V I S: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Committee.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: You're welcome.

COUNCILMAN DAVIS: Welcome to Chester, again.

The Mayor did a great job of giving you a layout of our town.

I'm not quite the Mayor-Elect yet. I think that has to wait for November 2 for that.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: Oh, okay. You're coming up to it.

COUNCILMAN DAVIS: But we're in Republicanville, as you may know. (laughter) And there are no Democrats running on the ticket, so unless somebody here wants to do a massive write-in campaign, it should all work out.

But I want to clarify one thing about the weather here. First of all, what you see is a sunny day in Chester. It is always like this in Chester. (laughter) Again, welcome to Chester. And at the conclusion of your meeting, if you would like, I would accompany you on one of the tours that the Mayor suggested -- certainly the Church and to The Publick House if you wish.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: Thank you for that.

COUNCILMAN DAVIS: Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: Thank you, again.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VAINIERI HUTTLE: Good luck in November. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: And now I will call on that roll call, Amy.

MS. DENHOLTZ (Committee Aide): Assemblywoman Munoz.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MUNOZ: Here.

MS. DENHOLTZ: Assemblywoman McHose.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LITTELL McHOSE: Here.

MS. DENHOLTZ: Assemblywoman Vainieri Huttle.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VAINIERI HUTTLE: Here.

MS. DENHOLTZ: Assemblyman Connors.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Here.

MS. DENHOLTZ: And Chairman Milam.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: Here.

I'm going to open it up to the Committee, just to anyone who wants to say anything that's on your mind. You don't have to.

And I will start with our host Assemblywoman.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LITTELL McHOSE: Thank you, Chairman Milam.

Welcome to the 24th District, all my colleagues. I'm so happy that you're here to see the beautiful parts of New Jersey. You don't need to travel to Vermont to see the fall foliage. You can come right here to northwestern New Jersey. I'm so thrilled to have you here and to have the Committee draw attention to the situation in the State.

As you made mention, with the difficult revenue situation, we want to make sure that we keep the attention focused on the areas of the state that are important to revenue, which includes agritourism, as the Mayor mentioned. And we also have a tremendous amount of the arts

community here in northwestern New Jersey that is also a draw, and provides revenue, and also supports local surrounding businesses.

So I appreciate you coming here today.

And on behalf of Senator Steve Oroho and Assemblyman Chiusano, who I'm sitting in for today, welcome.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: Thank you, Assemblywoman McHose.

Assemblywoman Munoz.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MUNOZ: Thank you for having us here. If it never rains in Chester, I will be here more often. It's quite beautiful. You couldn't have asked for a more beautiful day. As he said, the morning started out pretty miserably down where we are, which is only 45 minutes to the East. But it's a real pleasure to be here. We're looking forward to hearing what you have to say. As Assemblywoman McHose said, we really want to hear from our all constituents across the state. And we are facing some difficult financial times, but we certainly want to hear what everyone has to say.

So thank you for having us here. We are really looking forward to hearing from you.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: Thank you.

Assemblywoman Vainieri Huttle.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VAINIERI HUTTLE: Thank you.

Good morning.

I just want to thank our Chairman, Matt Milam, for taking us on the road, quite frankly.

Just a quick sidebar: I saw the *Soprano's State* last night. And unfortunately, New Jersey certainly has an image of, "What exit are you from," and corruption in both parties throughout the state.

But being on the road and seeing such jewels as this today in Chester, and Cape May, and the Paper Mill Playhouse, and continuing to go on the road, this is what we as legislators really need to do: highlight the precious jewels that we have in this state, whether they're historic preservation, open space, agriculture. That is what we need to portray New Jersey as. And I'm happy to be part of this Committee so that we can continue to highlight that and really have people aware of the destinations, and the tourism, and making this the economic drive in our downtowns -- this is what this Committee needs to do. And so I wish the Committee luck. And I'm happy to be here.

Thank you, Alison McHose, for welcoming us in your neck of the woods. I'm very happy to be here.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: Assemblyman Connors.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: I guess that goes for me, too.

Assemblywoman Alison McHose, it is great to be here.

Alison and I have served -- we currently serve on the Military and Veterans Affairs Committee. And it's interesting to see other members of the Legislature, but never-- You meet them in Trenton, but you never actually get into their district. I find it pretty interesting.

Yesterday, I was on a committee with Assemblyman Chiusano. And all he did was boast about Chester and telling me-- He said, "Jack, you're just going to love it. Wait until you see it." He said, "You're going

to love it, and you're going to want to come back." And I have to agree with him.

And then Mayor Verbaro-- We met in the kitchen there for the first time. I'm from Pennsauken, which is the 7th District. It turns out he's originally from Pennsauken. He graduated from Pennsauken High School. It was like we knew each other all our lives. And just listening to him here, you can tell how proud he is, now that he is obviously in Chester for some time.

But this is good. It's good to get out, it's good to get around the state, I think, for all of us -- whether you're like I tend to be. I have my 17 towns in South Jersey, and others have their towns in North Jersey. But it's good, I think, to get back and forth and see what goes on, see what -- in terms of tourism, even history. The Mayor, if you were listening to him carefully, he took us back to the 1600s. He moved forward up to 1930 when there was this split. But this town -- they saw the Revolution, they saw all the things that happened, just as other towns that we represent have had those kinds of things happen.

And people from other states should come in and see this. They should see these kinds of things and all these historical locations that we have. I have a town, Burlington City, where the former mayor keeps telling me that the first President of the United States came from Burlington City. I said, "Really?" He said, "Well, it was Elias Boudinot, and he was the first (*sic*) President of the Continental Congress. But people should come and see his house." So there's a lot to learn.

And then just getting into the arts: There are so many people dedicated to the arts, putting on some excellent shows. And this is the

place to be. We all benefit from it. Tourism is spending of money, whether it's in Atlantic City or wherever it is. The spending of money is what generates income for the state, and it's what keeps us going.

Chairman, I appreciate this opportunity to be here and to travel a little bit. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: It is. It was kind of my way-- When I was actually named Chairman, which I took as a real honor-- And I just kind of told leadership, "I kind of have a little thought about taking this show on the road, basically." Because I was blind to some things in New Jersey as well. And to be able to share it all with the Committee-- And like I said earlier, it is about awareness -- to open our eyes to know what we have to do when we go back to that Gold Dome to make sure one of our revenue streams is protected. I will say that.

And to just share a story with you: Believe it or not, I received an e-mail two days ago that -- someone told me I was wasting my time. It was an anonymous Jean Q. Public-type e-mail -- whoever this person is. Waste of time? I almost took it personally. I took offense for the folks I visited already -- we have visited. I took offense for where we were coming to: the Borough of Chester. Because, yes, there are the problems of this state. But we-- I will say this over and over about protecting the revenue streams and make sure we're marketing. There are all these numbers out there about every dollar you spend, you're going to make \$30. Whatever those numbers are -- however you want to skew those numbers -- it is true. It is about investing in your own business to make sure you get a revenue stream. I do it in my own business. If I don't continue to invest in capital

in my business, my business won't grow. It's the same with marketing the tourism and the arts, and the great things we have to offer.

We have, it looks like, maybe five different witness testifiers today. I want to welcome all of them.

We'll start with Denise Lanza, who is the President of the Morris County Tourism Bureau.

Denise, welcome, and thank you for having us.

D E N I S E L A N Z A: Good morning. I think it's still morning.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Good morning.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: It is.

MS. LANZA: Good morning.

Actually, welcome to Morris County. We're going to expand a little bit beyond Chester. Welcome to Morris County.

I am the President of the Morris County Tourism Bureau. I'm also the Assistant Deputy Director of the Morris County Park Commission. So that's why I'd like to welcome you to Morris County where, as a matter of fact, George Washington did sleep several times. (laughter)

I am the President of the Morris County Tourism Bureau, and I've been on the board for the past 10 years. The Morris County 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, and that's through the efforts of our Executive Director, Leslie Bensley.

This organization has grown tremendously in the last five years. And in part, that's due to some funding from the New Jersey Travel and Tourism cooperative marketing grants. We are currently a nonprofit

affiliated with the Morris County Chamber of Commerce. However, we have previously been a part of Morris County government and a stand-alone agency.

Our Tourism Bureau has a diverse board of community professionals. We have a highly interactive website. We have a visitor's center in Morristown with local resource information. We have a tourism alliance of representatives from sites around the county. We have a schedule of walking tours in the spring and summer. By the way, this summer we sold out our walking tours. And we also have a broad-based membership program.

This year, we were fortunate to receive a second cycle of the New Jersey Tourism grant. The 2010 portion allowed us, for the first time ever, to lead a huge collaboration between Discover Jersey Arts, and the New Jersey Art Pride Foundation, the New Jersey Council on the Arts, the Newark Museum, and Craftsman Farms here in Parsippany to promote attendance at a major retrospective of Gustav Stickley's work.

I did provide copies of this. And attached to that is an example of what we did with the funding. There are advertisements from the first round of funding for Morris County in general. And the second advertisement is the ad we did for the cooperative with Newark Museum and Craftsmen Farms in Parsippany.

This joint promotion, which included advertisements in the *New York Times* last Sunday and this coming Sunday -- that's the first time ever we've been able to do that -- really allows us to provide a template for future collaborations, which were spearheaded by the Morris County Tourism Bureau, not by the individual sites. And it will allow us to show

our partners and ourselves 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 our local restaurants, visiting historic arts and ecotourism sites, staying at our hotels, and shopping in our stores. The Bureau is the only organization coordinating such efforts on a countywide 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 New Jersey'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 our annual Holly Days promotion. That's the time period between Thanksgiving and Christmas when sites in the Morristown area provide special programs such as, at the Park Commission, our gingerbread display at the Frelinghuysen Arboretum.

Last year we sought the assistance of the Tourism Bureau to help promote the Eastern U.S. Figure Skating Championships which were held at Mennen Sports Arena in Morristown -- one of our facilities. We'll again be working with the Tourism Bureau in the spring of 2011 when the New Jersey State Clean Communities Conference is held in Morristown. And a portion of it will be held at our facilities.

A critical element missing in our efforts however -- and it stalls our effectiveness -- is a 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 State grant will be provided. This ambiguity impacts our ability to fully meet our mission. New Jersey, as you know, does not follow the example of its neighboring states by ensuring that even a small portion of the hotel tax is returned to 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, Pennsylvania, or the Hudson River Valley in New York. New York City is the number one port of entry for nonresident 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 Board meeting last week, we were advised that without the grant funding in 2011, we would fall back to budget levels similar to 2007. We cannot continue to positively impact our local economy if we cannot get the message out, as you said, Mr. Chairman.

So if 160 visitors can 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.

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

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: Would you want to stay if any of the members have questions?

MS. LANZA: I can take questions, absolutely. Morris County Park Commission Tourism Bureau.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: I would just start by saying thank you. You actually answered my question: What do you see as your biggest challenges? And it is in the dollars.

MS. LANZA: Stable source of funding.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: It's the stable source -- the not knowing, going with the cancellation of the spring/summer campaign. We were affected all across New Jersey. But it's very eye-opening, as Assemblyman Connors related to. Sometimes we are in our own districts -- I know how it affected Cape May County. To hear how it affected Morris County and adjoining Sussex County; not even thinking how close we are to Bucks County, which has lots to offer as well. And how many nights are you watching commercials about Bucks County? I see them in South Jersey about Bucks County. You answered a question.

I don't know if this is a fair one. You probably can't even give a dollar amount on it. What dollars would you foresee to get your message across properly?

MS. LANZA: I believe, last year, we had received approximately \$70,000 for collaborative marketing. And that -- the examples that you see in front of you -- those advertisements are specifically related to that. We were able to hire someone to really bring us forward.

The ad that you saw -- that's the cooperative ad with the Newark Museum-- They, of course, had their own advertising firm. But they liked our ad so much, that we did the *lush* and *wholesome* for Morris County, that they used the word *unique* and used our template to go ahead and provide that ad for the *New York Times*. And it's on all of our websites as well. So it connects you to going to the Gustav Stickley exhibit at the

Newark Museum and then coming to the only home that he built for himself at Craftsmen Farms, here in Parsippany.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: Thank you.

I will open it up to Assemblywoman McHose.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LITTELL McHOSE: Thank you very much. I know you do a great job. Leslie and I have known each other for a long time, and I know the struggles that you're facing.

One question I had: In terms of limited money for advertising, how effective or how useful is the internet and banner ads, and things like that? Because I know what frustrates me is to go into diners or places where you have those little boxes, and all they talk about is Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania. And you're right here in New Jersey, and we could be promoting. I know print ads are expensive, and those little brochures are expensive. Have you seen-- Are you able to track those banner ads? Can you talk about that?

MS. LANZA: Yes, we actually-- Again, with our website -- we're really excited about our website. And we do social marketing as well with Facebook and Twitter. And you're able to go on our website and download a postcard, for example, to send to someone to invite them to come. So we do track those numbers. And we know that initially someone may use the website to come to Morris County. And then when they get here, we find that they will walk into the visitor's center, or they will look to grab a map or information on the shopping centers in our area to take with them once they're here. So we absolutely see use of the internet. And we can track how many people come into that website. But we know that once they get here, they come -- want to have something in their hand.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LITTELL McHOSE: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: Assemblywoman Vainieri Huttle.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VAINIERI HUTTLE: Thank you.

Apparently, you're doing a terrific job, and your presentation was great. I'm going to take some of these quotes and use them -- that New Jersey can support 400,000 jobs and put billions of dollars into the economy. That's a great--

MS. LANZA: That's 2008 numbers. I pulled them off the internet yesterday.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VAINIERI HUTTLE: It's a great conclusion.

But the \$70,000 that you received -- did you receive that in moneys last year? Was that county dollars coming into the county?

MS. LANZA: No, that was State money through the cooperative grant from Travel and Tourism. And it's actually a two-year grant. So we should be receiving a second check for 2011.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VAINIERI HUTTLE: And do you get county dollars supporting, through Parks or through other areas of your--

MS. LANZA: The only funding that the Tourism Bureau now gets from the County of Morris is from the Board of Chosen Freeholders, and they're continuing to support the staff salaries. But there is no marketing funding coming from the County of Morris unless individual units, such as the Park Commission, become a member; and we are. The Park Commission is a member.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VAINIERI HUTTLE: And I think Assemblywoman McHose brings up the website. And I think that's important because what we do-- I come from Bergen County, and obviously it's tough no matter where you are -- not only New Jersey, but all over.

We have private partner sponsorships. For example, if you have a restaurant here, a hotel -- and maybe you can absorb some of the-- I don't know how much of the private partnering you're doing with your website and your advertising. But your advertisement is great. If you could-- Well, obviously, I'm not telling you anything new about how to conserve dollars. But do you do a lot of the private partnership sponsoring?

MS. LANZA: Yes, actually, if you go onto our website -- and even in those-- Unfortunately, you can't see the four separate ads that are listed there. But each of those four ads, when it highlights something on top -- for example, *wholesome* is a county park in Dover, Randolph. That's Hedden Park. One of the things that we will do is lower -- there is a photo. And generally that photo is one of our hotel partners. So if you're coming from out of the area, we'll show you where to go, and then we will recommend a location. And that's why I said to go to our website, because I think you can also see how some of our other partners work with us if they support a particular event or they support the Tourism Bureau in general.

We need to do more of it, absolutely. And we need to enhance our membership a little bit more. We're kind of new on the membership end of it. We've only been doing that for two years. But it's been a big impact to have the cooperative marketing dollars there.

Any other questions?

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: Assemblyman Connors.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Thank you.

May I call you Denise?

MS. LANZA: Absolutely.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Denise, thank you so much for coming today.

You talked about the neighboring states, and they have a hotel tax. Everybody hates the word *tax*, but regardless, do you--

MS. LANZA: An assessment. Can we call it an *assessment*?

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: An assessment.

But the tourism is generating -- it's putting people in those rooms.

MS. LANZA: Heads in beds, yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: So I guess that's the argument.

Do you have any idea what we're talking about or what the percentage is? It's not to put you on the spot.

MS. LANZA: We actually did-- Our Executive Director, Leslie Bensley, has recently done -- last year did a study of how much each of our municipalities in Morris County brings in with the hotel tax. If we could garner just 10 percent of that income, I believe it would have brought to the Tourism Bureau almost \$200,000.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MUNOZ: I didn't hear.

MS. LANZA: Two hundred thousand dollars. We have a couple of communities with many hotels, and they're bringing in a great portion of dollars. And we understand that the communities are using that

for general operating funds. We understand that that's important to prevent tax increases. But just 10 percent of what those municipalities bring in would help us tremendously.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: Thank you.

MS. LANZA: Sure.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: Denise, I want to thank you. It was very helpful, the numbers that you do.

MS. LANZA: Thank you for having me.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: Just one last question: What would the tourism in Morris County -- what other revenue streams do you have? We know the grants, and you have the little bit from the County.

MS. LANZA: Sure, we have the grants. We have membership and some sponsorships of our individual locations. The walking tours do charge a nominal fee to the people who participate. So we bring some of those dollars in.

We also have a visitor's guide which, unfortunately, we're in the preparation of putting a new one together for 2010-2011. But there is advertising in our visitor's guide. And what we do is, we distribute that to each of the hotels and all of the tourism sites so that if you do go to one, you can pick it up, and you can see everything else that is available in Morris County. I would say that's probably our second largest revenue stream: our Morris County visitor's guide and the advertising that's in there. We don't have a salesperson.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: Well, thank you, again.

MS. LANZA: Thank you very much.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: Next we're going to call on Mary Jo Mathias, the Executive Director, Sussex County Arts and Heritage Council.

Welcome.

MARY JO MATHIAS: Thank you.

You'll have to forgive me, I'm suffering from some allergies this morning, as many people are.

I'm Mary Jo Mathias. I'm the Executive Director of the Sussex County Arts and Heritage Council. And I bring you greetings from beautiful Sussex County and invite you to visit the many art studios, galleries, and performance events we have to offer.

Sussex County is alive with art and history, especially now, where everywhere you look you see scenes of beauty and, if you get away from 206, sounds of nature, beautiful sounds. (laughter)

Thank you for inviting me to speak this morning for my passion for the arts.

I was asked to give a little talk about what art -- why art is important, and then about the Arts Council. So as a former grade school and college music teacher, and present private teacher and performer, I can tell you firsthand the importance of art.

Beverly Sills famous quote is, "Art is the signature of civilization." Only human beings can express thoughts and symbols. Can you imagine a day without music or art in its many forms? The very first thing a tyrant does when it -- it takes away the books, music, and artistic expression from their victims in order to dehumanize them.

Art has been found to restore health, and aid concentration, and relieve stress. For example, they use music in operating rooms. It is used to communicate with patients who are uncommunicative. This morning on ABC's "Good Morning America," they had a segment on Alzheimer's. They showed a daughter whose father was completely lost in his own world. But he would respond for a few minutes when she sang his favorite song, and he would come back to her for those few minutes.

Also, Elton John was on. He was working with a former music partner from many years ago who had just had brain surgery. And his quote was, "Music for brain surgery patients is therapeutic." It brought him back.

Children who are involved in music and art programs are seldom problem students. Art is a discipline that requires a total emersion into it to be successful. It is important that art, music, and literature always be part of students' education. To remove it removes an important element of humanity from the students.

The Sussex Arts and Heritage Council was incorporated in 1971 and is the designated arts association for the County of Sussex. We are one of three county arts organizations that stand alone and are not part of County government, although we do get a small amount of funding from the Founty. We have to raise all our own funds through corporate appeal, membership, fundraisers, State and private grants. As a County agency, we apply to the State Council on the Arts to obtain funds to regrant to other nonprofits in the County. At present, we have 16 regrant organizations, and not all of them are arts related. We give funds to SCARC, which is a special program for special adults; the Council (*sic*) for Prevention and

Counseling, which has an after-school program for the children of their clients that provides art; K.E.E.P., which, again, is a childcare after-school art program; Project Self-Sufficiency and the Wantage Recreation Committee (*sic*), which did a beautiful veterans' war memorial in Wantage. These groups all had an art component for their clients that we fund.

We have an art gallery in downtown Newton to serve the visual artists of Sussex County. We hold receptions, workshops, summer art camps for children, and book signings. Since we are centrally located in historic Newtown, which is the County seat, we have been very involved in making downtown Newtown a growing, viable, historical, downtown area, as well as contributing to developing an awareness of historic Sussex County. Our gallery is a family friendly and education environment. We also have galleries in the historic courthouse that are known as our public galleries. We hold senior citizen art shows, teen art shows, youth month, and photography shows there.

One of our major fundraising events was established to showcase the performing arts regrantees. This event is continuing as we hold our sixth annual Evening with the Stars at the Lake Mohawk Golf Club on October 30, which we would invite all of you to.

We've developed a statistical information card, which I will give to you, showing the effects of the arts in Sussex County, and in the state, and in the country. Each year there are over 427 activities and events attended by over 25,000 people, supporting 1,200 artists in Sussex County. We spend over \$50,000 in the County, and we reach thousands of other people by way of television, radio, newspapers, newsletters, and our website. In New Jersey, \$1.2 billion is generated, and nationally \$166.2 billion, in

art-based economic activity. In the state, 77,000 jobs are provided, and nationally 5.7 million jobs in the arts are generated. In New Jersey, every dollar spent by an arts organization generates \$8 in the economy.

We receive grants from the Council on the Humanities and also the State Department of Tourism (*sic*). Next fall 2011, we are proud to host the traveling show from the Smithsonian Institute on New Harmonies, provided by the Council on the Humanities.

So, you see, Sussex County Arts and Heritage Council is alive in influencing the lives of both young and old. Please continue to support the arts and humanities in State funding to the councils in the state and to the schools.

And I thank you for going on the road. Because as you said, some people think you should be tending to State business. This is State business. We are the State business.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: Absolutely.

Would you mind any questions from the Committee?

MS. MATHIAS: No, I would be glad.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: I just wanted to make a couple of points.

Thank you for that. It is all about the awareness that I'm just really harping on today.

You mentioned the arts in education. I find it one of the most important things. Because I even know when I was going to school, there was never anything that was out there in front of us. Of course there was the drama class. And all the good kids could get to go and do the play in

the school. But to actually bring the arts to education-- It's very, very important for our young folks to know, going forward.

You talked about the music with the medical fields now. Another very important thing -- it's about the soothing -- only because I know. Because I had that whole dentistry fear. And you go in now, put a headset on you, and ask, "What station do you want?" But it's a great point you made, though.

And then, of course, the Alzheimer's and dementia patients as well. And I had heard about that in nursing homes. They're starting to do it more and more. Instead of just putting the TV on in the patient's room and just letting them focus on it, they are putting on that soothing music. We have a great veterans' home down in Vineland. Always in the lounges is just kind of really nice music going on.

You made mention of something I found very interesting: the regrants. In other words-- I mean, I'm just trying to get a little background. You apply for the grant, you get the grant. And you have some beneficiaries that would apply to Sussex County Arts and Heritage.

MS. MATHIAS: They apply to us, right.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: Give an example of who those people are, what groups they are. Just a couple of names.

MS. MATHIAS: The Teen Arts group, which is a statewide program. And that operates out of Sussex County Community College, and we fund them; the Sussex County Youth Symphony, which has -- is world renowned because they've traveled all over the world, this wonderful group of young people -- about 120 of them. And they're wonderful. There is the Skylands Youth Symphony, which is up in Vernon, and we fund them.

And Cameo theater -- Jacqueline Kroschell. I don't know if you've heard of her. She's sort of internationally known also. She does wonderful theater. And we have a community choral society, and we have harmonizers -- the Sussex County High Point Harmonizers; and the women's group, which is a wonderful harmonizing group. So we have those types of groups. There is the Cornerstone Theater group, too, that are being supported through us.

If we don't get the money, they don't have the money. And we have, in the past, unfortunately had a couple regrant groups that had to fold because we didn't have the money to give them. And it was-- We really felt bad.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: What keeps them from going to get their own grant from the State?

MS. MATHIAS: If you apply to the State, you cannot apply to us. And when you apply to the State, you apply for a little bit larger grant. The grants they're getting from us are in the range of \$4,000, \$5,000, \$6,000. So if they need-- Tri-State Theater, which is a well-known theater in Sussex, New Jersey -- they apply for their own grants. They have their own building. But they, again, are in very serious trouble this year because their funds have been cut terribly. So they may have to face other choices.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: Thank you.

Questions from the Committee?

Assemblywoman McHose.

MS. MATHIAS: Fellow Sussex *County*an.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LITTELL McHOSE: Thank you for being here. Welcome.

Just for full disclosure, I have been very involved with the debate over government funding of the arts and humanities. I worked in the Bush Administration for Bush Sr. I was at the National Endowment for the Humanities when the whole debacle with Mapplethorpe was going on, and whether we should be funding arts -- and the government, should they be involved. So this has been a long haul for me, almost 20 years.

And I think we have seen the positive side of the government funding arts. And I believe that the impact that you talked about, in terms of our community alone and how important it is that children, and adults, and seniors have arts and humanities in their life-- I believe that we can continue, even if we are challenged right now in terms of the dollar amounts. I believe that we should continue to see that there is money available and to help organizations like you. I don't know what the answer is. I wish I did. I wish I could wave the magic wand and it would all be taken care of. But clearly we will continue to try, and that's why we're here today to help and to listen.

Just so you know, I have three children. I have one who plays piano, and I have two who dance. And one is a boy who dances. So just so you know, he is-- It's a riot. And he wrestles and he plays lacrosse. So he's a well-rounded boy. But they all love -- and we very much emphasize arts with them, and I think it's very crucial.

Thank you for being here.

MS. MATHIAS: They've found that certain music -- Bach, Mozart -- affects the brain actually in babies, school children. It actually has an effect.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LITTELL McHOSE: Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: Was his first choice drums?
Drums or dance?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LITTELL McHOSE: No, actually the piano. He went right to the piano. He didn't even question it. He really took to it, and he's stuck with it too.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: Very good.

Assemblyman Conners.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: First of all, Mary Jo, thank you for being here today. You started out with Beverly Sills, and that arts is a signature of civilization. You're absolutely right.

And I was thinking that it must be something-- I think a lot of people -- we just take it for granted. Art is there. And if we didn't have it, it's kind of like when your favorite TV show is preempted or you were to lose the power, and you say, "What am I going to do with myself?"

Just this past weekend I went to a shop where they had artisans who make jewelry, and I bought a birthday present for my wife, which was something an artist made. I guess, hopefully, it's one of a kind. But I think we tend to take it for granted.

We talked about putting a smile on people's faces, and talked about going to a nursing home and visiting. And I remember, as a teenager, I was in an ambulance corps. And I remember the driver. In fact, his name was John Gabriel (phonetic spelling). He's actually deceased now. But John was -- and I'm a teenager. And we went into this home, and he was actually lifting a lady out of a wheelchair and he pretended to dance with her. And you could see the smile on her. She was confined to a wheelchair,

and we were going to transport her to the hospital. But he picked her up and he danced with her. There was no music. He was just pretending to dance.

My point is: It brings a smile to your face. And whether you're ill, whether you're healthy, or whatever, life is about art. And what Beverly Sills said about being a signature of civilization-- And we should all take it very seriously.

And Alison is right. Funding nationally, in New Jersey, is so difficult right now, but we can't turn our back on it. We need it and should not take it for granted, because it really is important. And we need advocates like you and all the people who are here just constantly reminding us of how important it is.

I appreciate your comments. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: Anyone else? (no response)

Mary Jo, thank you very much for having us and bringing us up to date on what's going on in Sussex County. You do have this Committee's support.

MS. MATHIAS: You're welcome.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: Next, I want to call on Kathy Barbieri.

Did I say that right?

KATHY BARBIERI: Close. (laughter)

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: Okay. President, Historic Chester Business Association.

Welcome.

MS. BARBIERI: Thank you very much.

I'm Kathy Barbieri, and I'm President of the Historic Chester Business Association. Welcome to our wonderful town.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: Thank you for having us.

MS. BARBIERI: We're glad to have you.

And thank you for giving me the opportunity today to present to you a little bit of an overview of our organization here and the contribution that this Historic Chester Business Association brings to the tourism of Chester.

For over 35 years, the Historic Chester Business Association has served as the sole business resource here in Chester. And it is the belief of our organization that the health of Chester is linked to the financial well-being of every single business here in town. It's not just about our members, it's not just about our individual businesses, it's about what we bring to the table collectively for the town of Chester. It's the total package. It's what makes Chester a desirable product, if you will; a desirable destination to come to for tourists. It's our boutique shops, it's our eateries, our farms, our parks, our art galleries. It's the history that's here, it's the preservation of our historic buildings, it's our infrastructure. That's the appeal to tourists of Chester.

And in that same vein, as an organization -- as a business organization, the Historic Chester Business Association -- it accomplishes collectively what no one business can accomplish here in town on its own. We are a nonprofit organization of 60 businesses right now. Our main goals and objectives are simple: it's business stimulation; it's drawing customers to town; it's promoting the town of Chester as a whole and the business community; it's trying to retain our existing businesses, making

them flourish and be successful; and it's identifying what are the right businesses to recruit here that will be long-term, viable, sustainable businesses in the future. The bottom line is: Both the recruitment and the retention of the businesses here all rely on bringing people to town on a consistent basis. It's tourism, and it's also our local resident shopping support.

We run, as an organization, four to five events a year. We have core events that we run. We have a car show. We've been running that about 10 years now. We have a spring and a fall craft show. And I'm very proud to announce that our fall craft show is rated one of the top 100 in the nation. It brings 8,000 to 10,000 people here one weekend a year. We run a harvest celebration, which we've been doing for 27 years, and we run a farmer's market. Every single event we run -- we have a full media plan that we put out there. And I want everybody to understand that we receive no grants. The Business Association is responsible for all of the advertising for this town, and we do it based on two income generations: our membership and the income we bring in from two of our events, the fall and spring craft shows.

Our media plans are extensive. We put posters in every single member's business; we hand out postcards, 8,000 to 10,000 for every single event; we have a street banner; we do print media wherever possible; we run radio campaigns; we promote every single event on 30 to 50 New Jersey web directories; we have our own website; we do e-mail blasts; social media; we do direct mail campaigns; and we do press releases. And that's a lot for a 60-member business.

All of our events that are sponsored by the HCBA bring in more people to town on those weekends than any other weekend of the year. They are designed for the purpose of positively impacting every business in Chester, and they're all free with the exception of our two income generators, which would be the fall craft show and the spring.

We also invest heavily in a winter holiday campaign. It's the Business Association that buys, and supplies, and decorates the town every single year. In addition to the media plan there, we do billboard advertising, and we run a promotion that's specifically and expressly designed to help bring local people in to support the town during the holidays. We do give-aways. The last two years, we did a 50,000 direct-mail campaign offering \$10 off a \$25 purchase or more. It's a significant campaign for a small business association. This year we had a limited edition Chester ornament produced, and we're going to offer that to our local residents to help induce some shopping.

We run two to three public relation events a year for design, to target our local residents. That's our Easter egg hunt and our fall -- Halloween trick-or-treating and costume contest. Of course we give out prizes, and they're all donated from the businesses.

We produce and distribute 30,000 Chester shopping and dining guides. This is our sole marketing tool we use that can give you an idea of what Chester has to offer as a whole. It has all of our member businesses in there, what they offer. It has a map and location of the main area of shopping down here, and it gives you a list of our events on the back. And this year we have made a significant improvement. We now

have a coupon section which has generated quite a bit of business for our members this year.

We are in the process of designing a new website, a website that will better promote Chester as the experience, Chester as the destination, and our members as well. We are also in the process of working on a five-year marketing plan. It's necessary when you're-- You need to have it in any organization, but especially in such a small business organization. We need a five-year plan. How are we going to brand Chester? How are we branding the HCBA? How are we going to promote and communicate that?

We are focusing our efforts on building new relationships. We have joined the Morris County Tourism Bureau. They're wonderful people. We've enjoyed working with them. We feel that being on their website with our events has helped our advertising.

We are also focusing on strengthening our partnerships with the other major stakeholders here in town. The businesses are not the only stakeholders where it's important that the success of the businesses are important. There are the residents, there are the landlords, there is Dennis and his Council. And we've been reaching out and building stronger, better partnerships with them as well.

So I hope you can see that, as a business organization, we have many challenges facing us on very, very limited funding. But we are committed, as a business organization, to bringing tourism and people into town; and to achieving a very health, vibrant business community here in Chester.

Thank you very much for hearing me. We are here, and we are working very hard. Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: It sure sounds like it.

Thank you.

Would you entertain any comments, questions from the Committee?

MS. BARBIERI: Sure, definitely.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: I just want to-- And I know I could probably look in here, but I wanted to hear it out loud, and just even for our recording and things. What are the business makeups down there? Do you have -- whether there are art galleries; and I know there are restaurants, of course. What other ones are there, and has there been a change? Did it used to be this and now, because maybe those businesses didn't do well-- What changes have you-- What changes do you see going forward?

MS. BARBIERI: Yes, the complexity of town has changed, and it has changed over the years. We were once known very strongly as an antique town. And if you take a look now, we have one -- pretty much maybe only one high-end antique store left, and we have maybe two other stores that carry antiques. So we're sitting maybe with about three now. So we can no longer promote ourselves as an antique destination shopping town.

We have, I think, a nice variety of shops right now. We have the antiques, we have art galleries. And now the art galleries are-- We have about four now in town, so they've been growing. We have, I think, a nice mix. We have interior designers as well, we have home décor, we have the

gifts, the nice take-aways. When people come out of a destination, they want to go home with something. It's not going to be something big, in general. So the complexity has changed, and it will keep changing. We have about a-- We have a vacancy rate now of under 15 percent, which we're proud of, because we started the year over 20 percent, and it was very difficult. We had a lot of open stores. So we've been given a little bit of a renewal of getting some new businesses in here.

The challenge for us, though, is identifying. And this takes money to do. A market research really does need to be done for us to determine what are the right stores to have here, what are the stores that are going to survive the long-term. Because we can just keep putting stores in that are going to last six months, a year. It does nobody any good. You can't do it. You never get on your feet. So that's what we're trying to focus our efforts on. We will-- We need to find new ways of raising money in order to go out and reach and bring in the expert knowledge to help us do that.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: And you might not even know the answer to this: What does a study like that cost?

MS. BARBIERI: I have been looking into it.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: Oh, okay.

MS. BARBIERI: We have presented to the membership this year-- We have a full range of goals and objectives. We laid out strategies on how we could actually accomplish these. The top one for getting to the core challenges we're faced with in Chester -- which would be the market study -- to do that, to bring in someone to help define what we need here--

There is a consulting firm that actually does almost everything we need, but their price tag came in at \$100,000.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VAINIERI HUTTLE: How much?

MS. BARBIERI: One hundred thousand. And even if we looked at skinnying that down, it's still way out of our price range.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: Yes, it's out of the one I had in mind. (laughter)

MS. BARBIERI: No, it's steep.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: I'm in the wrong business.

MS. BARBIERI: It is steep.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: Before I open it up to the Committee-- Collaborations with other like-minded associations in the state -- has that ever been-- And I see it actually in my own district. One of my towns -- they thought they had it all. They had the best idea in the entire United States -- whether it was 10 or 12 years ago. But now they're suffering. And I think because they stayed within their own cocoon, and they just wanted to-- And there were people visiting from all over the world to see what was going on. But they weren't willing to change. They were going to be this. They are artists who are actually doing, say, the pottery there, and they're actually doing the painting there. But they're dropping by the wayside, and the antique stores as well. They were trying to put very, very high-end -- in South Jersey, you can't do it in the poorest county in the state. But you have to have those antiques where people can go in and -- \$5 and \$10, along with the \$1,000 from the estates the rich, prominent glass families had -- there are actually still furnishings.

But has there been ever -- and I don't even know if they have ever done it since -- and I know they did their study about two years ago. And now they seem to be willing to change, and they have to because they had many vacancies there -- way, probably, in the 30 percent range. But is there, like-- Does your Association involve itself in other associations to see, "What's Chester doing, but what is this town doing?" And maybe that-- It's almost sharing ideas. And I don't know if that happens or not. But sometimes people think, "No, this is ours. Get out." And I don't know if that happens. I think it has to happen, actually. Because maybe something that happened in Chester could happen in District 1, as well as Burlington, and Assemblywoman Munoz's area.

MS. BARBIERI: Sure.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: Does Chester have an older theater that has been redone? Because it seems like a lot of these downtowns had the old movie theaters that are now performing arts centers. It happened in the City of Vineland that I represent. They took this old -- they were ready to tear it down. And now they made a great theater out of it. All the naysayers are now just kind of opening their eyes. I just wonder if there is more collaboration going on now -- everyone thought they had the best idea, but it's not working.

MS. BARBIERI: Definitely, now. And this is one of the things that I presented. I've been President a year. I had sat on the Board for about five years. My objective was: We, as a business organization, cannot continue to function the way we were. We're not the sole group here responsible for maintaining the success of the business community here. It impacts everybody. At one time, the way we were functioning was fine for

how many years ago. Everything around us has changed. People's shopping habits have changed. We have to change and be ahead of it. We started a little bit too late to be honest with you. You have to reach out and get the ideas, and bring in the expertise. And that's why I have a public relations person that I've even hired to help us this year. Because we hadn't done enough reaching out, even to our own members anymore. Because you get to be-- You have maybe 60 people in your membership, but you only-- Let's face it, you have less than 10 people who are doing everything. How can you do it all? So then all of a sudden we weren't nurturing our own members anymore, let alone reaching out to the other organizations that have great ideas or have experienced things as well.

So we have done more networking this year. We have gotten together once with all of the other business organizations in the town -- in the area. There were about 12 different business organizations that got together for a networking group, which was very helpful. So we are reaching out. We're members of the Morris Tourism Board. We have to start bringing in all of those people to help us and to reach out to the people with the expertise that we don't have. We all know our businesses, and we know the town of Chester. But there is a lot more involved to making this be a successful, vibrant business community for the long-term.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: Just the mere fact that you are open to suggestions-- And you know what? People could learn from what you're doing as well. I heard this fabulous craft thing that you do once a year. You said it was probably your second-largest funding generator.

MS. BARBIERI: The craft show is our largest.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: That's the largest. Okay.

MS. BARBIERI: Yes.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: How come it's only done once a year? I'm just curious. I know you can burn things out sometimes, like, "Oh, they're doing it again."

MS. BARBIERI: We actually do the craft show twice a year: spring and fall. The spring is much smaller. The fall is the largest one. We bring in about 200 to 250 crafters into town. We do it once because if you do it more than once, it does diminish your returns.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: It absolutely does.

MS. BARBIERI: The other thing is that it is a great undertaking for us to do it. And the other thing we are finding, with that being our major income generator, is that the complexity of that event is also changing now. It's becoming harder and harder for us to find the quality crafters, the people still in that business who will want to participate. So that, alone-- We are seeing a change there, and therefore we know we have to start reaching out for other ways of generating income, because that's not going to probably be there as strong as it is for the long-term. That's changing.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: Kathy, it sounds like you're doing a lot of good things. I also heard a farmer's market. And that seems to be a big thing now. I mean, if anybody, the Amish have figured out how to do that, and I know we're doing it down in our district as well. They're taking an old store front that was probably one of the old family names that was just there for years, and they're actually just revamping it. And that is going to be an indoor farmer's market run by the Amish, Inc. But they know how to do it. But it's an attraction, and it gets them downtown, which is the

whole idea. Once you get them on that key thing downtown, then they will continue to travel down to the other stores.

But it sounds like you're very open to ideas and you're moving forward, which is great to hear -- instead of just sitting back, waiting -- which is good.

Members of the Committee?

Assemblywoman McHose?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LITTELL McHOSE: Go ahead.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: Assemblywoman Munoz.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MUNOZ: I just have to commend you. I think it sounds like you're doing a tremendous job here.

MS. BARBIERI: Thanks.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MUNOZ: Sort of two sides of the thing-- The internet, as far as, like-- I think eBay has hurt the antique business, because I used to come up to Chester to look for things, and it no longer became necessary. But yet the internet could be used-- I mean, you look like-- It sounds like you have a tremendous model that could be used statewide. Is there some kind of statewide collaboration between all the business associations? I know that Chester is unique in that it's got that old, antique charm. And it may be different from South Jersey, and it may be different from my district which is more suburban. But do you have a statewide network where you -- the different business organizations share ideas and collaborate?

MS. BARBIERI: No, not really.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MUNOZ: Would that be something that you think might be--

MS. BARBIERI: Sure. That would be something that we could try and put together on a bigger scale than just the local groups. Sure.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MUNOZ: Because I can see, like, the internet both helping you and hurting you, in the sense of hurting you with eBay, because, again, I've seen the shift in antique businesses. They have just really suffered. I think they've suffered from eBay. Is that what you feel?

MS. BARBIERI: Definitely. I think the businesses that were here in town suffered from the ability to shop online. That's one of the changes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MUNOZ: Exactly. And when you have your fall craft thing, do you have it inside a building?

MS. BARBIERI: No, it's outside. It's down at the field down by the gazebo; most of them will be. We do close off Perry and have crafters down there as well. We used to have enough to also put out on Main Street in some of our courtyards, but we no longer have enough crafters to do that. But what I have been doing then is offering those spaces up to our businesses that are outside of Main Street so they can come up and get a benefit from what we're running in town.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MUNOZ: And is parking a challenge here?

MS. BARBIERI: I'm ashamed to say that at one time I think it was, but it is not right now. It is no longer.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MUNOZ: Because the attendance has dropped off. Is that why?

MS. BARBIERI: Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MUNOZ: You have a really charming town. Good luck to you.

MS. BARBIERI: Yes, it is. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MUNOZ: And I'd like to see your model used in other communities. Again, you have a very unique town, I think, which is to your advantage.

MS. BARBIERI: Definitely. Exactly.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MUNOZ: But that same model can be used in different parts of the state. So, I mean, it might not be a bad idea if there was some kind of statewide organization that you guys could all work through.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: Assemblywoman McHose.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LITTELL McHOSE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I just, again, want to compliment you on all the work you've done. I know how hard you've worked. And I have been witness to the changes over the years. My mom, my aunt, and I had an antique business. And I was going to say that eBay and the economy really changed things, and we're no longer open ourselves.

But I think that what has evolved-- For those of you who don't know, my district goes from Montague, at the very top of the state, to Tewksbury. So I have a huge geographic district. And oftentimes I meet people here in Chester because it's sort of a central location, and there are many good restaurants to go to and all. But I have noticed the changes with regard to 206, and I know there have been some challenges with the roadwork there, and we've been working through that together. But there

are some expanded strip malls on 206 that I think have drawn people to this area, again, in a way. But what I think needs to be done is, you need to capitalize. And you may know how to do this, I don't. Take those visitors to the new strip mall and bring them to Main Street. And that's a challenge.

MS. BARBIERI: Yes, a big challenge.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LITTELL McHOSE: And I just want to offer to you, I sat on my town's economic development committee for many, many years. And my little town is Franklin Borough, and it is the fluorescent mineral capital of the world. And there are many gemologists who come there, and students. We have a lot of trips where students come there. But we have struggled ourselves, after being a mining community and a little company town. We've struggled with trying to create a Main Street where you can draw people off Route 23, sort of pull them in.

At one time we had been in touch with NJIT. Their Department of Architecture was actually interested in helping us come up with a streetscape and sort of-- Their students were going to volunteer to do that. So I just wanted to offer that to you, to maybe explore some of the universities in the state as a potential to maybe say-- I mean, I know there's not a lot of money involved to redo that, but maybe even some of the suggestions they make might help.

And one last question: How do you track visitors? Are we able to know: Are people coming from Pennsylvania here, are they coming mainly from New Jersey, New York? Is there a way?

MS. BARBIERI: It's very hard for us to get that type of data. One of the things I've tried to implement this year are means of tracking

and collecting data so that, as a business organization, we can make intelligent decisions going forward: what events are working for us, where are the people coming from, how are they hearing about us, is our message getting out there. It is very hard.

When we do an advertisement in the paper -- a print ad -- we do try and put something on there that we can track. For our craft show, everything we put out there will have a \$1 off coupon so that when it comes in -- and the next day, we sit there and we count every single one. And we can tell you how good our print ads did. The only thing we can't track is our radio. We try and do the best we can just in talking with people and asking them where they're coming from, how they heard about us. But those are very hard statistics to come by on a general basis.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LITTELL McHOSE: And have you had any experience with the new strip mall? I know they're mostly national businesses, but--

MS. BARBIERI: We have-- We try, every year, to recruit them to become members of the Business Association, because we would like to try and improve the crossmarketing between the Main Street area, and the Streets of Chester, and the other shopping malls. We have not been successful in that, because they are larger chain organizations, and they are not all that interested in being a member of the small community. We only have one member that sits over at the Streets of Chester, and it's really a small-owned business.

We are going to try again this year to try to get them more actively engaged with us and more involved. Right now there is not a big pull from over there down on Main Street. People who shop in the Streets

of Chester Mall and the people who shop on Main Street are here for different experiences. And you're going to find that you're not going to get a big push-pull from both of them. People who come to Main Street want the small boutiques, the things that you can't find in the mall environment or in those big stores. They're unique items. A lot of them are handcrafted items. And that's what they're there for. They're there for that small community, that experience that they get from downtown. And you don't get that if you go a couple blocks over to the bigger areas -- the shopping areas. And the people who are going to the shopping areas may be local people who are focusing on certain things. They're not interested in strolling downtown. So we're pulling in two different people.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LITTELL McHOSE: One last thing I just thought of: Last weekend, I was out in Michigan, and I went to a little town called Frankenmuth. It's a German-- You know of it? Okay. And they have capitalized on this German community, and they have a famous restaurant. It's called Zehnder's. It's a chicken place. And then they have also created a Christmas store that is like the largest Christmas store in the whole world, I think, or something. But it's adorable. I mean, the town -- it's kind of in the middle of nowhere too. It's northwest of Detroit. And it is absolutely adorable. And it reminded me a lot of Chester with the sidewalks and all. But, man, the people are there. The weekend I was there was a Michigan State game. It was packed, and people were out and about. It was absolutely beautiful. So I know there are communities like Burlington, Vermont -- there are other places where I know they become an attraction to get people there. It's just a question of: How do you get from here to there?

Good luck.

MS. BARBIERI: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LITTELL McHOSE: Thanks.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: Assemblywoman Vainieri Huttle.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VAINIERI HUTTLE: Thank you.

I just want to follow up on the words of *collaboration* and *sharing*. I'm pretty big on sharing services and advocating to collaborate.

And I assume that your Business Association is the Chamber here in downtown Chester, correct?

MS. BARBIERI: Yes, it is.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VAINIERI HUTTLE: So I'm trying -- and not that I can compare Englewood, where I'm from, to Chester -- but we have this same sort of -- you know, trying to get people down on Main Street. Because we're right near the mall capital of world: Paramus, Route 4, and 17. And so it's a challenge for us. The same type of people you'll have shopping on your Main Street, and trying to make it quaint and historic-- Our attraction is now the Bergen PAC, which hopefully we'll be visiting in our show on the road. And, quite frankly, it's really combining business and the arts. Because when the theater is crowded, the restaurants prosper, the stores are busy.

So I applaud that business here -- and you're tying it into the arts community. But at the same time, if you could collaborate -- and I think it was suggested by Assemblywomen Munoz and also McHose -- if you could share that with the tourism in Morris County.

And what about Community Development funds? I haven't been to your Main Street, so I don't know. But we've had some CD

moneys coming into Main Street. We have a clock now in the center of town, we have our streetscapes with the antique lighting. So there's funding to be considered and tried, to bring into the community to help attract -- to make your Main Street a destination. I don't really know what is on your Main Street. But if you have a point of -- I shouldn't say a major store, because they're all small -- but if you have some sort of attraction to bring people to the Main Street -- and which you probably do. I mean, I know Chester from when I was a parent -- my children's -- when I was parent association -- I even forget what we call it.

ASSEMBLYMAN CONNERS: PTA.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VAINIERI HUTTLE: We used to come here apple picking and pumpkin picking. So you sort of highlight what the destination is.

And so I just want to commend you for bringing whatever businesses are here and tying it into the economy, and the arts, and the downtown; and keeping it quaint, and not creating another mall or strip mall. And, unfortunately, there are people who need both. But if you could highlight and get some of those moneys maybe from Community Development or your -- I don't know if you have -- if you work with your Mayor and Council. We have, like, a downtown economic development committee as well.

So to share all of that under one umbrella -- whether it's the tourism or whether it's your county; I don't know the make-up of the county here. But it's more efficient to share, and obviously it's cost-effective. And hopefully you try to stretch the dollars as much as you can.

Good luck with that.

MS. BARBIERI: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VAINIERI HUTTLE: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: Just one last comment. Assemblywoman McHose brought up a great point, and you mentioned about the mining that used to go on up here. There was. My business that I have is a trucking company. In my very, very younger days when I actually drove, I was always in Sparta -- Limestone Products for many years -- in and out of there. And it just makes you wonder, when you have the different quarries that were up here -- there are still a few remaining -- when those quarries closed, obviously people moved with some of those closings; whether they get transferred as supervisors, or even some of the workers transfer with some of these larger industries that had come in and bought Limestone Products -- I know, at one time, private. There were four or five guys who actually owned that. And they were bought up by some bigger conglomerate. And then, for whatever the reasons were, they ended up closing and just kind of moving on down to York, Pennsylvania. That's something that has to be absorbed as well. When you lose -- you do lose an amount of people. And even if they had visitors coming in, I'm sure they would take them to different areas.

You made that comment, and I just had to elaborate on it. And that's another stumbling block and another hurdle to cross when you have a bit of an industry. Whether they're not the most colorful industries a lot of times-- But it was about the people, the jobs -- it happened. And it is something to overcome.

Kathy, thank you again for all your testimony. Good luck to you. I look forward to looking downtown today.

MS. BARBIERI: Thank you. And we hope to see you all come shop here. (laughter)

Have a good day.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: Our next two testifiers I'm actually going to bring up together: Kadie Dempsey, from the Arts Council of the Morris Area. And under her recommendation, I also want to call up Bonnie Monte from The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey. Welcome to those folks.

Kadie, how are you? And Kadie, thank you for the recommendation of having Bonnie come. It made perfect sense. Welcome.

KADIE DEMPSEY: Of course.

I just want to thank everyone for inviting us. I have to apologize. We had a little problem with our e-mail, and we found that the e-mail was in our spam mail. So I just actually found out last night about 4:00, as I was on my way out of the office to the fifth fundraising in a row.

So I have to say that I represent some of the most vital, active, and fabulous people we have here in our county, Morris County. The Arts Council of the Morris Area has been in existence for over 25 years. We serve our schools, we put programs in our schools through our residency programs that serve thousands of students in Morris County. We mainly-- We have a different, sort of, way of looking at things. And, of course, money is always at the top of the list for everyone. And I just want to say-- Instead of telling you what we need and what we want, I want to just kind of tell or express how much we really already have to give.

I think that the arts are probably, in this time of crisis -- economic crisis-- Historically, the arts are the one thing that does thrive.

When people are down and out, they want to be uplifted. We have had increased numbers in our art galleries, arts performances. People really do look to the arts to inspire.

One of the things we do is, we regrant -- again, as my predecessor spoke about from Sussex -- we regrant funding that we receive from the Arts Council of the State -- New Jersey State Arts Council -- we regrant to 32 smaller arts organizations in Morris County. And the reason they don't go to the State Council is because they're more -- their audience is based more in Morris County. Once they get -- have a broader base of audience, they go on to the State. So we have about 32 organizations that we regrant funding to -- from the Morristown Neighborhood House, which is one of the oldest settlement houses in Morris County, Morristown, over 110 years old; to an organization called Creative Heartworks that serves children who have been abused and neglected. We do the Chatham Community Players. It used to be the Chester Theater -- actually applied for funding to us as well. The Dover Community Children's Museum is one of the people we regrant money to. I could go on, and on, and on. We have, as I said, a very vital community in Morris County.

I think the arts community is one of the first people who really started using the word *collaboration* and really meant it. So we come together for many, many reasons. We have close relationships with all the people who are in the arts community. We also have started to work very closely in Morristown with our Town Administrator and our Town Planner. And if there's--

There's so much to say. I'm really going to try to be brief. I have a whole packet of things, statistics, and studies that have been done on

the economic impact of the arts all over the country. I've visited many of these places, I see it. We have so many great resources that all of you can look to. One of them -- who I tried to get to come here today, but he was unable to attend -- is Leo Vazquez, from the Rutgers School of Public Policy. He's now teaching a class. They have a course now on arts and communities -- which is a class that I'm actually in the middle of taking right now -- and really educating people on how the arts can have a major impact in their communities. He is somebody who really should be here today. He has a vast amount of knowledge and so much to share.

I really-- As I said, I brought some handouts. I just think it's -- obviously the arts -- very bright, and something you would want to look at. In this packet are also a few of our arts and education brochures that just give you a little bit of taste of some of the programs that we put into the schools. These are not assemblies where people come in and, you know, sing to the students. These are three-, four-, five-week residencies where people go in and deal with issues of conflict resolution, bullying, drug abuse through the arts. And they come in and work with all the students. Amazing things have happened.

And I wish I could spend a whole afternoon with all of you. We have wonderful documentary films that we've made on some of these projects. And I, again, invite all of you. I would love to have everyone's e-mails. I would like to do an event where I could invite more of the people who are doing this hard work in our community to show off what they do, and I would love to have it at our building at 14 Maple Avenue in Morristown, which is a totally green building. We have a lovely art gallery

in our building. And I would love to have you all come and just talk further about what we do.

And Bonnie Monte had to be here, because her organization is one of the highlights of living in New Jersey.

Bonnie.

B O N N I E J. M O N T E: Thanks, Kadie. That was nice.

MS. DEMPSEY: It's true.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: No introduction needed there.

(laughter)

MS. MONTE: Thank you, Chairman Milam, Vice Chairman Conners, and all of you on the Tourism and Arts Committee.

And especially to Kadie for making us aware of this and getting us out here this morning.

I am always very grateful for the opportunity to heighten anyone's awareness of our remarkable institution and the extraordinary benefits that we bring to the state and the nation.

It is one of my greatest frustrations, as the head of the organization, that I think more people outside of New Jersey seem to know about us than the citizens of our own state.

So just to very quickly give you some information about us: The Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey is now the seventh largest Shakespeare theatre in North America, out of what is estimated at over 400 Shakespeare companies. We are a member of the Shakespeare Theatre Association of America; of ArtPride New Jersey, of which I am also a Trustee. We are a member of the Theatre Communications Group, the national service organization for theatres, the New Jersey Theatre Alliance,

the Madison Arts and Cultural Alliance, the Madison Chamber of Commerce. My Director of Marketing is the Chair of JAM North, which is associated with the Discover Jersey Arts campaign. We are members of the Morris County Tourism Bureau, and we partner with the Arts Council of the Morris Area, the Carolyn Dorfman Dance Company, the Community Theatre in Morristown, the Harmonium Choral Society. Anywhere we can get a partnership going, we get it going.

We are also the oldest Shakespeare theatre on the East Coast, and we will be celebrating our 50th anniversary in 2012, which is a venerable age for any theater in America.

We offer more education programs than any theater in the State of New Jersey -- over a dozen of them -- and more than most in the nation. And we have a national reputation as one of the best teaching theaters in America. We serve over 100,000 people annually through our many artistic and education programs. And our economic impact on the region is sizable. A study conducted in 2003 estimated that our impact was around \$9 million annually. We suspect that that number now has climbed to about \$12 million, and we will soon be conducting a new study to obtain a concrete, updated figure.

And just to help out -- I don't know if that lady is still here -- we're getting that study done for free, not for \$100,000, (laughter) through the Graduate School at Yale University. They're going to do it for us. So that's another partnership we've been trying to work with.

Our work serves New Jersey citizens in every county, and attracts audiences from the tri-state area and beyond. Participants in our

training programs come from across the nation and abroad, and they all spend money at the local restaurants, hotels, and shops.

In addition to our main stage in Madison and our outdoor stage in Florham Park-- And by the way, that stage in Florham Park is a little known treasure, unfortunately. It's a Greek amphitheatre modeled after the Theatre of Dionysus in Athens, Greece. It was built during the WPA period, and it is, I believe, the only Greek amphitheater in America that is actually being used by a professional theater company. And it is an extraordinary summer event that brings thousands and thousands of people out to that campus.

We have the largest touring company for students in the Mid-Atlantic region. We play to over 35,000 young people each year. And that particular program, which is called *Shakespeare Live!*, has, in its 14-year life, played to over 500,000 New Jersey students, which I'm very proud of.

As the State's only recipient ever of the prestigious National Endowment for the Arts *Shakespeare in American Communities: Shakespeare for a New Generation* grant -- which we have now received seven times -- we are able to bring the *Shakespeare Live!* touring program to thousands of economically challenged students in both rural and urban schools, mostly in New Jersey, and some in New York and Connecticut. And that's for at little or no 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 New Jersey theater ever to be featured on the cover of the prestigious *American Theatre* magazine, which is distributed nationally and internationally. And we have, for many years, received a 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. That money is then put to good use in the State of New Jersey.

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-old Shakespeare Festival model program for students. That initiative has been with us for four years now and has been so successful that it's tripled in size since we began it a few years ago.

Our *ShakeFest* summer training program for teachers has not only helped change the education landscape in New Jersey, along with our many other programs, but it has gone international. And 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 soon be introducing a new education initiative in the very troubled Orange School District, and that will be starting later this fall.

Our *Next Stage Ensemble*, which is a smaller summer touring company that we have, brings shows to people who cannot come to us,

often because of health issues. So we go to hospitals, hospices, retirement centers, as well as places like museums and bookstores.

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. And then that money was then reinvested in projects like the outdoor stage in Florham Park that has so benefited the community.

We currently conduct residencies in seven different schools in North Jersey and one in Manhattan, and we are featured regularly in major press, both in print and online, including the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Star-Ledger*, *Variety*, etc., bringing very good press to the state; helping to serve, I think, as some kind of antidote to the unfortunate image of New Jersey as conveyed by phenomena such as the *Jersey Shore*, (laughter), which you clearly see I have an opinion about.

All of what I have just listed are some of the many achievements and facts about The Shakespeare Theatre, but they don't really come close to conveying our deeper ripple effect -- how our programs help create better citizens. We promote literacy, tolerance, creative thinking, collaboration, all kinds of partnerships, a desire to learn, the desire to strive for excellence. And I could go on and on.

But suffice it to say, I hope some of these things I have mentioned give you a little bit better idea of what a treasure my institution is -- both economically, and culturally, and educationally -- for the State of New Jersey.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: Well, to both of you, thank you.

And congratulations on 50 years. That is remarkable. You don't hear that often.

MS. MONTE: I can't claim all of that time there, but I just finished my 20th year. (laughter) So I've been there for a hunk of time, yes.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: Assemblywoman Huttle, anything?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VAINIERI HUTTLE: Thank you.

As an ex-officio member of the Arts Council, I'm familiar with the Theatre and of all the good work of the councils throughout New Jersey counties. So thank you for that.

Before I go to, I guess, Kadie -- Bonnie, do you have summer camps for the Theatre?

MS. MONTE: We have a summer program. We have two programs.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VAINIERI HUTTLE: Because in all of your presentation, I don't think we heard that part. So I don't know if you--

MS. MONTE: There are a number of summer programs. The one that serves the youngest group of kids, 11 to 14, is the Junior Corps, and then the 14- to 17-year-olds go into what is called Senior Corps.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VAINIERI HUTTLE: That's great.

Kadie, the Arts Council of Morris County (*sic*) -- you get your grants yearly when they're awarded, I guess, in August from the Arts Council.

MS. DEMPSEY: Correct.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VAINIERI HUTTLE: What was the funding? I don't recall if it was the same, or was it cut from last year.

MS. DEMPSEY: It was, I believe, a little bit more this year, which was great. And we appreciate that.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VAINIERI HUTTLE: That's when, I think, you first started off, you came here and said, "I'm not asking you today, I'm giving you back," which is terrific to hear. And so hopefully the moneys that you do get -- as you said, you regrant them to 32 organizations, or that many.

MS. DEMPSEY: Yes, we regrant them. And one of the other things we also do is, we sponsor and hold technical assistance workshops for both our local arts organizations as well as our individual artists. And those workshops can be on subjects such as artists treating themselves as sole proprietorships of their own business, marketing, how to write business plans. And then we also have technical assistance workshops for those grantees on how to create a successful board, what to look for, what is a board, what should a board look like, who should they be. And people really look to us, the Arts Council of the Morris Area, to really sort of mentor them along the process.

And, of course, we keep mentioning the struggles we're all going through, particularly the arts. And I think more than any time-- I've been with the Arts Council for 10 years. I think we've really reached a pinnacle, as far as I've seen, in our ability to not recreate the wheel. We're all creative people. So that's one of the beautiful things about working in a creative community -- not that there isn't any creative thought left, there is, but there has been such wonderful work done all over the country, all over

the world on how to create successful models -- that we really look to those successful models. We can't afford to have our egos get in the way anymore. We're only going to kill ourselves if we do that. So we have seen such tremendous impact by all of us looking to other towns that have done cultural planning, looking at other organizations that have successful strategic plans, and really sharing the information that we all have.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VAINIERI HUTTLE: And just to follow up, because you don't want to recreate the wheel, obviously-- But are you-- What I see arts and -- working in literacy, and you mentioned probably in education (indiscernible) programs. Do you see programs becoming more creative, to use the dollars for funding into newer programs? Because I don't think years ago they would even look into anti-bullying programs with the arts or music, or educating our young people in a different area that probably we would not have thought about years ago.

So I guess the people who -- I guess when you award the regranting to -- are you looking at different places now or different nonprofit groups that--

MS. DEMPSEY: Yes, we do. We look at different nonprofit groups, and also the criteria has changed. And some of the-- I think one of the three or four things we really look at is the impact that organization is having on the community, and is it viably looking at what the community really is, not what it was 20 years ago, or 10 years ago, or 5 years ago. So some of the things we really look to are how they're serving the needs of the community.

One of the other things that the arts has really been, I think-- I'm really proud of the work that the arts have done in the area of

accessibility. The arts community in New Jersey is looked to nationally for the work that we've done in making the arts accessible. We have a very strong commitment to making arts accessible for people of all ages, all backgrounds, all abilities, challenges. And we're very, very proud of it. John McEwen, who I hope you know -- he is the Executive Director of the New Jersey Theatre Alliance. John has won national awards on his work for the arts and accessibility in all of our theaters. All of the people who apply for grants have a very -- we really look-- They all have to fill out an accessibility statement and form. And that's another thing that the Arts Council does. We hold workshops and trainings in sensitivity for all of the people we regrant money to. And if people aren't addressing those types of issues, there is a good chance they will not get funding.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VAINIERI HUTTLE: That's great.

Thank you.

Thank you, both.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: Assemblywoman McHose.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LITTELL McHOSE: Thank you.

Kadie, I want to thank you for being here today on short notice. You did a great job, and you have a wonderful reputation, and your organization does too. I appreciate all you do.

MS. DEMPSEY: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LITTELL McHOSE: Bonnie, I just want to tell you my son visited the Theatre two weeks ago for a class trip. He loved it. He's in seventh grade, and they had a wonderful trip.

My colleagues are learning so much about me. In college, at the University of Maryland, I worked at the Center for Renaissance and

Baroque Studies, and we housed the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, including Patrick Stewart. He came to the campus. And I just want to tell you from experience that the caliber of performers who are at the Theatre at Drew is exactly up to par with the Royal Shakespeare Theatre. So I just want to compliment you and tell you how much I appreciate having you here in New Jersey.

One last question: What is the relationship with Drew? Are you just housed there?

MS. MONTE: We are a separate 501(c)(3). We are a professional institution in residence on their campus. It's interesting. Fifty percent of the theaters in America are in residence on university campuses, because it seems to be a natural kind of symbiotic relationship. So we are completely separate from the University in many ways -- legally, financially, and all of those things. But we have a terrific interaction with the community. We're part of that Drew community in some ways.

The only bad thing about being on the Drew campus is that it does create some real branding issues for us. And people continue to think of us as a college theater department as opposed to one of the largest Shakespeare theatres in the world. And so that has become an issue that we're trying to deal with in a variety of ways. But we work with a lot of the Drew students, Drew faculty. It's a very good relationship. But they're our landlord, basically.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LITTELL McHOSE: Okay. Thank you.
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MUNOZ: The only comment was that my mother-in-law used to go to your Theatre ever summer. Unfortunately, I had to have her at my house. I'm only kidding. It's a joke. (laughter)

But I actually did not understand the relationship between you and Drew University. She always said to me she was going to Drew University.

MS. MONTE: To Drew, exactly.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MUNOZ: Exactly. So thank you for clarifying that. And I know it's a tremendous program. She was -- I would consider my mother-in-law very cultured. So she really, really enjoyed going there.

MS. MONTE: Excellent.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MUNOZ: I have never had the pleasure of going out there.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LITTELL McHOSE: Oh, I'll have to take you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MUNOZ: Yes, I would love to go. I'm not sure I would understand it.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LITTELL McHOSE: Oh, no, you will.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MUNOZ: Thank you.

Thank you very much, both of you, for all the work you do.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: Kadie, Bonnie, thank you very much.

Of course, Kadie, thank you for recommending Bonnie to come. Very insightful to see. You're very enthusiastic. You can see a lot is going

into it. And 50 years -- the way your enthusiasm is, and the way the Theatre is running -- 50 more years is not an unachievable goal for you.

Thank you, again.

MS. DEMPSEY: Thank you, all, really.

MS. MONTE: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: Before I call for an adjournment, if any members just have any closing arguments-- I just want to thank the Borough of Chester, of course the Mayor, and the other Mayor that I already had elected and sworn in (laughter), just for hosting us today in this beautiful building. And to know how it happened -- it was a former almost, maybe, brownfield. You hear about a fuel depot at one time -- and to see what can happen with different things.

And of course, the members of the Committee, for making this the *fun committee*, as I like to call it, and kind of bearing with me and just wanting to travel around with me.

And, of course, the staff. The staff just never really get recognized -- what has to happen here, you know, of course with Amy and Jillian -- have to get all the behind-the-scenes; and then, of course, the folks who have to set all these wires up and bring it all with them from Trenton. Thank you. I want to thank you personally for all the work you guys do to make this happen.

Any closing comments before I call for an adjournment? (no response)

Of course, we are invited to go downtown. I don't know the workings of that. I know Amy does. Do you want to just-- We'll just follow you.

I will call for an adjournment. Can I get a motion just for an adjournment?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN LITTELL McHOSE: Motion.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: And a second.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN MUNOZ: Second.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN VAINIERI HUTTLE: Second.

ASSEMBLYMAN MILAM: Assemblyman, Assemblywomen, thank you.

We are adjourned.

(MEETING CONCLUDED)