

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Governor Mike Beebe  
Senator Henry Wilkins, Co-Chair, Legislative Council  
Representative Scott Sullivan, Co-Chair, Legislative Council

FROM: Wayne Cranford, Chairman, Governor's Mansion Commission  
Ron Maxwell, Administrator, Governor's Mansion

SUBJ: Annual Mansion Report

DATE: December 12, 2008

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As the official residence of the Governor and his family, the Governor's Mansion is the center of official state entertaining and hospitality. It is the mission of the Mansion Commission and staff to ensure that all aspects of the property are well maintained, kept structurally sound and esthetically pleasing for the many thousands of guests from around the state, nation and world who visit the Mansion annually.

Pursuant to Arkansas Code 22-3-805, it is the duty of the Governor's Mansion Commission to report annually on the general condition of the Mansion and grounds. It is our assessment for 2008 that the overall condition of the Arkansas Governor's Mansion, its appurtenant buildings, grounds, furnishings and fixtures has never been better.

The highlight of this past year has been the recently completed major landscaping and outdoor lighting project encompassing all 8 ½ acres of the Mansion grounds. This project has given the house and Grand Hall an aesthetic and appropriate setting for the historic property for all to enjoy. In addition to routine repairs and maintenance, the Mansion building and Grand Hall have undergone some cosmetic changes over the course of the last 18 months that have put them in excellent operational as well as aesthetic shape for both occupants and guests.

Details of recent restorations and enhancements include:

**Historic Mansion** - Major pieces of furniture in the living room have been recovered in complimentary fabrics and some new appropriate antique pieces of furniture have been added there and in the library. New coordinating draperies have also been made and installed in the living room, dining room and library as well as the family breakfast room. Funding for these

enhancements was provided by the Governor's Mansion Association. The historic seven piece dining room table and 24 matching chairs have been repaired and refinished to a high quality. The Rockefeller rug in the dining room also received extensive cleaning and repair work last year. A new chandelier was added in the center of the living room because more light was needed in that area. In all three State Rooms, important works of art with an historical emphasis have been added to stress the connection the house has to the people of Arkansas and its colorful history. Other works of art have been added by Arkansas artists. All artwork is either on loan to the Mansion from various sources or paid for by the Mansion Association.

Other than routine repairs and maintenance, no other changes were made in the family private quarters, basement, storage areas or attic. All areas have routine maintenance inspections and regular cleaning schedules.

**Grand Hall / Atrium** - The Grand Hall, its banquet kitchen, storage areas and connecting glass-enclosed atrium undergo routine inspection and maintenance as well as thorough cleaning on a regular basis. Some cosmetic changes have been made with the repainting and repair of the Grand Hall ceiling tiles to more neutral tones. The hardwood flooring has also undergone inspection, repair and resealing this year. Some new pieces of equipment have been added to the kitchen for a more efficient operation and the "china room" or old gift shop, has been reconfigured for additional storage space for dishes, glassware and silverware and serving pieces.

The atrium space is now utilized as a reception area and gallery featuring Arkansas artists and craftspeople. It receives regular inspection and cleaning.

**Mansion Grounds** - The single major improvement to the Mansion complex is the recent completion of the landscaping project designed by noted Little Rock landscape designer P. Allen Smith, along with Phase II of the project which included the addition of outdoor lighting and outdoor sound system. The project was paid for by a combination of grant money from the Natural and Cultural Resources Commission, the Governor's Mansion Association and private funds. Final grading, soil preparations, planting and construction ended almost one year ago. The extensive landscaping project included the installation of a centerpiece fountain behind the Grand Hall, twin pergolas on either side of that, a container vegetable garden with greenhouse and potting shed, a fenced dog run area, extensive planting of trees, shrubs, flowering plants, flower beds, sod and groundcover, and handicapped accessible pathways connecting the various gardens. Additionally, an extensive sprinkler system was installed to keep it all watered.

Following completion, a monthly consulting agreement was signed with P. Allen Smith Associates to facilitate the maintenance and good health of the project. That agreement

expires in March, 2009. A specialist in horticulture was added to the Mansion staff in a previously unfilled allotted position in October to permanently oversee the landscaping.

**Appurtenant Buildings** - Additional permanent structures on the property include the Mansion Guest House, the Governor's Mansion Office, the Executive Protection Detail headquarters, and the Carriage House. All of these structures receive routine inspection, cleaning and maintenance. The Governor's Office received substantial remodeling in the spring of 2007 and the Guest House has had some cosmetic changes in the past year. The parking area beside the EPD headquarters was completed as part of the landscaping project and screen fencing was installed beside the Carriage House.

**Future Plans** – If funding can be secured through private sources, long range plans for the Mansion and grounds include improvements and restoration of the entrance fountain and walkways, as well as enhancement of the accompanying flower beds. Some additional remodeling and upgrading of the Mansion Guest House will soon be needed as well. Also being considered is the addition of a walk-in refrigerator/ freezer to the Grand Hall kitchen. The custom built front door of the Mansion is slightly warped and will need to be replaced, too. The entire Mansion complex is scheduled next year to undergo some upgrading to make the buildings more energy efficient and environmentally friendly.