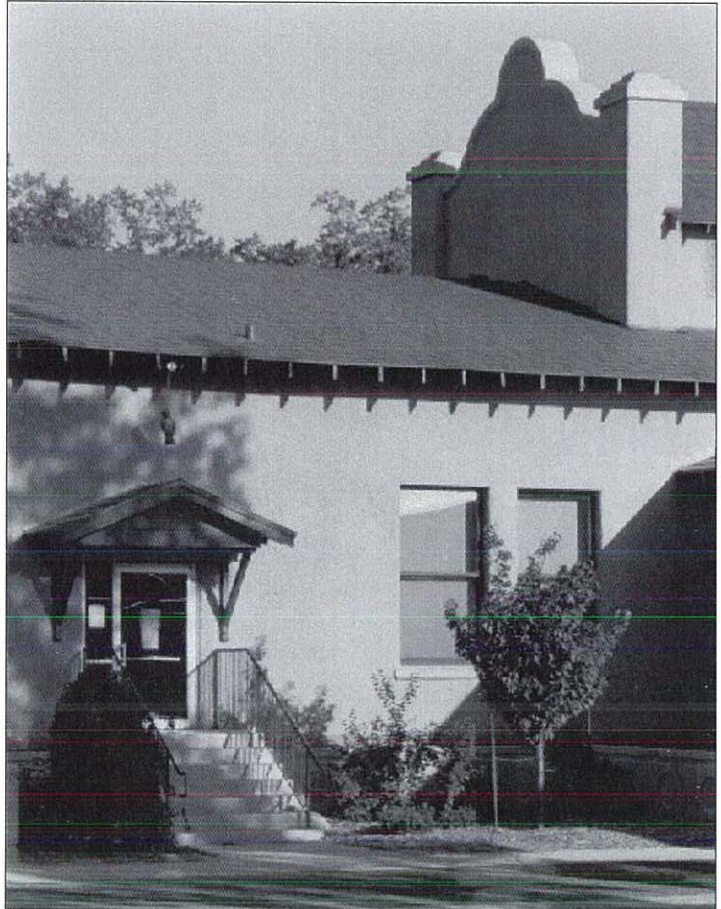


# **The Ten-Year Plan for the Commission for Cultural Affairs 2005-2014**

## **DEVELOPING THE 2005 PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS**

The recommendations for the 2005-2014 grant period of the Commission for Cultural Affairs (CCA) were developed through a broad public process, allowing for extensive constituent input and dialogue, followed by discussions among Department of Cultural Affairs staff and the members of the Commission. To develop these recommendations and the subsequent plan, the CCA contracted with a consultant, ArtsMarket, Inc., of Bozeman, Montana, to conduct state-wide research, program evaluation, and planning.

The process included extensive document review of the CCA's history and funding over the past ten years. The consultant conducted interviews with the Commissioners and staff members of the Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) and completed five in-depth case studies and on-site reviews of CCA projects. In addition, ArtsMarket facilitated seventeen public meetings, one in each county of Nevada, to gather public input. The consultant also observed the grant review process and sent a written survey to all grant applicants concerning the review process. With this information, the consultant defined the needs and realities that communities and organizations face in developing cultural centers within historic structures.



The McKinley Park School in Reno now serves diverse parts of the community as a cultural center. The facility includes a small stage and auditorium, classrooms for arts classes and spaces for exhibition.

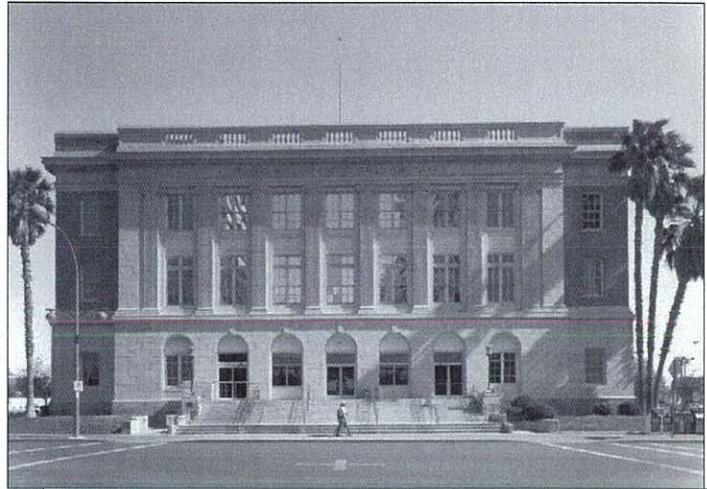
Photographs in this Plan are by Tom Perkins, a volunteer who traveled throughout the state capturing images of Commission for Cultural Affairs projects.



## HISTORY OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

This plan will guide the Commission for Cultural Affairs grants program for the next ten-year period, 2005-2014. The Nevada legislature initially authorized the sale of \$2 million in bonds per year. This was later modified so that the Commission could also grant applicants the interest from the bond program. This, together with a \$2.5 million dollar bond issue in 1993 has represented a total of \$23,226,997 granted between 1993 and 2004, but the cumulative total invested represents for more than that. Match more than exceeded 100 percent. The initial investment consequently developed over seventy cultural centers in every corner of the state, a staggering accomplishment. No other state can boast of such an achievement. The CCA exemplifies how a single program of economic stimulus can dramatically enhance a state's social, cultural and economic life.

On March 6, 1992, the Commission for Cultural Affairs adopted its first ten-year plan. The 1992 plan was the result of work dating to 1986 by the Inter-Governmental Group also known as I-Gov. I-Gov had recognized two priority cultural needs voiced by constituents statewide: "To preserve and maintain Nevada's historic buildings, and to develop a series of cultural facilities for arts and humanities." Subsequently, through NRS 233C.210, the Nevada legislature directed the Nevada Commission for Cultural Affairs to address certain priorities.



The Las Vegas Post Office and Courthouse is being restored so it can serve as a museum and cultural center. Located in the downtown core, it will serve as an important attraction for visitors and residents.

First of all, legislation directed the Commission for Cultural Affairs to establish a ten-year plan to:

- Preserve and promote Nevada's cultural resources; and
- Develop a network of cultural centers and activities in this state.

The plan must include:

- A description of the means by which a statewide network of cultural centers and activities is to be developed;
- A program for awarding financial assistance to develop a network of cultural centers and activities; and
- A detailed list of the initial projects to be undertaken.





The Manhattan Public Library is located in a historic school built in 1912. The Commission funds a wide-range of cultural centers.

The Commission is the advisory board for the Department of Cultural Affairs, formed in 1993 with general authority under NRS 378. The Department's four divisions, the Division of Museums and History, State Library and Archives, State Historic Preservation Office, and Nevada Arts Council, all promote the CCA grant program. In addition, a representative from the Nevada Humanities serves as a commissioner, as does an at-large representative of the tourism industry. The Nevada Humanities is a non-profit organization that distributes federal funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities to state and local agencies.

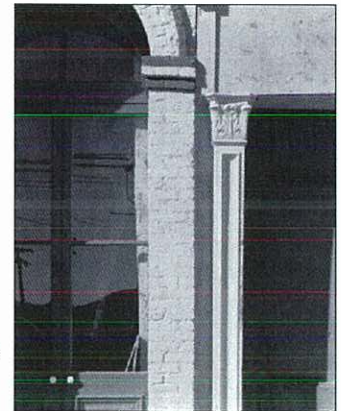
Working with the five agencies, the CCA adopted the 1992 Ten-Year Plan with three priorities:

- Create a plan for the management and development of cultural resources.
- Create a network of cultural activities and centers associated with historic sites in the state, and foster a means of improved communication between the agencies and individuals involved in such programs.
- Provide funding for projects which will improve quality of life, play a role in education, and/or increase tourism.

The plan went on to say that "it is the Commission's highest priority to foster the development of historic sites as cultural centers. It is extremely important that projects supported by the Commission be of the highest quality, executed in the most timely and efficient manner." This remains a mandate underscored by the 2005 Ten-Year Plan.

The Legislature (NRS 233C.25) stipulated that proceeds from State of Nevada General Obligation Bonds should support the above priorities. The legislation also allowed the CCA to distribute available interest generated from the bonds, first for the support of administration and then to augment the grants. In NRS 233C.200, the Legislature further directed the Commission to consider the degree to which proposed projects addressed the following priorities:

- May become a recurring event without the necessity of future state financial support;
- Will be accessible to the community;
- Will promote tourism in the state;
- Will promote or preserve some historic or prehistoric feature of Nevada;
- Will have multiple uses for many types of cultural organizations;
- Will supplement training in the classroom in the arts and humanities; and
- Incorporate the various disciplines directly associated with cultural resources.



Virginia City's Piper's Opera House is a nationally-renowned landmark of theater history.



In addition, the legislation states that “the ability of a project to raise and sustain support must be weighed against the relative means and abilities of the applicants.” Other criteria for evaluating grant requests must also include the following:

- Funding will be restricted to governmental agencies, tribal governments and private organizations.
- Attention to the importance of geography and demography.
- The ability of the project to be completed within budget and a reasonable time frame and in a quality manner.
- The ability of the applicant to manage the grant and project and to account for the expenditure of funds according to the Commission’s fiscal requirements.

The above priorities and considerations make up the framework of the 1992 plan. This 2005 Plan reaffirms and builds on that framework, recommending modifications that are consistent with the evolution of a statewide funding program.

## **OUTCOME OF THE 2005 PLANNING PROCESS**

The overwhelming consensus among the program’s constituents is that the CCA grant program should continue for a second ten year cycle. The need evidenced by communities in each county of the state remains significant and includes the potential of launching at least another one hundred projects. There is also a need to complete projects associated with facilities that are now being developed into cultural centers.



The Lear Theater holds the promise of providing northern Nevada with a major theatrical venue. Substantial work has been completed. More remains to be done.



The historic Las Vegas High School, now the Las Vegas Academy, is one of West’s rare examples of Mayan Revival Art Deco architecture. It benefited from a Commission for Cultural Affairs grant that restored the dramatic walkway leading to the school’s front entrance.



## THE PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS IN DETAIL

### 1. RATIONALE

Testimony gathered during the seventeen county meetings demonstrates that local constituents have the highest regard for the Commission for Cultural Affairs grant program. In ten years, the CCA has assisted in the rehabilitation of over 70 historic buildings, most of which are open as cultural centers in some capacity. Most communities benefiting from the program would have been unable to save their historic buildings and turn them into cultural centers without the Commission's help. The program has indeed created a statewide "network of cultural centers," which was one of the goals of the Commission's founding legislation.

As a model program creatively directing state bond funds into civic development projects, the CCA is without peer nationwide. It has been vitally important to the expansion of heritage tourism, historic preservation, and cultural development in Nevada. Approximately half of the projects funded in the past ten years began when existing cultural and/or civic organizations decided to take on the renovation of buildings. Other projects began literally as "save the building" ventures, which then evolved into thriving organizations that assumed a cultural purpose.

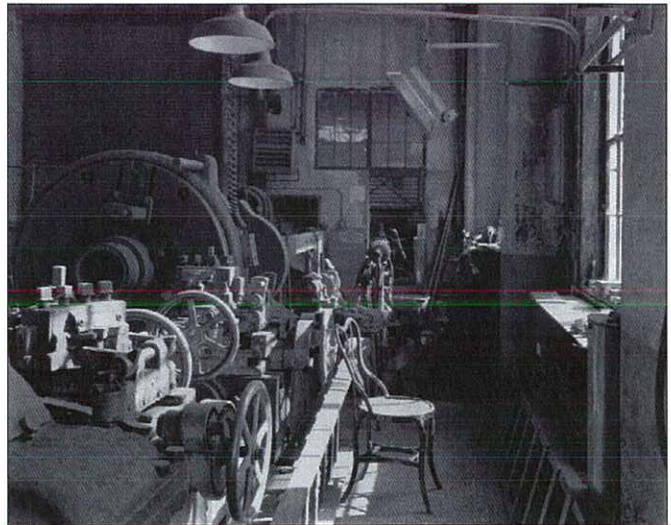
Thirty-five Nevada communities in sixteen counties have been touched by this program. In 2002, the Nevada Commission on

Economic Development studied the economic impact of CCA grants and demonstrated that applicants have consistently provided a dollar for dollar match. In other words, the funds granted between 1993 and 2004 generated approximately \$25 million more in construction throughout the state. The study further concludes that these construction projects had an additional \$62 million effect on the Nevada economy. In addition, the report indicates that the effect of creating facilities boosted the state's economy an additional \$41 million, a figure that grows with every year.

In 2002, 556,802 people visited the 44 centers that had already opened. Since then, eleven more facilities opened to the public, and attendance and the consequential economic effect has continued to increase.

### 2. NEED

**Too often, community sites are being lost.** This plan calls for the CCA program to continue. It also requests authorization of \$30 million in bond sales over a ten-year period beginning in 2005.



The National Park Service is in the process of nominating the Nevada Northern Railway complex in East Ely as a National Landmark. The remarkably-intact resource requires preservation.



Since the program's founding in 1993, applicants have requested an average \$7 million per year. The ratio of dollars requested to dollars actually awarded over this same time is more than 3 to 1. In addition, the Commission for Cultural Affairs has enumerated dozens of historic resources statewide that are in danger of being permanently lost without grant funding to stabilize and protect them.

**Many projects are only partially completed.** In an attempt to stabilize and protect as many historic buildings as possible, the Commission elected to spread its limited grant funds broadly during the first ten-year cycle. The rehabilitation of numerous historic buildings was consequently undertaken in phases. The strategy of applying smaller grants broadly allowed 71 projects to proceed, but only a portion have been completed. As many as half of the facilities funded through the CCA still require attention. Some still need major structural work, while others simply require the completion of final details necessary to make the resources fully available to the public and tourists.

**Others projects are literally on the drawing board.** As demonstrated through 17 hearings held throughout the state, communities are still determining which buildings are most suitable for Commission funding. Community groups are engaged in planning to decide which buildings will serve them best. Some are just learning about the program and are developing local coalitions to study and plan for new facilities. If these additional projects proceed, the potential economic, social, and cultural impact of the program will increase. As more cultural resources become anchors for economic development, opportunities for tourists to stop and explore will increase. At the same time, rehabilitated buildings will provide much-needed gathering places for broadly defined cultural activities. Many Nevada neighborhoods have no real community centers, and they are increasingly looking to the CCA as a critical source for funding to meet this need. They seek cultural centers that, while serving tourists, can also be used by families, teens, and seniors.

### 3. VISION FOR THE FUTURE

The vision for the CCA emerged from the inspired idea of combining the preservation of Nevada's historic resources with the development of civic gathering places that could be used as community cultural centers and tourist attractions. As projects are completed and the vision becomes reality, communities are realizing the benefits of the program. The cultural centers are serving the social and educational needs of their communities, as well as offering cultural events and programs attractive to Nevada's tourists. From the Boulder Dam Hotel in Boulder City, to Elko's Western Folklife Center, hundreds of thousands of people benefit annually from this program. Maintaining this fundamental vision is critical for this 2005 Ten-Year Plan.



The Galena Fish Hatchery is part of Washoe County Parks Department's Camp We Ch Me. The preservation and interpretation of this structure allows for this sole survivor of an important part of Nevada history to be saved for the future.



The 2005 Ten-Year Plan recommends broadening the meaning of “cultural center.” For example, if a senior or youth center can function in a fiscally sound way and some cultural or arts programs are housed there, it should probably be regarded as a cultural center. It is also important to note here that cultural centers can contribute to tourism even if serving visitors is not part of their express purpose. Many tourists are interested in building facades, which often play roles in popular historic walking tours. A requirement for signage explaining the history of sites and associated neighborhoods can be a useful alternative to being “open.” Similarly, brochures detailing local history and informing visitors of community events and programs can enhance a resource’s appeal to tourists.



The Las Vegas Springs Preserve features structures that date to the earliest history of the valley. These treasures will be featured in a comprehensive interpretive program to serve a large population.

## RECOMMENDED GOALS

1. The CCA should continue to use of historic resources as broadly defined cultural centers by working to complete existing projects and to undertake significant new ventures throughout the state.
2. Building on the successes and knowledge gained over the past ten years, the CCA should play a broader role in assisting communities and local organizations plan for and realize the active use of their cultural resources. This could be done with technical assistance and local planning. The CCA is a means by which people from throughout Nevada learn from each other when attempting to preserve and transform historic resources into active cultural centers.

3. The CCA has the ability to leverage matching funds not only for the communities and projects to which it awards grants, but also as a statewide venture. This 2005 Ten-Year Plan encourages the CCA to seek major grants from state and national foundations to match state funds. Additional funding can address needs such as programming and staffing, which cannot be supported with state bonds.

4. As a new program, the CCA grant process has evolved over the past ten years, and its constituency has matured with it. The ten-year period beginning in 2005 should see increased formalization of the grant-making process.



The Clark County Heritage Museum in Henderson includes several buildings that received assistance from the Commission for Cultural Affairs.



## THE RECOMMENDED GOALS IN DETAIL

### 1. The CCA should continue to use of historic resources as broadly defined cultural centers .

The 2005 planning process assessed potential needs for the protection of historic resources, statewide. The State Historic Preservation Office developed a list of 161 sites that need protection and could be viable as future cultural centers. Of these, the Historic Preservation Office and the Nevada Arts Council have concurred that 64 of the buildings are the most likely potential applicants. The list is subject to change as other structures not known or considered at this time emerge as result of local planning. At the same time, many or most of the identified buildings will not be saved unless a constituency steps up to answer the challenge. The facilities that this plan identifies are important civic structures ranging from historic banks, retail buildings, theaters, schools, courthouses, halls, hotels, resorts, and churches. Ideally, all 64 facilities will be preserved and transformed into new cultural centers. While this may be far beyond the scope of the funding and human resources available in the next ten years, it should stand as an important benchmark for Nevada and for this program.

Preserving historic buildings is half of the CCA's challenge. The Commission also seeks to facilitate the active use of these resources as broadly defined cultural centers. To date, the CCA program has won high praise from communities throughout the state. Most of the ventures funded over the years began locally, and volunteers often were crucial to success. Because these people often lack expertise or knowledge in grant writing, there is a great need to encourage and assist them. Existing grantees feel they have benefited from technical assistance received from the five agencies supporting the Commission. This is particularly true of the Historic Preservation Office and the Arts Council. Still, the need continues. With numerous successful ventures now either completed or nearing completion, the CCA can use case studies to illustrate how successful projects are shaped through facilitating peer consultation and dialogue.



Goldfield is the site of the last gold rush in the continental United States. The historic district promises to be a major tourist attraction for southern Nevada, but it must be preserved. Commission funding has addressed the restoration of the firehouse and courthouse.



The CCA should publicize its accomplishments as much as possible. It is a model that other states might use when planning the development of their own cultural resources. On a local level, the Commission should encourage grantees to host their legislators for special events and to thank their elected representatives for the program. In general, grant recipients should also be encouraged to engage in periodic promotions and public relations.

***2. Play a broader role in assisting communities and local organizations plan for and realize the use of cultural resources.***



The Rock House in Mesquite is a newer project undertaken with Commission support.

As stated above, the CCA should develop as many mechanisms as possible to encourage communities and organizations to use appropriate historic resources as broadly defined cultural centers. The field meetings held for this plan gathered recommendations regarding what constituent's see as the program's priority needs. These include the following:

- Increased communications through newsletters, regional meetings, the OASIS conference, and a program website.
- Increased field visits from Department personnel.
- Increased partnership in the dissemination of information and technical assistance by all five agencies.
- Pending financial support from the state to cover travel costs, there should be increased field review of projects by Commissioners to acquire direct knowledge of accomplishments, future goals, and community needs.
- A formalized approach to planning for projects, perhaps including a guidebook or materials that can be sent or emailed to groups or individuals contemplating projects.
- Criteria requiring more formalized project planning and feasibility analysis.

Many who attended the 17 statewide hearings had no previous knowledge of the grant program. They came to the meetings for information about the CCA and how it might benefit their communities. They also wanted guidance on how to undertake projects. It was clear that there was a need in each county for on-going technical assistance.

There was a general consensus that the CCA should provide more planning guidance for potential projects and that it should require a more formalized approach to project planning and feasibility analysis. This concern is crucial because many projects have encountered problems raising operating funds to keep their facilities open. Requiring feasibility planning may help



communities and organizations seek innovative solutions to operations, including partnerships with other organizations.

Similarly, training through periodic statewide meetings, a webpage, or email could assist new organizations during their start-up phase.

### ***3. Seek major matching grants from foundations.***

Clearly, the funding needs of this program would increase if the state were to assume the entire financial burden of all potential future projects. Fortunately, there is a history of large amounts of match obtained by these projects. At the same time, many of the grantees are truly grass-roots organizations with little background in grant writing and limited ability to win major capital grants from foundations or government entities.

There are multiple opportunities for public-private cooperation:

- Develop training programs and communications services to help grantees identify other sources for funding, including from federal agencies and private foundations.
- The Commission should consider directing staff to seek funding from federal sources and foundations to increase what is available for capital development of cultural centers, but this could only realistically be pursued if the state were to provide additional staff.
- The Commission should consider directing staff to seek funding from federal sources and foundations to establish new pools of operating and programming funds to sustain cultural centers once they open, but this could only realistically be pursued if the state were to provide additional staff.
- Investigate the possibility of creating a statewide endowment mechanism, whereby individuals or local businesses may help their local cultural centers through bequests and planned giving to ensure future viability.



The Morelli House is a remnant of the 1950s that recalls a time when Las Vegas was booming and people looked for architectural statements of a modern world. The Junior League saved this State Register site by moving it to its present location where it serves as a cultural center.



#### ***4. Formalize the grant-making process.***

The CCA began its program with broad criteria and an open process. As with any grants-making process, both the Commission and the grantees have learned during the formative years of the program. It is now appropriate to formalize processes that worked well so the program can continue to improve.

##### **A. Guidelines**

There are several ways to strengthen the guidelines and criteria for grantees, including:

- Require both capital and operations planning prior to the grantee's first application to insure the successful operation of centers. Grantees recognize the need for operations planning, but they need information and guidance from the CCA as to what it should involve and how to get started.
- Require a feasibility analysis for any project requiring over \$200,000 in total capital funding. Grantees and commissioners alike know that some projects will be extremely difficult to complete given their scale and the availability of matching funds. Feasibility analysis may be informal for smaller projects, but should be more formalized for larger ventures.
- Broaden the concept of a cultural center to include facilities that provide senior and youth programming as well as regular cultural programming.
- Support first year planning grants. Due to restrictions associated with bond funds, such planning would need to be limited to facility feasibility and capital planning. The planning processes that analyses sustainability and operations could be used as match. If the CCA is successful in winning partnership funding from foundations or federal sources, funds for planning could eventually be applied more broadly. Support for preliminary planning will precipitate better applications. This is particularly important for first-time applicants who have to compete with better-known and more competitive projects that have been funded in previous years by the CCA.



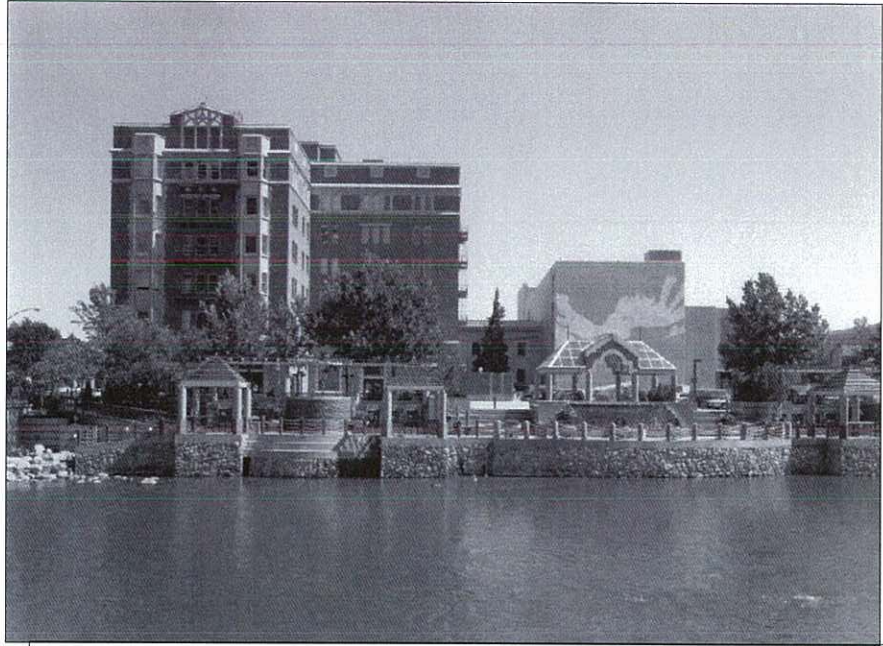
The Caliente Railroad Depot, an exquisite example of Mission architecture, serves as a cultural center.



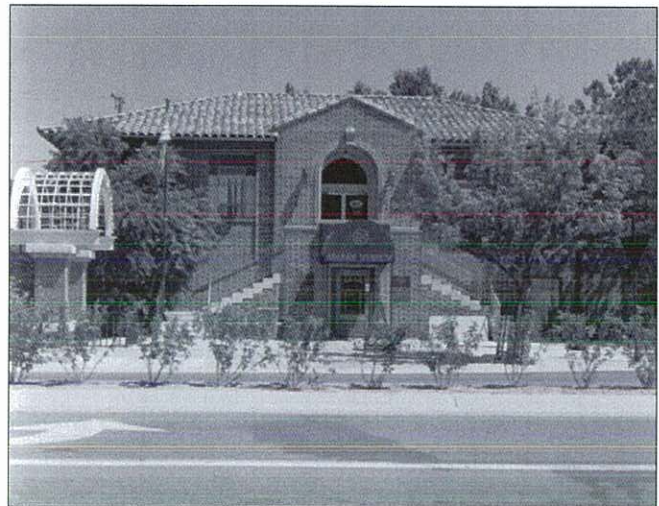
## B. The Review Process

As with the guidelines, the application review process should be formalized. It is important to work towards the most consistent, unbiased, balanced process possible. Based on input from the planner and from the public, the Commission agreed to modify the grant review process in the following ways:

- Clarify application requirements. A handbook or more communication from the agencies may be helpful. More close-ended, specific questions should be developed for the application. Fewer open-ended, vague questions would be favored by applicants and would make the review process easier and more consistent.
- Clearly state in the grant application that a three-minute oral presentation is required by the applicant to give a synopsis of the project and address specific criteria as determined by the Commission and staff.
- The Commission will accept no handouts during the presentation unless they are requested by the Commissioners.
- Commissioners, after hearing the presentations, will provide staff with their individual recommendations for funding for the grants, totaling the amount available for the grant year. Staff will then make the commissioner's initial budget recommendations public with averages of the commissioner's recommendations for each project. The Commission will then deliberate on those figures, making adjustments as the discussion and majority requires, arriving at a consensus (simple majority) approval of the funding distribution.



The Riverside Hotel was preserved as a project of Artspace, a nationwide non-profit organization that secures low incoming housing for artists. The hotel now plays a critical role in Reno's downtown arts corridor.



The Sparks Heritage Museum interprets local history in a 1931 former branch library.



## CONCLUSION:

### The Commission for Cultural Affairs for the next Ten Years

The Commission's first ten-year cycle of granting established dozens of cultural centers that welcome well over a half million visitors annually. This usage has an estimated annual \$19 million effect on the state's economy, and the number of visitors is growing. Seventy-one buildings benefited from funding between 1993 and 2004, and over fifty are now open and welcoming the public. The next ten years should build on this success.

Since 1993, the Commission for Cultural Affairs has reviewed over 250 applications requesting a total of nearly \$80 million. In response, it distributed \$23,226,997. The ratio of dollars requested to dollars awarded is over 3 to 1. The grant program has made a significant contribution to preserving and promoting Nevada's cultural resources, but it only partially meets the demonstrated need.

Matching funds have played a significant role in seeing projects to completion. Between 1993 and 2004, grant recipients contributed in excess of \$25 million in cash match for a total of roughly \$50 million spent on construction projects in the state. The Commission's network of cultural centers has also had an enormous impact on local economies.

By providing opportunities for cultural and educational enrichment, the Commission's benefits are multiplied a hundredfold by the intangible enhancement of the quality of life throughout Nevada. The Commission has established museums, theaters, archives, and art galleries in every part of the state. These have ranged from the restoration of such historic schools as the City of Sparks's Glendale School, Logandale's Elementary School, Reno's McKinley Park School, and Douglas County's Old High School, to the preservation of public structures such as Reno's Riverside Hotel, the City of Caliente's Union Pacific Depot, the Churchill Arts Council's Oats Park School in Fallon, Virginia City's Fourth Ward School Museum, the Esmeralda County Courthouse in Goldfield, and the Elko Chamber of Commerce's Sherman Station. Commission supported facilities have fundamentally changed communities, making them better places and increasing their ability to greet and entertain visitors. In all, the record can be a matter of pride for the Commission and the state.

A continued, expanded grant program has the potential of addressing diverse needs as more facilities open and the number of visitors increase dramatically. In addition, with the adoption of the 2005 Ten-Year Plan, the Commission increases its credibility and its ability to serve the public by embracing formalized processes. The Commission perfected its process by experimenting with various possible ways to serve the public over the previous ten years, and that period of growth has proven its worth to the Commission and Nevada. The ten-year period beginning in 2005 promises to be even more remarkable for the state.



The Tonopah Mining Park is an outstanding industrial museum that attracts people from throughout the nation and the world.