

MORRO BAY MARITIME MUSEUM

805-225-5044 morrobaymaritime.org

1210 Embarcadero Morro Bay, CA 93442

January 12, 2021

Morro Bay Harbor Department
1275 Embarcadero Rd.
Morro Bay, CA 93442

Subject: Morro Bay Maritime Museum
Annual Report

Dear Eric:

The new year is upon us and we would like to provide your office with a status report and outlook for the Morro Bay Maritime Museum (MBMM). To say that the year 2020 is one for the record books is an understatement. Mired in a global pandemic, economic and social turmoil not seen for decades, and topped off by a tumultuous election, the year has adversely impacted every sector of society and our local community. Yet even with these challenges I am delighted to report that the MBMM is healthy and doing well. Because of public health concerns our doors have been closed for regular visitation but because of our outdoor interpretive displays, each with an individual donation box, we have been able to mitigate some loss of revenue. Moreover, because of our committed and hardworking board members and volunteers we were able to conduct a limited, outdoor retail operation for a few hours per week. We were also able to conduct some fundraising activities including our ongoing brick and bench program. In the final analysis it is only because of the robust support of the community, and industrious board members and volunteers that we are not only still afloat but growing as well!

Just some of our accomplishments during the past 24 months include

Inside of the museum

- We commissioned and received our scale replica of the *SS Montebello* oil Tanker.
- We acquired a vintage hard-hat diving helmet for the abalone industry exhibit.
- Produced five short videos for the museum's mini theatre.
- Added various artifacts to the collection including a Wood-Freeman auto pilot, an operable WWII submarine Klaxon (dive horn), the ship's bell from the US Navy destroyer *USS Young* (one of the seven ships that ran aground in the 1923 Honda Point disaster).

Outdoor Exhibits and Improvements

- Conserved and restored the 1933 Monterey style fishing boat, *Spindrift*



- Conserved and restored the two-man submersible (“abalone sub”)
- Installed a lighted flagpole with all-weather U.S., California, and POW flags.
- Installed an event patio with solar lights, seating, and public address system that is available for community and private events.
- Installed additional hard scape in front of the museum which includes the expansion of the memorial bricks.
- Installation of signage and safety improvements.
- Acquired and restored two older and rare MATSON containers. These containers not only serve a practical purpose, but they are also considered artifacts because of the significant contribution that the *MATSON Navigation Company* made to the nation.



Installing the "ab sub"

Activities

- Hosted four memorial services.
- Hosted the Del Mar Elementary School 5th grade field trips.
- Hosted thirteen privately arranged tour groups from across the state. These included assorted car clubs, submarine veterans’ groups, STEM camp educational groups, and the *Red Hat Ladies*, to name a few.



Visitation

- In 2019 we were open for an entire year and had over 4000 families sign our visitor log. Our visitors came from 48 states and 45 countries! Anecdotal evidence from video camera footage indicates that thousands more toured our outdoor exhibits when the museum was closed, and this appears to be a continuing trend.
- Because of our physical presence and central waterfront location, we have been acting as the unofficial “Embarcadero Visitor Center” giving information for points of interest and dining recommendations.

Partnerships

- We continue to build on our ongoing partnership with Cal Poly (History and Engineering Departments).
- We continue to cultivate our professional connection and common interests with other maritime museums such as San Diego, Santa Barbara, and Channel Islands. A collaborative effort is underway with those institutions in the establishment of the *California Maritime Heritage Alliance* (CMHA). CMHA is intended to be a Statewide advocacy group for cultural institutions and communities that celebrate the State's maritime heritage and its dependence on the "blue economy." Former museum president and board member Larry Newland is representing the museum as an *ex-officio board member and advocating on behalf of the MBMM and the community.*
- We continue to partner with the Salinan Indian Tribe in developing their adjacent exhibit area.
- Cooperative venture with the Morro Bay Commercial Fishing Organization on exhibit development.

Combined Net Revenue for CY 2019 and 2020 (see attached pie chart)

• Donations	\$80,956
• Museum Store Merchandise Sales	\$27,531
• Fundraising	\$26,683
• Membership Dues	\$9,610
• Speaker Series	\$3,010

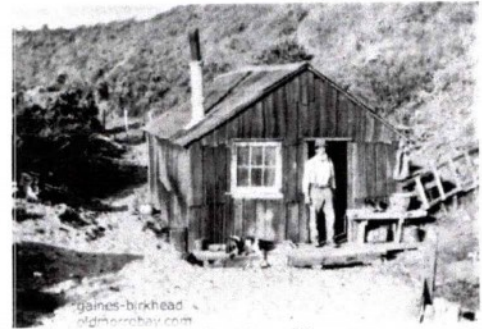
Goals for 2021

- A plan is being developed with local contractor and long-time museum supporter Dana McClish on designing and installing final improvements that will satisfy the museum's permit requirements. These include another interpretive kiosk and additional landscape and hardscape improvements in the area just west of the wall and adjacent to the DSRV. This area will be dedicated to Morro Bay's commercial fishing heritage.
- The Salinan Indian exhibit is slowly moving forward. With the passing of longtime resident Don Pierce senior, his son, Donny Pierce, has delegated project management responsibilities to another tribal member.
- The *DSRV Avalon* continues to be a major attraction on the waterfront. We have obtained the assistance of local resident, Rear Admiral John Weigold, Ret. in the board's effort to acquire title to the vehicle. As you are probably aware, the DSRV vehicle is on loan from the *US Navy History and Heritage Command* in Washington D.C. Acquiring title would allow the museum to liquidate the low-bed trailer that sits empty in the parking lot. More importantly, it would allow the museum to continue showing the inside of the vehicle to visitors on a limited basis, strengthening our STEM education program and our revenue stream.

- As part of the continued completion and enhancement of outdoor display areas we are collaborating with local artist and former City Councilman, Jeff O'Dell, and local artist Kim Hixson in producing a mural and signage on the western face of the wall.

Growing Pains

A drawback to the museum's current operation and the only negative feedback we receive has to do with the museum's small size. At certain times, especially during a busy summer weekend, we find it difficult to accommodate high visitor demand. The fact is we are outgrowing our current permitted space faster than we anticipated. It is for this reason we are requesting that the City allow us to expand in a northly direction, along the wall and up to the corner of the intersection of the chain link fence and the wall, (see attached exhibit). In the short term this expansion would allow us to construct a small, historically vernacular building (i.e., boat house, fishing shack, etc.) of approximately 15' x 25' that would be used for additional displays and a small video/theatre exhibit that currently exists inside the museum building. It is possible that this new building could also be made available for meetings and appropriate uses by other non-profit and community groups.



We are also researching the viability of acquiring a state-of-the-art maritime simulator (i.e., NavSim, etc.) These interactive displays use advanced computer and video interface technology to create a realistic



visitor experience in operating various ocean-going vessels in different situations. They are used in maritime training centers and museums such as Buffalo Naval Park Museum in New York.

Having additional space would also allow us the ability to construct a dioramic exhibit, if the Harbor Department so desires, of the soon to be retired 3868 Radon design Harbor Patrol Vessel. This popular proven vessel was specifically built for our coastal waters. It was designed and built by Morro Bay's pioneering boat building Radon family. At one point Radon Boats built 90% of all California coastal commercial Abalone/Urchin commercial dive vessels. Further, a dioramic display could be produced to exhibit the hazardous bar at Morro Bay's harbor entrance and the role that both City Harbor Patrol and USCG staff routinely deal with. A Morro Bay Maritime Museum member has also pledged \$15,000 towards this project.



Astoria Oregon Maritime Museum's USCG surf rescue boat dioramic exhibit

Please be aware that the accomplishments and activities listed are not exhaustive but meant to be a representative sampling of what's been happening at the museum and what is possible. The museum board of trustees is excited about the new year and the prospects for growth and new opportunities it presents. The City has been an enthusiastic supporter of the museum's goals and objectives and I know that I speak for the entire board when I say how grateful we are for the collaborative relationship we have. We look forward to meeting with you and other City staff in the near future to discuss the benefits of expansion to the city of Morro Bay and how to move forward on our plans. Morro Bay was and still is a maritime village at the edge of the continent and our hope is that the Community will continue to support and join us in celebrating that history.

Sincerely,



Scott Mather, President
Morro Bay Maritime Museum
Board of Trustees

Attachments: Pie Chart
Staton Survey Map

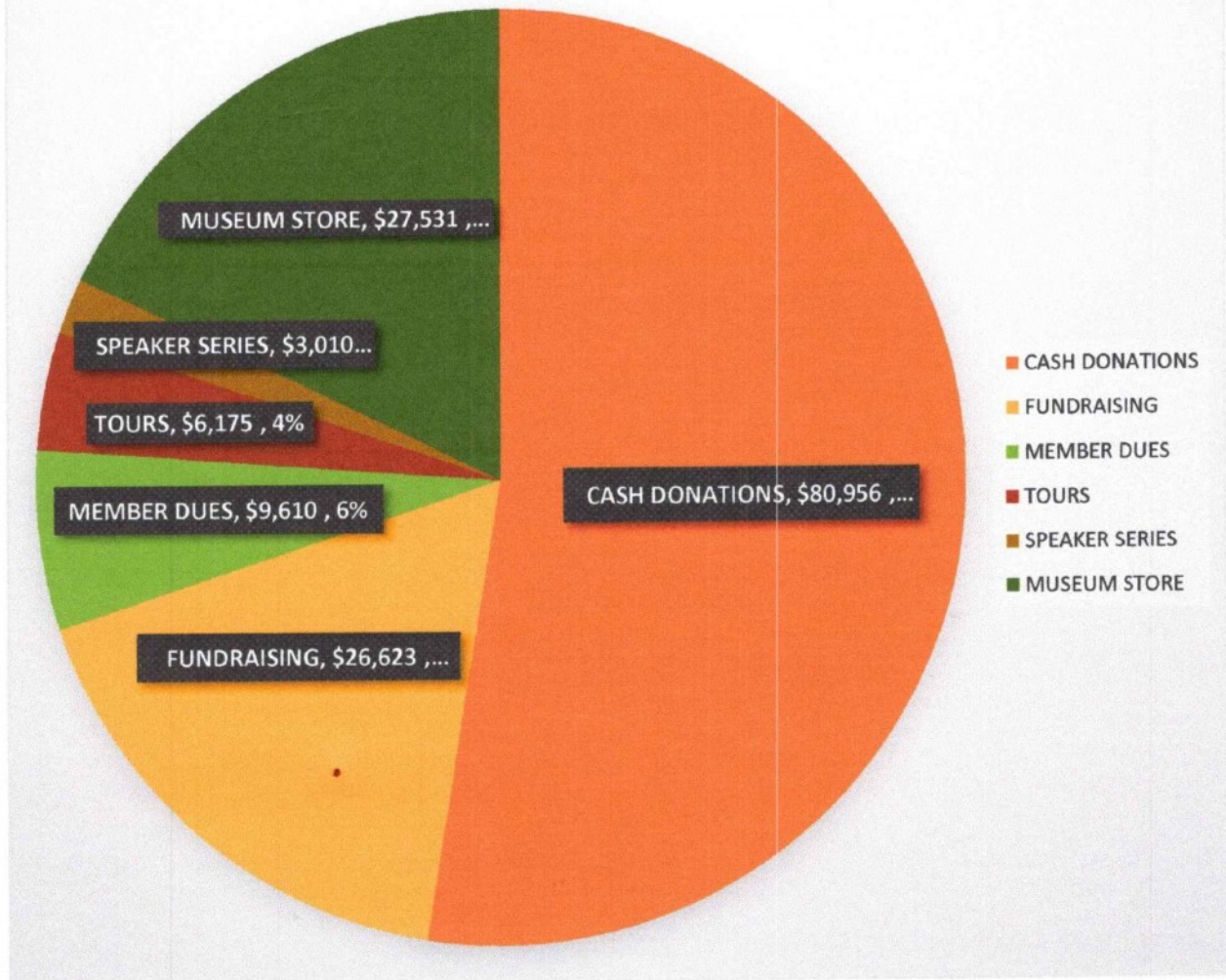
Cc: Scott Collins, City Manager
Chairman, Harbor Advisory Board

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MBMM REVENUE SOURCES CY 2019 & 2020



The Central Coast Maritime Museum dba Morro Bay Maritime Museum is a 501(c)3 public benefit corporation.



