



Monday, August 2, 2010

## Md. tourism agency focuses giving on War of 1812 bicentennial events

**Baltimore Business Journal - by [Amanda Pino](#) Staff**

The state's Heritage Area Authority recently awarded Maryland museums and historical sites with \$2.6 million in grants, giving organizations' applications for funds extra weight if they included War of 1812 bicentennial programs.

Organizations in the 11 state-designated "heritage regions" can apply for money from the heritage authority, which was created to help preserve Maryland's historical sites and encourage tourism. In past years, applications were given extra consideration for initiatives that play into state-wide marketing pushes, such as the "Captain John Smith Story," last year's focus. This year and possibly next year, HAA officials said, the spotlight is on the War of 1812, the bicentennial for which stretches from 2012 to 2014.

Havre de Grace in Harford County received \$34,000 from the HAA. There, British forces burned the city to the ground in 1813, and a coalition of the city's five museums plans to use the money to create a traveling exhibit chronicling the community's involvement with the war.

Brigitte Peters, marketing and tourism manager for Havre de Grace's visitor center, said that about 250,000 people come through the center each year, and that the town's War of 1812 history is part of what makes it stand out.

In Baltimore, the Friends of Fort McHenry and Living Classrooms Foundation received \$40,000 to create a virtual database of War of 1812 resources. Meanwhile, Historic Annapolis Inc. received \$36,000 toward a project collecting run-away slave and indentured servant ads.

That organization's president, John Guild, said the grant was "absolutely essential" to the nearly \$150,000 project, which will include ads from the war period.

Since the state is already focusing attention and marketing on the bicentennial, the Heritage Area Authority can focus on putting dollars into projects' development, said Elizabeth Hughs of the HAA.

According to the HAA, there are over 700 sites in Maryland related to the War of 1812. The HAA gave out 55 grants total.

The HAA plans to organize 12 bicentennial celebrations, including a keystone event at the Inner Harbor in 2014.

Not all of the grant recipients were looking to link their projects up with the bicentennial, though. Here are some other Baltimore-area organizations that received cash for this fiscal year:

- [The B&O Railroad Museum](#) got \$20,000, about half of what it asked for to do train rides commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Civil War, a project totaling \$500,000;
- Baltimore Museum of Industry received \$40,000, a piece of the \$3 million it will take to repair its tugboat;
- Historic Ships in Baltimore Inc. got \$90,000 to dry-dock its two ships, the USS Constellation and USS Torsk, for repairs this winter; and,
- Historic London Town and Gardens, an archeological dig site with two reconstructed 17th century buildings near Annapolis, got \$50,000 to start planning the reconstruction of a third building.

[apino@bizjournals.com](mailto:apino@bizjournals.com) or (410) 454-0523.