



WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ACT MEMO

2003 Wisconsin Act 91 [2003 Assembly Bill 328]	The State Historical Society of Wisconsin and Operation of its Historic Sites
2003 Acts: www.legis.state.wi.us/2003/data/acts/	Act Memos: www.legis.state.wi.us/lc/act_memo/act_memo.htm

2003 Wisconsin Act 91 makes a series of changes relating to the historic sites operated by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin (Historical Society), and makes other changes in the operation and management of the Historical Society.

Under current law, the Historical Society operates the following historic sites: Stonefield Village, Pendarvis, Villa Louis, Old Wade House, Madeline Island, Old World Wisconsin, H.H. Bennett Studios, and the First Capitol.

Wisconsin Act 91 includes the following provisions:

1. The Act establishes a separate trust fund designated as the “History Preservation Partnership Trust Fund” consisting of all moneys received from admission, sales, and other receipts of the Historical Society which may be expended only for the general program operations of the Historical Society.
2. The Act permits the Historical Society to organize and maintain, *for each historic site*, a nonstock, nonprofit corporation for the purposes of soliciting contributions, gifts, grants, and bequests for the historic site for which the corporation is organized and maintained. The nonprofit corporation is also authorized to provide goods or services relating to that historic site and provides support for the operation, management, and development of the historic site. Contributions to these corporations are intended to be tax deductible.
3. The Act also permits the Historical Society to enter into a contract with a corporation organized to support the historic site and places restrictions on the uses of moneys received by the corporation. The Act permits the Historical Society to sell memberships in a corporation organized for those purposes and requires the Historical Society to transfer all moneys received from the sale of those memberships to the corporations for which the membership was sold.

This memo provides a brief description of the Act. For more detailed information, consult the text of the law and related legislative documents.

4. The Act permits the Historical Society and the Department of Tourism to enter into a memorandum of understanding setting forth the responsibilities of the Department of Tourism relating to promoting and marketing the historic sites and the methods of the Historical Society and the Department of Tourism will use to cooperate in promoting and marketing the historic sites.

5. The Act requires the Department of Employment Relations to study the practices of the Historical Society relating to the hiring, classification, and compensation of its employees who staff the historic sites and to make appropriate recommendations for changes in those practices to reflect the seasonal nature of the work of the historic sites.

6. The Act permits the Department of Administration to conduct, in cooperation with the Historical Society, a survey of the condition of the facility's infrastructure of the historic sites and of the Circus World Museum, which is a museum owned by the Historical Society but operated under a lease agreement with the Circus World Museum Foundation, Inc. The Department of Administration is directed to prepare, in cooperation with the Historical Society, a needs assessment for those facilities in that infrastructure that includes a master plan for each of the historic sites and the Circus World Museum designed to achieve a healthy and sustainable historic site system.

7. The Act creates a program known as the "History Preservation Partnership Initiative" for the purpose of providing financial support to attract private and federal funds to acquire, construct, develop, enlarge, and improve facilities for collections, care, public programs, and visitor services at the historic sites, at the Circus World Museum, and at the headquarters of the Historical Society. The Act creates an appropriation to the State Building Commission to finance projects under the initiative, but does not authorize the state to contract any public debt for that purpose.

8. The Act requires the director of the Historical Society to include certain information in the biennial report prepared for the Governor and Legislature regarding the revenues and expenditures for each historic site and the condition of the historic sites.

9. The Act permits the Historical Society, subject to authorization by the Legislature or the Joint Committee on Finance, to employ outside the classified service, sales and development professionals to engage in activities intended to generate admission, sales, and other receipts for the historic sites and to solicit contributions, gifts, grants, and bequests in support of the historic sites.

10. The Act further permits the Historical Society to contract with the Wisconsin History Foundation, Inc., or another nonprofit corporation for the purpose of administering the Historical Society's membership program, marketing the Historical Society's goods and services, and performing other functions approved by the Board of Curators of the Historical Society.

Effective Date: The Act takes effect on December 18, 2003.

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December 12, 2003

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