

Funding proposed for U.S. slavery museum

By Jesse Muhammad
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
FREDERICKSBURG, Va. — A budget amendment proposed by Gov. Timothy M. Kaine includes \$250,000 for the U.S. Slavery Museum.

The proposed spending must still be approved by the House of Delegates and Senate before it's added to the budget.

The Kaine administration received a letter from the museum's executive director, Vonita Foster, requesting financial support for the slavery museum but not specifying a dollar amount.

Richmond Mayor L. Douglas Wilder, one of the museum's chief proponents, has launched a campaign to raise \$100 million toward the Fredericksburg museum's \$200 million cost.

Entertainer Bill Cosby has already committed at least \$1 million to the effort.

Kaine's proposed spending

amendment is consistent with funding proposed for 37 other state museums and cultural attractions. The sums ranged from \$100,000 to \$500,000. In all, the governor budgeted \$7.5 million for such programs.

The slavery museum and other attractions fall under the category of "non-state agencies" — things that are not the state's responsibility, but which wind up getting state support.

Sen. John Chichester, R-Northumberland and chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, said when he reviews the governor's budget amendments during the upcoming legislative session, he'll view this as "just another non-state agency."

"Two-hundred-fifty-thousand is a little bit heavy, but it's not unprecedented," Chichester told The Free Lance-Star of Fredericksburg.

Earlier this year, museum officials said cash and pledges toward the project total about \$50 million, half of what is needed to construct the 290,000-square-foot museum. The \$100 million sought by the fund drive would be its endowment. The museum reported \$938,186 in gifts, grants and contributions during fiscal year 2005, the Fredericksburg paper reported. That is nearly 10 times the sum from the previous year.

The museum, which is being designed by architect Chien Chung Pei, will be built on 38 acres on a hill overlooking the Rappahannock River.

Plans for the museum call for a full-size replica of a slave ship, 10 permanent galleries, a 450-seat amphitheater, two libraries, a lecture hall, several classrooms and an outdoor garden featuring sculptures, commemorative

walls and tobacco and cotton crops. The museum has already collected between 5,000 and

6,000 slavery-related artifacts, including furniture, documents, shackles and collars.

On the Net:
U.S. National Slavery Museum, www.usnational-slaverymuseum.org

Music built around the 'Godfather'

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Soul music owes him as much, too. Brown emerged from The Famous Flames as lead singer in the mid '50s and turned the genre on its ear. His wild dance moves and untamed vocal style left audiences breathless. His signature move of dropping to his knees, being covered with a cape and flinging the cape to the floor as he tore into another set was later mimicked by lots of artists in tribute and jest.

Brown's 1956 hit "Please, Please, Please" was a No. 1 R&B smash that looked to make the Flames a household name, but nine subsequent singles failed. He regained his footing in the '60s with "Live At The Apollo," a live LP which he nearly had to beg his record label to release. It crested at No. 2 on the pop chart, giving that audience a taste of what soul fans already feasted. "Papa's Got A Brand New Bag" earned him his first of three Grammys and changed the rhythm of his hits. Brown was funkier and leaner. He even got political with "Say It Loud - I'm Black And I'm Proud" and socially conscious with "Don't Be A Dropout."

The early to mid '70s were Brown's most productive years. His kinetic funk was a staple on Don Cornelius' "Soul Train" and Dick Clark's "American Bandstand." His blaxploitation soundtracks included "Black Caesar" and "Slaughter's Big Rip Off." He

wrote and produced a string of hits for band members Maceo Parker, Fred Wesley and Lynn Collins.

Brown's own hits were simple but unforgettable. "Hot Pants," "Make It Funky," "The Big Payback" and "Get On The Good Foot" were revelations in funk. These songs influenced the likes of the Rolling Stones, Sly & The Family Stone and even the stage show of a very young Michael Jackson.

Brown also influenced the Temptations, Prince, King Sunny Ade, Fela Kuti and even jazz great Miles Davis.

The '80s showed fall, rise and fall of Brown. His recordings were becoming a shell of his earlier work in stepped the Blues Brothers — Dan Aykroyd and John Belushi. Brown appeared in the "Blues Brothers" film as a preacher. He sang the life out of "The Old Landmark" and caught America's attention again. He had a hit with Afrika Bambaata on "Unity," a sort of school meets new school thing. He had a bigger hit in 1985 with "Living In America" from "Rocky III." Ironically, it was a disco hit — the genre that killed his career in the mid to late '70s. He won his second Grammy with that recording.

Brown's legal troubles began to mount in the '80s and his career never recovered. But that's of little significance. Brown may have become the butt of jokes but his body of work stands taller than his stack of legal woes.

Brown's influence on pop, R&B and hip-hop is more significant than any artist of the last 50 years. He's already missed.

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New Year's celebration

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is B5, a pop group out of Atlanta spanning in ages 10 to 17. The brothers are sparking excitement among teens who are excited to see the group perform.

"Maybe I can meet one of them," said 15-year-old Ineisha Callaway of Charlotte. "Especially the oldest one [Dustin]."

Ineisha says she wasn't aware of the celebration because her mother had grown weary of New Year's celebrations uptown crime in the past years.

"I think it's something that's good and productive, doing something during the daytime is good and positive," said Callaway's mother Phyllis Callaway. "Parents can feel at ease without all of the crime."

CCCP Senior Vice President of Events Robert Krumbine says he has received six to eight calls a day about B5 from families as far away as Kansas. He says Noon Year's is expected upwards of 5,000 people.

"This is our opportunity to get kids involved in what is considered an adult holiday, and to experience Center City in a non-threatening way," said Krumbine.

Families will also have the opportunity to participate in interactive games, receive autographs from their favorite performers and countdown the New Year at the end of the event.

Uptown construction will eliminate fireworks this year, says Quinn. The launch site was originally at Founder's Hall, but due to rebuilding of the hall, the fall zone is not suitable. The fall zone needs to be low enough to stop fireworks from landing on bystanders.

"The higher you go, the more difficult the fall zone," said Quinn.

Not only will there not be fireworks, but the Charlotte crown will not be lowered during the New Year's countdown because there isn't a suitable place to hang the crown.

Because Center City Partners is focusing all of their attention on Noon Years instead of organized parties or fireworks, they will send uptown visitors to restaurants and bars for evening New Year's celebrations.

For a list of night events, visit www.charlottecentercity.org or www.holidaysinthecity.org



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