

HB1395

A BILL for an Act to adjust state agency spending authority approved by the emergency commission and budget section; to provide an appropriation; to provide for retroactive application; and to declare an emergency.

Bill Peterson
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Senate Appropriations Committee – Friday March 26th, 2021.

Chairman Holmberg, Members of the Committee,

My name is Bill Peterson and I am the Director of the State Historical Society. In accordance with Governor Burgum's Executive Order 2020-06.7, the State Historical Society has been requiring anyone coming into the Heritage Center to be subject to a wellness screening. Due to minimal staffing levels available to screen for COVID precautions of anyone entering the Heritage Center, we have had the Heritage Center's west entrance closed for the past year. The State Historical Society is requesting additional funds to purchase and install self-monitoring temperature reading thermal scanners at our public entrances so we can begin to more fully welcome visitors to the Heritage Center. This request would allow the agency to purchase the Revel wrist scanners and mirror units that are currently in use here at the Capitol. We also request funding for an additional 10 antimicrobial hard surface sanitizing foggers for use at the Heritage Center and Historic Sites around North Dakota.

The cost of this equipment is estimated at \$21,985.00.

The pandemic and the necessity of moving to virtual and online platforms for work and program delivery laid bare critical shortcoming in internet connectivity at our historic site near Williston at the Missouri Yellowstone Confluence Interpretive Center. Due to the poor internet service at this location, staff can barely participate in remote meetings, and Microsoft Teams calls and delivery of digital content is nearly impossible. The local internet service provider in that area, Nemont, estimates the most effective way to solve our connectivity issues would be to install fiber optic cables to the site, which is not currently in place. The company estimates that this will cost \$175,000.00. We are, therefore, requesting \$175,000.00 for internet infrastructure so that we may be able to effectively participate in the Microsoft Teams work environment and deliver digital content to school groups and other visitors as needed.

I am available to the committee for questions.

Respectfully,

Bill Peterson