

**To:** Members of the Legislative Appropriations Committee at a hearing to consider a proposed merger of the Commission on Culture and Tourism with the Department of Economic and Community Development on 2/17/2009

**From:** Robert Stewart, Principal, Historical Technologies<sup>1</sup> – Phone (860) 668-2928 e-mail: robert.stewart13@att.net

**Summary:** Merging the Commission on Culture and Tourism with the department of Economic and Community Development is counterproductive. Neither organization would be capable of performing its statutory duties effectively. Optimum cost effectiveness in retaining Federal and private funding for cultural resource identification and protection, is best retained by maintaining independent agencies.

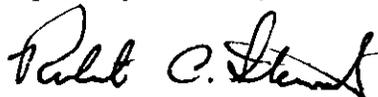
**Statement:** Connecticut's historical economic strength and prosperity has been based on innovative manufacturing. During the 19th century local entrepreneurs developed mills and factories that produced clocks, armaments, sewing machines, general hardware, hand and machine tools, carriage parts, toys, cutting implements and electrical components. The state also manufactured textile machinery, glassware, specialized fabrics, lace, brassware, maritime hardware and a whole host of "patent" goods. Arguably, the state's most important characteristic is that it was, and to a lesser extent continues to be, the world's premier center of manufacturing technology. The Legislatures' goal should be to integrate the state's archeological, industrial and engineering history into a plan that will attract more funding and tourist dollars to the state than the potential cost savings to be realized by merging highly diverse agencies.

As an example of how this can happen, one region where integration was successfully done is the Ruhr Valley of Germany. The German government developed a "Route of Industrial Heritage" (Industriekultur im Ruhrgebiet). It traverses the Ruhr Valley, the former center of European heavy industry. Today, the area is a center of history and culture and a major recreation destination.

When its mining and steel industries fell into decline in the 1970s, the Ruhr Valley government turned the dying industrial landscape into a giant history and technology museum. The Industrial Heritage route opened in 1999 with an assortment of museums, parks and unique historic industrial sites. It helped attract some three million visitors to the Ruhr Valley in 2001 and continues to be a major tourist destination. The "Route" is more than 240 miles long and takes in six museums, 19 industrial sites, and an approximate dozen gardens and historic houses. It can be visited on foot, by car or by bike. Each site on the tour has a huge yellow "map pin" on the property so that it can be readily identified when a visitor approaches the area.<sup>2</sup>

While Connecticut does not have the spectacular mine sites or steel mills, it does have enough interesting archeological, structural, working factory, museums, preserved railroad/trolley sites, turbo-electric generators, canal remains, food processors, historic and architectural buildings to establish such a "route". Tourists could take a self-guided organized "tour" of the state's cultural and industrial history. Under the present departmental organization the State could readily incorporate the large body of pre-historic, historic and industrial archeology research that is archived at the University of Connecticut into a plan for attracting tourists and showcasing the cultural attractions by using the idea of a "route" around the state. The effect would be to attract tourists, increase business, preserve historic/cultural sites and increase state revenue. A merged CCT/DECD conceivably would have such diverse responsibilities and interests that opportunities for utilization of historic and cultural resources would be easily overlooked or grossly underfunded. The loss of Federal funds is also a possibility. I urge the appropriations committee to think "outside the envelope" and come up with more creative solutions for cost savings and revenue enhancement than the proposed merger.

Respectfully submitted,



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<sup>1</sup> I have been a professional industrial archeologist for seventeen years - based at 1230 Copper Hill Road – West Suffield, CT 06093. I'm former president of the Society for Industrial Archeology and am currently on SIA's board of directors. Industrial archeologists' document and record historical work sites and engineering structures that sometimes are scheduled for demolition or major modification. Most archeologists work as private contractors, generally under the guidance of State Historic Preservation Offices (CTSHPO) or the National Park Service.

<sup>2</sup> Detailed information may be obtained by checking out the Industrial Heritage web site at: <http://www.route-industriekultur.de/en/menu/>