

EXECUTIVE DIGEST

MICHIGAN HISTORICAL CENTER

INTRODUCTION

This report, issued in February 2000, contains the results of our performance audit* of the Michigan Historical Center (MHC), Department of State.

AUDIT PURPOSE

This performance audit was conducted as part of the constitutional responsibility of the Office of the Auditor General. Performance audits are conducted on a priority basis related to the potential for improving effectiveness* and efficiency*.

BACKGROUND

MHC's mission* is to preserve and interpret Michigan's past and to help people discover, enjoy, and find inspiration in their heritage. MHC accomplishes its mission through the activities of its five organizational units: Museum Division, State Historic Preservation Section, Archives Section, Publications Section, and Archaeology Section.

MHC had 71 employees, 27 student assistants, and 7 temporary employees as of June 30, 1999 and was appropriated approximately \$6.8 million for the fiscal year ended September 30, 1999.

AUDIT OBJECTIVE,
CONCLUSION, AND
NOTEWORTHY
ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Audit Objective: To assess the effectiveness and efficiency of MHC's activities related to the Museum Division, State Historic Preservation Section, Archives Section, and Publications Section.

Conclusion: We concluded that MHC's activities were generally effective and efficient. However, we noted reportable conditions* related to museum accreditation, a continuous quality improvement process, archives and artifacts records, storage space plans, artifact loans, the publications inventory, *Michigan History Magazine* distributor collections, and *Michigan History Magazine* promotional efforts.

Noteworthy Accomplishments: MHC established a worldwide web site with the inauguration of the Department's web site in June 1995 and it significantly modified and expanded the web site during our audit period. MHC's web site provides citizens with on-line museum tours, schedules of events, Michigan history facts, and information necessary for maintaining archives records and preserving historical sites.

AUDIT SCOPE AND
METHODOLOGY

Our audit scope was to examine the program and other records of the Michigan Historical Center. Our audit was conducted in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States and, accordingly, included such tests of the records and such other auditing procedures as we considered necessary in the circumstances.

Our methodology included examination of MHC records and activities for the period July 1, 1997 through

June 30, 1999. We conducted a preliminary survey of MHC's operations to gain an understanding of its activities. We analyzed how MHC determined if it accomplished its mission and if the Museum Division and the State Historic Preservation, Archives, and Publications Sections met their goals and objectives. We tested museum artifacts and assessed the artifact inventory system and the artifacts' safety and security. We also assessed selected State Historic Preservation Section programs. In addition, we assessed the effectiveness and efficiency of the Archives Section's archive services and the Publications Section's publishing, printing, and distribution of its publications.

**AGENCY RESPONSES
AND PRIOR AUDIT
FOLLOW-UP**

Our audit report contains 8 findings and 10 recommendations. The Department indicated that it either will comply or has taken steps to comply with all of the recommendations.

The Department had partially or fully complied with 2 of the 4 prior audit recommendations. We repeated 2 prior audit recommendations in this report.