

Alaska State Museums Bulletin 48

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Museums: Where to start and how to keep up

Alaska and its museums are unique in many ways compared with the rest of the nation. However, the state's nonprofit historical, artistic and cultural institutions are subject to statutes and regulations just like everyone else.



Museums and historical societies are an important part of preserving culture in local Alaskan communities. Often, interested community members collect objects and host displays of historical and other significant items important to the towns they live in. Fulfilling the ethical obligation to protect and display artifacts in a safe and aesthetically pleasing way requires resources, sometimes more resources than the dedicated volunteers who start the museum can afford. The best way small museums can bring in outside funding is to organize as a 501(C)3 non-profit organization. Like any government application process, there are a lot of hoops to jump through, but there are many resources on the web which can help. There is a good pdf you should read that was written specifically for the Alaskan community association nonprofits but a lot of the same advice can apply to museums. You can find it

here: <http://www.commerce.state.ak.us/dca/pub/NonProfit.pdf>.

There is also a website that outlines the important steps for applying to be a nonprofit in Alaska. <http://www.nolo.com/legal-encyclopedia/forming-nonprofit-corporation-alaska-36042.html>

By following some simple steps putting together a non-profit is a very attainable goal.

- The first consideration in pursuing 501(C)3 status is to assemble a board. The State of Alaska requires that a non-profit board have at least three members aged 19 years or older. It's a good idea to pick board members who have some experience in nonprofit work as well as a passion for the project. The board will need to write bylaws for the new nonprofit as well.
- Next, it's important to choose a name and the State requires that each nonprofit have a unique name. The name cannot be in use by another corporation. It is a good idea to search the state's database of corporations first to make sure the name you choose is not in use. Here is the website where you can search for corporation names. <http://www.commerce.state.ak.us/CBP/Main/CBPLSearch.aspx?mode=Corp> . Try to pick a name that

reflects the work and purpose of the institution. It helps if the museum or historical society has a clear mission statement that gives the institution direction.

- The most essential part of the process is preparing the articles of incorporation that officially register that non-profit with the state. The form for this can be found at the Alaska Department of Revenue's website: http://www.commerce.state.ak.us/occ/pub_corp/08-405.pdf. It's important to keep thorough records of all these steps and keep financial documents well organized.
- A non-profit has to file tax-exempt status requests with both the federal and state government. First, for federal tax exempt status, the non-profit will have to file form 1023, <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f1023.pdf>. After the federal tax exempt status has been achieved it is time to file for the State of Alaska tax-exempt status.
- Keep in mind that once you are up and running as a 501(C)3 nonprofit you must file a biennial report (once every two years) with the state and pay a \$15 filing fee. <https://www.commerce.state.ak.us/CBP/CorporationLicensing/CorpFormIntro.aspx?FormId=-7105>

There are numerous benefits to achieving nonprofit status — the opportunity to apply for foundation grants and receive government funding and tax-exempt individual donations, to name a few. But with these benefits comes responsibility. A museum operating as a nonprofit must fulfill the federal requirements that go along with its tax-exempt status. In short, it must operate responsibly and ethically in a manner that benefits its visitors and the community at large. While many ethical issues are not defined in municipal, state, or federal law, a large list is defined in the American Association of Museum's (AAM) "Code of Ethics for Museums," which was adopted by the association's board of directors in 1993. The code can be voluntarily adopted by both collecting and non-collecting institutions, and it is periodically updated as the need arises. You can download a copy here. <http://www.aam-us.org/museumresources/ethics/coe.cfm>

Although the missions of various museums may vary, each has a duty to care for its collections. A museum operating as a nonprofit organization must especially protect and preserve its collections as a public service to its patrons. This is called the "Public Trust Duty."

AAM recommends that each museum craft its own collections management policy, which really isn't a single policy but rather all the policies that detail the management standards, institution policies and staff responsibilities for caring for a collection. The policy should take into account reproduction, copyright and other legal and ethical issues that could affect artifacts. Accessioning and deaccessioning guidelines that reflect the museum's legal status, bylaws and capabilities should also be detailed in the policy. The policy may also detail protocol to be followed in the event that a museum should close for any reason. In the interest of a museum's integrity, it is always advised to seek professional advice when legal or ethical questions arise.

Ask ASM



Question: Do you know if SortKwik finger moistener (the kind that bank tellers use when they sort money) is safe for archival documents and if not, what is a good alternative?

ASM: In general, if you are talking about archival documents that are meant to be cared for in perpetuity, then preservation standards would need to apply. Using any kind of fingertip moistener is probably not a good idea. For one thing, it implies that documents are going to be handled very rapidly and perhaps without the level of care required. If you are talking about a record with a limited retention schedule, you can use whatever you like, as it will be discarded in a few years. Among the chemicals in SortKwik (the exact formula is likely a trade secret) we're likely to find glycerin (a simple alcohol) that acts as a humectant. This is just a fancy way of saying it attracts moisture. This is to provide a little bit

of grip so your finger won't slip across the paper. But it also is likely to contain other chemicals. Any kind of proprietary substance like this that you might put on a document could result in a stain or an area of deterioration over time. Commercial products are designed for immediate function and working properties, not longevity. Even if you were to use pure glycerin to flip pages, it could solubilize inks or cause surface dirt to pool up in what is known as a tide line.



As an alternative for documents with a retention schedule, you could use the little rubber fingertips. That eliminates the aspect of surface contamination and reaction from a liquid product, but it doesn't change the issue of safe handling practices for archival materials. That you're asking for a device or product to help you flip through materials quickly is a red flag from a preservation point of view. I would worry about ripping staples, dog-earing corners, tearing through thin onion-skin style typing papers etc. The proper way to move accessioned museum documents or paper artifacts around is by slipping a small square of stiff paper underneath the corner of the document and use that to lift it up. This method will keep the original document from getting damaged.

Shaking the Money Tree

BREAKING NEWS: FY12 Funding Finalized

Funding for the Institute of Museum and Library Services has again been reduced as Congress reached agreement on final spending levels for FY12. The bill, H.R. 2055, is expected to be signed by President Obama this week and will provide:

\$30.918 million for the Office of Museum Services (OMS) at the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), a decrease from the current \$31.5 million,

\$146.255 for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), a \$8.435 million decrease from the current (FY11) level, and

\$146.255 for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), a decrease of \$8.435 million.*

**Note: All programs are subject to a .189% across the board reduction.*

National Endowment for the Humanities

It is not too early to be thinking about the NEH Preservation assistance grant. This is a good grant to apply for if you are working on projects that follow up from a MAP or CAP assessment.

The National Endowment for the Humanities Division of Preservation and Access has offered Preservation Assistance Grants for Smaller Institutions for more than a decade. These grants help small and mid-sized cultural heritage institutions such as libraries, museums, historical societies, archival repositories, town and county records offices, and colleges and universities improve their ability to preserve and care for their humanities collections. Awards of up to \$6,000 support preservation-related collection assessments, consultations, training and workshops, and institutional and collaborative disaster and emergency planning. Preservation Assistance Grants also support education and training in best practices for sustaining digital collections, standards for digital preservation, and the care and handling of collections during digitization. Institutions may request funds for a preservation assessment of digital collections. NEH does not fund digitization or the development of digital programs in this grant category.

All applications to the NEH must be submitted through Grants.gov. See the application guidelines for details.

The 2012 guidelines for Preservation Assistance Grants for Smaller Institutions are available at <http://www.neh.gov/grants/guidelines/pag.html>. You will also find sample project descriptions, sample narratives, and a list of frequently asked questions. The deadline for applications is May 1, 2012.

Small and mid-sized institutions that have never received an NEH grant and those considering projects in digital preservation are especially encouraged to apply.

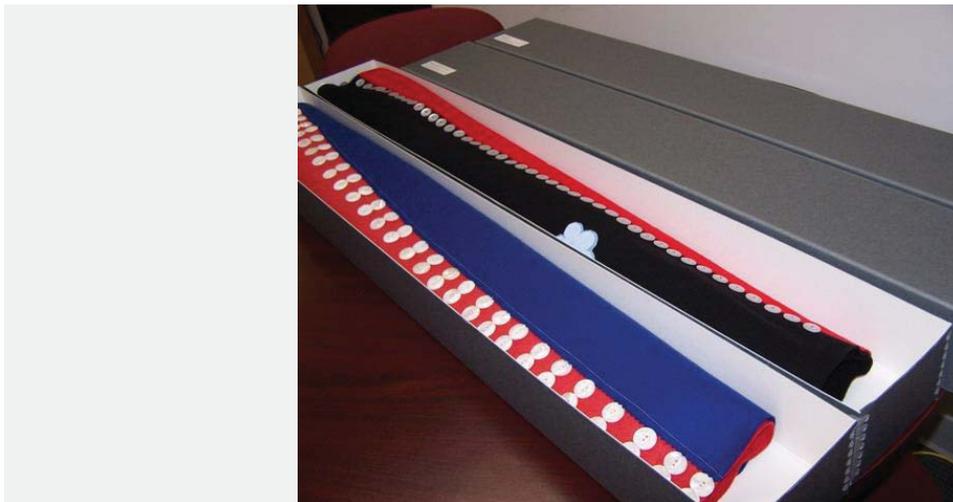
For more information, contact the staff of NEH's Division of Preservation and Access at 202-606-8570 and preservation@neh.gov

See [Free Webinar, March 22, 2012, COLLECTIONS CARE: Writing Your NEH Preservation Assistance Grant](#)

Spotlight on Grant in Aid

The Sealaska Heritage Institute

This Grant-in-Aid award to Sealaska Heritage Institute (SHI) contributed to the purchase of select types of ethnographic object storage materials and boxes. This grant award helped SHI obtain funding toward its museum collections, which have not been as well funded in the past as has SHI's archival and book collections. The purchase of expensive storage boxes, tissue, and other materials, helped preserve special items in SHI's collections. These include the care of Tlingit button robes, which had previously been stored folded-up.



Rolled Tlingit Robes photo by Zach Jones

The grant allowed for the purchase of elongated boxes made for the rolled-storage of textiles, and SHI was able to roll and store 14 of its Tlingit button robes in these boxes. This effort alone will greatly add to the preservation and more proper storage of SHI's button robes. Additionally, textile storage kits for costumes were purchased, which provided for a more professional and proper storage of Tlingit button tunics. Other materials and boxes were purchased that provided improved storage for additional ethnographic objects and SHI's collection of Tlingit place-name research maps. Overall, these materials added greatly to the lifespan of these objects and help preserve them in a more professional method.

ASM on the Road

Curator of Museum Services, Scott Carrlee traveled to the Alaska Jewish Museum and Cultural Center in early January. He worked with Leslie Fried, the new curator of the museum. This museum is currently renovating the space that will become their new exhibit hall.



Future Home of the Alaska Jewish Museum

Alaska Museums in the News

'Boreal Birch': fascination in the familiar

<http://juneauempire.com/art/2012-01-12/boreal-birch-fascination-familiar#.Txnq828S0uc>

Mixing traditional and modern art, Larry Ahvakana builds reputation

<http://www.alaskadispatch.com/article/mixing-traditional-modern-artist-ahvakana-builds-reputation-0>

Plesiosaur fossil finds home at Museum of the North

74 million year old Plesiosaur fossil finds its way to the Fairbanks Museum of the North from Montana.

http://newsminer.com/view/full_story/17091545/article-Plesiosaur-fossil-finds-home-at-Museum-of-the-North?instance=home_news_window_left_bullets

Wrangell Museum moves forward in accreditation process

http://kstk.org/modules/local_news/index.php?op=centerBlock&ID=688

Ancient Eskimo artifacts return to Alaska

26,000 items making up the "Birnik collection" from a Point Barrow site dated around 500 AD have been returned to the University of Alaska Museum of the North by the US Navy. The site had been excavated by Harvard students in the 1950's and was kept at Harvard Peabody Museum for decades.

<http://newsminer.com/bookmark/16748701>

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Professional Development/Training Opportunities

COLLECTIONS CARE: Writing Your NEH Preservation Assistance Grant

Free Webinar: March 22, 2012. 2:00 pm Eastern (2 hrs)

Registration deadline: March 21, 2012

Maximum class size: 80

Class level: Beginner

Instructor: Angelina Altobellis, NEDCC Preservation Specialist

This live, online webinar will cover the important issues that should be considered when preparing to submit an NEH Preservation Assistance Grant.

Emphasis will be on preparing the grant narrative, making the case for your project, getting requisite information from consultants, and putting together a good budget. This webinar is for those who have identified a PAG-eligible project, and want to learn strategies for preparing a strong application.

This webinar is for those who have identified a PAG-eligible project, and want to learn strategies for preparing a strong application. To find out if your project is eligible for a PAG, review grant guidelines at <http://www.neh.gov/grants/guidelines/pag.html> or contact the staff of NEH's Division of Preservation and Access at 202-606-8570 or preservation@neh.gov

To register go to: <http://www.nedcc.org/education/training/calendar.php>

Other NEDCC Webinars

Our slate of Collections Care and Preservation Online courses provide basic, practical training at a low fee (starting at only \$65!) These courses are designed for staff, volunteers, board members, or interns at small to mid-sized museums, historical societies, libraries and archives. Courses can be taken at your own pace, with 2-3 hours of work time per week to be completed at your convenience. The courses feature interaction with qualified instructors and assignments which are based on your own collections.

Spring Courses Include:

Introduction to Reformatting -- February 6 - March 2, 2012

This course should help you determine the best way to approach a digitization project for varying collections and is intended to take the mystery out of digitization vocabulary, while shedding light on technical issues.

Climate Control for Small Institutions -- March 5 - March 30, 2012

This course will allow participants to explore the issues that need to be considered when planning for climate

controls including monitoring, testing, environmental analysis assessments, long-range planning, systems design, construction support, and operations training. Low cost-low tech solutions will be offered and discussed, providing participants with the background knowledge to assist them in making informed decisions that can be implemented at their own institutions

Conservation and Preservation of Photographs and Albums -- April 2 - April 27, 2012
Students will learn about photographs and their many formats: black & white, color, negative, prints, and albums. We will review the major processes, how to identify and date them, how to recognize their deterioration, and what can be done to preserve them.

Basic Preservation, Care & Handling of Paper Based Materials -- April 30 - May 25, 2012
Learn the mechanics behind the degradation of paper materials and how through passive activities and techniques you can slow down the march of time and safeguard your collections.

Visit our website for more information and to register: <http://www.museumwise.org/services/online-courses/4-week-mini-courses>
Questions? call us at 800.895.1648 or email stephanie@museumwise.org

California State Library and the California Preservation Program

Presents: Storing and Managing Digital Collections

Presenter: Jacob Nadal

Date: Tuesday, February 7, 2012

Start Time: 11 am Alaska Time

In the third part of our four-part series on Digital Preservation, this webinar will present and explain:

This webinar will last approximately one hour. Webinars are free of charge and registration is ONLY done on the day of the event on the WebEx server. No Passwords are required. For Tips and Registration Information, please go to <http://infopeople.org/training/webcasts/tips.html>

For more information and to participate in the February 7, 2012 webinar, go to <http://infopeople.org/training/storing-digital-collections>

Core concepts in the storage and maintenance of digital collections.

How computers store data and the significant aspects of disk- and tape- based systems, including RAID arrays and cloud storage

Basic trends in storage pricing and availability

Common reference and assessment models for digital libraries, including the Open Archival Information System (OAIS) and Trusted Repository Audit and Certification (TRAC)

How these technologies and standards manifest themselves in a some common digital repository and content management systems.

Participants will be able to evaluate costs and benefits of different storage methods, the applicability of repository software for their needs, and gain a framework for evaluating their immediate and hypothetical storage needs.

This presentation is the third in the series. Archived webinars are available at:

Digital Preservation: Fundamentals:

<http://infopeople.org/training/digital-preservation-fundamentals>

Digital Preservation: Fundamentals: Text and Images Formats:

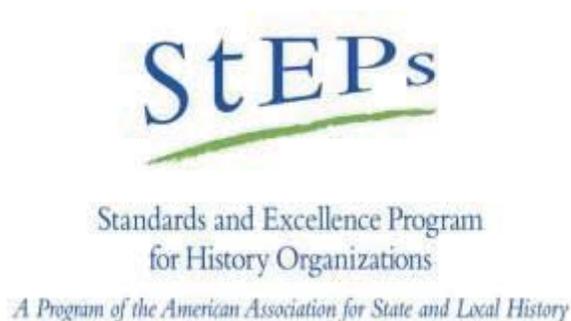
<http://infopeople.org/training/digital-preservation-fundamentals-formats>

This Just In

From the American Association of Museums

- Museums spend more than \$2.2 billion a year on education; the typical museum devotes three-quarters of its education budget to K-12 students.
- The nonprofit arts and culture industry generates over \$166 billion in economic activity annually, supports over 5.7 million full time jobs and returns over \$12 billion in federal income taxes annually. Governments that support the arts on average see a return on investment of over \$7 in taxes for every \$1 that the government appropriates, according to the U.S. Conference of Mayors
- Trips including cultural and heritage activities account for over 23% of all domestic travel, according to the U.S. Travel Association.
- At least 22% of museums are located in rural areas and engage in programs to bring education and access to their materials to their communities in a variety of ways

Standard in Excellence Program (StEPs) Update



Redefining Audiences

AASLH is able to offer the following webinar free of charge with funding generously provided by an IMLS 21st Century Museum Professionals grant. [Register today!](#)

January 27, 2012

Time: 2-3:15 pm Eastern (10 am Alaska Time)

Who are our current audiences and how can we engage new ones? Looking at the most recent U.S. Census, Susie Wilkening will discuss demographic change and the valuable ways in which history organizations can use census data.

Webinar content is supported by StEPs standards and performance indicators. Pre-registration is necessary.

[Click here to register online](#) or to register by phone or mail, contact Terry Jackson, Program Associate, at 615-320-3203 or by email to jackson@aslh.org

Certificate Update

The Seward Museum has earned a Silver Certificate for the Interpretation Section of the StEPs workbook. Congratulations!

Professional Time Wasting on the Web

Athabaskan Snow Show Maker

Watch the new short film The Athabaskan Snowshoe Makers Residency on the National Museum of Natural History You Tube Page at:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/smithsonianNMNH>

Film description:

In May 2011, the Smithsonian Arctic Studies Center, Alaska State Council on the Arts, and Anchorage Museum hosted a workshop to highlight a key implement of Arctic survival – the sinew-webbed snowshoe. Koyukon Athabaskan master artists George Albert and Butch Yaska built snowshoes in several traditional styles while teaching the intricate construction process to apprentices from their communities. Gwich'in Athabaskan culture-bearer Trimble Gilbert discussed the art in his Native language, documenting the rich vocabulary and traditional knowledge that surround this focal item of Athabaskan culture. Museum visitors observed the work in progress, and nearly 200 students and teachers from the Anchorage School District took part in educational tours to meet the artists and learn about Athabaskan culture.

Conservation Controversy

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/04/arts/design/clash-over-restoration-of-leonardos-virgin-and-child.html?src=twrhp>

Major Museums Collect Occupy Wall Street Artifacts

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/12/24/occupy-wall-street-museums-organizations_n_1168893.html

Cloud Computing for Small Museums

<http://discussions.mnhs.org/mnlocalhistory/blog/2011/12/28/cloud-computing-for-small-museums/>

Shapeshifting' exhibit puts Native American art in a new light

http://articles.boston.com/2012-01-04/theater-art/30618774_1_native-american-art-exhibition-curator-primitive-art

This is really amazing! You can “fly” any part of the Alaska coastline:

<http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/shorezone/>

click on shore zone flash site

Cool sign at the Victoria and Albert Museum

<http://vimeo.com/13302135>