

National Endowment for the Arts Grant Award



NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
FOR THE ARTS

A great nation
deserves great art.

The Friends of Sheldon Jackson Museum has received a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. The \$20,000 grant will be used to support their summer Native Artist Demonstrators Program and a lecturer/artist during Native American Heritage Awareness in November for their winter lecture series. The support period for the grant is March, 2009 through November, 2010.

Alaska Native artists are hired to demonstrate and interpret their artwork in the Sheldon Jackson Museum. The artists present traditional Alaska Native art similar to the art reflected in the museum collections and exhibits. These include wood, ivory and silver carving, drum making, beading, skin sewing, basket and textile weaving as they are practiced by Alaska's indigenous cultures, including: Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian, Aleut, Alutiiq, Athabascan, Yup'ik, and Inupiaq. Participating artists are chosen for their acknowledged skill in tradition-based Native arts and for their ability and willingness to discuss their work and their culture.

The program helps visitors make a modern day connection to Native art and culture. The demonstrators, who are of all ages, allow visitors to see that traditional art forms continue to be a part of Native life and culture.

The program works to preserve and encourage "endangered arts" or arts that are now being revitalized such as spruce root and cedar bark basketry, willow root basketry, and Raven's Tail and Chilkat weaving. Beginning artists gain the opportunity to sharpen their artistic and public demonstration skills. Master artists gain the opportunity to share their knowledge with other artists and give their work exposure to a broad audience in a respected state museum. Working in the museum also affords Native artists from all over Alaska the chance to study the Sheldon Jackson Museum's extraordinary collection, one of Alaska's most comprehensive collections of ethnographic period art and technology.

The program will begin the first part of May, 2009. Artists' schedules will be announced at that time.

