

# Bulletin

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## An Information Source for Alaska's Museum Community ALASKA MUSEUM SURVEY RESULTS

Alaska's museums spend more than \$22,400,000 annually, 70 percent of that in their local communities. This is one of the interesting statistics gleaned from the Alaska Museum Survey 2000 conducted by the Alaska State Museum. At the beginning of 2000, the State Museum mailed survey forms to 75 museums and related visitor facilities in Alaska. After two follow-up mailings, 48 museums responded, and partial data from 8 other museums were added from Grant-in-Aid application forms and from the American Association of Museums Official Museum Guide. The database contains information on 56 institutions, with very limited information, such as addresses, on 12 others. Efforts will be ongoing to add new information and update existing information. The State Museum would like to thank those institutions who responded to the survey.

Information has been supplied by individual respondents who may not be using the same criteria for their responses as other participants. In some instances they have had to make estimates or informed guesses. Also, information from some institutions may be from 1999, while other data may be from 2000. While the statistics may have some limitations, they are the best available and are a snapshot of Alaska's museums at this time.

The database has already proved helpful to a number of museums and planning agencies in the state who have been trying to answer questions such as: What are the budgets of city-funded museums? How many cities share museum operations with non-profit groups? What are typical museum salaries? Who funds Alaska museums? We hope the database can be a resource for museums and can serve an advocacy function for the improvement of museum operations statewide.

A more comprehensive printout of the survey results will follow this winter.

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### Museums included in survey results:

Alaska Aviation Museum  
Alaskaland Pioneer Air Museum  
Alaska Museum of Natural History  
Alaska Native Heritage Center  
Alaska Sealife Center  
Alaska State Museum  
Alaska State Trooper Museum  
Alaska Zoo

Alutiiq Museum and Archaeological Repository  
American Bald Eagle Foundation  
Anchorage Museum of History and Art  
Anvik Historical Society Museum  
Baranov Museum / Kodiak Historical Society  
Carrie McLain Memorial Museum  
Circle Historical Museum  
Clausen Memorial Museum  
Cordova Historical Museum  
Crow Creek Mine  
Delta Historical Society  
Dog Mushing Museum  
Dorothy Page Museum  
Duncan Cottage Museum  
Eagle Historical Society and Museum  
George Ashby Memorial Museum  
Heritage Library & Museum  
Hyder Community Association  
The Imaginarium  
Isabel Miller Museum  
Juneau-Douglas City Museum  
Kenai Bicentennial Visitors Center  
Klondike Gold Rush Nat'l Historical  
Last Chance Mining Museum  
Museum of Alaska Transportation & Industry  
Museum of the Aleutians  
Museum of Orthodox Church History, Kodiak  
Oscar Anderson House  
Palmer Museum/Chamber of Commerce  
Pratt Museum  
Resurrection Bay Historical Society  
Sheldon Jackson Museum  
Sheldon Museum and Cultural Center  
Simon Paneak Memorial Museum  
Sitka National Historical Park  
Skagway Museum and Archives  
Soldotna Historical Society & Museum  
Southeast Alaska Discovery Center  
Southeast Alaska Indian Cultural Center  
Sullivan Roadhouse Historical Museum  
Talkeetna Historical Society  
Tanana-Yukon Historical Society  
Tongass Historical Museum  
Totem Heritage Center  
Trapper Creek Museum  
Univ of Alaska Fairbanks Museum  
Valdez Museum & Historical Archive  
Wrangell Museum

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## **Museum Income and Expenditures**

Forty-one museums provided for combined operating expenditures of \$22,405,351. The largest budget was more than \$7 million, the smallest was \$500. Six agencies had budgets of more than \$1 million. All other museum budgets were under \$500,000. The percentage of expenditures that went to local communities ranged from 10 percent to 100 percent, with the average being 70 percent. More than \$15,683,000 went to local communities from the 41 reporting museums.

### **Collections acquisitions**

Thirty-three museums provided collection expense data. Of these, 14 had no budget for acquisitions. The remaining 19 had a combined figure of \$209,288 for acquisitions. The average for all reporting museums was \$6,342.00.

### **Income**

Thirty-nine museums provided revenue data. The Alaska Sealife Center, the Anchorage Museum, the University of Alaska Museum and the Alaska State Museum had incomes of more than \$1 million. All other museums had revenues of \$522,000 or less. Revenue figures totaled \$21,300,309.

Sources of revenue (totals):

Governing agency: \$7,395,755.

Grants: \$6,877,273.

Admissions: \$3,376,362.

Other: \$2,324,311.

Gift shop (net income): \$887,334.

Membership: \$826,133.

### **Staff**

Fifty-three responding museums employed 267 full-time staff and 257 part-time staff. The bulk of these were employed at the 7 largest museums or visitor centers. Most museums had 4 or fewer full-time staff. Thirteen museums had no full-time paid employees but did pay part-time staff. Five museums relied entirely on volunteers.

Museums reported a total of 2,429 active volunteers. Thirty-eight museums benefited from a total of 94,659 volunteer hours annually.

By far the most common use of volunteers was to host visitors and/or act as docents. Other common activities included collection care, maintenance work and exhibit work. Many other duties were listed, from working in the museum store to providing bookkeeping and filling photo orders.

Those museums that indicated they had memberships listed a total of 11,187 members.

Note: Staff salary information is not currently available, but will be provided when Museum Survey data is presented more formally later this year.

## **Visitation**

Annual visitation at 53 reporting museums totaled 2,291,931. Of these visitors, 69 percent were tourists. It should be noted that this figure includes the Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park, which had 650,000 visitors, but does not include the museum at Denali National Park.

Fifteen reporting museums do not charge admission. Twelve museums have a discounted admission charge in the winter.

## **Square Footage**

The average overall square footage of Alaska museums is approximately 11,000 sq.ft. The largest facility reporting was the Alaska Sealife Center with 115,000 sq.ft., followed by the University of Alaska Museum at 40,000 sq.ft. The smallest reporting museum was the Anvik Historical Society with 400 sq.ft.

Average exhibit space is 4011 sq.ft. Office space is 1130 sq.ft. and collection storage is 1403 sq.ft.

## **Types of museums and collections**

### **Governance and ownership**

The survey asked museums: "Who governs them, who owns the collection, who owns the building, who maintains the building and who pays salaries?" The data supplied was not complete, but initial results indicate that:

At least eighteen Alaska museums are entirely non-profit.

Nine Alaska museums and collections are entirely city owned and operated.

Three are State owned and four are Federally owned.

Fourteen museums are non-profit organizations operating in city owned buildings. In some cases the city also owns the collection.

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Of the 68 museums in the database, most identified themselves as Alaska or local history museums. Groupings are as follows:

Alaska or local history: 35

Natural history/wildlife: 7

Historic Building: 6

Cultural Centers: 6

Ethnographic: 4

General: 4

Historic Park: 4

Other (Air / Science): 2

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The reporting museums' collections contain 2,229,330 objects, many of these being archaeological specimens.

Eighteen museums ranked local history objects as the largest percentage of objects in their collection. Thirteen museums listed Native Alaskan objects as being the most numerous, eleven listed Alaska History, eight ranked Arts & Crafts first, four ranked Natural History as the dominant collection and one said Archival Materials were the most common.

When the different types of collections within individual museums are ranked and those rankings are then totaled, a similar, but slightly different pattern emerges:

1. Local History
  2. Native Alaskan
  3. Alaska History
  4. Archival Materials
  5. Arts & Crafts
  6. Natural History
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Some other statistics:

Eight museums are in log buildings. (Other log buildings are part of larger parks or historical societies.)

Only fourteen museums have humidity controls.

Does your museum have job descriptions? Yes = 38. No = 8.

Does your museum have a long-range plan? Yes = 31. No = 15.

Does your museum have a membership group? Yes = 32. No = 14

Does your museum have a disaster preparation plan? Yes = 27. No = 18.

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## FY2002 Grant-in-Aid Awards

The Alaska State Museum has announced the awarding of 16 grants totaling \$105,600 to Alaska museums. The annual Grant-in-Aid awards are funded by an appropriation from the legislature, which this year increased the available funding by \$20,000. Thus, approximately 4 more grants could be funded this year. Overall, 23 applicants requested more than \$179,000. As has been true in past years, many of the requests were to fund improvements in collection maintenance and storage.

The following museums received awards:

Clausen Memorial Museum, Petersburg, \$2,000 for a MAP II survey.

Museums Alaska, \$10,000 for Professional Development Conference expenses and planning.

Totem Heritage Center, Ketchikan, \$10,000 for protective barriers for open storage area.  
Skagway Museums and Archives, \$7,450 to purchase freezer for collection protection.  
Sheldon Museum and Cultural Center, Haines, \$5,362 for completion of storage upgrade project.

Kenai Visitors and Cultural Center, \$7,565 for collection storage upgrade.

Juneau-Douglas City Museum, \$8,070 for photo documentation and collection inventory.

Gastineau Channel Historical Society, Juneau, \$2,934 for purchase of a computer and peripherals for society and collection management.

Pratt Museum, Homer, \$9,986 for a media specialist and computer to initiate new interactive Kachemak Bay exhibition plan.

Alutiiq Museum & Archaeological Repository, Kodiak, \$10,000 for interactive computer kiosk for exhibits and outreach.

Eagle Historical Society & Museum, Eagle City, \$9,871 for upgrade of Han (Athabaskan) exhibit.

Carrie McLain Museum, Nome, \$7,980 to catalog and scan a portion of museum photo collection.

Talkeetna Historical Society, \$4,655 for conservation supplies, equipment and exhibit upgrade.

Cordova Historical Society, \$6,627 for a photograph collection cataloging and access project.

Resurrection Bay Historical Society, Seward, \$1,650 to purchase and install a security camera and monitor.

Bristol Bay Historical Society, Naknek, \$1,450 for a heating unit for building.