



# STATE LIBRARIES, ARCHIVES AND MUSEUMS **FINAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

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SEPTEMBER 2009

*Preserve the Past*

*Educate Alaskans*

*Realize Potential*

*Prepared for:*

State of Alaska, Department of Transportation and Public Facilities  
for Alaska Department of Education and Early Development  
Division of Libraries, Archives & Museums  
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### Acknowledgments

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### Executive Summary

This document is the 2009 Final Needs Assessment for the Alaska State Libraries, Archives and Museum project (SLAM) located in Juneau. It presents a clear picture of the facility requirements to protect Alaska's cultural and historic resources and to make those treasures more accessible to all citizens of Alaska. This work has been done by RISE Alaska as project manager with Steve Fishback as architect, under contract through the Alaska State Department of Transportation for the Department of Education and Early Development's Division of Libraries, Archives and Museums (LAM).

The value of collecting and maintaining the State's history was recognized long before statehood. The U.S. Congress established the Alaska Historical Library and Museum in 1900. A new museum was built by the community of Juneau and turned over to the State of Alaska in 1968 to honor the centennial of Alaska's purchase. At that time, the Alaska Historical Library was separated from the Alaska State Museum and became a part of the Alaska State Library that had been established in 1955. The Alaska State Archives was created in 1970. The State Archives entered its current building in 1975. In 1991, the Commissioner of Education and Early Development (EED) created the Division of Libraries, Archives and Museums. The buildings that are home to these facilities are failing, too small, and technologically insufficient. The facilities are not integrated for efficient research and operations. The collections are not connected physically or digitally for statewide access.

- The State Libraries have suffered from water leaks and lack of lighting and environmental controls in the State Office Building, with no more room to grow while maintaining an easily accessible collection.
- The State Archives building is failing structurally with a large crack in its walls as building slumps downhill off bedrock. The collections are at 98% capacity.
- The State Museum has been at capacity for visitation and storage since the mid-1980s. Now, the collections are partially housed in a leaking basement near water pipes and in a temporary annex next to the museum.

### Aligned with State Education Priorities

The State Board of Education and Early Development (EED) approved the *Alaska Education Plan* dated March 19, 2009 which was drafted from the visions and priorities of the 450 educators, parents, students, businesspeople and legislators who attended the November 2008 Statewide Education Summit. One of the key visions from this plan is "*our graduates understand the past and build the future.*" This vision is parallel to LAM's vision: "Preserve the Past; Educate Alaskans; Realize Potential.

There is also an Alaska History Education requirement for students to earn at least one-half credit in Alaska History in order to graduate from high school. LAM can provide Alaska's educators and students with statewide access to information on Alaska's regional history, geography, cultures, Russia's colony, territorial history, government and modern-day Alaska.

### Protect Alaska's Treasures

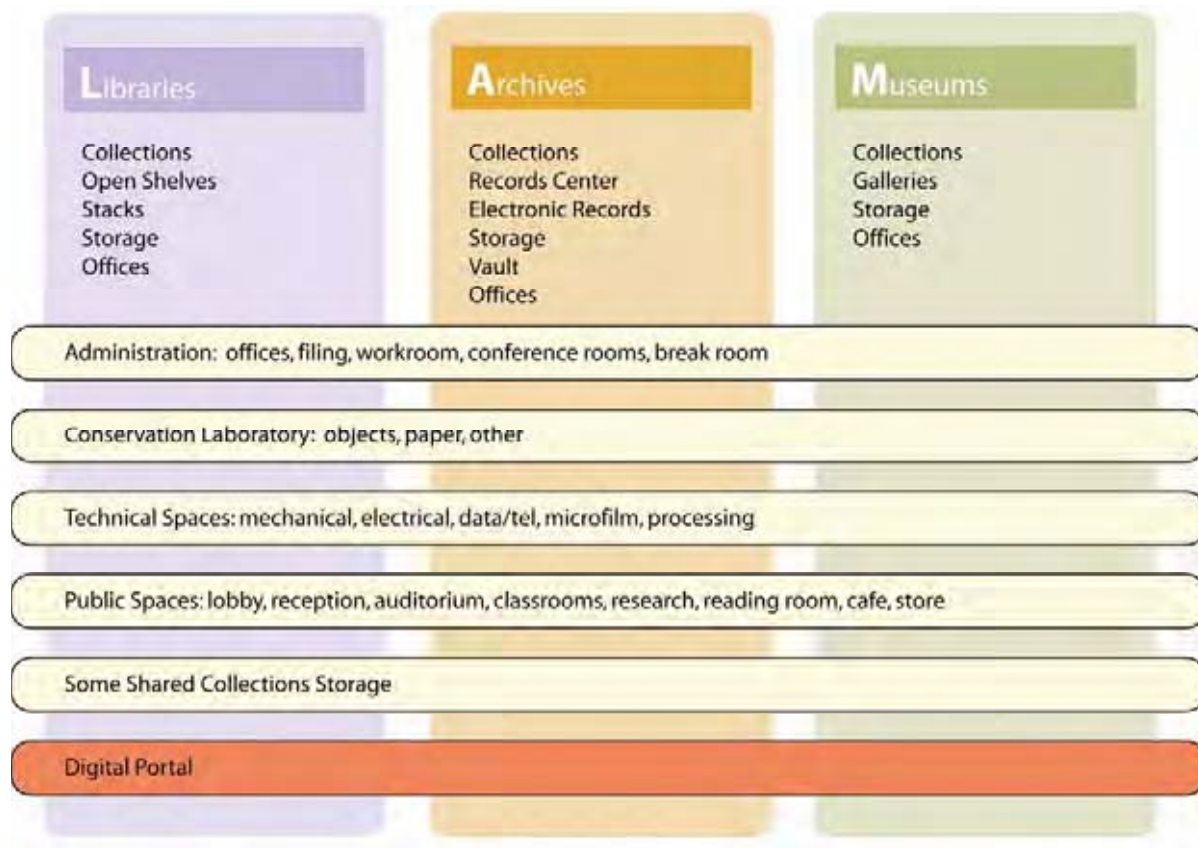
It is time to plan for a new facility to protect Alaska's treasures in an integrated storage and conservation space, while providing physical and virtual access to the legislature, and citizens of Alaska. Integrating the services, collections and staff physically and virtually will better serve the educational and heritage needs of Alaskans statewide. A digital portal that integrates the Alaska's collections of artifacts, manuscripts, files, publications and official records of Alaska's State government will enable statewide and global users to connect to the rich resources of the State's history.

### Site

In 2002, the State acquired a 1.58-acre vacant lot contiguous to the State Museum in Juneau with an appropriation of \$1.5 million from the Alaska Legislature. The intent was to provide the land to consolidate the collections and services for the State Libraries, Archives and Museum, now in three separate facilities. This lot is adjacent to the 2.05-acre museum property, thereby providing a combined total of 3.65 acres for SLAM facilities.

### Space Requirements

After extensive user interviews with SLAM staff members and stakeholders in 2005-6 and again in 2008-9, facility space requirements have been summarized. This approach assumes that the public areas, technical, administrative and collections spaces in the new facility would be shared.



The program diagram on the previous page illustrates the independence of the three primary functions: Libraries, Archives and Museum. Each of the three organizations requires security and rigorous environmental controls and will maintain separate collections to fulfill their specialized missions.

At the same time, a consolidated facility will result in many opportunities for shared spaces. Some of these multi-party areas include administrative offices and workrooms; conservation laboratory for objects, paper and other materials; technical spaces for mechanical, electrical and communication systems, as well as for microfilm and digital processing. Some sharing of collections storage is considered for large format and special conditions materials such as film and microforms. A significant opportunity is sharing of public spaces for the lobby, auditorium, reading rooms, classrooms, conference rooms and staff spaces. A visitor will enter the lobby with a central reference desk and be guided seamlessly across collections to what is needed.

Similarly, the virtual visitor from Alaska or around the world will enter a common Digital Portal accessing the collections through finding aids, search functions and digitized artifact images and information. The intention is to integrate LAM functions where possible recognizing there will be some protocols and collections that will require separation. The overall goal is to provide seamless access to the physical and virtual visitor.

### **Project Cost Estimate**

The full project cost estimate includes hard costs (site work, new construction, renovations, contingency) and soft costs (design, contingency, fixtures and equipment, management). Estimations, Inc. prepared the preliminary building cost estimate. Costs are now escalated due to the three years intervening, and changes in scope by LAM staff as they continue their strategic effort to integrate services, organization and operations.

Hard costs	\$72 million
Soft costs	\$21 million
Exhibits	\$5.5 million
<b>PROJECT COST ESTIMATE</b>	<b>\$98.5 million</b>

### **Outreach**

Initial outreach efforts in 2006 included stakeholder interviews with representatives of 35 groups statewide, and an email poll of other state libraries, archives and museums regarding their expansion projects. A project fact sheet outlined the project need and approach. A project brochure was distributed with presentations to the annual meetings of the Alaska Historical Societies and Museums Alaska. The 2006 Preliminary Needs Assessment and cost estimate was completed.

The SLAM Statewide Advisory Committee (SSAC) was created to provide statewide input on the project, advisory support to LAM and develop constituency support statewide. The first SSAC meeting was held in Juneau in February 2009 to discuss LAM programs, pros and cons of the current LAM system. Since then, the SSAC has convened via teleconferences to advise the