

Museum Assessment Program

Community Engagement Assessment
Final Report 2011

AMERICAN  ASSOCIATION OF MUSEUMS

The American Association of Museums' Museum Assessment Program is supported through a cooperative agreement with the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

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Congratulations on the hard work you have put into completing MAP!

Enclosed is your final assessment report from your peer reviewer. I hope that you will find the report's content helpful to your organization as you move towards best practices and meeting national standards. Your peer reviewer has written a set of recommendations and resources that will hopefully provide you with the direction and insight that you were seeking through the Museum Assessment Program.

In addition to your report, MAP staff has also included a grant proposal writing guide and a list of state specific resources to help you implement your MAP report. We hope that these materials will supplement your other MAP resources, including access to the AAM Information Center, AAM 2010 and 2011 on-demand Museum Essentials Webinar series, and your MAP bookshelf. Remember that you can access the AAM Information Center through the rest of the year by using the username and password: **mapee11**. You can also contact them directly at infocenter@aam-us.org with questions and for sample documents. Please mention that you are a MAP participant. *This benefit can be extended through AAM Institutional Membership.*

Your peer reviewer is another wonderful resource. This relationship should not end now that you've received your report. Feel free to contact your reviewer to discuss your report and next steps. You can also consult MAP staff with any questions at 202-289-9118 or map@aam-us.org.

Thank you for participating in MAP, and we hope to work together again.

Kind Regards,



Jill Connors-Joyner
Assistant Director, Museum Assessment Program

MUSEUM ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ASSESSMENT

REPORT

Sacajawea Interpretive, Cultural and Educational Center

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Dates of Visit: August 29-30, 2011

Executive Summary

The Sacajawea Center is a wonderful institution that needs to be better appreciated and supported. The staff and volunteers are all dedicated, enthusiastic, and professional in everything that they do. Their love for and respect of the history of the area and their commitment to their audience are remarkable.

After a few days at the Center, it is obvious that the Center is at a turning point in its history. The rationale for seeking this MAP reflects this desire: to assist in setting the priorities for long-term planning, to determine weaknesses in over-all operations, and to examine the staff resources.

Recognizing the limits of the Sacajawea Center in terms of financial and human resources, I have attempted to give some ideas and recommendations to help focus the energies of governing bodies, board, and staff. While it may at times seem daunting, taken step-by-step and prioritizing them at the Board and staff level, these things will fall in place.

Full recommendations may be found in the text below and in the Summary of Recommendations in the back. To summarize the following pages is difficult, but there are several basic areas or specific recommendations that come to the forefront after careful reflection:

- Implement a volunteer appreciation program that acknowledges and awards the volunteers for their contributions.
- The mission statement needs to be redone to reflect the current situation and hopes for the future.
- The Strategic Planning process needs to begin immediately, with focused goals and measurable benchmarks.
- There needs to be a full-time director with experience in the management of an educational/cultural organization, there should be a half-time education director, a half-time curator, a half-time volunteer coordinator, and a half-time facilities manager who is also in charge of rentals.
- Participation in the American Association for State and Local History's "Visitors Count!" program would be extremely beneficial, as would participation in AASLH's "Standards and Excellence Program for History Organizations" (StEPs)..
- What is needed is a new collaborative model that brings the Center into a closer working relationship with the community of Salmon.
- The Sacajawea Committee needs to be formalized as the governing/advisory body of the Center.
- The Friends organization needs to be formalized as its own 501(c)3 to provide financial support, political leverage, and volunteers.
- Signage has got to be improved.
- Given the lack of funds, the use of the internet is vital, one person needs to be in charge of maintaining and developing the site.
- The Agai DKika Shoshones need to be cultivated and included.
- The Center needs to position itself as the definitive resource for Native American and frontier studies and actively market itself to the local, regional, and home schools.

- Develop a board manual that can provide a general understanding of the mission and operations of the Center, and guide how a board member should act.
- The exhibit in the Interpretive Center needs better labels on the objects that provide interpretation, context, and ownership.
- Adopt the PastPerfect software for collections to keep track of everything.
- The Store needs immediate telephone access for credit card approval.
- Evaluate everything.

I hope that the following is of some assistance.

Introduction

The Community Engagement Assessment of the Museum Assessment Program is designed to assess the Center's understanding of and relationship with its various communities to help the Center respond to the changing nature of its audiences and incorporate them into planning and operational decisions. As a peer reviewer it was my role to evaluate conditions on site and to provide this written report to suggest ways for the Center to achieve their goals and meet their challenges as set out in the Self-Study and on-site visit. In all meetings with MAP participants, I made it clear that my role was that of an impartial observer, to suggest ways to better identify weaknesses and better use strengths, and to foster a broad commitment to following the best professional practices within the framework of their resources.

I arrived in Salmon, Idaho, on the evening of August 28, and toured the area in my car. It was interesting to note that a “Shakespeare in the Park” production was being held on the grounds of the Sacajawea Center that evening that seemed to be very well attended.

On August 29, I met with Judy Barkley, half-time Director, and Bonnie Jakubos, full-time Volunteer Coordinator over breakfast to discuss the goals for MAP and the schedule of events. That morning I met with Jill Smith, Facilities and Marketing Coordinator (15 hours/week), Wendy Koons, Educational Programs Coordinator (15 hours/week), Sahrayh Krants, seasonal Grounds and Buildings Coordinator (seasonally 15 hours/week), Jakubos, volunteer historian/docent/site host Mike Crosby, and Mayor Leo Marshall. I had lunch with Barkley and Jakubos, before having a facilities tour with Barkley, Jakubos, and Crosby. I then attended a meeting of the Sacajawea Committee, including Barkley, Crosby, Jakubos, Sherry Elrod (Salmon Valley Stewardship, Children's Garden Project), George Miley (former City Councilor, docent), Ken Hill (City Councilor), Bob Russell (unofficial president of the Friends), Joe and Denyce Bigley (Outdoor School Program). Several other volunteers and staff joined the meeting as it progressed and as it evolved into a reception. Among the guests at the reception were the mayor, more volunteers, and several of the Center's Partners. An informal dinner followed with Barkley and Jakubos.

On August 30, I met with Joe and Denyce Bigley to talk about the Outdoor School and Challenge Course, Barkley, Jakubos, and volunteer Ruth Young – the only volunteer who took the opportunity of the time allotted for volunteers to meet with me. An exit interview with Barkley followed before I left at noon. At that time, George Miley took me to the Lemhi County Historical Society and Museum and the Salmon Valley Business Innovation Center.

Throughout my visit, discussions always centered around the three objectives that the Sacajawea Center had for this process: to improve their ability to raise funds to support community needs, to improve their ability to communicate with the community, and to improve their ability to meet audience needs through exhibitions and programming. These objectives remained unchanged since the Self-Study.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Ms. Bonnie Jakubos, who put the whole program together, and to all of those who took some of their valuable time to meet with me.

Institutional History

The Sacajawea Center is located in the city of Salmon, Idaho. According to the census of 2000, 3,122 people reside in the city, with a population density of 1,813.2 per square mile. The racial makeup of the city is 96.76% Caucasian, 0.19% African American, 0.54% Native American, and 0.29% Asian. The median income for a household in the city is \$26,823, and the median income for a family is \$34,844. Salmon is a small, rural community where growth and industry are stagnant, and there are many deserted buildings and an aging, stressed infrastructure left over from when the oil and mining industries left. Lemhi County, of which Salmon is the capital, is dominated by government ownership (about 90% of the county is owned by the government – US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, etc.); Its predominant industries are government, tourism (fly-fishing, hunting, rafting, Lewis and Clark Trail), and some ranching. The Sacajawea Interpretive, Cultural and Educational Center is a city museum with little funding through the city.

The Sacajawea Center was a project envisioned by Lemhi County residents, members of the Lemhi Shoshone Tribes, and a diverse group of other partners, including federal and state agencies. The project was to correspond with the national Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commemoration and to celebrate Salmon's role as the birthplace of Sacajawea. In September 2001, the City of Salmon purchased a 71-acre property one mile east of Salmon for the site. Construction of the facility was funded by grants, predominantly a bicentennial HUD grant.

Several years ago the Center went through a very trying time as the City of Salmon contemplated closing the Center. This was avoided, but in the process the Center lost its full-time director (city funded) and full-time secretary (alternatively funded). At that time, immediately before their biggest event of the year, Heritage Days, the city hired their half-time Recreation Director as the Center's half-time Director and allowed her to hire three 15 hour/week professionals to run the Center. Since that time, the budget has been very restrictive (see below), with a more-or-less unofficial Friends group providing some funds. Meanwhile, the Center's Partnership organization has fallen inactive and may be obsolete, and the governing Sacajawea Committee searches for its footing.

The budget is extremely unstable, with 74% described as “unstable” in the Self-Study. The 2011 budget totaled \$113,126, of which \$56,376 was personnel related. The budget was funded by the City of Salmon, \$80,126; Bureau of Land Management, \$20,000 for the outdoor school and education curriculum development, the Bureau of Reclamation, \$10,000, and the Lewis and Clark Trails Committee, \$3,000. A large part of the budget covers general operational overhead – utilities, janitorial supplies, insurance, printing, supplies, etc. Interestingly, there is no line item for any maintenance of the site.

The Center has 71 acres with interpretive trails, amphitheater, Interpretive Center/gift shop (with a small exhibit), Meriwether Theater in an old barn for programs, outdoor school area, challenge course, and a new Learning Center which houses offices and program/rental space. Given a very small staff, the Center hosts many activities and programs, including: an outdoor school, Heritage Days, Agai Dika Days, interpretive presentations, Kids Garden Club, 1805 Living Experience, and Tough Stuff for Girls.

Audiences and Community

The Mission Statement (2006) of the Sacajawea Center is: *To honor and provide education regarding Sacajawea and her people, the Agai Dika Shoshone, and their role in Idaho and American West culture; and stewarding Lemhi River front lands for future generations.*

The Sacajawea Center defines its community as the traveling public, local Lemhi residents within 10-15 miles of Salmon, and youth program participants. Its target audiences are destination travelers, and they seek increased local participation of a broader cross-section of the community. The Center has no organized method of addressing the audience needs, nor is there anything beyond the informal gathering of information about the audience. There is a 2007 Master Plan based on community input and consultants that include a goal for greater community involvement, attendance at, and support of the Center. Other goals are for formal operating agreements for new and/or additional resources for the operation of the Center, a transfer to the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (now a moot point), and a goal to increase revenue. The team for this plan included the then-director of the Center, various self-identified partners (US Forest Service, Salmon Valley Stewardship, Lemhi Shoshone, Lemhi County Historical Society, Bureau of Land Management, Lewis and Clark Trail Committee, and two professional planners). Audience participation in this effort was apparently minimal if existent. Public involvement in the MAP Self-Study included 105 returned questionnaires, 76% of which were from people aged 50 and over, typical of their general audience as anecdotal evidence indicates that the Center is more heavily used by the older population.

The Center addresses the needs of its self-identified audience through a very ambitious program of activities by an exhausted staff and corps of volunteers, and of which evaluation is minimal. These activities include an interpretive trail, outdoor school, Heritage Days, Agai Dika Shoshone Days, interpretive presentations in the Meriwether Theatre, a community garden, a Kids Garden Club, 1805 Living Experience (a journey in experimental archeology and applied primitive technology recreating daily activities and experiences of people living on the frontier), Tough Stuff program for girls, classes, concerts, and a very popular Howl-O-Ween event. The outdoor school provides a hands-on primitive living experience and education that may include: survival camp, hide tanning, leather working, flint knapping, beading, challenge courses, felting, etc. A Food for Thought program offers a venue for guest speakers and presenters to bring their expertise and knowledge alive to visitors. There are also creative programs for a Sacajawea Center CSI, a water adventure camp, and puppeteering. Programs are available for individuals, families, and groups. Without a very dedicated corps of volunteers and strong base of grant support, none of these would be possible. However, staff and volunteers are overwhelmed and feel unappreciated.

The Center tries to involve the Native American community, but with the reservation over three hours away, that involvement is limited. Even after moving this year's Heritage Days to a date better suited for Native American involvement, none showed up. Previous efforts have had limited success. The Agai Kika Shoshone need to be cultivated and included. Every effort needs to be made to make them a part of the

Native American-related events; even a token participation would be beneficial. Perhaps a Sacajawea Committee meeting could be held on the reservation once or twice a year. Going a little bit out of the way can bring tremendous dividends.

For the walk-in visitor, the Interpretive Center that is designed to give people a general orientation is difficult to find. The Interpretive Center also houses the store, but it is unable to accept credit cards without calling the Learning Center office to run the charges. The interpretive trail is excellent, maintained well by the one seasonal staff, volunteers, staff, and staff spouses. Signs show evidence of wear and need treating, and more interpretive signage is needed, along with seating opportunities. Signage has got to be improved. The biggest improvement would be to have a large sign between the parking area and the Learning Center directing people to the Interpretive Center and providing an annotated map to the site.

Mission:

Staff has recognized that the mission statement needs to be redone. While it was exceedingly appropriate during the bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, it is no longer sufficient to their reach. As more and more people come to the Center to enjoy non-Lewis and Clark events, the nature trail, rental opportunities, and such programs as the Challenge Course, it becomes obvious that the mission statement needs to be changed to reflect these opportunities. It was interesting to see, for example, how the Tough Stuff for Girls Program managed to “fit” the mission; as a program to build stronger, more self-reliant women and to build teamwork, it fit the mission since Sacajawea was a strong, self-reliant woman and the Lewis and Clark Expedition succeeded because of teamwork. We have all learned to bend our mission statements, but the Sacajawea Center's mission statement needs to reflect more of its current direction, while at the same time strengthening its ties to the community.

It was interesting that in most of my discussions with staff, stakeholders, governing bodies, and volunteers, “Sacajawea” was rarely mentioned. I doubt that many, outside staff, know what the mission statement is, although it is prominently posted at various locations on the grounds (a very nice touch). While Lewis and Clark and Sacajawea are still very popular in Europe and among aficionados, I suspect that since the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial, the interest in Sacajawea and the Expedition has lessened dramatically in the local community. Local residents see the Center as more of a park and site for a nature trail. To meet this particular challenge, the mission statement also needs to be changed.

An expanded mission statement might read: *The mission of the Sacajawea Center is to honor and provide education regarding Sacajawea and her people, the Agai Dika Shoshone, and their role in Idaho and American West culture, and the region; to provide stewardship of the Lemhi River front lands for future generations; and to provide interactive, educational opportunities for the people of Salmon and all visitors to learn and appreciate the legacy of Sacajawea, her people, the Lewis and Clark Expedition, and those that followed.*

Strategic Planning:

As mentioned above, the current Master Plan was implemented in 2007, and in light of developments since then, it is very out of date. While hoping that this MAP report will serve as a basis for the next strategic plan, the staff and governing bodies of

the Sacajawea Center need to understand that this reviewer had only the Self-Study and a day-and-a-half on site from which to make his observations. Stakeholders, staff, volunteers, governing bodies, and the public must be involved in any strategic planning process. As the Center struggles to find and identify and struggles to achieve community buy-in, the community must be involved. This process needs to happen soon, and needs to address fundamental issues, such as the mission statement, funding, staffing, and vision.

There is an understandable but lamentable lack of a formal, planned, integrated vision for the Sacajawea Center, understandable because of the lack of finances and inadequate staff. The lack of funding means that all resources go towards maintaining the status quo, and the staff is already too stressed in trying to do their jobs in only 15-20 hours per week. Staff were unanimous in lamenting their inability to devote as much time as they need to get their jobs done. Staff, at all levels, put in more time than they are paid, spouses are overused, and when events such as Heritage Days come along they have to put in extra hours during that time period, while cutting back on hours in later weeks. As it is, there are frequent times when no staff is on site and the Center is operated entirely by volunteers. This is clearly a recipe for institutional disaster.

A vision statement needs to be created and adopted that would flesh out the mission statement with specific talking points establishing how the Center sees itself accomplishing the mission and how the Center sees itself as a cultural part of the community. This would be the document for such phrases as: “inspiring a sense of place and history,” “a welcoming place,” “supporting and giving voice to diverse cultural perspectives,” etc. The vision statement is also the place for a list of core values, or what the Center is committed to on a general, institutional basis, i.e., openness, integrity, excellence, relevance, etc.

Following, or concluding the vision statement should be a statement of implementation strategy that states more practically how the Center will accomplish the mission and vision, setting the stage for the strategic plan.

While the staff is trying to get the message out to the community, ideally, all members of the governing authority, staff, and volunteers should be able to recite the Center’s mission statement, and should be aware of the general visitation of the institution.

The Strategic Planning process needs to begin immediately. A real strategic plan will provide buy-in from all involved parties and will provide a definite 3- to 5-year plan with focused goals and measurable benchmarks. If a consultant can be found, perhaps the city or another non-profit in the community has a facilitator that could be used, or perhaps someone within the Idaho Association of Museums or the state museum could be prevailed upon to help. Governing bodies, staff, stakeholders, Partners, Friends, and the public need to be included in the early phase of Strategic Planning in order to get the most participation and eventual buy-in. The actual Plan should be developed by representatives of the governing body and staff. The resulting plan should include goals, action steps, timelines, delegation of responsibility, and budget implications. Technological implications must be addressed; the fact that the Center does not have an effective printer or copier is incredible. After the Plan is approved by the required body, a general slideshow or PowerPoint presentation about the Center, its Mission, Vision, and Strategic Plan should be made that could be taken to civic, educational, and cultural

organizations for programs that will help the community see the value of the Center for the entire community.

Policies:

Beyond the Strategic Plan, there is a lack of policies to drive the mission forward. While the Center states that it has collections, no one knows where they are or what they are, a Collections Policy is obviously needed or the Center needs to decide if it is or it is not a collecting museum. Other policies that are needed include: Building and Grounds (rental, housekeeping, and maintenance), Education, Emergency/Disaster Plan, Ethics, Exhibit, Marketing, Volunteer. Developing these policies with the involvement of community members would encourage greater community buy-in and develop possible future board members. I recommend that a board/staff committees be formed, with outside community members, consultants, other museum professionals, etc., that would look at each policy and develop real policies that govern each area of the Center's operations. These policies would outline not only philosophy, but establish guidelines for budgeting, evaluation, community involvement, responsibilities, and timelines. By involving volunteers, governing entities, and the public, the Center would be increasing its community visibility and gaining greater support, as well as educating the public about the needs for advancement. As part of your MAP participation, you have access to sample documents from the AAM Information Center. You can request sample policies by emailing infocenter@aam-us.org.

Each functional area should have a specific committee and every Sacajawea Committee meeting should devote some time to each area. As major benchmarks are met, there should be some sort of celebration to acknowledge that fact, before moving on to the next benchmark. Without having some fun, without some recognition of progress being made, board and staff will lose sight of progress being made and will face burnout.

This process will also establish the committees that will address the policies in each area. Additionally, by drawing members of the community, outside of the board, into the process, the community will have invested in the Center and new people will be motivated to move into board and board leadership positions, thus expanding the pool of people available to do the work.

Marketing:

There is no marketing budget and no plan. With a minimal printing budget of \$1,500 for Fiscal Year 2011, and \$1,000 for Advertising and Legal Publications, there is in reality no marketing budget. That said, the marketing efforts of the Center are commendable. Rack cards are distributed in the area. I was informed by Ms. Jakubos that she made sure that the rack cards were at the Idaho Visitors Center at Lost Trail Pass to Montana, and rack cards were noted at a variety of businesses in town. However, the process is very haphazard. Brochures for programs and events are distributed, and staff makes use of the local radio station and newspaper. Given the lack of funds, the use of the internet is vital, particularly to non-local and especially to the international audience that loves Western and Indian history. Focused efforts should be made, particularly to Europe and Japan. Before and after the site visit I frequently surfed the Internet to look at Salmon sites (the city, not the fish) and while some sites one can easily find the Sacajawea Center, many sites were more difficult, including the city's home page. One person needs to be in charge of maintaining and developing the site. This could be done

by a talented volunteer, perhaps involving a younger person, thus meeting one of the desires of the assessment to get younger people more involved.

Schools:

I received conflicting information from staff and volunteers about attendance by school groups. While staff informed me that there had been no school groups due to lack of transportation funds, volunteers informed me that there had been plenty of school groups attending the site. Whatever the case, the Center needs to position itself as the definitive resource for Native American and frontier studies and actively market itself to the local and regional schools. Contact with home schools would also be beneficial and perhaps see greater response given their greater freedom to travel. While the use of college interns has been done and is being contemplated, the nearest colleges or universities are hours away in Missoula, Pocatello, Idaho Falls, and Boise. Use of these institutions should not, however, be discounted since there are many hungry undergrad and graduate students who would love to spend a semester or a summer volunteering working with one of the preeminent Lewis and Clark sites to beef up their resumes.

Public Perception

The Sacajawea Center is located in the city of Salmon, Idaho. According to the census of 2000, 3,122 people reside in the city, with a population density of 1,813.2 per square mile. The racial makeup of the city is 96.76% Caucasian, 0.19% African American, 0.54% Native American, and 0.29% Asian. The median income for a household in the city is \$26,823, and the median income for a family is \$34,844. Salmon is a small, rural community where growth and industry are stagnant, and there are many deserted buildings and an aging, stressed infrastructure left over from when the oil and mining industries left. Tourism is the biggest industry, although numbers were not available. Lemhi County, of which Salmon is the capital, is dominated by government ownership (about 90% of the county is owned by the government – US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, etc.); Its predominant industries are government, tourism, increased mining, and some ranching. Other cultural organizations include: Lemhi County Historical Society and Museum, Salmon Arts Council, Salmon Public Library, Salmon Valley Chamber of Commerce, and Salmon Valley Stewardship, according to the Salmon Valley Guest Guide.

The Center has an intuitive understanding of its audiences, understandable given its lack of resources for a formal study. It knows it draws heavily from the county audience (those who are not taxed to support the Center), it knows that the city audience is often upset about having to pay taxes to support the Center after the public had been inaccurately told in the beginning that tax money would not be required for maintenance of the Center, and it knows that it draws a good sized audience from Lewis and Clark Trail travelers, including a good foreign audience. Unfortunately, it obtains its demographic information informally, through a guest book, informal visitor surveys, informal donation and ticket sale data, and program registration forms. The information obtained is minimal – age, reason for visit, quality of program or experience, who they came with, and area of residence. They regard their most successful program to be facility rentals as this provides income, acceptance, and visibility although it strains the mission. The Center's marketing and public relations efforts are minimal with minimal target group surveys, Facebook, and informal inquiries of the visitors. The community primarily values the Center as a space for meetings, special events, and a nice place to walk. Promotional activities are basic, with banners, blog, rack cards, e-mails, e-newsletter, Facebook, mailings, memberships, free and limited paid advertising, press releases, and a web site. The web site is very good and interactive but there needs to be a set policy and formal procedures and dedicated responsibilities for making this work. Public relations and marketing account for 1.2% of the budget and the Center only belongs to the Chamber of Commerce. A consistent logo is needed to build awareness. There is a big misunderstanding about the nature of the funding of the Center and a need for greater media presence to show that the Center is a place for children and families to come and learn and have fun. The Center uses its facilities as rentals for community organizations. There are summer concerts in the amphitheater (the only one in the area), Challenge Course, Howl-O-Ween event, Heritage and Kids' Gardens, and many other programs that the Center identifies as public programs not supported by the mission, although they are providing a place for physical activity, the building of self-esteem and life skills, as well as a venue for meetings, conferences, workshops, weddings, and other gatherings. Despite staff misgivings about the Howl-O-Ween event, it is a crowd pleaser,

provides funds, gains the Center positive attention from the city audience, and fits the proposed new mission.

Frankly the Center needs to do audience research, it needs to find out who its audience really is and what it really wants. For example, do the locals simply want a place to rent for parties and meetings or a place to jog and walk their dogs, or do they truly value what the Center brings to the community in the way of cultural activities and tourism. By learning what the audience knows and wants, it then becomes easier to focus on how to educate them on why the Center matters. At the conclusion of my visit, Mr. Miley suggested having community businesses give discounts to people wearing the Sacajawea Center admission stickers. While this might be a hard sell but would be entirely voluntary; it could be and should be argued that the businesses will actually gain revenue and not lose it since people will be more inclined to spend more and stay longer in town. While this may be a good idea, it would have to come out as an initiative of the Chamber of Commerce or some other business organization in partnership with the Center.

As cultural institutions we need to realize that we are in competition with television, the web, the mall, movies, sports, etc., we have to know what our audience wants if we want them to support us. We can no longer live with the belief that we know what our audience needs and wants and then give it to them. We are sellers of a product and if the public doesn't want our product, they won't buy it. Evaluations are absolutely vital to every aspect of operations. The Center should send out an evaluation form to all members, with an incentive to complete and return it. Membership is the strongest constituency and if they aren't happy then something is seriously wrong. Even if they are happy, and I have every confidence that they are, they will have ideas that may make things better. In the strategic planning process, the Center needs to interview people in the community outside the membership for reasons why they come to the Center or why they don't come to the Center, and ask them what the Center could do to meet their needs. Board members or volunteers should conduct oral interviews with people who walk in to the Center and find out why they came, what they expected to experience, was their experience positive, and what could be done better. Staff and board should call friends and neighbors with the same questions. One of the most important and most unasked questions is: "Why don't you come to the Center?" Have volunteers poll the audience at the festivals or programs as another source of information.

The Center doesn't know what its audience is or what the current audience thinks of it. Participation in the American Association for State and Local History's "Visitors Count!" program would be extremely beneficial. Participation in this would provide much needed information on how to meet visitor expectations. It would provide confidential data and feedback that would create a visitor-driven strategic and long range plan, strengthen marketing and fund raising efforts, and focus improvement efforts on what matter to the visitors. While this is expensive (\$4,200), it would be a way for the staff to obtain the information that they are missing and are currently unable to obtain themselves. This might be something that the Friends organization could fund, thus not using any of the Center's severely limited city provided budget and not supplanting city funded activities.

Governance:

One of the hardest parts of the Center's problems to address is the lack of support that it has from the City of Salmon and from its Partners. On the part of the City of Salmon, the governing body and funding body, this is a tragic absence of public perception.

To help the Center in their public efforts there is a group of official "Partners," which were established at the very beginning but have outlasted their importance. These are the Shoshone-Bannock Tribe, Bureau of Land Management, Salmon Challis National Forest, Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, Idaho Governor's Lewis and Clark Trail Committee, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Lemhi County Historical Society, Salmon Valley Stewardship, Salmon Arts Council, and Lemhi County Humane Society. These Partners used to meet with the purpose of supplying financial and technical assistance and to promote the organizations and their missions. Since the change in staffing, this Partnership Committee has not met, although some are also members of the Sacajawea Committee which serves as a sort of governing/advisory body. While I believe that in the beginning the Partnership concept helped to get the Center established, I believe that it is largely unnecessary today. The aims of this partnership do not seem to benefit the Center, there is a lack of interest by the other partners to participate, and any needs that the Center have for assistance in any given area can be better obtained by direct contact with the appropriate organization. Given the limited amount of staff time to do anything, trying to keep this group together seems counterproductive.

What is needed is a new collaborative model that brings the Center into a closer working relationship with the community of Salmon. Closer coordination with the Economic Development Association, Chamber of Commerce, Builders Association, Salmon Arts Council, Lemhi County Historical Society and Museum, newspaper, radio station, civic organizations, retail associations, outfitters, and schools would provide a reciprocal relationship that in the end would benefit the Center through increased exposure in the community and increased buy-in of the Center's mission by community leaders. Additional funding opportunities might also reveal themselves.

The governing/advisory Sacajawea Committee is made up of City Council members appointed by the Mayor and Center staff. Its purpose is to review the operations and programming at the Center while the director reports directly to the Mayor and City Council. The Sacajawea Committee needs to be formalized as the governing body of the Center. Instead of dealing directly with the Mayor and City Council, a formalized, structured Sacajawea Committee could provide the buffer the Center needs and expansion of the Committee will increase its visibility in the community. Membership in this Committee would include members of the City Council, the Mayor or his designate, the Center's Director, the important and functioning Partners, the president of the Friends organization, and representatives of the business community. This would provide a clearer direction and focus and would provide the Center with a stronger advocate to the whole City Council, since that organization will always be the final decision maker.

The Friends organization needs to be formalized as its own 501(c)3, separate from the Salmon Valley Stewardship organization. Anecdotally there are lots of people who are strong supporters of the Center. They need to be organized to provide financial support, political leverage, and volunteers. Currently Friends-only events are held and an occasional public event. Funds received by memberships and programming could be

used to supplement the Center's budget, helping the Center do things that the city-funded budget doesn't. These funds need to be recognized as not taking the place of any of the city-funded money; these funds would be supplemental, to provide necessary support for specific projects – perhaps funding participation in AASLH's "Visitors Count!," a printer/copier, or other much-needed projects. The temptation for the City Council to see Friends funds as a way to cut back on city funds MUST not be permitted, the Center can only achieve success with multiple avenues of revenue. Additionally, the Friends would provide an umbrella for other fund-raising activities. While many funding organizations will balk at providing grants to a government entity, they are more than happy to give to a non-profit organization. Friends events will provide more visibility and greater buy-in from the community and the more events that occur, the more Friends will be raised. The Friends could sponsor a centennial recognition program, with ceremonies and plaques for buildings reaching the centennial marker. The Friends group could also provide an umbrella for a docent organization. The docents are overworked and feel very under appreciated at this point. An organization of the docents, with the Education Programs Coordinator, would create an arena where the docents can meet, socialize, perhaps go on field trips, and help plan for the future. Friends fundraisers, while raising funds and awareness, also are excellent vehicles to further an active engagement with the community, be it with the local garden club or Rotary Club, or by hosting a holiday bazaar or community flea market.

Public Involvement

Overall the public perception of the Sacajawea Center is that it's a nice, safe place to take a nature hike. This is not the definition of a cultural center or museum. Some fundamental changes have to happen if the Center is to be a success. Primarily, the City Council needs to become positively involved in supporting this gem of an institution that brings people to Salmon, to spend money, from around the world.

The broader community is involved with the Center as volunteers, limited financial supporters, in-kind providers, committee participants, event participants, vendors, and as Partners. Communication with the community is through focus groups, annual meetings, informal inquiries, open houses, events, participation in membership-based community organizations, and social media. Collaboration with other organizations is through the Friends of the Sacajawea Center and the currently unused Partners organization. Perceived strengths are the passion of the Center's volunteers and the variety of its partners. The perceived weakness is a lack of youth involvement.

That being said, the Center is at a turning point: the Center has grown and the demands on it have grown. The staff is very dedicated and enthusiastic, and recognizes the need to professionalize the operation of the Center. The current governing/advisory board needs to be more involved in the operation of the Center with a more active committee structure, based on the functional divisions of Center operations (administration, education, collections, etc.). An active committee structure can also strengthen the Center's engagement with the community, and it will lessen the workload expected of an overworked staff. By delegating work to committees, the work of the whole board will be facilitated, potential new board members can be groomed by becoming familiar with the Center at the committee level, and there will be much greater buy-in by everyone concerned. And, do not be caught in the trap of one-person committees. The board and staff should do annual self-evaluations to make sure that they are all on the same page and understand their duties and responsibilities. Often the outcome of these self-evaluations can spot and allow rectification of some important misunderstandings.

One problem with the lack of a strategic plan and the lack of policies is that there is no standardized understanding of what the Center is, does, and where it is going. The lack of a board manual makes this situation even worse. Even with the lack of a strategic plan and policies, a board manual can at the very basic level provide a general understanding of the mission and operations of the Center, and a guide for how a board member should act. Board members are volunteers who receive no salary for their service. Ethical and legal standards prohibit financial gain from service on the board. Board members receive many other rewards through their work, they have opportunities to understand the inner-workings of the Center which are often unknown to the general public, they can gain friendships with people who share a commitment to public service, and they always have the opportunity to learn more about the history of the area. Perhaps the greatest reward comes from the fulfillment of contributing to the present success and future security of an important cultural institution. Individually, board members must use their expertise to address the specific and distinct demands of the Center. The board manual needs to address the issues of general board functions, fiduciary, collections, exhibits, public programs, management, delegation of authority, and policy development and implementation. The governing authority is minimally involved and needs to

expand. With an intermediate governing/advisory body between the Center's operation and the City Council, the Center will be able to recruit new members to the organization, and obtain much needed expertise in finance, human resources, law, risk management, etc. All members of the new body should have a beginning orientation, training period that exposes them to all aspects of the Center's operation so that they can see the fundamental needs that are lacking so that they can then lobby and fund raise to meet those needs. Diversity can also be better served with a new governing/advisory body in that recruitment can target ethnic, age, sexual, and cultural diversity to also broaden the Center's appeal and outreach in the community.

Staff is less than minimal. No museum or cultural organization of such a scope that is the Sacajawea Center can function productively with a half-time director whose focus is recreation, and three 15-hour/week professional employees who cannot get their work done. Were it not for volunteers, and especially the efforts of Jakubos and spouses, the Center could not function at all. While efforts have been made to train staff, to send them to professional meetings and workshops, to go on field trips, and allow flex time to accommodate courses, there is very limited funds for these efforts and any attendance at any of these opportunities merely means that staff has less time to do their jobs at the Center. There needs to be a full-time director with experience in the management of an educational/cultural organization, there should be a half-time education director, a half-time curator, a half-time volunteer coordinator, and a half-time facilities manager who is also in charge of rentals. These increases would involve a big leap of faith by the City Council since it would also involve increased costs in flex benefits as well as in salaries. Without these increases the Center stands to lose its present staff and would find itself hard-pressed to find replacements at what is being offered. To expect staff to work extra hours for special events and then adjust their hours down after the event is counterproductive to the efficient operation of the Center; the needs of the Center do not decrease simply because staff isn't there. Increased funds would have to come from increased rentals, increased admissions – everyone should pay an admission fee, including full fee for county residents who do not provide tax support to the Center, and discounted fees for city residents. Admission fees should be raised but there should also be a discounted admission fee for senior citizens, and members of the Friends group and children under 6 should be admitted free. School groups from the city should also be free, while others should have to pay some sort of perhaps sliding fee depending on the situation. People are used to and expect to pay admissions to cultural organizations and events. The Sacajawea Center should be no different.

Volunteers are overworked and frequently some of the docents have to staff the Center all alone. This seems to be a liability issue for the City Council to consider and another reason why increased staff is necessary so that there is always a staff member on site while the Center is open. Volunteers are also feeling very under appreciated in the aftermath of the changes following the resignation of the former director. Admittedly staff has very little time for their own jobs, let alone to show appreciation for volunteers. But staff has to make time. They cannot simply drop off supplies or cash to the docents and then rush back to their jobs. They have to spend time with the volunteers and make them appreciated. Easy ways to show appreciation include appreciation buttons, photographs and acknowledgment on the web site, a volunteer appreciation picnic held off site where staff serves the volunteers. Volunteers also need to include the members of the Friends governing board, the governing/advisory board, and City Council – they all

are important volunteers in the successful running of the Center. Jakubos should be treated as the staff member that she is and featured on the web and in all other publications as “volunteer staff,” while a way to fund her position needs to be pursued.

However the crux of the matter is that financial resources are minimal and financial sustainability is almost nonexistent. With 40% of the Center's funding coming from what has been a reluctant City Council and 74% regarded as unstable, changes have to happen. Without increased funds there can be no extended staff hours, no maintenance, no growth. Developing a formal Friends group will help, but the City Council has to step up and see that the city has an important resource in the Sacajawea Center that they do not appreciate. Hundreds, if not thousands of visitors come to Salmon every year only because the Center is there; and these tourists not only visit the Center, but buy gas, groceries, shop in stores downtown, go to restaurants, and stay overnight at campgrounds and motels. Could not the county also provide some funding, at least for some targeted operational areas?

The Self-Study states that the Center's top funding needs in order of priority are: staff, repairs and maintenance, and facility improvements. This reviewer concurs. Without increased staff the Center cannot meet it's proclaimed mission and obligations and without repairs and maintenance the Center's facilities will deteriorate to a point where no one will come. Facility and programmatic improvements will follow. Grants will not suffice and since many grants require hard, cash matches, they can become counterproductive in their own right. Funds must be raised; through increased city support, a new and vibrant Friends organization, increased rentals, and an invigorated store.

Public Experience

The Sacajawea Center needs to step back and congratulate itself on what it has accomplished and what it offers to the community. While the challenges are daunting, they can and will be met. Meanwhile, the staff and volunteers who are doing so much with so little need to take a deep breath and realize that they have been doing an incredible job with such limited resources.

The Center has a good anecdotal understanding of its demographic community, but has no institutionalized approach to test that perceived knowledge. Without knowing who the audience is and determining what they want, the Center cannot realistically endeavor to serve their needs.

Staff develops programs based on mission-driven considerations but without any formalized input from the audience or without any general philosophy or policy. The Center has a wide variety of impressive programs that are attractive and well thought out, but there is no governing policy to guide their development, and no formal evaluative component to test their worth. Small, understaffed and volunteer organizations frequently fall in the trap of trying to do too much, they put so much time and effort and resources into an event only to make barely enough money to justify it. There are times when it would be easier and more profitable if those organizing an event each wrote a check for \$100 than to work two months and spend hundreds if not thousands of dollars to barely break even on the event (and this I speak of from a long, long line of similar experiences). If a popular program or event is not paying for itself then the question needs to be asked, "Why do it?" There may be many good reasons to continue to do a program – community service, tradition, contracts, etc., but at least ask the question.

The Center is active in the community with festivals, fundraisers, and limited educational programming. These activities include: an accessible interpretive trail, outdoor school, Heritage Days, Agai Dika Shoshone Days, interpretive presentations in the Meriwether Theatre, a community garden, a Kids Garden Club, 1805 Living Experience (a journey in experimental archeology and applied primitive technology recreating daily activities and experiences of people living on the frontier), Tough Stuff program for girls, classes, concerts, and a very popular Howl-O-Ween event. The outdoor school provides a hands-on primitive living experience and education that may include: survival camp, hide tanning, leather working, flint knapping, beading, challenge courses, felting, etc. A Food for Thought program offers a venue for guest speakers and presenters to bring their expertise and knowledge alive to visitors. There are also innovative programs for a Sacajawea Center CSI, a water adventure camp, and puppeteering. Programs are available for individuals, families, and groups. Without a very dedicated corps of volunteers and strong base of grant support, none of these would be possible. This is a phenomenal menu of programs for such a small staff and it is a wonder that they can pull it off time and time again and maintain their good humor and dedication. The Agai Dika Shoshone need to be cultivated and included. Every effort needs to be made to make them a part of the Native American-related events; even a token participation would be beneficial. As mentioned earlier, perhaps a Sacajawea Committee meeting could be held on the reservation once or twice a year. Going a little bit out of the way can bring tremendous dividends.

Educational outreach needs to be strengthened. The board should establish an Education Committee to create a Education Policy. All programs need to have a budget

from the very beginning, realistically arrived at and conscientiously adhered to. Develop a more focused series of outreach specific grade levels, with a lot of hands-on components in the trunk shows. Evaluate everything.

For the walk-in visitor, the Interpretive Center is designed to give people a general orientation to the role of Sacajawea and her people in the area, Sacajawea with the Lewis and Clark Expedition, the Sacred Homeland, and the Agai Dika today. The exhibit is limited by space, is hands-on and contains no artifacts. Disturbingly no one seemed to be sure if the Center actually owned artifacts – several thought the Center did, but assumed that the Lemhi County Historical Society was somehow in possession of them. Nor was there any list of the objects on display, although the common assumption was that they were temporary, supplied largely by the volunteers and school program participants. A further difficulty for the walk-in visitor, as I found out myself when I first arrived and stopped the evening before the MAP was to begin, was that it was difficult to find the Interpretive Center. Staff and volunteers are aware of this, vegetation has grown up to obscure the building, the new Learning Center building is clearly visible and attracts one's immediate attention, and directional signage is lacking.

The exhibit in the Interpretive Center is a good introduction to Sacajawea and the Shoshone, but there needs to be more labels on the objects that provide interpretation, context, and ownership. A list has got to be made of these objects and stored in the Center's main computer, at this time probably in the Educational Programs Coordinator's computer. The Center's exhibits were limited. The current exhibit in the Interpretive Center (which is more of an Orientation Center than an Interpretation Center) needs to be better labeled interpretively, objects identified, and hands-on areas clearly delineated. The walls of the Learning Center need to be utilized to continue to inculcate the mission of the Center. This area could be used for short-term exhibits, mostly flat wall exhibits so as not to impede with rental needs, but small cases could be constructed that could be easily moved to the side as necessary. The staff and board needs to develop an Exhibit Policy that would include philosophy, a 5-year schedule, budgets, responsibilities, and evaluation components. Develop thematic labels and interpretive text for all exhibits. Place "Do Not Touch" signs and erect physical barriers between the audience and artifacts on display. Certainly, clearly, definitively find out what are collections and what are not. Adopt the PastPerfect software for collections to keep track of everything. Incorporate more hands-on opportunities for the audience. Develop a routine gallery checklist that includes walkthroughs in a housekeeping manual; this will catch crooked labels, dirty glass, burned out light bulbs, etc. Evaluate everything. Develop a short evaluation form that can be given to everyone who comes to the Center asking them what works in the exhibits and what could be done better.

The Interpretive Center also houses the store, but it is unable to accept credit cards without calling the Learning Center office to run the charges. The store needs immediate telephone access for credit card approval, one can only assume that purchases, probably large purchases are being lost for lack of this. Selling Native American craft items on consignment from tribal members might be a way to inculcate positive relations with the tribe.

The interpretive trail is excellent, largely handicapped accessible and well maintained by the one seasonal staff, volunteers, staff, and staff spouses. Signs show evidence of wear and need treating, and more interpretive signage is needed, for example at the beaver lodge, sweat lodge, chicken coop, cabin, school camp, and Challenge

Course. Other areas are done very well, like the fish weir. Signage has got to be improved. The biggest improvement would be to have a large sign between the parking area and the Learning Center directing people to the Interpretive Center and providing an annotated map of the site. Signage along the interpretive walk needs to be treated and upgraded to prevent further deterioration. Other interpretive signs need to be added to enhance the visitors' experience, such as at the beaver lodge and sweat lodge.

The Board needs to establish a Marketing Committee, using non-board members from the advertising and marketing industries and tap into the Business Departments of area colleges for interns or class assignments to help understand their market and to help develop a marketing plan to use the precious marketing dollars in a way to get a bigger bang for the buck. This committee should conduct a real audience evaluation and then produce a true marketing plan with benchmarks, evaluation of marketing cycles, understanding the markets and competition, look at the marketing tools, and assess all aspects of customer service. The Center needs to make sure that its rack cards are distributed to all of the businesses in the area. Hosting an after work reception for the immediate local businesses, and networking with the Chamber, Rotary, Kiwanis, etc., can only win friends and influence.

The volunteer force at the Center is small but marvelous – their enthusiasm, dedication, professionalism, and friendliness are enviable. There needs to be a formal Volunteer Manual with clearly defined job descriptions, with an evaluation component that has the responsible staff person performing formal evaluations of all volunteers. Investigate the possibility of using volunteers to do building and grounds maintenance, thus alleviating staff responsibility. Implement a volunteer appreciation program that acknowledges and awards the volunteers for their contributions – this can be as simple as the presentation of a bouquet of flowers at the annual meeting, a special page on the web site, a display of the volunteers' pictures during Volunteer Appreciation Month, a volunteer appreciation picnic hosted by the staff and/or board. And do not forget that the most dedicated volunteers are those who serve on the board and I would strongly recommend having an annual board appreciation party where board members, staff, and significant others can get together on a social level, no business permitted, to get to know each other outside their responsibilities at meetings, events, and fundraisers.

Summary of Recommendations

When I first arrived at the Sacajawea Center, I was impressed. When I left after intensive interviews and tours, I was even more impressed with the potential, but dismayed by lost opportunities. Staff and volunteers are to be commended for their efforts given the scarcity of resources at their disposal.

Recognizing the limitations of the Center, and acknowledging their desire to learn and meet professional standards, the following are the key recommendations included in the full report. One always realizes that on visiting a museum one is exposed to a very limited picture and some of these recommendations may not make sense on site. On the other hand, some of these recommendations are very easy to implement. It is, I hope, a road map for your use.

First, a major decision has to be made by the City Council. Is the Sacajawea Center merely a drain on the city's budget and only a place for people to have a nice nature walk? If so, then the Center should be made into a park. However, the Center brings to Salmon an incredible opportunity for economic and cultural growth and vivacity that should not be overlooked. If, upon making the decision that the Sacajawea Center is a valuable part of city government and responsibility, I would recommend that the Center take part in the American Association for State and Local History's Standards and Excellence Program for History Organizations (StEPs). This is a voluntary, self-assessment program developed by AASLH for small- and mid-sized museums, historic houses, historical societies, and other history organizations. This self-study program uses assessment questions and performance indicators (Basic, Good, Better) to rate policies and practices in six standards areas: mission, vision, and governance; audience; interpretation; stewardship of collections; stewardship of historic structures and landscapes; and management. The Center will be able to clearly identify and document strengths and areas needing improvement so it will be able to begin taking steps to plan for positive change. Participation also includes benchmarks and certificates for completion at each level. It is constructed so that an organization can do it all at once or take one area at a time for study. I would highly recommend this.

High Priority:

- Implement a volunteer appreciation program that acknowledges and awards the volunteers for their contributions – this can be as simple as the presentation of a bouquet of flowers at the annual meeting, a display of the volunteers' pictures during Volunteer Appreciation Month and on the web, a volunteer appreciation picnic hosted by the staff and/or board. And do not forget that the most dedicated volunteers are those who serve on the board. I would strongly recommend having an annual board appreciation party where board members, staff, and significant others can get together on a social level. Showing appreciation can include appreciation buttons, photographs and acknowledgment on the web site, a volunteer appreciation picnic held off site where staff serves the volunteers. And, Jakobos should be treated as the staff member that she is and featured on the web and in all other publications as “volunteer staff,” while a way to fund her position needs to be pursued.
- The mission statement needs to be redone. While it was appropriate during the early years, it is no longer sufficient to the Center's reach. As more and more

people come to the Center to enjoy non-Lewis and Clark events, the nature trail, rental opportunities, and such programs as the Challenge Course, it becomes obvious that the mission statement needs to be changed to reflect these opportunities.

- A vision statement needs to be created and adopted that would flesh out the mission statement establishing how the Center sees itself accomplishing the mission and how the Center sees itself as a cultural part of the community.
- The Strategic Planning process needs to begin immediately. A real strategic plan will provide buy-in from all involved parties and will provide a definite 3- to 5-year plan with focused goals and measurable benchmarks. Governing bodies, staff, stakeholders, partners, Friends, and the public need to be included in the early phase of Strategic Planning in order to get the most participation and eventual buy-in. The actual Plan should be developed by representatives of the governing body and staff.
- There needs to be a full-time director with experience in the management of an educational/cultural organization, there should be a half-time education director, a half-time curator, a half-time volunteer coordinator, and a half-time facilities manager who is also in charge of rentals.
- Participation in the American Association for State and Local History's "Visitors Count!" program would be extremely beneficial, as it would provide much needed information on how to meet visitor expectations and help to create a visitor-driven strategic and long range plan, strengthen marketing and fund raising efforts, and focus improvement efforts on what matter to the visitors.
- What is needed is a new collaborative model that brings the Center into a closer working relationship with the community of Salmon. Closer coordination with the Economic Development Association, Chamber of Commerce, Builders Association, Salmon Arts Council, Lemhi County Historical Society and Museum, newspaper, radio station, civic organizations, retail associations, outfitters, and schools would provide a reciprocal relationship that in the end would benefit the Center through increased exposure in the community and increased buy-in of the Center's mission by community leaders.
- The Sacajawea Committee needs to be formalized as the governing body of the Center. Instead of dealing directly with the Mayor and City Council, a formalized, structured Sacajawea Committee could provide the buffer the Center needs and expansion of the Committee will increase its visibility in the community. Membership in this Committee would include members of the City Council, the Mayor or his designate, the Center's Director, the important and functioning Partners, the president of the Friends organization, and representatives of the business community. This would provide a clearer direction and focus and would provide the Center with a stronger advocate to the whole City Council.
- The Friends organization needs to be formalized as its own 501(c)3, separate from the Salmon Valley Stewardship organization. It needs to be organized to provide financial support, political leverage, and volunteers.
- The current governing/advisory board needs to be more involved in the operation of the Center with a more active committee structure, based on the functional divisions of Center operations (administration, education, collections, etc.). An

active committee structure can also strengthen the Center's engagement with the community, and it will lessen the workload expected of an overworked staff.

- Signage has got to be improved. The biggest improvement would be to have a large sign between the parking area and the Learning Center directing people to the Interpretive Center and providing an annotated map to the site.
- Evaluate everything.

Lower Priority:

- Given the lack of funds, the use of the internet is vital, particularly to non-local and especially to the international audience that loves Western and Indian history. Focused efforts should be made, particularly to Europe and Japan. One person needs to be in charge of maintaining and developing the site, this could be done by a talented volunteer, perhaps a involving a younger person.
- The Agai Dika Shoshones need to be cultivated and included. Every effort needs to be made to make them a part of the Native American-related events; even token participation would be beneficial. Perhaps a Sacajawea Committee meeting could be held on the reservation once or twice a year.
- The Center needs to position itself as the definitive resource for Native American and frontier studies and actively market itself to the local and regional schools. Contact with home schools would also be beneficial and perhaps generate greater response given their greater freedom to travel.
- One problem with the lack of a strategic plan and the lack of policies is that there is no standardized understanding of what the Center is, does, and where it is going. The lack of a board manual makes this situation even worse. Even with the lack of a strategic plan and policies, a board manual can at the very basic level provide a general understanding of the mission and operations of the Center, and a guide for how a board member should act.
- The exhibit in the Interpretive Center needs better labels on the objects that provide interpretation, context, and ownership. A list has got to be made of these objects and stored in the Center's main computer,
- Adopt the PastPerfect software for collections to keep track of everything. Incorporate more hands-on opportunities for the audience. Develop a routine gallery checklist that includes walkthroughs in a housekeeping manual.
- The Store needs immediate telephone access for credit card approval; and sell Native American craft items on consignment from tribal members.
- Evaluate everything.

This will take time, but patience and perseverance pay off in the long run.

I have included in the report more information on each recommendation, additional recommendations, and specific reference material follows that may be of assistance.

I might also suggest getting in contact with the Tribal Museum Network, through the Mountain-Plains Museums Association. They would be a tremendous resource.

Good luck.

Resources

Web sites:

aam-us.org
aaslh.org

Associations:

American Association of Museums
American Association for State and Local History
Idaho Association of Museums
Western Association of Museums

Programs:

AASLH's Standards and Excellence Program for History Organizations
AASLH's Visitors Counter

Books and Pamphlets:

Note, this is just a small sampling of the books and resources available through AAM and AASLH, visit their web sites and browse.

Fundraising for Small Museums, by Salvatore G. Cilella, Jr.

The Small Museum Toolkit, edited by Cinnamon Catlin-Legutko and Stacy Klingler

This includes toolkits on :

- Leadership, Mission, and Governance
- Financial Resource Development and Management'
- Organizational Management
- Reaching and Responding to the Audience
- Interpretation: Education, Programs, and Exhibits
- Stewardship: Collections and Historic Preservation

Consumer Research for Museum Marketers, by Margot A. Wallace

Museum Basics, by Timothy Ambrose and Crispin Paine, Routledge

Strategic Planning Workbook for Nonprofit Organizations, by Bryan W. Barry

Welcome to the Board, by Fisher Howe

The American Association of Museums Code of Ethics, by AAM

Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension of Museums," edited by Ellen Cochran Hirzy

The AAM Guide to Collections Planning, by James B. Gardner and Elizabeth E. Merritt

Mission-Based Marketing, An Organizational Development Workbook, by Peter C. Brinckerhoff

Mastering Civic Engagement: A Challenge to Museums, by AAM

Finally, I would offer the Historical Museum at Fort Missoula policies and procedures to you as needed, as well as myself.

Characteristics of Excellence for U.S. Museums

1. PUBLIC TRUST & ACCOUNTABILITY

- 1.1 The museum is a good steward of its resources held in the public trust.
- 1.2 The museum identifies the communities it serves, and makes appropriate decisions in how it serves them.
- 1.3 Regardless of its self-identified communities, the museum strives to be a good neighbor in its geographic area.
- 1.4 The museum strives to be inclusive and offers opportunities for diverse participation.
- 1.5 The museum asserts its public service role and places education at the center of that role.
- 1.6 The museum demonstrates a commitment to providing the public with physical and intellectual access to the museum and its resources.
- 1.7 The museum is committed to public accountability and is transparent in its mission and its operations.
- 1.8 The museum complies with local, state, and federal laws, codes, and regulations applicable to its facilities, operations, and administration.

2. MISSION & PLANNING

- 2.1 The museum has a clear understanding of its mission and communicates why it exists and who benefits as a result of its efforts.
- 2.2 All aspects of the museum's operations are integrated and focused on meeting its mission.
- 2.3 The museum's governing authority and staff think and act strategically to acquire, develop, and allocate resources to advance the mission of the museum.
- 2.4 The museum engages in ongoing and reflective institutional planning that includes involvement of its audiences and community.
- 2.5 The museum establishes measures of success and uses them to evaluate and adjust its activities.

3. LEADERSHIP & ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

- 3.1 The governance, staff, and volunteer structures and processes effectively advance the museum's mission.
- 3.2 The governing authority, staff, and volunteers have a clear and shared understanding of their roles and responsibilities.
- 3.3 The governing authority, staff, and volunteers legally, ethically, and effectively carry out their responsibilities.
- 3.4 The composition, qualifications, and diversity of the museum's leadership, staff, and volunteers enable it to carry out the museum's mission and goals.
- 3.5 There is a clear and formal division of responsibilities between the governing authority and any group that supports the museum, whether separately incorporated or operating within the museum or its parent organization.

4. COLLECTIONS STEWARDSHIP

- 4.1 The museum owns, exhibits, or uses collections that are appropriate to its mission.
- 4.2 The museum legally, ethically, and effectively manages, documents, cares for, and uses the collections.
- 4.3 The museum's collections-related research is conducted according to appropriate scholarly standards.
- 4.4 The museum strategically plans for the use and development of its collections.
- 4.5 Guided by its mission, the museum provides public access to its collections while ensuring their preservation.

5. EDUCATION & INTERPRETATION

- 5.1 The museum clearly states its overall educational goals, philosophy, and messages, and demonstrates that its activities are in alignment with them.
- 5.2 The museum understands the characteristics and needs of its existing and potential audiences and uses this understanding to inform its interpretation.
- 5.3 The museum's interpretive content is based on appropriate research.
- 5.4 Museums conducting primary research do so according to scholarly standards.
- 5.5 The museum uses techniques, technologies, and methods appropriate to its educational goals, content, audiences, and resources.
- 5.6 The museum presents accurate and appropriate content for each of its audiences.
- 5.7 The museum demonstrates consistent high quality in its interpretive activities.
- 5.8 The museum assesses the effectiveness of its interpretive activities and uses those results to plan and improve its activities.

6. FINANCIAL STABILITY

- 6.1 The museum legally, ethically, and responsibly acquires, manages, and allocates its financial resources in a way that advances its mission.
- 6.2 The museum operates in a fiscally responsible manner that promotes its long-term sustainability.

7. FACILITIES & RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 The museum allocates its space and uses its facilities to meet the needs of the collections, audience, and staff.
- 7.2 The museum has appropriate measures to ensure the safety and security of people, its collections and/or objects, and the facilities it owns or uses.
- 7.3 The museum has an effective program for the care and long-term maintenance of its facilities.
- 7.4 The museum is clean and well-maintained, and provides for the visitors' needs.
- 7.5 The museum takes appropriate measures to protect itself against potential risk and loss.

American Association of Museums: Characteristics of Excellence for U.S. Museums *In Plain English*

PUBLIC TRUST & ACCOUNTABILITY

Be good
No really—not only be legal, but be ethical
Show everyone how good and ethical you are
(don't wait for them to ask)
Do good for people
Know which people
And to be on the safe side
Be nice to everyone else, too
Especially if they live next door
Avoid cloning
Look something like the people you are doing good for
And maybe a bit like your neighbors
Let other people help decide what games to play
And what the rules are
Share your toys

MISSION AND PLANNING

Know what you want to do
And why it makes a difference to anyone
Then put it in writing
Stick to it
Decide what you want to do next
When you are deciding what to do, ask lots of people
for their opinion
Put it in writing
Then do it
If it didn't work, don't do it again
If it did work, do

LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Make sure everyone is clear about who is doing what
The board knows it is governing
The director knows she is directing (and the board
knows it too)
The staff know they are doing everything else
And have it in writing

COLLECTIONS STEWARDSHIP

Know what stuff you have
Know what stuff you need
Know where it is
Take good care of it
Make sure someone gets some good out of it
Especially people you care about
And your neighbors

EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION

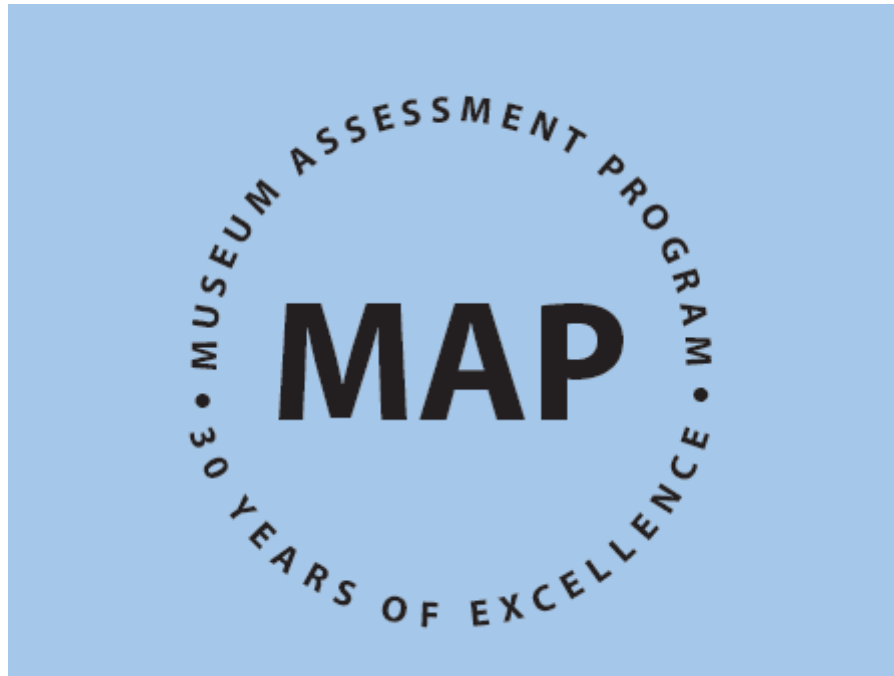
Know who you are talking to
Ask them what they want to know
Know what you want to say
(and what you are talking about)
Use appropriate language (or images, or music)
Make sure people understood you
And ask them if they liked it
If not, change it

FINANCIAL STABILITY

Put your money where your mission is
Is it enough money?
Will it be there next year, too?
Know when you will need more \$
Know where you are going to get it from
Don't diddle the books

FACILITIES AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Don't crowd people
Or things
Make it safe to visit your museum
Or work there
Keep it clean
Keep the toilet paper stocked
And if all else fails, know where the exit is
(and make sure it is clearly marked)



Museum Assessment Program

Grant Writing Guide

Using Your MAP Report to Leverage Funding

The Museum Assessment Program is supported through a cooperative agreement between the American Association of Museums and the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

202-289-9118 • map@aam-us.org • www.aam-us.org/map

This grant writing resource guide is designed to help your organization in preparing an effective proposal for a self-determined project in conjunction with your MAP self-study materials and assessment report. Attached to this grant-writing guide is a list of your state's government agencies and foundations, which you hope you will use in tandem with this guide. Please note that the following are general proposal recommendations and that you should always follow the specific guidelines a potential funder provides. The MAP staff wishes your institution success in any funding opportunity it pursues.

Review the MAP Process

Before you plan and set priorities for your proposal, sit down with the assessment team and review the entire MAP process including your institution's progress towards implementation. Review your application, self-study workbook and MAP report. Are there any patterns that emerge? What are your implementation plans? How has your institution improved operations? This is an important first step in determining which projects are priorities, what resources you have to commit to future projects, and which priorities/projects need outside funding.

Plan and set priorities

Determining which project is worth proposing can be achieved by looking over the MAP report and considering both the short and long term recommendations provided by the peer reviewer. In deciding which recommendation you will pursue for outside funding, ask yourself the following:

- What do you need?
- When do you need it?
- Why do you need it?
- Who do you need to do it?
- How much do you need to do it?

If you can answer those questions simply and succinctly, you should move forward and ask yourself the following questions that designed to dig a little deeper:

- How does this project align with your mission?
- Why is your organization the most qualified to develop and implement this project?
- How will you execute the project?
- What is the duration of the project?
- What will be included in the scope of the project?
- What staff will be needed to execute the project and their specific responsibilities?
- What outcomes do you hope to achieve? (Alternatively: How will you define the success of the project?)
- What resources do you already have available to use towards the project?

- Are there other individuals or organizations that you will need to partner with to complete the project? How will you identify these partners?

All of these questions will shape and guide your proposal. If you cannot answer these questions or if your project doesn't align with your mission, re-evaluate the project.

Using the MAP Report:

- Review the Mission and Planning section of your peer reviewer's report and evaluate your institution's mission statement. Examining your mission statement will guide your activities and decision-making process as well as clarify how your institution can further strengthen its mission and planning.
- Look over the recommendations, resources and appendices provided by your peer reviewer. Those supporting and sample documents will provide guidance on how to implement your projects.

Compile a list of potential funding sources

- If your state has museum association, we encourage you to contact them and consult about likely funding sources;
- Seek advice from fellow museum professionals and your Board of Trustees to identify potential funding opportunities;
- Look at organizations with mission and projects similar to yours—review their funder list;
- Look for funding by foundations, state and federal agencies that aligns with your project by accessing their websites and exploring funding search databases;

Prepare your proposal package

Your package should be well-organized, clear and concise. Make sure it follows the funder's guidelines for format, page length, project descriptions, and incorporates the funder's review criteria. Most proposal packages will include the following components:

1. Cover letter (one page): Make sure that before you submit the proposal, you are aware of the cover letter requirements and contact information for the funding organization. Include a thank you for the opportunity to submit the proposal.
2. Executive Summary (one page): This summary should include the following:
 - Project title and synopsis
 - Need
 - Expected outcomes
 - Timeline
 - Organization and its expertise
 - Funding requirements

Using the MAP Report:

Parts of your MAP report can help to shape your Executive Summary. The background information in the MAP report's summary will identify strengths and key recommendations. The brief institutional history with founding date, institutional mission, and overview of exhibitions/collections and program highlights, can be included in the proposal. The Executive Summary section of the report might highlight your institution's expertise and strengths. Review the following elements of your MAP report:

- Executive Summary
 - Introduction
 - Brief Institutional History
 - Summary
3. Statement of Need/Supporting Data (two pages): When arguing for your specific financial and capacity needs, it is helpful to use data pulled from surveys or evaluations your institution has compiled. Furthermore, review your Self Study Workbook Activities and Workbook and supporting document from the Peer Reviewer in order to compile supporting data. This data can include the following:
- Statistics culled by your staff, volunteers, governing authority, or internal data
 - Statistics gathered by external sources (e.g. city and state statistics, evaluations conducted by outside organizations, etc)
 - Examples, testimonials and anecdotes
 - Statements of Support from individuals and organizations (e.g. your peer reviewer, other cultural institutions, etc)

Using the MAP Report:

Draw specific content from the MAP report and the recommendations made by your peer reviewer. Remember that the peer reviewer is an expert professional and can be quoted in the proposal. You may want to include parts of the MAP report verbatim in your proposal. This section should support the case you are making.

4. Project Description (three pages): This section should give an overview of your goals and objectives for the project. When you select your project, consider and include in your proposal:
- Project narrative
 - Planned or desired outcomes
 - Action steps for achieving outcomes
 - Metrics of success to measure program results
 - Project staff (e.g., staff, governing authority, volunteers, consultants, collaborators). Specify what project staff is already available and who you will need to hire.

- Project resources. Include any resources that your institution already has available as well materials and supplies that will need to be acquired.
- Time line
- Sustaining the project. Explain how the project will continue to be funded in the future to insure funder that it is a good investment.

Using the MAP Report:

The peer reviewer's report should serve as a professional opinion regarding recommendations for improvement for your institution and may include specific suggestions towards the scope of your project. Your project team will need to consider the logistics of executing the project and how these steps will ultimately impact your institution. You may find it helpful to work with the reviewer to theorize action steps to implement your project.

5. Budget (one page): The budget should reflect and support the narrative and should be accurate and realistic. Make sure that someone familiar with your finances contributes to this section. In creating a budget, think about:
 - Expense information: personnel, non-personnel and overhead
 - Income information: grants, gifts, earned income, in-kind donations, etc.
 - Cost-share: Some grant and funding applications require a cost-share. Cost-share can be made up of a variety of sources including paid and unpaid staff time, in-kind donations, funding from another source, etc. By providing some form of cost-share, you are demonstrating to the funder your dedication to the project.
 - Although not required by all funders, compiling a budget narrative assists in planning for full, true costs and serves to validate expenses.
6. Organizational information (one page): This should be information about what your organization is, who it serves and why it serves them. Include the following:
 - Your mission (and vision statement, if applicable)
 - Brief overview of organizational structure: staff, volunteers and governing authority
 - Your community engagement: your audience, your programs and your expertise
 - Community relationships: either with other organizations, partnerships or councils.

Using the MAP Report:

Your MAP report will have this organizational information, usually at the beginning, in its Executive Summary. Use that as a model for writing the proposal summary. Also use the information you gathered for your self-study and additional documentation to fill out your organizational information. This will serve as a template for future funding proposals

7. Conclusion (less than one page): The conclusion should serve as your final appeal, which will restate the needs of your organization, why your organization is best suited to deliver the project, how this project will enhance the organization, and why this project will meet the criteria of the funding organization. Make a concise but meaningful final statement. Make sure that your organizational needs and the project's importance truly resonate.
8. Appendix: The appendix should support and complement your proposal, so choose materials and documents that make a strong and pertinent case. This may include MAP reports, data, and letters of support referenced in the Statement of Need/Supporting Data section.

Using the MAP Report:

Some of these documents may be found in your own MAP report's appendix. Review the materials that your peer reviewer has attached to your MAP report and see if they align with the project and the proposal.

Proposal submission and results:

Before you send your proposal, double-check that you have the correct information regarding who and where to submit your proposal.

Acceptance/Rejection

If your proposal is accepted:

- Send a thank you letter.
- Establish a cordial relationship—be professional and responsive. The funder is helping your institution grow and improve, and with the right attitude and performance, they could become an ongoing or future financial resource.
- Make sure to check grant agreements and grant report forms.
- Meet all deadlines for reporting.
- Communicate frequently/often—within reason.
- Work to meet the outcomes established in the report. If you discover that these outcomes cannot be achieved, reevaluate the project and discuss alternatives with your funder. Do not be discouraged.

If your proposal is rejected:

- Don't take it personally. This may not be the right time for your project with this funder. It is possible that a future opportunity will arise.
- If feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal is provided, review and use this information to strengthen and revise the proposal for future applications.

- If you have concerns about the rejection, it is appropriate to discuss the situation with the funder to see if they will explain the specific reasons you were not selected.
- Research other grant opportunities and deadlines and requirements for those.

Proposal tips:

- Avoid jargon
- Humanize the project
- Keep it simple, concise—make sure to revise and edit!
- Connect the project to your mission
- Contact the funder discuss ideas and ask questions
- Tell a story
- Make it clear and honest
- Submit ahead of deadline

Using your Peer Reviewer:

It may be helpful to ask your reviewer to review the proposal before you submit it. An external party that knows your operational capacity and your needs may give you further insight into your project's implementation and may give you resources to help support your case.



Museum Assessment Program State Resource Guide

IDAHO

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202-289-9118 • map@aam-us.org • www.aam-us.org/map

American Association of Museums
202.289.1818
www.aam-us.org

Community Foundations of Idaho
<http://www.nonprofitexpert.com/community%20foundations/id.htm>

Idaho Association of Museums
<http://idahomuseums.org/>

Idaho Education Association
208.344.1341
<http://idahoea.org/>

Idaho Commission on the Arts
208.334.2119
info@arts.idaho.gov
www.arts.idaho.gov

Idaho Humanities Council
208.345.5346
info@idahohumanities.org
www.idahohumanities.org

Idaho Nonprofit Center
208.424.2229
www.idahononprofits.org

Idaho State Department of Education
208.332.6800
www.sde.idaho.gov

Idaho State Historic Preservation
Office
208.334.3847
<http://history.idaho.gov/shpo.html>

Idaho Travel and Tourism Guide
208.334.2470
www.visitidaho.org

National Trust for Historic Preservation
Western Office
415.947.0692
wro@nthp.org
www.preservationnation.org/western

Preservation Idaho
208.424.5111
info@preservationidaho.org
<http://preservationidaho.org/>

Western Museums Association
307.578.4011
westernmuseumsassoc@gmail.com
<http://westmuse.wordpress.com/>

Old Loans State Legislation/Abandoned
Property Laws

Below is the state-specific law regarding the process a museum must undertake before an old loan (e.g. expired loan or loan of unlimited duration where the material(s) has been left unclaimed) can become its property. Consult with the state attorney general's office before taking any legal action.

No museum-specific legislation as of 2009. Refer to "Old Loans" by Ildiko Pogany DeAngelis, pgs. 85 - 96, and "Model - Museum Unclaimed Property Law" by Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums, pgs. 97 - 99 in *Museum Registration Methods, 5th Edition*, ed. by Rebecca Buck and Jean Allman Gilmore, 2010.

State Attorney General's Office
208.334.2424
<http://www2.state.id.us/ag/>