

AH-TAH-THI-KI MUSEUM

2009-2014
LONG RANGE STRATEGIC PLAN





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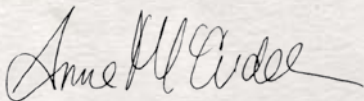
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A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

There are so many components to running a business, and a Native American museum is no different. Over the last five years, however, I have found that one component can make or break an institution; planning. When the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum took its first steps down the path toward strategic planning there were many bumps and unexpected intersections along the way. At times it seemed as if we spent more time in reverse than in drive, but that is no longer the case. With this five-year, long-range plan in hand, we are expertly positioned to travel at the right speed and in the right direction.

The time and effort needed to get to this point was nothing short of a herculean labor. Over the years we have had our staff numbers increase, our budgets fluctuate, and our physical presence altered - and through it all we have continued to focus on our mission and planning. This document and its subsequent annual work plans, will allow us to operate at the highest level, collaborate with the necessary partners, and grow at the appropriate pace. We are confident we will be able to stand at the crossroads of the Native American community and the museum world and know what we should do and how to do it. All plans and policies are living, breathing documents and this one is no exception, which is why our staff and constituents will be able to use this plan as a useful road map for the next five years.

Sincerely,



Anne McCudden

MISSION

The Seminole Tribe of Florida's Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum collects, protects, preserves and interprets Seminole culture and history - inspiring an appreciation and understanding of the Seminole people.

VISION

To establish and maintain the most credible and sustainable Tribally run museum in the country.

VALUE STATEMENTS

- Having an influential presence amongst the museum community.
- Being the credible source for Seminole cultural and historical information.
- Promoting a collaborative environment.
- Dedicated to being a museum of distinction.
- Being accountable to those we serve.

STRATEGIC PLANNING HISTORY

Our strategic planning process has been in full force for the last six years, but with this latest version we feel we have finally turned the corner and made the process and the plan itself a living and breathing document. Many times when institutions work on planning or policy making, it is done in a vacuum. The ideas expressed and projects put forth are worthwhile in their own right, but they come to fruition in anything but a holistic manner. With the new planning process on which we embarked for the first time in October of 2009, we feel we truly have a new way of looking at our mission, vision and core values in such a way that they will consistently remain the leading factors in our goals and objectives. It goes without saying however, that the future always holds the possibility of re-addressing the planning process. Whether we do or not, we will always come back to those things that make us work smarter. Any time a group of dedicated staff sit down to plan, the outcome is worthwhile, but now when we sit down we know that we are all operating with long term goals and short term guidelines.



STRUCTURE OF THE PLAN

This new Strategic Plan is structured as follows: There are five overarching, long term goals (3-5 years); each goal has between 5-7 corresponding objectives (2-3 years); and each objective has a 12 month "Work Plan" associated with it. The work plan is a day to day guide for each division of the Museum. This guide is set forth by senior level staff with input from their direct reports. The tasks outlined for a particular objective contain activities that each division must carry out in order for the overall objective to be met and the overarching goal to be achieved. For the purposes of this document, we are not providing the Work Plan in its entirety, but it is available if requested. The Work Plan is discussed quarterly and a new plan will be written each fiscal year based on the newly assigned tasks for an objective. This process allows for proper budgeting and also helps staff understand that goals and objectives oftentimes span multiple budget years, and more than one division.

MEASURING PERFORMANCE

This new plan will empower management with a new tool to measure the performance of a particular division within the Museum. By addressing the tasks within the Work Plan, and whether they are completed in a timely manner, we are able to have an accurate picture of what each division within the Museum is achieving and whether the tasks have been realistic and accomplished. There are many ways to measure the performance of a particular employee or area of an institution, but often those ways are too subjective. We hope that by using the strategic plan and the associated Work Plan, we will be able to remove as much of that subjectivity as possible and focus more on the tangible, quantifiable results.

GOAL #1 - ENHANCE AND EXPAND OUR PROFILE AND RELATIONSHIPS

We will broaden and diversify our partnerships with the aim to grow our visibility and secure a sustainable future. We will foster relationships at the local, state and federal levels to aid in and support collaboration within Tribal and museum communities. To achieve this goal we will:

DEVELOP REVENUE STREAMS TO SUPPORT CONTINUED FISCAL GROWTH

We will look to secure alternative sources of funding not previously tapped, as well as work toward increasing our existing revenue sources of membership and retail.

DEVELOP A PUBLIC STRATEGY TO ENHANCE MEDIA, MARKETING, AND PROMOTIONS

We will build and sustain strategic partnerships to enhance the visibility and recognition of our programs, services and capabilities. We will strengthen the positioning and marketing of our unique product in support of our mission.

ENHANCE PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER NATIVE PEOPLES

In the spirit of Tribal culture, we will collaborate with Native partners in the areas of programming, exhibitions and scholarly presentations. We will embrace opportunities for the exchange of ideas with emphasis on bringing awareness to Native cultures.

TARGET AND EXPAND OUR COLLABORATIONS

We will continually work to identify new community partners and affiliates to encourage programmatic collaboration and strengthen our public role and responsibility.

GROW OUR MEMBERSHIP BASE

We will build membership through active advocacy efforts. We will aim to retain and measurably expand membership and support through campaigns for upgraded member levels, annual fund giving and donor programs.



GOAL #2 – SECURE AND MAINTAIN OUR PRESENCE

The distinctive culture of the Seminole Tribe of Florida requires the provision and maintenance of adequate and secure space. There is also a public expectation of exactly what should be exhibited and how the Seminole experience should be demonstrated at our domain. All efforts at this Museum will be directed toward an authentic, safe and enjoyable encounter by all who witness our Seminole Tribal ways of life.

To achieve this goal we will:



MAINTAIN OUR COMMITMENT TO UPHOLDING AND IMPROVING QUALITY STANDARDS

We are committed to maintaining and improving staff training and development strategies that meet the challenge of constant change, ranging from museum philosophy through technology to public expectations and marketing requirements. We will monitor the response of the public to be prepared to modify or change from existing practice and preconceptions. We will continually formalize procedure manuals to ensure that the priorities they set out are consistent with Museum policies. Our organization will flourish by adopting a customer-based focus on visitor services to fulfill our mission and survive financially.

PRACTICE RESPONSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

We have realized for some time that irresponsible environmental actions can cause damage such as pollution and the destruction of cultural heritage. We therefore will abide by an ethic that embodies cooperative planning and management of environmental resources with other organizations and our community to actively engage in the prevention of loss of habitat and facilitate its recovery in the interest of long-term sustainability.

EXPAND MUSEUM FACILITIES

Based on spatial needs assessment the Museum is preparing to enter into a building campaign aimed at new facilities. We will focus our attention on a technology-driven and environmentally responsible project. We want future visitors to perceive things in a different perspective by incorporating multi-level opportunities to expand their visual sensations and experiences. This will be accomplished through a design commitment that honestly reflects the true meaning of the Seminole story.

EXCEED PUBLIC EXPECTATION OF MUSEUM EXPERIENCE

We will continue utilizing our unmistakable surroundings to convey to visitors our unique and unforgettable Tribal experience. We will promote visitor satisfaction through extensive training and professional development of the front office staff that have the most frequent and prolonged contact with visitors. We will strive to have superior guest services inspiring numerous word of mouth recommendations to others from our contented visitors.

GOAL #3 - INTERPRET AND DISSEMINATE THE SEMINOLE STORY

As the cultural center of the Seminole Tribe of Florida, we recognize the incredible importance of our civic responsibility to educate audiences about the distinctive culture and the depth of history of the Seminoles. We will provide an environment that brings Tribal members together to share their story, plus carry it on for future generations. We will be laying the foundation of this goal through our programming. To achieve this goal we will:

CONTINUALLY UPGRADE AND DEVELOP EXHIBIT EXPERIENCE

We will strive to engage our visitors in a welcoming and comfortable manner throughout our public spaces and to engage them fully through our exhibition programs. We will revamp our permanent exhibits by offering clearer signage, more family-friendly features and we will interpret a wider variety of the cultural items from our collection. Through our temporary exhibits program we will pair thought provoking topics with objects from our permanent collection to bring the visitor closest to the Seminole experience.

DEVELOP AND DISTRIBUTE SEMINOLE TRAVELING EXHIBIT PROGRAM (STEP)

Further the Museums' revenue source by continually developing and distributing quality exhibits through STEP (Seminole Travelling Exhibits Program). STEP will be available to other institutions throughout the nation. Developing relationships with other institutions is of the utmost importance to STEP. To do this we will concentrate our efforts on creating a reciprocal exhibits exchange program. It is also important to keep our exhibit cache fresh and exiting. To achieve this we will rotate our variety of exhibits and feature a new STEP exhibit annually.



PROVIDE PROGRAMMING TO ENHANCE THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

We will create authentic experiences that engage our audiences in learning about the Seminole people. By reassessing our programming annually, we will strive to create new messages, storylines and activities that express our central theme and sub-themes. This will ensure that our various programs have messages that compliment each other.

PROVIDE MISSION-ORIENTED EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

We will try give all the ability to understand the Seminole people from any location based upon the tenets of our mission. By developing various types of resources that connect our audiences to the stories, we will ensure that those who may not be able to step onto our grounds will have the opportunity to learn about Seminole culture. To accomplish this, we will be researching and creating new avenues of dissemination.

DEVELOP OPERATIONAL STANDARDS FOR PROGRAMMING ACTIVITIES.

We will insure continuity of theme, by developing a common language of interpretation within our staff's work. This will be accomplished through creating a single set of programming reference standards by which interpretation should follow. These guiding principles will be an integral resource when developing programming for our educational, exhibits, and outreach activities. We will use these standards to support the Interpretive Plan to speak with a unified voice in a process that is efficient and streamlined.

GOAL #4 - PERPETUATE SEMINOLE HERITAGE

Chartered in 1989 the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum was entrusted with the preservation and care of the heritage of the Seminole people of Florida. The heritage of the Seminole Tribe is not only found in the Tribal members of today, but also in the artifacts and stories of their ancestors. Presently the Museum houses various objects in its collections, including artifacts, archival items, oral histories, and photographs. Through the continued care and effective management of these collections, the heritage of the Seminole Tribe of Florida will be preserved for generations to come. To achieve this goal, the Museum will:



ESTABLISH MUSEUM AS THE LEADING ACADEMIC RESOURCE FOR SEMINOLE AND SOUTHEASTERN NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURE AND HISTORY

As the first Tribally owned Museum to be accredited by the American Association of Museums, it is paramount for the Museum to establish itself as the resource for all information concerning the Seminole Tribe of Florida. This concerns not only the people currently known as Seminole Tribal members, but also the many Native peoples throughout the southeast who have cultural ties to the current Tribe. The Museum will continue to reach out to local universities and other academic institutions to solidify its place as the resource for all southeast Tribal information.

COLLECT AND PRESERVE SIGNIFICANT EXAMPLES OF SEMINOLE AND SOUTHEASTERN NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURE AND HISTORY

A museum's collections are an ever evolving aspect of a cultural institution. We will continue to collect objects that are relevant to the Seminole Tribe of Florida in order to enhance the collections owned by the Tribe. These additions will occur with the advice of Tribal members and Museum senior staff. Collection standards will be continually adopted and instituted that will direct the future of the collections for years to come.



INCREASE CONSERVATION AWARENESS

Conservation, defined as preservation of objects for the future, is of utmost importance to the Museum. This is done not only by the preservation of the objects we currently own, but also by educating our various audiences of the sciences involved. We will continue to educate the local public on the various conservation projects conducted by our staff. We will also focus on reaching out to other museums in both Native and Regional museum networks to instruct on the techniques used by conservators.

ENHANCE ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Our collections contain not only artifact and archival objects, but also a growing collection of the oral histories of the Seminole Tribal members. These oral histories contain an important part of the heritage of the Seminole people that can be found no where else. Our Museum will continue to actively record and interview Tribal members in order to preserve their stories. We will also make sure that the histories are made into a format that will be accessible to Tribal members and others deemed appropriate. Lastly we will ensure that the oral histories are preserved for future generations who wish to access them.

RESPONSIBLY MANAGE THE COLLECTIONS

Collection stewardship continues to be an important aspect of our operations. Stewardship concerns both the preservation and accessibility of all objects that are within the various collections. We will continue to catalog objects contained within the collection in order to make the information accessible to the public. We will also strive to ensure that all collections are kept in appropriate museum quality storage. All objects within the collection, regardless of type, will be kept in accordance with collection care standards appropriate to their medium.

GOAL #5 - PROVIDE GUIDANCE AND FOSTER GROWTH

As a member of the Native American museum and cultural center community, we will act in a manner consistent with the best professional standards in our industry. Knowing that cultural identity and material culture is at stake we will consistently be reminded of our goal to grow as an institution and to always be prepared for the highest level of scrutiny. To achieve this goal we will:

UPHOLD THE HIGHEST PRACTICES AND STANDARDS OF THE MUSEUM INDUSTRY

Through constant participation in national and regional museum related activities, we will ensure that our staff and facilities meet the highest standards set forth by our industry. We will encourage our staff to both learn from and participate in discussions at the forefront of the field. We will make use of all relevant external assessment processes to prevent too inward a perception of ourselves and to remain transparent.

CULTIVATE MUSEUM RESOURCES

The Museum's employees, location, collections and programming offer us a unique opportunity to create new and diverse avenues for internal and external development. These resources exist within our institution and they will allow us the ability to continually advance our mission.

TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCE THE MUSEUM

We will strive to remain knowledgeable regarding any and all technological advances available within the museum field. As much as financially feasible and without risking any cultural improprieties, we will institute these activities and/or mechanical components to continually connect with our audiences.

ENSURE RESPONSIBLE STEWARDSHIP OF SEMINOLE CULTURE

In accordance with Tribal Council directives and Tribal community concerns, we will produce, disseminate, and house Seminole cultural components with a vigilant eye for accuracy and sensitivity. With the knowledge that our primary audience (Seminole Tribal members) is the ultimate voice and owner of what we oversee, we will always institute practices that reflect their wishes.

DEFINE AND ESTABLISH OUR ROLE AS A LEADER IN THE MUSEUM COMMUNITY

Through well orchestrated and professional processes, we will work with all willing institutions within the museum field to establish operational standards that advance the missions of all involved. We will assist when necessary and lead when directed, towards a common agreed upon goal for those in this field of cultural preservation and education.





AH-TAH-THI-KI
MUSEUM

WEDNESDAY 21
1998
SATURDAY 24
1998

WEDNESDAY 21
1998
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