

2011 ANNUAL REPORT

TELLURIDE HISTORICAL MUSEUM, INC.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Telluride Historical Museum is to preserve the rich, colorful and diverse history of the region and to bring history to life through exhibits, programs and education.

2011 ORGANIZATIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Telluride Historical Museum saw an unprecedented increase in numbers served through visitation and programming in 2011. Enhanced and expanded exhibits, programs and outreach certainly contributed to this success. It would appear that the Museum reached a tipping point with the combination of efforts in all of these areas in 2011. The Museum continues to progress towards its vision of becoming an indispensable cultural asset to the region by pushing the boundaries of typical small-town museums, gaining recognition and a reputation for innovation and creativity.

Guided by a three-year strategic plan, the Museum advanced successfully towards its goal of engaging more often and more creatively with constituent communities by bringing the region's rich history to life in ways that go beyond the walls of the Museum. Outreach included collaborative programming in the West End and in Ouray County, an off-site exhibit was added at the Telluride Visitors Center, and staff was invited to present at regional conferences highlighting local projects and its signature artifact, the Telluride Blanket.

Advances were also made toward the goal of attaining the highest degree of operational integrity based on industry standards. Museum staff expanded by one to include an Exhibits Manager dedicated to creating quality in-house and off-site exhibits. Continued focus on the collection resulted in critical assessments of both the Museum's textile and furniture collections with the assistance of professional conservators from across the state. Technologically, the Museum integrated a new Point of Sale system to increase efficiency of Museum store operations.

Lastly, operational goals include efficient and cost effective governance using industry best practices. Networking with museum professionals resulted in professional development in the areas of financial management and collections care. After consulting with museum financial professionals, review of the financial policy suggested capitalization of expenses related to exterior leasehold improvements which are reflected in the financial report. In addition, professional curators and conservators were consulted during various collections activities.

EXHIBITS

An increased focus on exhibits was underscored by the grand opening of the exterior Hard Rocks, Rough Lives exhibit, and the introduction of The Amphitheater, an outdoor education and program area. The successful grand opening over Independence weekend of the interactive exhibit drew record crowds, and the education area has already hosted both public and private lectures, musical performances, and theater productions.

Hard Rocks, Rough Lives includes interactive elements such as a gold panning station, a mine adit, and working ore car and tram buckets. Interpretation designed to highlight the entire mining process leads the visitor from the early prospecting stage through the hard rock mining, assaying and transportation stages. The interactive elements have attracted younger audiences who especially appreciate the gold panning activity and the mine adit where one can experience the drilling and blasting of a drift, and learn about the origins of dynamite.

Exhibits Manager Cameo Hoyle, having completed a BA in Studio Art with a concentration in Museum Studies as well as graduate studies in historic preservation and conservation, was added to Museum staff in 2011. Focused attention on exhibits resulted in a new level of professionalism for *The 1970s: Makin' it Work* and *Layin' Down the Law*, the Museum's on-site temporary exhibits contributing to our increase in Museum visitation.

Efforts to increase public exposure to the Museum's vast collection have also advanced through the Museum's Collections Blog. The addition of the blog allows staff to highlight some of the unique items from the Museum's collection of over 10,000 artifacts. Articles have been written about such diverse items as the menu from the Busy Corner Pharmacy counter, to a Velocipede, and a woman's side saddle.

Off-site exhibits were maintained throughout the Mountain Village in the Centrum, Peaks, Town offices, and the Market at Mountain Village. An exhibit remains at the Telluride Airport, and exhibits in the Town of Telluride include the Telluride Medical Center, Element 52, and the Telluride Visitors Center. Updated exhibits were completed in each venue. An interactive electricity exhibit was re-located from a Telluride Ski and Golf retail location to the lobby of the Market at Mountain Village exposing it to larger audiences. Permission for additional exhibits in the Mountain Village continues to be challenging, however we are currently negotiating with the Telluride Conference Center for an interior rotating exhibit.

COLLECTION

After the 2010 revision of the Museum's collections policy, efforts to complete an overall assessment of the collection continue. Assessments of the collection are necessary not only for identification of items, but also the determination of items needed to complete or round out the collection. A renewed focus on current history for instance resulted in the accession of about 110 items from the 1970s.

The advent of the new outdoor mining exhibit brought the accession of over 100 items from community members to help us tell the story more accurately. Items donated included dynamite boxes, tram buckets, ore cars, a shaft bucket, and even a fuse crimper. Plans to add a mineral display to the Mining Room exhibits brought additional donations of many local ore specimens to round out the Museum's existing collection, and even some amalgamated ore and gold buttons.

A critical assessment of textiles in the collection was completed this summer by Avenir Museum of Design Curator Linda Carlson and Collections Manager Kathy Rohrer. The assessment facilitated the identification of many pieces, and the results confirmed that the Museum boasts not only a representative collection of quilts, but an eclectic and unique collection of women's lingerie. At the recommendation of Dr. Carlson 97 of 720 textile items were deaccessioned, mostly non-descript household items that had little historical value, were damaged beyond repair, or were beyond the Museum's means to preserve. In one instance, an item was suggested for deaccession due to the hazard it posed to other items in the collection.

A critical assessment of the Museum's furniture collection by Smithsonian educated conservator Mark Minor of Mountain States Arts Conservation was also completed. The extensive process required the unpacking, review, identification, repacking and provenance research of over 150 furniture items. With an eye towards the suitability of items in terms of their relevance to the scope of the Museum's collection, the Museum's ability to care for and exhibit the items, and the condition of the items, 38 pieces were deaccessioned to the Museum of the Mountain West in Montrose who intends to exhibit the pieces in buildings throughout their six acre facility.

Maintenance projects included some exterior painting as well as additional mitigation of issues related to condensation on interior windows within the historic Hall's Hospital building. All window sills affected by the condensation were sanded, treated and resealed, and a plan to work with town Facilities Coordinator Marshall Flick to watch for signs of possible trouble have been established. The installation of a new third floor humidification system is underway after the previous system failed.

PROGRAMMING

Community outreach through engaging, entertaining and educational programming continues to be a strength of the Museum. Over eighty established and new programs attracted record attendance serving over 6750 guests in 2011.

As in past years, the Museum partnered with Pinhead Institute for the signature Telluride Unearthed Lectures, with Marketing Telluride, Inc. and the Sheridan Arts Foundation for Heritage Fest, with the Ouray Historical Museum for Hikes into History, and with The Peaks Resort for summer Fireside Chats which were successfully expanded this year to further the goal of better serving the county's West End residents. Two Fireside Chats were hosted by the Norwood Arts, Community and Education Center and attracted 78 West End residents.

New programs include a collaboration with The Peaks Resort for the first Ski into History Tours. Johnnie Stevens, former CEO of the Telluride ski area and Colorado Ski and Snowboard Hall of Famer, hosted 229 people over the course of the winter. The highlight of the experience was touring twenty-two New York City firefighters, veterans of 9/11 tragedy. According to Johnnie, these firemen had the same sense of camaraderie and playfulness that he remembers from his days mining in Telluride.

In addition, the Museum introduced Sleeping with History, a unique and creative attempt to fuse history and social media marketing to attract younger audiences. A contest afforded the winner an opportunity to sleep in the hospital-turned-Museum for one weekend. The winner, local videographer David Byers, hosted two dinner parties for friends and supporters of the Museum, and documented the experience using social media outlets like Vimeo, Facebook and Twitter. David's video post "Dare to Spend the Night" boasted 430 views, and the campaign caught the attention of people from across the country.

Established programs like the Schmid Ranch Old Fashioned Christmas complete with tree cutting, sleigh rides and wreath making, as well as the San Miguel Social Services Senior Lunch remain popular. Tours of the Lone Tree Cemetery continued, and Telluride Architectural Tours and Law Enforcement Tours were added.

The number of student contacts annually increased a notable 51%, up over 350% from 2008. For the third year the Museum facilitated eighth grade tours to Tomboy, and hosted programs for first, second third and fourth grades as well as a program for a continuing education class from Western State College. Use of the mobile Pioneer Trunk designed for second grade curriculum was expanded into the Dolores Schools through their District Pioneer Days event. The Museum hopes to further expand use of the trunk in 2012.

VISITORS

Over 6200 members, locals and visitors toured the Museum in 2011-an almost 35% increase over 2010 and 75% increase over five years ago. In addition, over 6700 participated in Museum programs, and over 1200 student contacts were documented bringing the total number served in 2011 to 14,240. The Museum grew its online community to nearly 2000 newsletter subscribers, and membership grew to 332 members, up 5.5% over 2010, and 71% of our 2010 members renewed in 2011.

Efforts to increase local visits through the “Hamburgers and History” program increased local visits by 25%. Supported by Honga’s Lotus Petal and the New Sheridan Chophouse, local residents who toured the Museum on Thursdays were granted free admission and given a coupon for dinner specials at the sponsoring restaurants. A trend of repeat local visitors was also noted after the opening of Hard Rocks, Rough Lives to take advantage of the Museum’s new interactive elements.

LEADERSHIP

The Museum was led by Executive Director Lauren Bloemsma for the seventh year guided by a Board of Directors. The board of fourteen includes both resident and government representatives from the towns of Telluride and Mountain Village, and from San Miguel County, and is representative of demographic groups from the region.

Executive Director Lauren Bloemsma, responsible for oversight of all Museum activities, brought increased attention to the Museum, and to the region, through presentations at regional industry conferences. Most significantly, collaborating with Todd Gehrke of the Telluride Tourism Board, she presented at the Mountain Plains Museum Association Annual Meeting promoting Telluride as the host city for their 2014 annual conference. The decision is pending.

Museum staff grew by one full-time person in January 2011, and retention remained 100% through the year. Full-time Assistant Director Beth Roberts managed programming, development, store operations, public relations and marketing. Part-time Collection Manager Kathy Rohrer coordinated all inventory and collections assessments, artifact donations, and managed satellite exhibits in the Mountain Village. The new position of Exhibits Manager was filled by Cameo Hoyle. Cameo was instrumental in the final stages of Hard Rocks, Rough Lives, managed satellite exhibits in the Town of Telluride, and designed and coordinated a renovation of the permanent interior Mining exhibit. A seasonal part-time Visitor Services Coordinator rounded out the staff responsible for maintaining a positive visitor experience, and for managing daily store sales.

The makeup of the Board of Directors remained constant in 2011 with the exception of the substitution of Board Member Jonette Bronson for Town of Mountain Village Representative Dan Garner. The makeup of the Board of Directors at the end of 2011 was as follows:

Executive Committee:

President	Deborah Freedman
Vice-President	Paula Malone
Treasurer	Danny Craft
Secretary	Vicki Eidsmo

Government Representatives:

Elaine Fischer, San Miguel County
Jonette Bronson, Mountain Village
Bob Saunders, Town of Telluride

Directors:	Todd Brown	Diana Conovitz	Rudy Davison	Carol Hintermeister	Shari Mitchell Seay
		John Shields	Jim Tharp		
Emeritus:	Richard Betts	Carol Kammer	Sheila Wald	Jack Harrison	John S. Pillsbury III

FINANCIAL REPORT

Efforts to continue meeting industry standards and best practices in finances, the Board of Directors reviewed and approved the capitalization of exhibit expenses related to leasehold improvements and to permanent exhibit installation. This capitalization requires a re-filing of 2010 financials which have been included with this report. The capitalization of these expenses resulted in the Museum experiencing a significant net income for both years. Excluding the new outdoor exhibit and education area, the Museum experienced a net loss for both years.

The Museum Board of Directors approved a \$29K loss before depreciation and capitalization in 2011 because significant work in collection management and development of exhibits was overdue and necessary. The actual loss before depreciation and capitalization was \$25.5K. The long-term effect of this attention on the collection and exhibits will improve the Museum's ability to fulfill its goals of preservation and education. In addition, expanded and improved interactive exhibits helped increase traffic and will sustain the Museum going forward.

While the number of Museum members increased in 2011, membership income decreased a slight 8% from 2010. This was in part due to the effects of a capital campaign for the outdoor exhibit and education area. Admissions income however, more than made up for the loss with a 42% increase. An increase in earned revenue resulted from the addition of several low-cost programs including the Architectural Walking Tours and Pub Crawls. Museum store income decreased significantly due to the unexpected closing of Museum partner Wildcat Studios' retail space. Wildcat Studios provided a Colorado Avenue presence for the Museum's large collection of historic photos, and was a generous supporter of the Museum by providing low-cost photo printing, matting and framing services. Photo sales alone decreased 60%, and the Museum is negotiating with another area vendor to regain some of that loss.

An increase in personnel expenses was seen with the addition of an Exhibits Manager as previously noted. In addition, fundraising expenses were high due to the addition of a new publication for members which is due to be completed in February, 2012.

Overall, the Museum's accomplishments in 2011 were significant, and the loss, covered by the existing operating reserve, was a deliberate and anticipated loss.

CONCLUSION

Efforts over the past 10 years to re-establish the Museum as a vital cultural asset to the community seemed to have all come together in 2011 to reach a tipping point. Visibility of the Museum through outreach, exhibits, press releases, advertising and social media attracted not only local attention, but state-wide and national attention.

This increased visibility was evidenced by coverage in magazines across the country including the Montecito Journal in California, the Four Corners Region AAA Travelhost magazine, the Berlin Citizen in Connecticut. A film crew from Salt Lake City included the Museum on their must see list as well.

World wide web attention is growing with reviews on travel sites like Yelp which lists the Museum as the third "thing to do" under Arts and Entertainment, and Trip Adviser which lists us as the fifth top "thing to do" in Telluride. The Museum is also a "suggested visit" by the New York Times Travel Guides and the sixth "thing to do" according to US News Travel.