

**JULY 29, 2005**

## **ATTENDEES**

- David Pickens – Theatre Squared
- Shannon Mitchell – University of Arkansas, Fine Arts Gallery
- Leah Whitehead – Peel House Foundation
- Scott Starr – Botanical Garden at the Ozarks
- Allyn Lord – Shiloh Museum
- Bob Workman – Crystal Bridges Museum
- Gaye Blond – Rogers Museum
- Laura Goodwin – Walton Arts Center
- Amy Robinson – Springline Consulting Group
- Brent Robinson – Northwest Arkansas Museum Foundation

## **INTRODUCTION**

Brent Robinson gave a short presentation to update the attendees on the status of the project and the purpose of the Northwest Arkansas Museum Foundation.

Introductions of the individual attendees and a brief description of their position and organization were given. Common themes and challenges mentioned during introductions were: support and excitement for a science and technology museum to fill a cultural gap in the region; year to year funding challenges; successful education programs and the need for more; a need for strong cultural community cooperation and communication.

The following talking points were then open for discussion:

- Individual needs vs. Regional needs
- Marketing
- Programs
- Exhibits
- Transportation

## **DISCUSSION**

### ***INDIVIDUAL NEEDS VS. REGIONAL NEEDS***

#### **UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP**

The question, as in the education meeting, was asked as to whether or not there would be a direct partnership with the University for the museum.

## **NWA Museum Foundation Partnership Workshop**

---

- The challenges of mixed of funding sources and limited flexibility were mentioned
- The speed at which science and technology change makes it vital for the museum to maintain flexibility – therefore, a direct partnership is not being sought at this time

### **SERVICE AREAS AND GROWTH**

Education, Experience, and Entertainment are the three requirements of cultural venues today.

- Business expectations of what was once more arts and culture driven

Rogers Museum survey to be conducted:

- Visitation is not growing at the same rate as the area. Why?
- Working to provide for all audiences
- Not wanting to lose “small town feel” but need to find way to compete in a region that has grown substantially in population and demographics

MSA Comparison: Looking at other, similar cities or areas of growth could help determine individual next steps as well as give ideas for the regional, cultural community.

- Louisville, KY
- Austin, TX
- North Carolina’s “Golden Triangle”

Other partners to consider: NW Arkansas Council

Existing education programs are well received

- Increased communication on a regional level will add to the offerings of individual organizations

### **MARKETING**

#### **NICHE AND SHARED MARKETING**

Lack of comprehensive cultural marketing for the region

## **NWA Museum Foundation Partnership Workshop**

---

- Possible need to expand upon the NWA Museum Consortium
- Increase communication and joint efforts of the regional culture market vs. dividing into "type" or city
- Expand beyond museums into the multiple components of a museum – theatre, music, education (interdisciplinary)
- Direct visitors to other regional culture attractions

### **INTERNET OPPORTUNITY**

Multiple individual websites, not a central or direct way to search the region for cultural attractions

Websites that do exist are for advertising – hotel and restaurant heavy – and rarely represent what the area has to offer

- Actual cultural attractions don't have funding for advertising on existing sites

NWA Museum Consortium members have links to one another on their individual sites

### **PROGRAMS AND EXHIBITS**

Multi-location experiential learning

- Passport - whole day or week of touring the area and it's museums

Full day cultural experience with access to other venues, restaurants, shopping

- Walking distance
- One-stop parking

Open rooms for cross-learning

- Other museums bring in exhibits to entice full visits to other local museums

Information kiosk w/ interactive display

- New museum has kiosk with information about other area museums and interactive examples of exhibits and content to attract visits

Mobil exhibits

- Bringing exhibits to classroom when the classroom can't come to the exhibit

Company sponsored exhibits

- Create quality exhibits by creating "competition" to keep updated and dynamic
- Limited signage preferred

Research labs, IMAX, Meeting rooms

**TRANSPORTATION**

Full support of rail system by cultural community represented

- Idea to make cultural voice heard on the subject

Bus system

- A shared bus system to transport on passport system and assist in getting schools to attend
  - Note: schools have not appeared to have any issues with bussing transportation. Many have offered reimbursement of bus expenses and none have been taken up on the offer.
- An interactive bus experience (exclusive to the cultural bus system) would be beneficial

**NEXT STEPS**

With the addition of Crystal Bridges and the new science and technology museums, it will be more imperative than ever to create a cohesive cultural community in the region. It was the expressed desire of the group to continue discussions among these local cultural resources as well as extend the group and discussion.

All support the new science and technology museum and are happy to continue with input and assistance it moves forward.