

# Valdez Museum & Historical Archive

## *Strategic Plan* 2012 – 2017

Adopted on the 16<sup>th</sup> day of August in the year 2012 by the VMHA Board of Directors  
Updated April 17, 2014



**Organizational Profile:** The Valdez Museum & Historical Archive’s mission is to “preserve, present, and interpret, the heritage and culture of Valdez, the Copper River Basin, and Prince William Sound, Alaska.”

Valdez’s first museum was established in 1901 by prospector Joseph Bourke, who put together a small exhibit of curios that was displayed in various Valdez buildings until 1964. These objects are part of the Valdez Museum’s core collection, now numbering approximately 75,000 objects, photographs, and historical documents related to Valdez’s regional history.

In 1976, the Valdez Heritage Board formed, hired a curator, and opened the Valdez Museum. Initially, the Museum functioned as a City of Valdez department with an advisory board providing input on operations.

Formed in 1996, the Valdez Museum & Historical Archive (VMHA) is a private 501c(3) Non-Profit organization. Its purpose is to contract with the city to manage and operate the museum with the goals of decreasing dependence on city funding, increasing the museum's ability to care for and manage the community’s heritage materials, and to continue to serve the community of Valdez. The VMHA Board of Directors governs the corporation and is accountable to the voting membership, made up of the members of the City Council. The membership, in turn, represents the residents of Valdez. The collection remains the property of the city. A non-voting associate membership program that was merged with the Friends of the Museum in 1999 consists of 300 individuals and businesses.

The VMHA is governed by an 11 member volunteer board of directors and staffed with 4 permanent full time professionals, 1 permanent part-time employee, 9 temporary part-time employees and numerous volunteers. Board & staff work closely to develop fund-raising efforts, museum activities, and community relationships that strengthen the museum’s mission to share local and regional history. The museum mounts at least four temporary exhibitions each year. It balances preservation of collections with interpretation by rotating newly acquired artifacts and existing collections in and out of exhibits in a timely manner. This in turn provides access to the remaining collections by researchers and scholars.

Located in the heart of Valdez, AK, the VMHA exhibits are located in two buildings that are four blocks apart. The main building on Egan Drive offers an overview of the region’s history with stories about the 1898 gold rush, Native culture, aviation, tourism, transportation, the oil industry, and a selection of temporary exhibits. At its second location, the annex, the museum provides a broader interpretation of the 1964 Good Friday Earthquake.

Each year, the VMHA serves approximately 15,000 visitors. Of that more than 1000 are local and regional school children, 500 participate in multi-generation programs and presentations, and 200 are researchers who access the collections and archives.

Looking to the future, the VMHA board members and staff embarked on a two year strategic planning process that recently came to completion in summer of 2012. The new Strategic Plan is a five year road map that articulates the following four goals and associated objectives:

Goal 1: The Valdez Museum & Historical Archive will be a sustainable organization.

Goal 2: The Valdez Museum & Historical Archive will have a diverse program.

Goal 3: The Valdez Museum & Historical Archive will have a dynamic communication program.

Goal 4: The Valdez Museum & Historical Archive will have a consolidated infrastructure.

Embedded within each of the strategic goals are objectives, milestones and action items which will guide board and staff for years to come.

**Goal 1: The Valdez Museum & Historical Archive will be a sustainable organization.**

A. Expand and develop new sources of revenue.

	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timeline/ Status</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>I.</b>	Write a business plan to focus on earned revenue sources	Research best practices in developing a business plan	Executive Director, Museum Services Manager, & Communication & Marketing Manager	Fall 2014	
<b>II.</b>	Write and implement a Fund Development Plan	Increase endowment through strategic planned giving	Endowment Committee & Executive Director	Fall 2012	Appeal mounted in Summer of 2013
		Implement an annual appeal letter	Executive Director & Board President	Ongoing	
		Implement 2 membership drives a year: Spring and Fall	Membership Committee & Staff	Ongoing	
		Host 4 cultivation events a year (small scale): 2 member and 2 donor parties	Board	Ongoing	Two Events held in 2013
		Increase non-city grants	Staff	Ongoing	
		Plan 2 Raffles a year. 1 in the summer and 1 for Roadhouse	Board & Staff	Ongoing	
<b>III.</b>	Develop mission driven products to sell in the store	Two new products a year (striving for Alaskan made, or made in USA)	Museum Services Manager, Communication & Marketing Manager, & Staff	Ongoing	custom printed scarves, & aviator jackets
<b>IV.</b>	Develop fee based public programs	Offer 4 workshops annually	Curator of Education & Public Programs	Ongoing	

B. Strengthen human capacity (*board and staff*)

	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timeline/ Status</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>I.</b>	Develop the Board for maximum participation	Create Board Development Committee	Bylaws Committee	Completed Spring 2013	
		Develop Annual Calendar for Board Meetings/Events	Communications & Marketing Manager	Annually at the beginning of the year	Up on Museum website
		Review/Amend Policies and Procedures for clarity and relevancy	Board Development Committee & Executive Director	Ongoing	
		Update Board Manual	Board Development Committee & Executive Director	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter 2015	
		Develop job descriptions for officers and committees	Bylaws Committee	Completed Spring 2013	
<b>II.</b>	Enhance volunteer program	Create a volunteer needs assessment	Staff	Fall 2012	Updated 2013
		Designate a volunteer manager	Executive Director	Winter of 2013	Andrea was designated
		Create a volunteer recruitment plan. Design corresponding marketing materials.	Museum Services Manager, & Communication & Marketing Manager	Ongoing	
		Create annual event calendar for which volunteers are needed. Schedule volunteers.	Museum Services Manager, Curator of Collections & Exhibitions, & Curator of Education & Public Programs	Ongoing	
		Create monthly volunteer tracking system	Museum Services Manager	Ongoing	Updated Regularly
<b>III.</b>	Provide professional development opportunities for paid staff	Budget for Professional Staff to attend a minimum of 1 conference a year	Finance Committee & Executive Director	Annually	Human Interaction Laboratory & Museums Alaska

<b>IV.</b>	Provide enhanced training for summer staff	Develop training materials to include museum history and interpretation. Set training schedule.	Staff	Ongoing	
<b>V.</b>	Build more active relationship with members	Offer 2 Behind the Scenes and 2 Special Tours/Events a year of Museum Collections	Curator of Collections & Exhibitions, & Communication & Marketing Manager	Annually	2 Offered, Only 1 Completed

C. Improve efficiency of existing infrastructure

	<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timeline/ Status</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>I.</b>	Implement energy efficient improvements	Upgrade lighting to LED lights; Replace halogen lights in Egan Commons	Curator of Collections & Exhibitions	Summer 2014	
<b>II.</b>	Reduce electric energy consumption	Turn on display lighting when first patron of day arrives, turn off display lighting when patrons leave	Staff	Ongoing	
		Investigate replacing old lighting tracks with more energy-efficient ones	Curator of Collections & Exhibitions	Completed	
		Renovate front entrance and office area	Executive Director & City Maintenance	Spring 2014	Planned by the City

**Goal 2: The Valdez Museum & Historical Archive will have a diverse program.**

A. Evaluate the Museum Program

	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timeline/ Status</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>I.</b>	Develop Visitation Tracking System	Create monthly visitation reports	Communication & Marketing Manager	Ongoing	
<b>II.</b>	Evaluate the visitor experience	Identify evaluation manager(s)	Executive Director	Completed	Faith has been identified as the evaluation manager
		Create an assortment of evaluation tools including surveys, tracking forms, exit interviews, etc.	Curator of Education & Public Programs & Education Assistant	Ongoing	Now using survey monkey to track
		Conduct surveys	Curator of Education & Public Programs, Education Assistant, Curator of Collections & Exhibitions, & Seasonal Staff	Ongoing	
		Map galleries and track visitors.	Education Assistant & Seasonal Staff	2014	
		Compile evaluation data in accessible retrievable electronic system and share with staff regularly	Curator of Education & Public Programs, Education Assistant, Curator of Collections & Exhibitions, & Seasonal Staff	Ongoing	
		Identify actions needed to improve visitor experience from compiled data	Curator of Education & Public Programs, Museum Services Manager, & Staff	Ongoing	
		Evaluate hours of operation for maximum visitation	Museum Services Manager, Curator of Education &	Fall 2014	

			Public Programs, & Curator of Collections & Exhibitions		
<b>III.</b>	Determine best locations to provide Museum public programs	Meet with community individuals and organizations to determine programmatic needs.	Curator of Education & Public Programs	Ongoing	

B. Expand programming for maximum mission impact

	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timeline/ Status</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>I.</b>	Focus on 50 year Anniversary of the Good Friday Earthquake	Complete the earthquake exhibit: A Moving Experience	Curator of Collections & Exhibitions	Scheduled Completion by March 27 <sup>th</sup> 2014	
		Implement Communities, Disasters, & Change, traveling exhibit	Curator of Collections & Exhibitions	May 2014 – January 2016	
		Update earthquake education curriculum	Curator of Education & Public Programs	Develop in Spring and launch in summer of 2014	
		Enhance Old Town walking tours	Curator of Education & Public Programs	Develop in Spring and launch in summer of 2014	
<b>II.</b>	Improve Native Culture Programs	Work with Native Organizations	Native Gallery Committee Chair, Curator of Collections & Exhibitions, & Curator of Education & Public Programs	Ongoing	Have worked to strengthen partnerships with Chugachmiut and Tatitlek
<b>III.</b>	Revitalize Native Gallery Committee	Update Native Gallery Exhibits	Native Gallery Committee Chair, Curator of Collections & Exhibitions, & Curator of Education & Public Programs	Summer 2014	
		Identify native heritage knowledge keepers in varying communities.	Curator of Education & Public Programs & Curator of	Ongoing	

			Collections & Exhibitions		
		Create a database of potential native program presenters, artists, educators, etc.	Curator of Education & Public Programs & Curator of Collections & Exhibitions	Ongoing	
		Travel to native communities and meet with stakeholders. Consult and collaborate with them on museum programs.	Curator of Collections & Exhibitions, & Curator of Education & Public Programs	Annually	
		Add hands-on education elements that expand the interpretation of Native Gallery	Staff	Ongoing	Healing Plants Kit
		Offer programs based upon established Native curriculum in Gallery	Staff	Ongoing	
<b>IV.</b>	Develop Publishing Plan	Evaluate cost and feasibility Evaluate and assess list of potential publishing options Assess the best delivery process	Executive Director, Curator of Collections & Exhibitions, & Curator of Education & Public Programs	Summer 2013	Evaluated – Not Feasible

### C. Enhance Community Engagement

	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timeline/ Status</b>	<b>Completed Comments</b>
<b>I.</b>	Increase Visitors	Increase number of visitors to the Museum by 10%	Executive Director, Museum Services Manager, & Communication & Marketing Manager		Pending Visitation Tracking System
		Broaden & strengthen collaborations between organizations in the region by 2 per year	Board & Staff	Ongoing	



II.	Establish Programmatic Advisory Groups	Identify advisors from educational institutions, seniors, students and community members.	Curator of Collections & Exhibitions, & Curator of Education & Public Programs	Ongoing	
		Define advisor's role and draft a schedule when their input will be needed.	Curator of Collections & Exhibitions, & Curator of Education & Public Programs	Ongoing	Earthquake Advisory Committee
		Involve students in museum life in a variety of capacities. Work with schools, institutions and agencies to identify matches and opportunities.	Curator of Education & Public Programs	Ongoing	

**D. Increase accessibility**

	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timeline/ Status</b>	<b>Comments</b>
I.	Increase Virtual Accessibility	Budget for software/hardware improvements	Finance committee & Executive director	Completed Summer 2013	
		Put collections online	Curator of Collections & Exhibitions & Communications & Marketing Manager	Pending Priority	
		Upgrade and develop an interactive online version of the Gold Rush Name Database	Curator of Collections & Exhibitions, Communications & Marketing Manager, & Web Designer	Phase 2 2015	Phase 1 completed Summer 2013
		Install technology and furnishings into Gold Rush gallery	Curator of Collections & Exhibitions	Completed Spring 2012	
II.	Increase Physical Accessibility	Work with the city to have a new handicap accessible front door installed.	Executive director, & City Maintenance	Spring 2014	

**E. Maintain and Improve Professional levels of Collections Care & Management**

	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timeline/ Status</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>I.</b>	Evaluate human resources needed to maintain Collections Management	Assess need for intern and volunteers	Curator of Collections & Exhibitions & Executive director	May of 2013	Hired Curatorial Assistant
<b>II.</b>	Improve mezzanine storage	Organize mezzanine artifacts and move small artifacts into compacting shelving,	Curator of Collections & Exhibitions	Began Fall 2012	Partially Completed
		replace wooden shelving on mezzanine,	Curator of Collections & Exhibitions		Pending New Facility Plan
		construct storage for large signage,	Curator of Collections & Exhibitions		Pending New Facility Plan
<b>III.</b>	Develop plan to address acceptable storage of items currently off-site	Assess items in storage, move and re-house smaller items	Curator of Collections & Exhibitions & Curatorial Assistant		Accessed still needs to be rehomed
		Update storage options	Staff		Pending New Facility Plan
<b>IV.</b>	Plan for Stabilization of exterior artifact displays	Conduct Condition Survey by Boatwright for Perry	Curator of Collections & Exhibitions, Collections Committee, & Consultant	2015	
		budget for exterior redevelopment (Main Museum)	Finance Committee		Pending New Facility Plan

**F. Maintain & Improve Permanent & Temporary Exhibits**

	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timeline/ Status</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>I.</b>	Upgrade 1 long-standing exhibit per year	Establish priorities	Curator of Collections & Exhibitions		The Earthquake Exhibit was updated this year
<b>II.</b>	Mount 4-5 temporary exhibits annually	Coordinate temporary exhibit selection with educator and dovetail exhibit and program budgets strategically	Curator of Collections & Exhibitions	Ongoing	
<b>III.</b>	Procure better display cases: more secure, better lighting, fresher appearance and energy-efficient	Research options	Curator of Collections & Exhibitions		Pending New Facility Plan

**G. Maintain & Improve Education Programs**

	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timeline/ Status</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>I.</b>	Evaluate human resources to maintain and grow education programs	Solicit paid and volunteer help for summer programs	Curator of Education & Public Programs & Executive Director	Begin Fall 2012	Education Assistant was hired
<b>II.</b>	Schedule a minimum of 5-3 visits throughout the year to schools and organizations with shared programmatic goals	Visit schools in Kenny Lake, Tatitlek, Copper Center, Glennallen and others	Curator of Education & Public Programs	Ongoing	Visited Tatitlek & Chugachmu it in 2013
<b>II.</b>	Evaluate criteria for an education collection.	Designate storage space for existing education collection in archives	Curator of Education & Public Programs	Ongoing	
		Purchase and borrow items for an education collection	Curator of Education & Public Programs	Ongoing	
<b>III.</b>	Create an organized, accessible, easily retrievable storage system for education.	Share system with stakeholders. Clean and organize storage closet.	Curator of Education & Public Programs	Ongoing	

		Purchase standardized storage bins. Label.	Curator of Education & Public Programs	Ongoing	
<b>IV.</b>	Present new museum educational program to public, schools and educators	Publish list of new and existing programs	Curator of Education & Public Programs, & Communication & Marketing Manager	Ongoing	
		Identify curriculum matches	Curator of Education & Public Programs & School Admin	2014	Working with Beverly Colapietro
		Access feasibility of annual teacher in-service programs at the museum	Curator of Education & Public Programs	Annual	Began in 2012
		Revise existing education narrative on VMHA Website	Curator of Education & Public Programs, Communication & Marketing Manager, & Web designer	Begin 2013	Completed with the launch of the new website
<b>IV</b>	Develop new educational programs	Research, develop and launch VTS Visual Thinking Strategies in classrooms and at the museum	Curator of Education & Public Programs	Ongoing	Launched in 2013

**H. Maintain & Improve Public Programs**

	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timeline/ Status</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>I.</b>	Expand summer programming	Solicit paid and volunteer help for summer programs	Curator of Collections & Exhibitions, & Curator of Education & Public Programs	Ongoing	
		Review community calendars and events. Collaborate. Schedule programs in smart niches.	Staff	Ongoing	Summer Camp & CDC

**Goal 3: The Valdez Museum & Historical Archive will have a dynamic communication program.**

A. Increase Public Awareness

	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timeline/ Status</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>I.</b>	Identify a Communication & Marketing Manager	Budget for Position	Executive Director & Finance Committee	4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter 2013	Brittany was appointed the Position
<b>II.</b>	Analyze our market	Develop a marketing Audit (1 <sup>st</sup> step in a marketing plan that researches demographics stakeholders, potential partners, assets and liabilities)	Executive Director, Communication & Marketing Manager, & Board	June 2014	
<b>III.</b>	Implement a marketing plan	Define best way to advertise with locals	Communication & Marketing Manager & Executive Director		Pending Marketing Audit
		Develop marketing plan that implements best practices for the largest impact	Communication & Marketing Manager & Executive Director		Pending Marketing Audit
		Expand and upgrade technological resources	Communication & Marketing Manager & Executive Director	Ongoing	
		Create a plan to increase the Museum's off site presence at Fairs, trade shows and festivals	Communication & Marketing Manager, Executive Director, & Staff		Pending Marketing Audit & Budget
<b>IV.</b>	Create a unified VMHA Brand	Redesign printed materials to align with new website aesthetic	Communication & Marketing Manager &	Spring 2013	Completed Stationary

			Executive Director		& Business cards
		Redevelop regional & national ads to align with unified branding	Communication & Marketing Manager & Executive Director	Summer 2014	
		Update Chenega/Egan Museum sign	Executive Director	Spring 2015	
<b>V.</b>	Develop advocacy plan (board & staff)	Create an Advocacy Inventory	Executive Director	Completed	
		Write a case statement	All Board & All Staff	Summer 2014	
		Create a communications plan	All Board & All Staff	Summer 2014	

B. Expand & Enhance Technological Resources

	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timeline/ Status</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>I.</b>	Upgrade website for easier navigation, interactive for education, exhibition and fund development	Budget for new & improved website	Finance Committee & Executive Director	Complete	
		Provide staff training for maintenance and upgrade	Communication & Marketing Manager & Staff	Winter 2014	
		Update educational and programmatic section	Communication & Marketing Manager & Staff	Winter 2014	
		Expand offerings for research and interaction	Communication & Marketing Manager & Staff	Spring 2014	
<b>II.</b>	Develop a technology plan for hardware & software	Work with Arctic IT to develop a course of action	Executive Director	Ongoing	

**Goal 4: The Valdez Museum & Historical Archive will have a consolidated infrastructure.**

A. Evaluate existing Museum facility

	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timeline/ Status</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>I.</b>	Predevelopment Evaluation	Submit Foraker Predevelopment Application	Executive Director, Board President, & City Manager	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2014	Application Recieved
		Complete the Foraker Predevelopment Program	Board, Executive Director, & City administration	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2015	
		Develop a Funding Plan	Board, Executive Director, & City administration	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2015	
		Attain City Approval to move forward	Board & Executive Director	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2015	

B. Develop a Facility/ Master Interpretative Plan

	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timeline/ Status</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>I.</b>	Develop a Planning Team	Hire a Project Manager	Board, Executive Director, & City administration	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2015	
		Hire a Master Interpretative Planner	Board, Executive Director, & City administration	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2015	
		Hire an Architect	Board, Executive Director, & City administration	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2015	
		Hire and Environmental Engineer	Board, Executive Director, & City administration	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2015	
<b>II.</b>	Develop a design plan	Work with planning team to design a facility that fits the museums needs	Board, Staff, & City Administration	2016	

C. Implement a Funding Plan

	<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timeline/ Status</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>I.</b>	Create a Capitol Campaign Committee	Identify a committee chair & members from the Board	Board Development Committee & Executive Director	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2015	
		Select a Co-Chair from the community		3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2015	
<b>II.</b>	Mount Capitol Campaign	Solicit diverse donors & funders	Capitol Campaign Committee & executive Director	4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter 2015	

D. Build Facility