

Valdez Museum & Historical Archive

Strategic Plan 2012 – 2017

Adopted on the 16th day of August in the year 2012 by the VMHA Board of Directors



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

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objects are part of the Valdez Museum’s core collection, now numbering approximately 75,000 objects, photographs, and historical documents related to Valdez’s regional history.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 a 13 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.

	Milestones	Action Items	Responsible Party	Timeline	Completed
I.	Write a business plan to focus on earned revenue sources	Develop mission driven products to sell in the store	Staff	Two new products a year by 2014	
		Develop a fee based afterschool education program	Staff		
II.	Write and implement a Fund Development Plan	Increase endowment through strategic planned giving		Fall 2012	
		Implement an annual appeal letter		Ongoing	
		Implement 2 membership drives a year: Spring and Fall	Board/Staff	Ongoing	
		Host 4 cultivation events a year (small scale): 2 member and 2 donor parties	Board		
		Increase non-city grants			
		Plan 2 Raffles a year. 1 in the summer and 1 for Roadhouse		Ongoing	

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

	Milestones	Action Items	Responsible Party	Timeline	Completed
I.	Develop the Board for maximum participation	Create Board Development Committee	Bylaws Committee	Summer 2012	
		Develop Annual Calendar for Board Meetings/Events			
		Review/Amend Policies and Procedures for clarity and relevancy	Bylaws Committee		
		Update Board Manual			
		Develop job descriptions for officers and committees		In progress – complete by end of 2012	
II.	Enhance volunteer program	Create a volunteer needs assessment	Staff	Fall 2012	
		Designate a volunteer manager			
		Create a volunteer recruitment plan. Design corresponding marketing and education materials.	Staff		
		Create annual event calendar for which volunteers are needed. Schedule volunteers.	Staff Board	2012	
		Create monthly volunteer tracking system	Staff	Ongoing	
III.	Provide professional development opportunities for paid staff	Budget for Professional Staff to attend a minimum of 1 conference a year		End of 2012	
	Provide enhanced training for summer staff	Develop training materials to include museum history and interpretation. Set training schedule.	Staff	2013	
IV.	Build more active relationship with members	Offer 2 Behind the Scenes and 2 Special Tours/Events a year of Museum Collections			

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

A. Expand programming for maximum mission impact

	Milestones	Action Items	Responsible Party	Timeline	Completed
I.	Evaluate the visitor experience	Create an assortment of evaluation tools including surveys, tracking forms, exit interviews, etc.			
		Identify evaluation manager(s)			
		Conduct surveys		Ongoing	
		Map galleries and track visitors.		2013	
		Compile evaluation data in accessible retrievable electronic system and share with staff regularly		Begin 2012	
		Identify actions needed to improve visitor experience from compiled data		Begin 2012	
		Evaluate hours of operation for maximum visitation			
		Identify the “best” places for public programs throughout the year.	Staff	Begin 2012	
		Evaluate transportation for seniors and school groups	Staff Board	Begin 2012	
II.	Update the Museum’s Master Interpretative Plan	Secure National Endowment for the Humanities Grant Funding		December 31, 2013	
III.	Improve Native Culture Programs	Revitalize Native Gallery Committee Work with Chugachmiut on revitalizing NEC		Fall 2012	

	Milestones	Action Items	Responsible Party	Timeline	Completed
		Update Native Gallery Exhibits		By 2012	
		Identify native heritage knowledge keepers in varying communities.	Staff Others	Ongoing	
		Create a database of potential native program presenters, artists, educators, etc.	Staff		
		Travel to native communities and meet with stakeholders. Consult and collaborate with them on museum programs.	Staff	Ongoing	
		Add hands-on education elements that expand the interpretation of Native Gallery	Staff	Ongoing	
		Offer programs based upon established Native curriculum in Gallery	Staff	Ongoing	
IV.	Develop Publishing Plan	Evaluate cost and feasibility Evaluate and assess list of potential publishing options Assess the best delivery process			

B. Enhance Community Engagement

	Milestones	Action Items	Responsible Party	Timeline	Completed
I.	Strengthen mutually beneficial partnerships with tourist and community organizations	Increase number of regional visitors to the Museum by 10% in 2013			
		Increase number of collaborations between organizations in the region by 2 per year			
II.	Establish Programmatic Advisory Groups	Identify advisors from educational institutions, seniors, students and community members.		Ongoing	
		Define advisor's role and draft a schedule when their input will be needed.			
		Involve students in museum life in a variety of capacities. Work with schools, institutions and agencies to identify matches and opportunities.	Staff	Ongoing	

C. Increase accessibility

	Milestones	Action Items	Responsible Party	Timeline	Completed
I.	Evaluate Museum Access	Conduct surveys for schools and senior groups	Staff	Ongoing	
II.	Develop a stronger web presence	Budget for software/hardware improvements			
		Put collections online			
		Upgrade and develop an interactive online version of the Gold Rush Name Database			
		Install technology and furnishings into Gold Rush gallery			

D. Maintain and Improve Professional levels of Collections Care & Management

	Milestones	Action Items	Responsible Party	Timeline	Completed
I.	Evaluate human resources needed to maintain Collections Management	Assess need for intern and volunteers			
II.	Improve mezzanine storage	Organize mezzanine artifacts and move small artifacts into compacting shelving,		Fall 2012	
		consolidate mezzanine collections		Fall 2012	
		replace wooden shelving on mezzanine,		End 2014	
		construct storage for large signage,		End 2014	
III.	Develop plan to address acceptable storage of items currently off-site	Assess items in storage, move and re-house smaller items	Staff	Done	
		Investigate storage options (done),	Staff	Done	
		Discuss and develop plan of action	Staff and Collections Committee, City of Valdez	End 2012	
IV.	Plan for development of exterior artifact displays	Conduct Marine Survey for Perry	Staff,	End 2012	
		budget for exterior redevelopment (Main Museum)	Board and staff	End 2013	
		contract exhibit developer working through MIP	VMHA	End 2014	

E. Maintain & Improve Permanent & Temporary Exhibits

	Milestones	Action Items	Responsible Party	Timeline	Completed
I.	Upgrade Earthquake Exhibit	Complete MIP		Begin Summer 2012	
		Assemble committee of stakeholders			
		Put out RFP for exhibit designers			
		Add hands-on educational elements to enhance interpretation of Remembering Old Town exhibit	Staff	Begin 2012	
II.	Upgrade 1 long-standing exhibit per year	Establish priorities and approaches through MIP		2014-2017	
III.	Mount 4-5 temporary exhibits annually	Coordinate temporary exhibit selection with educator and dovetail exhibit and program budgets strategically	Staff	Ongoing	
IV.	Procure better display cases: more secure, better lighting, fresher appearance and energy-efficient			End 2015	

F. Maintain & Improve Education Programs

	Milestones	Action Items	Responsible Party	Timeline	Completed
I.	Evaluate human resources to maintain and grow education programs	Solicit paid and volunteer help for summer programs		Begin Fall 2012	
II.	Schedule a minimum of 5 visits throughout the year to schools and organizations with shared programmatic goals	Visit and teach at schools in Kenny Lake, Tatitlek, Copper Center, Glennallen and others		Begin Fall 2012	
II.	Evaluate criteria for an education collection.	Designate storage space for existing education collection in archives	Staff	Summer 2013	

		Purchase and borrow items for an education collection	Staff	Ongoing	
	Create an organized, accessible, easily retrievable storage system for education.	Share system with stakeholders. Clean and organize storage closet.			
		Purchase standardized storage bins. Label.			
III	Present new museum educational program to public, schools and educators	Publish list of new and existing programs	Staff	Begin 2012	
		Identify curriculum matches	Staff School Admin		
		Provide two annual teacher in-service programs at the museum	Staff	Begin 2012	
		Revise existing education narrative on VMHA Website	Staff Web designer	Begin 2012	
IV	Develop new educational programs	Research, develop and launch VTS in classrooms and at the museum	Staff	Begin 2012	

G. Maintain & Improve Public Programs

	Milestones	Action Items	Responsible Party	Timeline	Completed
I	Determine best locations to provide museum public programs	Meet with Community individuals and organizations to determine programmatic needs	Staff	Begin 2012	
II	Expand summer programming	Solicit paid and volunteer help for summer programs			
		Review community calendars and events. Collaborate. Schedule programs in smart niches.	Staff	2013	
III	Develop a collections care program for individual collections		Staff		

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

A. Increase Public Awareness

	Milestones	Action Items	Responsible Party	Timeline	Completed
I.	Analyze our market	Develop a marketing Audit (1 st step in a marketing plan that researches demographics stakeholders, potential partners, assets and liabilities)		Spring 2013	
		Define a clear plan to connect with visitor industry			
II.	Implement a marketing plan	Define best way to advertise with locals			
		Develop marketing plan that implements best practices for the largest impact			
		Expand and upgrade technological resources			
		Create a plan to increase the Museum's off site presence at Fairs, trade shows and festivals			
III.	Create a unified VMHA Brand	Complete ROVE exterior		Summer 2012	
		Update Chenega/Egan Museum sign			
IV.	Develop advocacy plan (board & staff)	Write 2 OP ED local Utilize AAM write One		2 nd Quarter 2014	
		Advocate for a Heritage Protection Ordinance			

B. Expand & Enhance Technological Resources

	Milestones	Action Items	Responsible Party	Timeline	Completed
I.	Upgrade website for easier navigation, interactive for education, exhibition and fund development	Budget for new & improved website		Summer 2013	
		Provide staff training for maintenance and upgrade			
		Update educational and programmatic section			
		Expand offerings for research and interaction			
II.	Develop a technology plan for hardware & software				

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

A. Evaluate existing Museum facility

	Milestones	Action Items	Responsible Party	Timeline	Completed
I.	Develop a Building Plan for new building that addresses institutional needs	Assess need for a teaching classroom and a storage room		End 2015	
		Assess need for collections receiving area			
		Assess need for exhibit preparation area			
II.	Develop a plan for ROVE with multiple scenarios	Be actively involved in City of Valdez Community Strategic Planning process		Ongoing	

B. Improve efficiency of existing infrastructure

	Milestone	Action Items	Responsible Party	Timeline	Completed
I.	Implement energy efficient improvements	Upgrade lighting to LED lights		In progress. Research long-term plan by 2013. Implement by end 2013. Address ROVE needs 2015	
II.	Reduce electric energy consumption	Turn on display lighting when first patron of day arrives, turn off display lighting when patrons leave			
		Investigate replacing old lighting tracks with more energy-efficient ones		End 2013	
		Renovate front entrance and office area		End 2012	
III.	Reduce heating fuel consumption	Set thermometer to 68 in winter, 72 in summer, adjust for maximum efficiency			