

Board Meeting Summary – November 25, 2011

The third meeting of the 2011/12 MAS Board of Directors was held on November 25, 2011 at the United Way offices in Regina.

The Board added this meeting to their schedule set of meetings in order to hold focused discussions on issues and trends affecting museums.

Key items discussed at the November meeting were:

Management

- A copy of the report prepared by Dan Holbrow on the 2011 Professional Development Survey results was distributed to the Board for their information. It was noted that while the return rate was low it was the first survey conducted primarily on-line by MAS. The information garnered will be very useful as staff plans for the future. The Board commended Dan for his initiative. Please note that the report has been posted on the MAS website.

Environmental Scan discussions

- Provincial Election recap - MAS worked closely with Heritage Saskatchewan with respect to the recent provincial election to ensure that heritage – including museums, received a higher public profile than in previous elections. MAS distributed a museum fact sheet along with the Heritage Saskatchewan election card to all members. This was an advocacy initiative to use the election as a means to raise awareness of museums in the larger context of heritage in the province. It was suggested that members use the information to ask informed questions of candidates at the doorstep.

The majority of comments were positive to this initiative. In fact one member asked to use the information in a regular column in the local paper. Permission was, of course, given for this use. Only one negative comment was received from a member who did “not feel the MAS should get politically involved in an election.” A letter in response was sent explaining that MAS was not and in fact cannot become politically involved in an election but can and will use the election process to advocate on behalf of MAS members to those who may become the decision makers.

The Premier has stated that he will stay with his pre-election cabinet until spring, 2012. This means that Bill Hutchinson remains as Minister of Tourism, Parks, Culture & Sport.

- SaskCulture Gathering and AGM - October 28 & 29 Both Co-Managers along with Vice-President Crystal Craig both days. Professional Development Coordinator Dan Holbrow also attended the session on youth engagement. MAS also had a booth in the SaskCulture tradeshow.

Crystal Craig noted that Past President Celine Perillat was also in attendance at the gathering. Brenda Herman noted that MAS was credited with having been the first to bring to Saskatchewan Dr. Candice Metalic during her introduction - referring to the fact she had been the key presenter at the Creative Collaborations symposium.

- Federal funding/MAP status – Notification was received in late September that our 2011/12 application to the Museums Assistance Program (Dept. of Canadian Heritage) was successful. It was noted that MAP staff has twice asked for permission to use the MAS 2011 application as an example of a “successful” application for first time applicants. The Board commended the staff for their work on producing an application that is not only successful but truly exemplary.

It was noted that the federal government has instructed all departments and agencies to look to cutting between 5 & 10%. This could impact on funding available to museums through Department of Canadian Heritage (MAP, Young Canada Works), Human Resources & Skills Development Canada (New Horizons), Service Canada (Youth Employment Strategy programs), Parks Canada, etc. This led to the discussion of difficulty of accessing summer student employment programs both federal and provincial. It was noted that it is becoming increasingly difficult to locate appropriate students for two main reasons: the lateness of notification on application status which generally comes after university students are already in the workforce; and the inability of museums to compete with large local businesses with respect to competitive wages in many areas of the province.

Wendy shared an idea proposed at the recent Parkland network meeting for the creation of a seniors employment grant program. This is an idea which needs further study.

The question was raised – how can MAS building the case for the impact museums have, across sectors, in their community?

Several ideas were mentioned including:

- non-traditional partnering
- conduct a member survey as had been done in the past
- sharing success stories
- promote ideas for partnering activities
- hold a Bring & Brag session at the conference – bring an idea and brag about a success

• Tourism Saskatchewan's Cultural Tourism Initiatives - At the final meeting of the Tourism SK President's Cultural Tourism Task Team September 20/11 representatives of provincial cultural agencies were invited to attend in order to inform them of the activities of the task team and discuss ways of moving forward. MAS participated in the September meeting with the Cultural Tourism Task Team along with representatives from several lead cultural agencies including SaskCulture, Sask. Arts Board, Heritage SK, SK Arts Alliance, Multicultural Council of SK, and the SK Publishers Group.

The most positive aspect of the meeting was simply that it brought together leaders from all sectors within the broader cultural sector to discuss a common issue – cultural tourism. The second positive was that those present agreed that to have an impact on decision makers it is important for the cultural sector to speak with one voice. Finally, at the end of the meeting the cultural agencies agreed that we wanted to continue the discussions which led to a second meeting November 9th/11 which MAS staff attended.

Tourism SK is to be commended for recognising the importance of culture within the province and bringing together senior members of the cultural sector to begin the process of identifying common issues and enabling culture to speak with one voice on those issues.

• artsVest - This program is a two year pilot project of Canadian Business for the Arts which is a sponsorship training and matching incentive program designed to stimulate business investment in culture with funding from both the provincial and federal governments. This is a program which will bear watching as it moves forward to see how it impacts funding for museums both public and private. It was noted that the January issue of Megaphone will focus on artsVest and the Community Initiatives Fund – Community Initiatives Program as potential sources of funding for members.

General

- The Board was informed that the strategic values, goals and objectives have been posted to the MAS website. The next step in the process will be the development of the 3 year operational plan which can't, realistically, happen until the new Executive Director is in place in the new year.
- The Board adopted a revised Board meeting self evaluation form and agreed that the President would provide feedback to the entire Board after each meeting of evaluation results.

The next meeting of the Board will be in mid January.

If you have any comments or questions, you can contact us by telephone, mail, or email.

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