

The Megaphone

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meg·a·phone [meg-uh-fohn] –noun
1. a cone-shaped device for magnifying or directing the voice, chiefly used in addressing a large audience out of doors or in calling to someone at a distance.

www.dictionary.com

Hello everyone!

It's that time of year ... too late for Christmas ... too early for spring planting – sigh! Some of us are looking at the tail end of winter and thinking about ways to put these last few months of cold weather to good use, before we head outside for the sunshine of summer.

That makes this an ideal time to increase our knowledge about museums, and network with others with the same interests, by taking part in a MAS education or professional development opportunity!

MAS' Winter-Spring 2010 Education and Professional Development Calendar was recently distributed to all of you.

It outlines the great new courses we're offering over the next couple of months, to help you develop skills and knowledge about your museum, and many great networking opportunities as well.

In March, for example, we're offering two Certificate in Community Museum Studies courses, and a workshop titled *The Art of Grant Writing*. Our members can also participate in three special interest discussion groups.

As you can see by the list in the box to the right, the sessions are offered in many locations throughout the province, and some are being offered again in different locations in April.

And there are many other new and interesting opportunities available in addition to these sessions too!

At the spring network meetings, for example, our Network Knowledge Exchange will offer a session focusing on our new resource, *The Advocacy Guide – Tools and Tips*. We also offer Standards for Boards workshops, a Coaching Program, and a number of discussion groups which are working on-line, including Greening the Museum and Museums and Sustainability. We also have several active Special Interest Groups which will be meeting this spring. So as you can see, there are many, many opportunities to network with others in the museum community, and increase your knowledge!

Certificate in Community Museum Studies

Exhibit Design and Planning, a two-day course, will be offered Friday, March 12 & Saturday, March 13 at Barr Colony Heritage Cultural Centre in Lloydminster.

Museums and Community, a two-day course, will be offered Friday, March 19 & Saturday, March 20 at Assiniboia & District Historical Museum.

The Art of Grant Writing, a one-day workshop, will be held Saturday, March 27 at Signal Hill Arts Centre, Weyburn.

Special Interest Groups

Note: You must be a MAS member to join a Special Interest Group

First Peoples Special Interest Group

Wednesday, March 3rd in Regina

Managers/Directors Special Interest Group

Thursday, March 4th in Regina

Education and Public Programming Special Interest Group

Friday, March 26th in Saskatoon, with special guest Brent Toles, Social Sciences Consultant with the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education. Please note: The session with Brent Toles will be by RSVP only, but is open to the entire museum community.

For April listings and more information, please click http://www.saskmuseums.org/professional_development or email Jessica at jessica.leavens@saskmuseums.org

MAS' Education and Professional Development offerings are developed and organized by Wendy Fitch, our Director of Museum Development, and Jessica Leavens, our Professional Development Coordinator. The courses are chosen each year based on the needs and interests of the members, and the financial resources available.

“MAS continues to make professional development a strong priority in our organization,” Wendy says. “We update the Certificate Program, create new programs and services, and offer contemporary and relevant training in a variety of ways for a number of reasons.”

“First, it's a key way of fulfilling our mandate: ‘To serve museums and work for their advancement.’ Second, it strengthens professional standards, and provides our members with opportunities to develop skills and knowledge necessary for a strong and vibrant museum community. And third and most importantly, because our members continually tell us it is important!”

There are also many tangible benefits to participating in the courses, Jessica says. “Tangible benefits include being better qualified for positions in museums, whether you are staff, volunteer, or board, and coming away with contemporary and relevant information on all areas of the museum,” she says. The courses are also recognized throughout the province and beyond – most provincial museums associations have a Certificate Program, and courses taken through associations in Ontario, Alberta, and Manitoba can be transferred to the MAS Certificate and vice versa.

Another advantage of taking part in these learning opportunities is learning from local members, and being able to access experts with other fields of knowledge, Wendy says.

“We choose our course leaders from our knowledgeable base of members and the broader heritage community. Their hands-on experience, often gained over many decades of work in Saskatchewan museums, makes them wonderful teachers who are able to easily demonstrate techniques and share knowledge,” she says. “In addition, we like to hire people from outside the museum community for some courses, because they bring a fresh perspective to the material, which we feel is beneficial for members to experience.”

The Certificate Program is a set of nine courses, plus the Introduction to Standards course, designed for entry-level museum workers. If a person successfully completes all of the courses, including the assignment, they are awarded a Certificate which indicates that they have a basic understanding of what is involved in operating a successful museum. People can take individual courses if they only have an interest in a very specific topic; however, Wendy says they are encouraged to try and take as many of the courses as possible, to better understand the different aspects of museum operation.

“And if the Certificate Program does not meet your needs, MAS offers a wide range of professional development opportunities for board members, staff, volunteers, and interested individuals within the arts, culture, and heritage community,” Jessica says. “Join a group, attend training, bring an expert to your museum, or browse our website for resources that will help you achieve your goals and contribute to a healthy and vibrant museum community.”

I hope you decide to join other members of our museum community in networking and discussion, or make good use of the rest of winter by signing up for a course. Happy learning!

- Lisa