

The Megaphone

May 19, 2011

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,

In this month's Megaphone I would like to take this opportunity to celebrate the career of a highly respected and knowledgeable member of the museum community, David Klatt, currently Executive Director of the Saskatchewan Western Development Museum.

David has recently announced his departure from the WDM after 20 years at the helm of the WDM and a previous 10 years as Manager of Boomtown, the Saskatoon WDM branch. He will be leaving at the end of June to pursue new challenges. David's departure provides MAS with a chance to publically acknowledge his impact on the Saskatchewan museum community for more than a quarter of a century.



Photo from the WDM website:

<http://www.wdm.ca/>

David Klatt was named the WDM Executive Director in 1991. During his time with the WDM he brought the branches in Moose Jaw, North Battleford and Yorkton back from seasonal openings to year-round operations. In all four sites, new permanent positions were created in Museum programming, research, exhibitions, conservation and artefact collections work.

He inherited buildings with leaking roofs and gravel floors. New roofs were installed on the Museums in Moose Jaw and Saskatoon, and on the Curatorial Centre in Saskatoon. Floors were upgraded in Moose Jaw and Saskatoon, along with major renovations and storage additions throughout the WDM system.

The bold, innovative new set of exhibits - *Winning the Prairie Gamble*, conceived in celebration of Saskatchewan's centennial in 2005, were developed and launched. A WDM first -, the development of formal strategic and operational plans were begun in 2006.

David served on the MAS board for 8 years and served one term as president from 1987-1989. When asked about his time as part of the MAS board he responded "The eight years in the mid-late 1980s during which I worked with the MAS (SMA) board, was a time of exceptional growth and development for the Association. It was during this period that the Certificate in Museum Studies program was developed, the Museum Advisor position was created, networks were organized, and the Standards for Saskatchewan Museums initiative

was born. MAS was blessed with the contributions of exceptional staff and board members, and it was both a humbling and very rewarding privilege to work with the expertise and knowledge that these people brought to the organization.”

David is still an active member of MAS and when asked what his thoughts were about MAS now he responded “At present, I perceive that the Association is moving forward with clarification of its role, relevance and potential contribution to the Saskatchewan museum community. The progress which has been made during the past two years provides me with great optimism that MAS once again will achieve status as one of Canada's most innovative and visionary provincial museum organizations.”

MAS has spent much of the past year working on a new strategic plan for our organization. This plan will be presented at the Mini-Conference on May 26, by the Board. In light of this process we were interested in David’s opinion on where MAS is going in the future. “My hope for the future is that MAS retains and enhances its function as an organization that advocates for all museums and, in particular, provides the training, communication and guidance that are critical to retention and stability of Saskatchewan's many community museums. MAS can provide a pivotal role in serving as a facilitator in bringing together the resources (however limited) available from larger institutions, and coordinating those with the needs of smaller operations. To its credit, MAS already boasts an exemplary record in this regard.”

David notes the contributions of the staff and board members he worked with during his years on the then SMA board. What he is too modest to say is what his contribution during that time was to the organization. Just one example is how, as a leader, David was instrumental in ensuring that Saskatchewan’s Standards (Canada’s first) were developed and continue to be grounded in a set of defining principles. These principles have ensured that after four revisions standards continue to present best practices, broadly applicable, which guide museums toward operational excellence.

Since his time on the MAS Board David has been a constant supporter of the Association. He has made his own institution’s limited resources available to the museum community both through MAS and on individual bases. As well, he can be counted on to provide thoughtful insights and advice whenever asked.

In 2005 MAS awarded David with its highest accolade – the Lifetime Achievement Award for his contributions to the provincial museum community. While we thank David Klatt for his contributions to MAS in the past we intend to take advantage of his new availability and look forward to working with him in the future.

Live long and prosper!