



ACHF financial narrative report

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Submitted by Brenda Raney, Director of Government Relations

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The Science Museum of Minnesota is pleased for this opportunity to submit an updated narrative review of the work we've done with the generous allocation of \$500,000 for each of fiscal years 2012 and 2013 from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund of the Minnesota Legacy Amendment.

The main contact for the museum's Legacy programming is Brenda Raney. Brenda's contact information can be found in the header of this report. The museum's website address is [www.smm.org](http://www.smm.org) and the site is in compliance with all web requirements set forth in the current Legacy legislation. Our fiscal agent for Legacy projects is the Minnesota Department of Administration. A current museum Board of Directors list is attached to this report. The Science Museum of Minnesota is using these funds on three separate projects. Descriptions of each project's scope, financials and outcomes are included in this report.

Our first project continues efforts we began with last biennium's Legacy funding for our American Indian collections project. In the first fiscal year of this biennium we completed our payments and closed on the purchase of a collection of local and regional American Indian objects. One of our objectives for this year is to increase the number of Minnesotans of all ages with access to museum programs related to the objects in American Indian collections purchased with \$208,357 of Legacy funds. To exhibit these items to more Minnesotans, a team of museum staff has spent \$46,149 during FY13, which includes funding 1.1 full time equivalency positions, planning a small showcase display featuring American Indian artifacts. That display will open at the Science Museum in February 2013 and will be available to visitors for several months as part of their general museum admission. Our second objective for this project is increasing audience understanding of native cultures evidenced in the purchased American Indian collections. While museum staff are privileged to be able to bring these objects out of collection storage and into our galleries for visitors to share, we're also acutely aware that these objects have a heritage that is not ours to interpret. Thus, a key feature of this exhibition is generating feedback from visitors and community members about what stories they want to hear about the American Indian experience in Minnesota and what kinds of objects they think will best tell those stories. There will be four feedback stations in the gallery actively soliciting comments, questions, suggestions and criticisms from visitors. We're in the process of developing internal plans for how we can get these objects and the stories they carry to more Minnesotans. The feedback we receive through this showcase exhibition will be invaluable to informing how to best do that. Future work in this area could take several programmatic and/or exhibition forms and we're hopeful to secure additional Legacy funds in the FY14/15 biennium to help us continue these efforts.

Our second project, Suitcase Science, continues to prioritize public outreach across the state of Minnesota. Suitcase Science is a live theater show that tells the stories of both science and cultural heritage from

objects shared with us by individuals at workshops in Duluth, Mankato, Moorhead, Rochester, Saint Cloud and the Twin Cities. Museum staff used the stories collected at the workshops to develop a show featuring objects from each community and covering a variety of scientific disciplines interpreted with a cultural heritage perspective. While individual communities supplied the objects, general visitors from around the state enjoy the production. Outcomes for this project included creating an engaging show that generated interest and enjoyment from its audience while also fostering an audience connection to the cultural heritage represented by the objects. Program evaluation reveals over 80% of viewers find the theater show both interesting and enjoyable. The same percentage also report seeing a connection linking them personally to the content of the show. So far in the biennium, over 25,500 visitors to the museum have seen the show. Museum actors also performed the show at community events around the state reaching over 700 people. Since the start of the biennium, \$81,439 has been spent on this project and it supports 1.4 full time equivalency positions.

Our third project is focused on enhancing our programs for students and teachers in order to increase their value to these audiences. This work is part of a larger museum initiative around our service to schools begun in 2012 with extensive study and conversations with teachers about what they need to get the most value out of a field trip. Legacy funds supplied \$411,298 of the project budget so far in this biennium, and \$150,000 of private funding and \$67,433 from a competitive federal grant will be used over the course of FY13. Legacy funds specifically funded the equivalent of 3.2 full time equivalency positions working on this project. During the first half of FY13 we redesigned our field trip website, introduced a new field trip package with new experiential learning components and connections to Minnesota state science and math standards and evaluated these offerings to understand how teachers received them and what we can continue to improve. Our first field trip package was called Big Weather Experience. It combines an Omnitheater film, *Tornado Alley*; a live museum theater production, *Storms on Stage*; and dedicated attention to hands-on weather exhibit components throughout the museum into one directed field trip experience. We designed this in response to teachers' requests for an easy-to-plan field trip package. Additional objectives for this work include clearly communicating connections between our informal learning opportunities and Minnesota academic standards as well as increased value of our informal education programs for teachers and students. We use our in-house evaluation team to consistently gather feedback from teachers about our progress towards those objectives. Program evaluation showed 69% of teachers said the Big Weather package "completely met my goals" and the field trip "was a great culmination to our weather unit. PLEASE offer it again next fall. It was a highlight for us all!" Based on this success, we're in the process of introducing the Real Dino Experience field trip package tied to state standards for nature of science study in grades K-3. We hope to continue this work with additional Legacy and other funding sources during the FY14-15 biennium.

It is our pleasure to submit these financial and narrative reports. We're proud of the work we have completed so far with the Legacy amendment funds and are looking forward to continuing it. The museum is happy to answer any additional questions you have about this work and would be thrilled to show you in person what is discussed in this report. Please contact Brenda Raney directly for any additional information you need.