

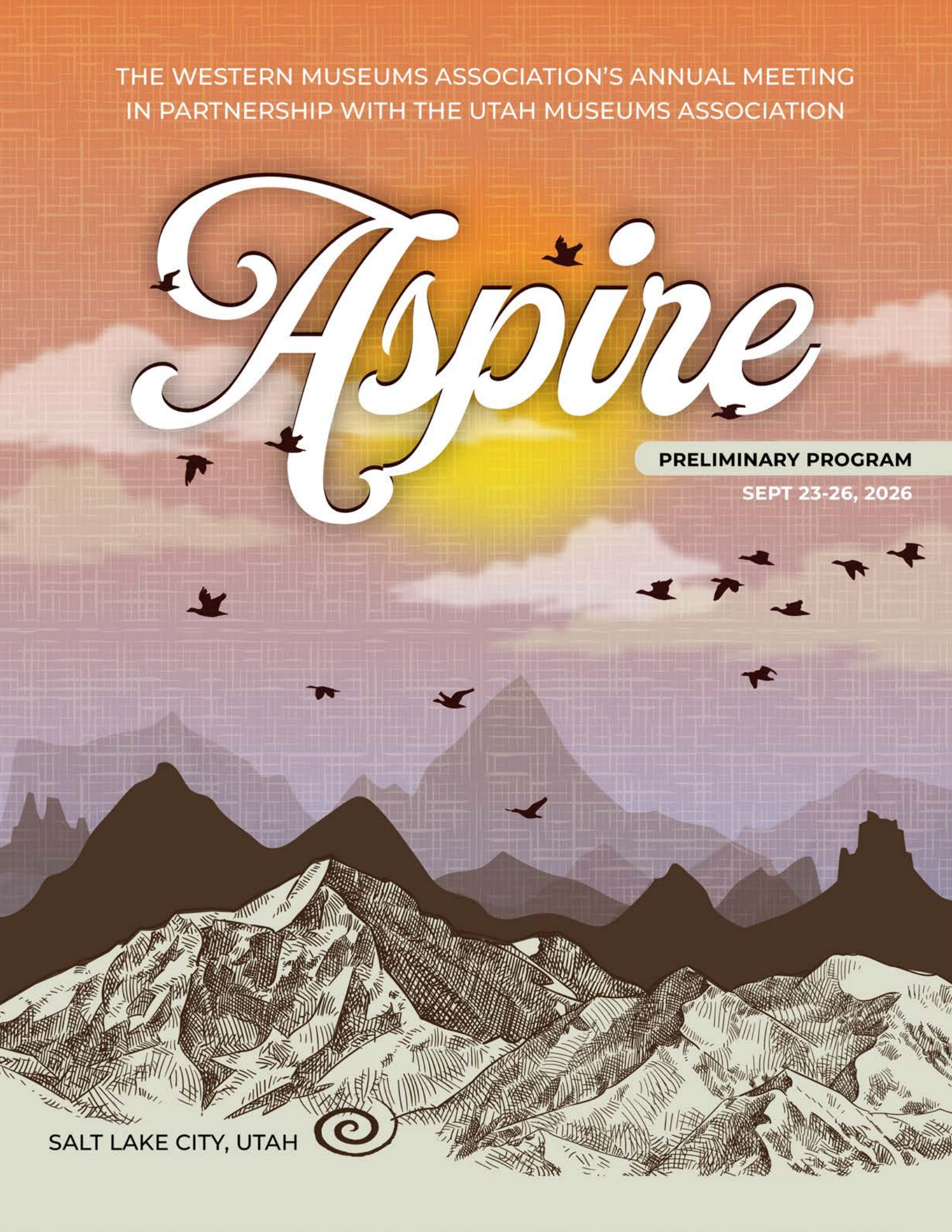
THE WESTERN MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION'S ANNUAL MEETING  
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE UTAH MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION

# Aspire

PRELIMINARY PROGRAM

SEPT 23-26, 2026

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH





The Western Museums Association (WMA) is delighted to invite you to our 2026 Annual Meeting, hosted in partnership with the Utah Museums Association (UMA), in Salt Lake City on September 23-26. Nestled at the base of the majestic Wasatch Mountains, Salt Lake City, located on the ancestral lands of the Ute, Goshute, Eastern Shoshone, and Timpanogos peoples, is often called the “Crossroads of the West,” making it the perfect place to gather and forge new paths forward for cultural professionals across the West. Blending urban innovation with natural beauty, Salt Lake City — or SLC to the locals — is where high-tech industry meets high-altitude adventure, and the Hilton Salt Lake City Center — our conference hotel and hub — places us at the center of it all.

With the theme of **ASPIRE**, WMA | UMA 2026 invites museum professionals to imagine boldly, reaching beyond inherited boundaries to shape futures not yet written. To **ASPIRE** is not simply to dream; it is to take intentional steps toward transformation. In museums, this means embracing innovation, confronting historical silences, and cultivating practices that reflect the diverse realities of the publics we serve. Whether expanding community engagement, rethinking stewardship, or exploring new interpretive strategies, the act of aspiring requires us to hold space for possibility. Attendees will find fellowship with peers, strengthen regional and national networks, and gain a broader understanding of how museums are navigating current issues.

This year we gather in Utah, a state shaped by layered histories, evolving communities, and ongoing efforts to reckon with land, identity, and belonging — home to a museum community that has long worked at the intersection of these very questions. Against this backdrop, **ASPIRE** invites us to forge stronger partnerships, uplift underrepresented voices, and build frameworks that honor both local stories and global perspectives. Six session tracks, curated events at local museums, and ample opportunities for informal exchange offer multifaceted learning for professionals at every stage of their careers — all in service of growing our cultural institutions together.

WMA | UMA 2026 will be an extraordinary gathering for museum people to exchange ideas, learn from peers, and cultivate skills to best serve their community. Daily programming will include both formal and informal learning emphasizing equity, action, and leadership. In the evening, continue networking with your colleagues during events at the Utah Museum of Contemporary Art, the Museum of Utah, the Natural History Museum of Utah, and the hotel. Make the most of your time in Utah with a pre-conference tour — tracing Robert Smithson’s Spiral Jetty into the Great Salt Lake, or exploring two difficult chapters in Utah’s history at either the Topaz Museum or Wuda Ogwa and Washakie. During your stay, use the local recommendations found throughout the program book to find the best food and sites the city has to offer.

As we confront the challenges facing our field, WMA | UMA 2026 serves as a catalyst to **ASPIRE** beyond the status quo—together. We hope you will join us in Salt Lake City this September.

**-WESTERN MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION AND UTAH MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION**

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Phoebe Charpentier, Communications Specialist

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**VICE PRESIDENT, COMMUNICATIONS:**

Landon Wilkey, Museum Curator, Historic Wendover Airfield

**VICE PRESIDENT, ADVOCACY**

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**VICE PRESIDENT, FUNDRAISING**

Alana Blumenthal, Museum Director, Brigham City Museums

**AT-LARGE**

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### UMA STAFF

Ruth White, Executive Assistant

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Elizabeth Nagengast-Stevens, Park Manager, Fremont Indian State Park

Katherine Ross, Curator, Frontier Homestead State Park Museum

Diego Velasquez, Director of Communications, Moab Museum

Mindy Wilson, Director of Marketing and Public Relations, Red Butte Garden & Arboretum



Thank you to the following individuals, who have all been instrumental in the planning, development, and support of this Annual Meeting. Your generous gifts of time and resources have made this Annual Meeting possible.

**2026 ANNUAL MEETING HOST COMMITTEE**

**CO-CHAIR:** Lorie Millward, *Principal, Lorie Millward Consulting*

**CO-CHAIR:** Jami Van Huss, *Museum Director, Hyrum City Museum*

Eliza Carr, *Public Programming Manager, Utah Historical Society*

Gretchen Dietrich, *Executive Director, Utah Museum of Fine Arts*

Axel Estable, *Director of Operations, Natural History Museum of Utah*

Jake Fitisemanu, *Director, Samoana Integrated Learning Initiative*

Katy Knight, *Museum Education, Administrator, BYU Bean Life Science Museum*

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Carrie Elizabeth Snow, *Manager of Collections Care, Church History Museum*

James Toledo, *Deputy Director, Utah Division of Indian Affairs*

Mindy Wilson, *Director of Marketing and Public Relations, Red Butte Garden & Arboretum*

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**CO-CHAIR:** Seth Margolis, *Director of Education Programs, Museum of Flight*

**CO-CHAIR:** Megumi Nagata, *Heritage Program Manager, 4Culture*

Emily Bentley, *Director, Kanab City Museums*

Marta Bones, *Director, Arizona Mining, Mineral & Natural Resources Education Museum*

Jacqueline Cabrera, *Principal, Cabrera+Art+Management*

Eric Chang, *Arts Program Coordinator, East-West Center*

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Michelle Gollehon, *Digital Asset Specialist, Utah Historical Society*

Doug Jenzen, *Executive Director, Hearst Castle Foundation*

Gail Mandel, *Chief Operating and Advancement Officer, Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education*

Nicole Meldahl, *Executive Director, Western Neighborhoods Project*

Paul Stavast, *Director, BYU Museum of Peoples & Culture*

Niki Stewart, *VP, Chief Learning & Engagement Officer, Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation*

Melanie Tran, *Chief Curator, California State Railroad Museum*

Thanks to all for the role you play in making this meeting so successful.



**INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT**

BYU Bean Life Science Museum  
 Church History Museum  
 Clark Planetarium  
 Discovery Gateway Children's Museum  
 Hyrum City Museum  
 Lori Millward Consulting  
 Natural History Museum of Utah  
 Red Butte Garden & Arboretum

Samoana Integrated Learning Initiative  
 Sparano + Mooney Architecture  
 Utah Division of Arts & Museums  
 Utah Division of Indian Affairs  
 Utah Historical Society  
 Utah Museum of Contemporary Art  
 Utah Museum of Fine Arts



**2026 ANNUAL MEETING HEADQUARTERS**

Hilton Salt Lake City Center  
255 S W Temple St  
Salt Lake City, UT, 84101

**ANNUAL MEETING ACTIVITIES**

The WMA 2026 Annual Meeting will be held at the Hilton Salt Lake City Center.

**TRANSPORTATION**

Scheduled buses for tours and special events will pick-up guests at the Hilton Salt Lake City Center. Please consult the Program for shuttle times, and arrive at the pickup location fifteen minutes prior to departure. Buses will return participants to the Hilton Salt Lake City Center.

**REGISTRATION/VOLUNTEER DESK**

The Annual Meeting Registration Desk is located on the second floor of the Hilton Salt Lake City Center. The desk will be staffed during the following times:

Wednesday, September 23 7:00 am–6:30 pm  
Thursday, September 24 8:00 am–5:00 pm  
Friday, September 25 8:00 am–5:00 pm  
Saturday, September 26 8:00 am–5:00 pm

**EXHIBIT HALL SCHEDULE**

Exhibit tables are located in the Grand Ballroom and main hallway. Visit with them and learn about their services during the following hours:

Wednesday, September 23 5:00 pm–6:30 pm  
Thursday, September 24 10:45 am–6:00 pm  
Friday, September 25 8:00 am–4:45 pm

**TICKETS**

If you registered for an Evening Event or Affinity Luncheon, your tickets are in your registration packet. Please present your ticket before boarding buses or entering an event.

**GUESTS**

Non-registered guests are not allowed to attend Annual Meeting sessions or workshops, but may purchase tickets to attend special social events. Please check with the Registration Desk for availability.

**NAME BADGES**

Name badges must be worn at all times, as only registered attendees are allowed to attend sessions and workshops.

**PROGRAM CHANGES**

In the event of changes to the program, an addendum will be available at the Registration Desk.

**MESSAGE BOARD**

Attendees may post messages, job opportunities, and exchange tickets on a message board located in the Registration area. There is no charge for this service; however, we ask that you be mindful of the limitations of space to accommodate all notes. Commercial ads are not allowed on the board, nor is material of a commercial nature allowed on tables unless arranged in advance with the WMA.

**LOST & FOUND**

Lost and found articles turned in at the WMA Registration Desk will be held until the end of each day, after which items will be turned over to the hotel's front desk.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23	
9:00 AM–4:00 PM	Pre-Conference Workshops
9:00 AM–4:00 PM	Pre-Conference Tours
4:00 PM–5:00 PM	Speed Networking (FREE)
5:00 PM–6:30 PM	Opening Reception (FREE)
7:00 PM–9:30 PM	Evening Event: Utah Museum of Contemporary Art
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24	
8:00 AM–8:45 AM	Morning Coffee
9:00 AM–10:45 AM	Opening General Session & Keynote
11:15 AM–12:30 PM	Concurrent Sessions
12:30 PM–2:00 PM	Exhibit Hall Networking Lunch (FREE)
2:00 PM–3:15 PM	Concurrent Sessions
3:15 PM–3:45 PM	Exhibit Hall Networking & Refreshment Break
3:45 PM–5:00 PM	Concurrent Sessions
5:00 PM–6:00 PM	Directors & Leadership Team Member Reception
5:00 PM–6:00 PM	Happy Hours
7:00 PM–9:30 PM	Evening Event: Museum of Utah
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25	
8:00 AM–9:00 AM	WMA Breakfast Club
9:00 AM–10:15 AM	Concurrent Sessions
10:15 AM–11:00 AM	Exhibit Hall Coffee Break & Poster Session
11:00 AM–12:15 PM	Concurrent Sessions
12:30 PM–2:00 PM	WMA & UMA Community Lunch
2:15 pm–3:30 pm	Concurrent Sessions
3:30 pm–4:45 PM	Exhibit Hall Closing Reception (FREE)
4:45 pm–6:00 pm	WMA & UMA Leadership Reception (invitation only)
7:00 PM–9:30 PM	Evening Event: Natural History Museum of Utah
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26	
8:00 AM–9:00 AM	WMA Breakfast Club
9:00 AM–10:15 AM	Concurrent Sessions
10:15 AM–10:45 AM	Coffee Break
10:45 AM–12:00 PM	Concurrent Sessions
12:15 PM–1:30 PM	Affinity Lunches
1:45 PM–3:00 PM	Concurrent Sessions
3:00 PM–3:30 PM	Coffee Klatch
3:15 PM - 5:00 PM	Roundtables
6:30 PM–9:00 PM	Evening Event: Hilton Salt Lake City Center

(Please Note: Schedule and sessions are subject to change)



# Proud Sponsor of Western Museum Association



Museum of Natural History - Commons

Architect: Frederick Fisher and Partners Architects

## PROGRAM KEY

Look for these keys throughout the program to tailor your experience!



### BUSINESS

Dive into topics of marketing, writing a grant proposal, managing digital assets, setting up a business plan, social media, working within a budget, pitching a proposal, or figuring out an ad campaign.



### INDIGENOUS

Join indigenous and non-indigenous museum staff as they explore issues from diverse perspectives, to learn about innovative projects, and to deepen practice-transforming sensitivities.



### COLLECTIONS

Calling all registrars, collection managers, art handlers, curators, and conservators! These sessions focus on safeguarding your museum's collections now and for years to come. Core museum work!



### LEADERSHIP

Explore issues related to professional development, management of human resources, unraveling roles and responsibilities, institutional governance, developing leadership capacity, and getting ahead in your career



### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Engaging your museum's community is essential for remaining relevant, offering new and meaningful experiences, and reaching wider audiences. These sessions provide insight into the process of developing community partnerships, community-based initiatives, and enhancing your mission through outreach.



### VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Exhibition design, educational programming, curatorial practice, evaluation, and more! If it happens in the galleries, it happens in these sessions. Learn about new trends in museum experience!

## Connect with WMA! Use #wma2026

Post pictures on our Facebook Wall  
@westmuse

Tweet us @westmuse  
Tag us on Instagram @westmuse.pics



## Connect with UMA! Use #utahmuseums

Use #utahmuseums  
Facebook: @utahmuseumsassociation  
Instagram: @utahmuseums  
LinkedIn: @utahmuseumsassociation



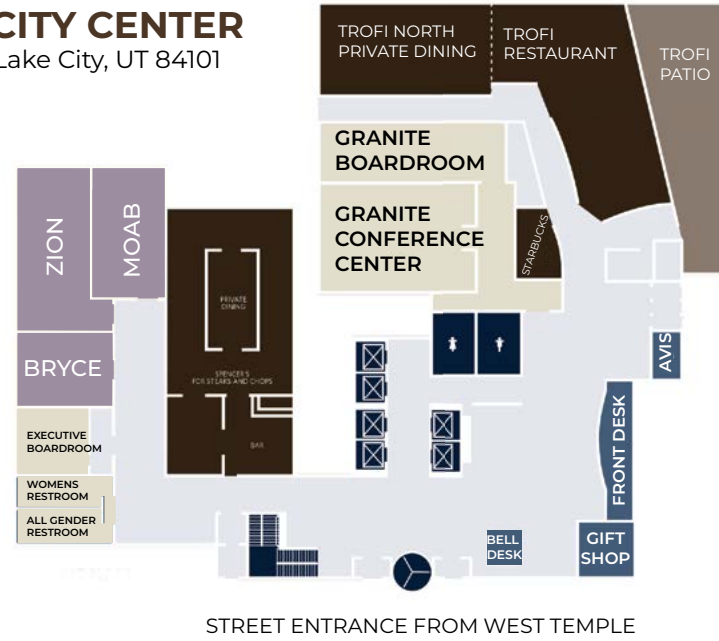


**MAP OF HILTON SALT LAKE CITY CENTER**

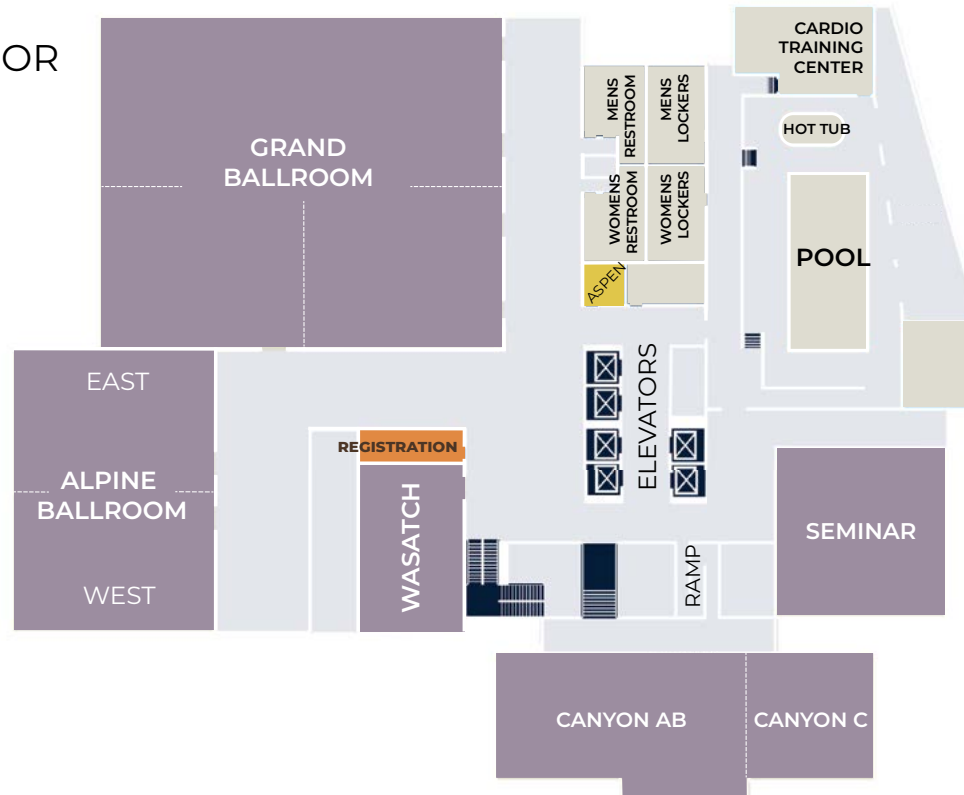
The Annual Meeting Registration Desk is located on the second floor of the Hilton Salt Lake City Center.

**HILTON SALT LAKE CITY CENTER**  
255 South West Temple, Salt Lake City, UT 84101

**1ST FLOOR**



**2ND FLOOR**



*Curating Canopy: Trees at Sunnylands*  
Photographs by David Loftus  
THROUGH JUNE 6, 2027



**PRE-CONFERENCE TOURS**

Pre-Conference Tours are not included in the Annual Meeting registration fee and require pre-registration. Please pick up your registration packet and name badge and arrive in the hotel lobby 15 minutes prior to the scheduled departures below.

8:00 AM – 3:30 PM

**SPIKE AND SPIRAL**

*\$105, includes transportation, a tour, and a box lunch.*

Join us for a day of exploration at two sites where the landscape holds extraordinary stories — one etched in iron and ambition, the other coiled in rock and reflection. First stop is Golden Spike National Historical Park at Promontory Summit, where on May 10, 1869, the Central Pacific and Union Pacific railroads completed the first transcontinental railroad. During our visit, we will see a working replica of an original locomotive. The park offers a window into the remarkable convergence of cultures, labor, and ambition that reshaped the nation.



From there, we travel to the shore of the Great Salt Lake, where Robert Smithson's Spiral Jetty (1970) extends 1,500 feet into the lakebed in a counterclockwise coil of black basalt rock and earth. The earthwork engages with its surroundings — the rust-red water, the salt-crustured shore, the open sky — and with ideas of entropy, time, and landscape transformation. Once submerged beneath the rising lake waters, it reemerged in the early 2000s; and now sits a mile from the water's edge. Dr. Emily Lawhead, Associate Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art and Annie Burbidge Ream, Co-Director of Learning and Engagement, K-12 and Family Programs at the Utah Museum of Fine Arts, will offer a short talk before attendees explore the site on their own.

Note: The bus ride is approximately 2 hours each way. This tour is mostly outdoors on open, unpaved terrain, with limited cell service in some areas. Restrooms are available at Golden Spike but not at the Spiral Jetty. Wear sturdy shoes and layers; hats, sunglasses, and sunblock are recommended. The Spiral Jetty site is not ADA accessible. The tour will proceed rain or shine. Attendees are encouraged to learn more about the Spiral Jetty before the tour by exploring resources [here](#).

By registering, participants acknowledge they undertake the journey at their own risk and that the Western Museums Association, Utah Museums Association, University of Utah, and Utah Museum of Fine Arts assume no liability for personal injuries or property.

8:00 AM – 4:00PM

**TOPAZ: CONFRONTING A SHARED HISTORY**

*\$25, includes transportation, a tour, and a box lunch.*

Join us for a day of reflection and learning as we travel to the Topaz Museum and the historic site of the Topaz War Relocation Center in Delta — a place that holds one of the most sobering chapters in American history: the imprisonment of people of Japanese ancestry during World War II.

The Topaz Museum shares the stories of the 11,000 people of Japanese descent who were unjustly confined at Topaz during World War II. Through artifacts, photographs, oral histories, and original artwork, the museum's core

exhibit traces the full arc of incarceration experience — from the racist laws that marginalized early Japanese immigrants, through the traumatic upheaval of mass removal, to the Constitutional violations that incarcerated were forced to endure. The museum invites visitors to engage with these personal stories and to recognize the protection of civil liberties as a shared responsibility.



From the museum, we travel to the Topaz site itself, passing through Delta to see barracks and hospital wings that were relocated from the camp after it closed in 1945 to be used as houses. Once at the site — a mile-square expanse of high desert 16 miles northwest of Delta, designated a National Historic Landmark in 2007 — the landscape tells its own story. Outlines of barracks, rock gardens, and pathways remain etched into the desert floor. The original barbed wire fence still stands. At its peak, Topaz was the fifth-largest city in Utah; today, visitors walk the same ground where more than 11,000 people built lives under extraordinary constraint.

Note: The bus ride is approximately 2.5 hours each way. The Topaz site is outdoors on unpaved terrain and is not ADA accessible. Wear sturdy, closed-toe shoes and layers; hats, sunglasses, and sunblock are recommended. Do not remove artifacts from the site; watch for rusty nails and prairie dog tunnels. Tour proceeds rain or shine.

This tour is underwritten by the Topaz Museum.

8:00 AM – 4:00PM

**RESTORING WUDA OGWA**

*\$25, includes transportation, a tour, and a box lunch.*

Join Tribal Elder Rios Pacheco and Tribal Council Vice Chairman Brad Parry to travel to two sites significant for the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation — two places that together tell a story of loss, survival, and renewal. We will first travel north to Wuda Ogwa (Bear River), where tribal ancestors gathered each winter to camp and perform the Warm Dance. In the early hours of January 29, 1863, 240 soldiers led by Colonel Patrick Connor massacred more than 400 Shoshone men, women, and children at this site — the Bear River Massacre. In 1880, surviving tribal members settled in Washakie, where they learned to dry-farm and cultivate a new life.

In 2018, the tribe purchased 350 acres of its ancestral land along Wuda Ogwa and is now restoring the area. The multi-year plan includes replacing invasive vegetation with native plants, restoring natural wetlands, and creating an interpretive center to preserve Shoshone history and the significance of the land. These changes are estimated to return over 10,000 acre-feet of water to the Great Salt Lake annually. From there, we travel south, following the path of the surviving tribal members to the Washakie Cemetery to hear more about how the tribe is actively preserving its history, language, and cultural knowledge for future generations.

Note: The bus ride is approximately 2 hours each way. This tour is entirely outdoors on open, unpaved terrain with limited cell service in some areas. Portable restrooms are available at Wuda Ogwa; there are no facilities at Washakie, but the bus can stop at a nearby gas station. Wear sturdy, closed-toe shoes and layers; hats, sunglasses, and sunblock are recommended. Tour will proceed rain or shine.

**PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS**

Pre-Conference Workshops are not included in the Annual Meeting registration fee and require pre-registration. Descriptions will note if transportation is included.

8:30 AM – 3:30 PM

LOCATION: Process Curiosity

**EXHIBITS 102: PROTOTYPING FOR EXHIBITS, ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE, AND GETTING UNSTUCK**

Cost: \$25 (includes materials, transportation, and lunch)

There are so many ways to get stuck in museum work. Prototyping is thought of as design tool, but it can be used in many aspects of museum practice to get us unstuck– this hands-on session offers an atypical perspective on prototyping–exploring the process of prototyping as an essential museum practice that applies to every department in your institution; from exploring exhibit & program ideas, to deepening community relationships, to building a more adventurous, innovative culture.

PRESENTERS: Daniel Guyton, *Traveling Exhibit Manager, Oregon Museum of Science & Industry*  
 Hunter Klingensmith, *Director of Visitor Experience & Exhibits, Swaner Preserve and EcoCenter*  
 Dana Schloss, *Chief Design Officer, Process Curiosity*  
 Katherine Ziff, *Post-doctoral Fellow, New York Hall of Science*

9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

LOCATION: Clark Planetarium

**FROM ASPIRE TO INFLUENCE: STORYTELLING FOR ADVOCACY AND FUNDRAISING**

Cost: \$25 (Includes all materials)

No matter your role or career stage, every museum professional CAN advocate effectively for their organization and its mission. How do we move from intention to action in advocacy and fundraising? This session introduces Public Narrative (story of self, us, and now) as a practical framework to build confidence, align teams, and motivate collective action. Participants will engage in guided exercises to reconnect with their “why” and leave with tools they can immediately apply.

PRESENTERS: Tracey Collins, *Director, Education & Community Engagement, Natural History Museum of Utah*  
 Doug Jenzen, *CEO, Foundation at Hearst Castle*  
 Phil Kohlmetz, *Registered Fundraising Counsel, Independent Museum Professional*  
 Makenzie Stewart, *Educational Programming and Events Manager, Foundation at Hearst Castle*

10:30 AM – 2:30 PM

LOCATION: Natural History Museum of Utah

**STEM ROOTED IN CULTURE: COLLABORATIVE, SUSTAINED, AND EMPOWERING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**

Cost: \$25 (includes materials, transportation, and lunch)

The Natural History Museum of Utah’s STEM Rooted in Culture (SRIC) educator workshop series brings together community experts and museum educators. Together we help educators broaden understanding and diversify teaching practices in the K-12 social studies and STEM classroom. Participants in this half-day workshop will experience past workshop highlights first-hand. NHMU and our partners will share our efforts to elevate Indigenous knowledge, cultivate sustained and meaningful community partnerships, and increase equity and access for students.

**PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS**

Pre-Conference Workshops are not included in the Annual Meeting registration fee and require pre-registration. Descriptions will note if transportation is included.

PRESENTERS: Chanda Chuon, *Artistic Director; Director of Cultural Affairs, Khemera Dance Troupe; Utah Cambodian Community Buddhist Temple*

Jacob Fitisemanu, *Director, Samoana Integrated Learning Initiative*

Vicky Lowe, *Project Director: Born from Corn, Artes de México en Utah*

Dawnell Moon, *Junior Science Academy Coordinator, Natural History Museum of Utah*

Sterling Voortmeyer, *School Outreach Coordinator, Natural History Museum of Utah*

11:00 AM – 2:30 PM

LOCATION: Fort Douglas Military Museum

**HIKE TO LIVING ROOM LOOKOUT**

Lace up your hiking shoes and join us on one of Salt Lake City’s most beloved trails! Located immediately behind the Natural History Museum of Utah, this trail leads you to a lookout where you can pause and take in a stunning view of the city. Our local guides will show you the city’s landmarks and tell you about the unique natural history of the Wasatch Range. Time permitting, the group may also stop at the Natural History Museum of Utah to view an exhibition or enjoy a refreshment at the Canyon Café.

This trail is moderately strenuous and participants should be comfortable with sustained uphill hiking. Comfortable clothes and hiking shoes or sneakers are recommended. Sunscreen, sunglasses, and a hat are recommended, and layers are advisable as temperatures at the lookout may be cooler than in the city. The trailhead begins at an elevation of 5,000 feet with a 1,000-foot elevation gain to the top. The average round-trip for the 2-mile hike is 1.5 hours.

9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

LOCATION: Fort Douglas Military Museum (Transportation provided)

**CSI: REGISTRARS**

FREE to RC-WR Members – event space limited (visit RCWR.org to join for just 25/year!).

Lunch and transportation provided courtesy of RC-WR

Registration is through the Registrars Committee Western Region. For more information on participating go to rcwr.org or contact RCWR Vice Chair Jennifer Gritt at vicechair@rcwr.org. Each year, in conjunction with the Western Museums Association Annual Meeting, the Registrars Committee - Western Region organizes its members to volunteer their professional skills at a museum near where the meeting is being held. Join us for “CSI: Registrars” (Collections Services Initiative), an all-day event of giving back to our collections community!



**WMA BOARD MEETING** INVITATION ONLY  
 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM New Board Member Orientation  
 11:00 AM - 4:00 PM Board Meeting

LOCATION: Zion

2:00 PM–4:00 PM  
**STATE ASSOCIATION EXCHANGE** INVITATION ONLY

LOCATION: TBD

4:00 PM–5:00 PM  
**SPEED NETWORKING**  
 FREE

LOCATION: Grand Ballroom Foyer

Kick off your conference experience with a lively hour of Speed Networking! Bring plenty of business cards and your sense of humor. Everyone is encouraged to join us for a friendly, timed-interval business card exchange social hour. This people-rotating format encourages brief individual introductions between everyone in the room.

*Sponsored by Atthowe Fine Art Services*

5:00 PM–6:30 PM  
**OPENING RECEPTION**

LOCATION: Grand Ballroom

Join your fellow Annual Meeting attendees for an Opening Reception in the Exhibit Hall. Spend your first evening in Salt Lake City enjoying appetizers, drinks, and conversing with colleagues and our corporate members.

*Sponsored by SmithGroup*  
*Wine Sponsored by CCS Fundraising*

**EVENING EVENT**  
 7:00 PM–9:00 PM  
**UTAH MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART**  
 \$45, includes appetizers and drinks

Welcome to Salt Lake City! Begin your Annual Meeting experience with an evening at the Utah Museum of Contemporary Art (UMOCA), a contemporary art museum in the heart of downtown – a short walk from the headquarters hotel. Spend the evening reconnecting with colleagues, exploring the galleries, and browsing the gift shop. On the short stroll from the headquarters hotel, keep an eye out for Point of View, a public artwork by Aaron T. Stephan comprised of more than 150 road signs with contrasting phrases that align — depending on where you stand — into a single unmistakable image: a whimsical yet thought-provoking invitation to consider your own point of view as you engage with colleagues and sessions over the days ahead. On view at UMOCA this evening is Time, Truth, and Other Immeasurables, an exhibition exploring dimensions of human experience that resist calculation — time, truth, vastness, spirituality, and deep history. In an era defined by speed and measurable outcomes, it invites viewers to reflect on what cannot be quantified yet profoundly shapes our existence: the unseen, the enduring, the infinite, the immeasurable.



8:00 AM–8:45 AM

**MORNING COFFEE** FREE

Join your fellow Annual Meeting attendees for coffee, while connecting with new colleagues and seeing familiar faces.

*Sponsored by TBD*

LOCATION: Grand Ballroom

9:00 AM–10:45 AM

**OPENING GENERAL SESSION & KEYNOTE**

FREE

Join us as we welcome attendees to Salt Lake City, present the 2026 Awards – the Charles Redd Center Award for Exhibition Excellence, the WMA Leadership Award, and the WMA Impact Award—and get inspired by the keynote speaker!

LOCATION: Alpine Ballroom

**OPENING REMARKS**

Jason B. Jones, *Executive Director, Western Museums Association*

**LOCAL WELCOME** TBD

**UMA WELCOME**

Katy Knight, *President, Utah Museums Association*

**WMA PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS**

Noelle Kahanu, *Acting Director, Museum Studies Graduate Certificate Program, University of Hawai'i at Monoa*

**AWARDS PRESENTATION**

Molly Wilmoth, *Cultural Access in Public Schools Coordinator, City of Olympia*

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

Lisa Sasaki, *Deputy Under Secretary for Special Projects, Smithsonian Institution*

*Sponsored by MATT Construction*



Lisa Sasaki

**CONCURRENT SESSIONS 11:15 AM–12:30 PM**

A1 2026\_552

**LEAD FROM WHERE YOU ARE: FINDING YOUR LEADERSHIP STYLE**

LEARNING FORMAT: ACTIVE LEARNING

LOCATION: Alpine East



You don't need a title to lead. This session brings together three museum professionals at different stages of their leadership journeys — from influencing without authority to running an organization. Through honest conversation and guided reflection, you'll explore your own leadership style, discover what it looks like to lead from where you are right now, and walk away with real tools to grow yourself and the people around you.

PRESENTERS: Alannah DeBusk, *Registrar, Utah Division of Arts & Museums*

Sarina V. Ehr Gott, *Executive Director, Bountiful Davis Art Center*

Michelle Sifuentes, *Curator of Collections, Ontario Museum of History & Art*

A2 2026\_537

**DOUBLE THE DATA, TWICE THE DISCOVERY**

LEARNING FORMAT: PASSIVE LEARNING

LOCATION: Alpine West



In 2022, the Utah Department of Cultural & Community Engagement (CCE) decided to integrate various state collections into one central database. With a CMS vendor selected, CCE began the ambitious task of migrating data from three major collections. This session explores the project's successes and challenges, providing essential insights and practical advice for other institutions aiming to consolidate their historical and cultural assets into a unified, accessible public resource.

MODERATOR: Hannah Elliott, *Director of Collections, Utah Division of Arts & Museums*

PRESENTERS: Sabrina Sanders, *Artifacts Curator, Utah Historical Society*

Rachael Wood, *Consultant, Relicura*

A3 2026\_579

**WELLNESS PROGRAMMING IN MUSEUMS: A VARIETY OF MODELS**

LEARNING FORMAT: CONVERSATION

LOCATION: Canyon AB



Museums play a crucial role in contributing to individual and collective well-being, connecting people and enhancing social resilience. This interactive session combines rapid Ignite-style presentations showcasing a variety of wellness-focused museum initiatives including creative aging, social connection, and nature and wellness programs. The session will then transition into a World Cafe discussion, where participants will explore programming, partnerships, and resources, while brainstorming ways to enhance and/or build wellness programming at their own museums.

MODERATOR: Natalie Petersen, *Deputy Director, Utah Division of Arts & Museums*

PRESENTERS: Emily Larsen, *Director, Springville Museum of Art*

Elizabeth Nagengast-Stevens, *Park Manager/DNR Archaeologist, Fremont Indian State Park Museum*

Lily Rushing, *Public Programs Assistant, Crocker Art Museum*

Laura Sharp Wilson, *Manager of Studio Programs, Utah Museum of Fine Arts*



A4 2026\_564

**RUNNING WITH SCISSORS: AI DOS AND DON'TS**

LEARNING FORMAT: CONVERSATION

LOCATION: Wasatch

Artificial Intelligence is a creative tool that, like scissors, must be handled with care to avoid the pointy bits. Learning from a legal expert, a reluctant adopter, and a professional actively using it, this session will demystify AI with a brief intro to its history, legal challenges, and as a tool that can support human creativity. Find out how a monkey, alien, and ghost influenced AI's legal use, and explore museum scenarios in small group discussions.

MODERATOR: Lorie Millward, *Principal, Lorie Millward Consulting*

PRESENTERS: Marta Bones, *Director, U of AZ, Mining, Mineral & Natural Resources Museum*  
 Wendy Meluch, *Evaluation & Research Consultant, WendyMeluch.com, VisitorStudies.com*  
 Barron Oda, *Art and Intellectual Property Attorney, Invenio Legal Studio*



A5 2026\_565

**BEYOND CONSULTATION: BUILDING RECIPROCAL MUSEUM RELATIONSHIPS**

LEARNING FORMAT: CONVERSATION

LOCATION: Canyon C

Museums increasingly seek meaningful collaboration with Indigenous communities, yet many institutions struggle to move beyond consultation toward true partnership. In this fishbowl-style conversation, members of the Natural History Museum of Utah's Indigenous Advisory Committee share their perspectives on collaborating with museums through exhibitions, educator workshops, and youth and community programs. Together, participants will explore how institutions can build reciprocal relationships, improve reciprocal practices, and create more inclusive approaches to collections, research, and community engagement.

MODERATOR: Paul Whisman, *Community Outreach Coordinator, Natural History Museum of Utah*

PRESENTERS: Tracey Collins, *Director, Education & Community Engagement, Natural History Museum of Utah*  
 Jeanie Groves, *Head Advisor and Community Coordinator, Intermountain Hoop Dance*  
 Virgil Johnson, *Former Chairman, Educator, Community at Large, Confederated Tribes of the Goshute*  
 Lisa Whisman, *Community Educator, Ohngo Gaudadeh Devia*



A6 2026\_644

**PREPARING FOR THE UNKNOWN: THE NEXT TWO YEARS AND BEYOND**

LEARNING FORMAT: CONVERSATION

LOCATION: Zion

It is no secret that federal funding cuts and the actions of the current administration have the field making difficult decisions and grappling with the uncertainty of the time. As individuals, we might not have all the answers now, but we are not alone. This session invites participants to engage with the question of "what can the museum field do now and in the next two years to prepare for the unknown future?" Participants will go through asset mapping and collective brainstorming of actions – small and large – that help us ASPIRE to be prepared for what may come.

MODERATOR: Molly Wilmoth, *Cultural Access in Public Schools Coordinator, Inspire Olympia*

PRESENTERS: Molly Dalessandro, *Grants Manager, Arboretum Foundation*  
 Alexis Gordon, *Assistant Director of Individual Giving, Berkeley Art Museum & Pacific Film Archive*  
 Koven Smith, *Principal, Koven J. Smith Consulting*



12:30 PM–1:45 PM

**EXHIBIT HALL NETWORKING LUNCH** FREE

Location :Grand Ballroom

Join your colleagues in the Exhibit Hall where you can explore vendor offerings and enjoy lunch courtesy of the WMA and UMA. Make sure to start bidding on the fabulous items in the silent auction that were generously donated by our members. All proceeds benefit the scholarship funds to help colleagues attend future gatherings of the Western Museums Association and the Utah Museum Association.

**CONCURRENT SESSIONS 2:00 PM–3:15 PM**

B1 2026\_595

**BEYOND THE SHELF: INVENTORY FOR ADVOCACY, ACCESSIBILITY, AND STEWARDSHIP**

LEARNING FORMAT: PASSIVE LEARNING

LOCATION: Alpine East

Inventory is crucial for stewardship, but it can be daunting. Learn to transform your collection inventory from a compliance task into a strategic tool for advocacy, accessibility, and institutional leverage. Four collections stewards from municipal, county, and state organizations will share practical, scalable processes and successful outcomes for initiating or refining your own inventory project.

PRESENTERS: Will Challis, *Manuscripts & Photographs Archivist, Utah Historical Society*  
 Sara Mercado, *Registrar, San Bernardino County Museum*  
 Sabrina Sanders, *Artifacts Curator, Utah Historical Society*  
 Michelle Sifuentes, *Curator of Collections, Ontario Museum of History & Art*



B2 2026\_539

**TRUTH, TRUST, AND PURPOSE: BRAVE SPACES AND THE CIVIC POWER OF MUSEUMS**

LEARNING FORMAT: CONVERSATION

LOCATION: Alpine West

As civic space dwindles and attacks on truth, culture, and fundamental FREEdoms escalate, this is a clarion call for museums to show up with renewed purpose and moral clarity. How do we protect civic space, nurture public trust, and lead with radical care, courageous truth-telling, and a vision for a more just and connected future? If museums are a core civic infrastructure, how do we fully embrace that responsibility—defending cultural memory and strengthening dialogue across difference?

MODERATOR: Rick Noguchi, *CEO, California Humanities*

PRESENTERS: Ann Burroughs, *President & CEO, Japanese American National Museum*  
 Lori Fogarty, *CEO, Oakland Museum of California*  
 Edward Tepporn, *Executive Director, Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation*





B3 2026\_574

**EVALUATION IN ACTION: PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR EVERYDAY MUSEUM WORK**

LEARNING FORMAT: ACTIVE LEARNING

LOCATION: Canyon AB

Evaluation helps museums strengthen internal practices and remain responsive to their communities. This session introduces practical evaluation approaches that can be integrated into everyday museum work. In the first half, professional evaluators and museum staff share foundational concepts and tools they use in their own roles. The second half is an open forum where participants can ask questions, discuss current projects, and explore strategies for implementing evaluation in their own institutions.

*MODERATOR:* Johanna Jones, *Director of Evaluation and Visitor Insights, Oakland Museum of California*  
*PRESENTERS:* Glynis Bawden, *School Outreach and Teacher PD Manager, Natural History Museum of Utah*  
 Ashley Clouse, *Museum Education Manager, Utah Historical Society | Museum of Utah*  
 Lewis Kogan, *Executive Director, Swaner Preserve and EcoCenter*  
 Kari Ross Nelson, *Evaluation Consultant, Kari Ross Nelson LLC*



B4 2026\_641

**BUILDING CONNECTIONS ACROSS YOUR STATE**

LEARNING FORMAT: ACTIVE LEARNING

LOCATION: Canyon C

How do you engage with others in your field? Are you looking for colleagues doing similar work or help advocating for your museum? Your state museum association provides a framework of connectivity you can tap into. Every western state has an active association with a mission to help your museum thrive. Join us to explore how engaging with your state association benefits you professionally and builds a stronger community. We are stronger together.

*PRESENTERS:* Jennifer Caballero, *Executive Director, California Association of Museums*  
 Kimberly Flook, *Board President, Hawai'i Museums Association*  
 Kristen Heidenthal, *Museums Connect Project Coordinator, Washington Museums Association*  
 Janice Klein, *Executive Director, Museum Association of Arizona*  
 Ruth White, *Program Chair, Coalition of State Museum Associations*



B5 2026\_646

**BREAKING NEWS! OCEANIC EXHIBITIONS IN 2026**

LEARNING FORMAT: PASSIVE LEARNING

LOCATION: Wasatch

This past year saw major exhibitions at the Guam Museum, the National Museum of the American Indian, and the British Museum. Listen to Indigenous curators and community leaders share about some of the most significant museum installations in decades — from the repatriation of CHamoru latte stones, to a showcase of the political relationship between the Kingdom of Hawai'i and the U.K., to an overview of the complex and nuanced history of the Hawaiian Nation.

*MODERATOR:* Eric Chang, *Arts Program Manager, East-West Center*  
*PRESENTERS:* Michael Bevaqua, *Curator, Guam Museum*  
 Nicole DeLisle Dueñas, *Archaeological Collections Lab Manager, Guam Cultural Repository*  
 Noelle Kahanu, *Associate Specialist and Acting Director, Museum Studies Graduate Certificate Program, UH Manoa*



B6 2026\_629

**BEYOND FIELD TRIPS: MEANINGFUL YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN MUSEUMS**

LEARNING FORMAT: CONVERSATION

LOCATION: Zion

Many museums engage youth primarily through school field trips or simple interactive activities. But what happens when young people are invited to participate as creators, collaborators, and community voices within museum spaces? This panel shares case studies from three museums of varied sizes and missions that are intentionally expanding youth engagement beyond traditional education programs. Presenters will highlight strategies that work in both rural museums with limited resources and larger institutions with dedicated youth programming.

*PRESENTERS:* Andy Clark, *Youth + Family Programs Manager, Burke Museum of Natural History + Culture*  
 Tara McCauley, *Executive Director, Jefferson County Historical Society*



3:15 PM–3:45 PM

**EXHIBIT HALL NETWORKING & REFRESHMENT BREAK**

LOCATION: Grand Ballroom

Enjoy coffee, tea, and light snacks while perusing exhibitors' booths, bidding on silent auction items, and networking with peers.

*Sponsored by TBD*

5:00 PM–6:00 PM

**DIRECTORS & LEADERSHIP TEAM MEMBER RECEPTION**

LOCATION: Summit Room

**\$43**

Join your fellow directors and leadership team members in this special reception.

*Sponsored by TBD*

5:00 PM–6:00 PM

**HAPPY HOUR IN THE EXHIBIT HALL**

LOCATION: Grand Ballroom

FREE

After sessions, join us at the Exhibit Hall Happy Hour to enjoy meeting a variety of colleagues including specific meet ups. Cash bar provided with non-alcoholic beverages available for FREE. Discounted drink tickets may be purchased online during registration with a cash bar onsite.

*Sponsored by MATT Construction*

6:00–7:00 PM

**DINNER ON YOUR OWN**

Before tonight’s Evening Event, take the time to enjoy a dinner on your own, or with fellow WMA and UMA friends.

**EVENING EVENT**

7:00–9:00 PM

**MUSEUM OF UTAH**

**\$65**, includes transportation, appetizers, and drinks

Be among the first to experience Utah’s new and first-ever state history museum! Join us for an evening of food, connection, and exclusive access as we explore four immersive galleries that tell Utah’s history like never before. Through the themes of Becoming, Connecting, Building, and Inspiring, you’ll learn about Utah’s vast and exciting history and the people who have helped to shape the Beehive state.

Mingle with other conference attendees, explore the galleries, and see the temporary exhibit *Past is Personal* where visitors see how Utahns have commemorated the nation’s 250th drawing upon the Utah Historical Society’s semiquincentennial project the Peoples of Utah Revisited. Come and explore the new home for Utah’s history - including behind-the-scenes tours of the brand new collection space!



**CONCURRENT SESSIONS 3:45 PM–5:00 PM**

C1 2026\_583

**WHAT DRIVES EXHIBITION IDEAS?**

**LEARNING FORMAT: PASSIVE LEARNING**

LOCATION: Alpine East

This session explores the many starting points that shape exhibition concept development. Through case studies of temporary exhibitions at our various institutions, we will examine projects sparked by a variety of motivations such as specific collections, community partnerships, milestones, and more. Participants will also take part in a guided, interactive exercise, developing a “big idea” for an exhibition from a hypothetical prompt while considering the mission, audience, and constraints of their own institutions.

*PRESENTERS: Jennifer Fang, Director of Exhibits, Wing Luke Museum*

*Heather Flynn, Curator, Britannia Mine Museum*

*Lauren Willis, Curator of Academic Programs, Museum of Natural and Cultural History, University of Oregon*



C2 2026\_529

**REFRAMING OLD NARRATIVES: TOOLS FOR NAVIGATING THE UNANSWERABLE**

**LEARNING FORMAT: ACTIVE LEARNING**

LOCATION: Alpine West

This session is an examination of communication strategies used by staff at the Agua Caliente Cultural Museum—a tribal institution—to navigate complex visitor interactions & offer the public a better understanding of how traditional knowledge is shared. By utilizing a step-by-step approach dubbed the “Not Quite Sure” tool to address questions that don’t have a clear answer, aren’t meant to be answered, or are outdated, staff are empowered to shift perspectives and facilitate more effective learning outcomes.

*PRESENTERS: Marina Gutierrez, Museum Education Coordinator, Agua Caliente Cultural Museum*

*Melissa Hempel, Programs Specialist, Agua Caliente Cultural Museum*



C3 2026\_633

**THE HOMEWARD PROJECT: HONORING OUR COMMITMENT TO INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES**

LOCATION: Canyon AB

Museums across the world are confronting the responsibility to return Indigenous belongings and ancestors. This session shares how the Museum of Us is expanding its Cultural Resources team and developing institution-wide strategies to return all holdings to their homelands while strengthening relationships with Indigenous communities. Attendees will gain perspectives on relational repair, consent-based stewardship, and institutional transformation.

*PRESENTERS: Jesi Bennett, Director of Decolonizing Initiatives, Museum of Us*

*Carmen Mosley, Associate Director of Repatriation, Museum of Us*

*Kara Vetter, Senior Director of Cultural Resources, Museum of Us*



C4 2026\_547

**STRENGTHENING THROUGH STANDARDS: NAVIGATING CHALLENGES IN EDUCATION PROGRAMMING**

LEARNING FORMAT: ACTIVE LEARNING

LOCATION: Wasatch

Our organizations actively engage with communities in discussions that promote critical thinking about some of the most pressing issues we face today. This presents both opportunities and challenges, especially when addressing potentially contentious topics. Learn how our institutions navigate difficult topics to facilitate thought-provoking conversations and inspire students to think critically. Brainstorm with colleagues to find curriculum links to specific topics and conversations your organization engages in.

MODERATOR: Annie Young, *Field Trip and Teacher Resources Manager, Natural History Museum of Utah*

PRESENTERS: Scott Bassett, *Education Liaison, Topaz Museum Board, Topaz Museum*  
 Dawnell Moon, *Junior Science Academy Coordinator, Natural History Museum of Utah*  
 Jason Trump, *Education Program Supervisor, Clark Planetarium*



C5 2026\_613

**FROM BURNOUT TO BALANCE: BUILDING CULTURES WHERE LEADERS CAN THRIVE**

LEARNING FORMAT: ACTIVE LEARNING

LOCATION: Canyon C

Leaders work hard to cultivate cultures of trust, collaboration, and creativity, but who supports them? Data shows we are burning out generations of leaders in the creative sector, particularly women of color. How might we find new ways to connect, support, and ultimately thrive in this field? Join this facilitated discussion to explore what some institutions are doing to bring greater balance to their workplace and find new ways of working.

MODERATOR: Jennifer Ortiz, *Director, Utah Historical Society*

PRESENTER: Deborah Omawale Jarmon, *CEO, San Antonio African American Community Archive & Museum*



C6 2026\_642

**FRAGMENTATIONS: FROM COLLECTIONS OF LUSTERWARE TO MUSEUM NARRATIVES**

LEARNING FORMAT: CONVERSATION

LOCATION: Zion

In a groundbreaking program at the Shangri-La Museum of Islamic Art, Culture & Design, PhD student Hossein Nakhaei explored their collection of Persian luster tiles. The institution opened itself to meaningful critique as he focused on their most prized possession, a luster mihrab, one of only six in the world. Learn what happened when they connected via zoom with community members standing in front of the empty space where the mihrab once belonged.

MODERATOR: Noelle Kahanu, *Associate Specialist and Acting Director, Museum Studies Graduate Certificate Program, UH Manoa*

PRESENTER: Navid Najafi, *Associate Director of Programs and Social Practice, Shangri-La Museum of Islamic Art, Culture & Design*



8:00 AM–9:00 AM

**WMA BREAKFAST CLUB**

FREE

Join the WMA Book Club to discuss what you're reading! Whether it's fiction, non-fiction, or museum-related, we want to know about the books living rent-FREE in your head.

*Sponsored by X*

LOCATION: Grand Ballroom

**CONCURRENT SESSIONS 9:00 AM–10:15 AM**

D1 2026\_618

**BUILDING TRUTH TOGETHER: COMMUNITY INPUT AND EVIDENCE IN EXHIBITION DESIGN**

LEARNING FORMAT: ACTIVE LEARNING

LOCATION: Alpine East

How do you design galleries that reflect a divided public? This session shares a process for developing exhibitions that give equal authority to stakeholder perspectives and historical evidence. We will discuss the internal framework that kept our team steady while navigating social and political tensions as we collaborated with stakeholders across the state. Attendees will learn a practical path for balancing historical facts with authentic, object-based storytelling to create galleries where visitors see themselves in the stories being told.

MODERATOR: Holly Andrew, *Exhibition Program Manager, Utah Historical Society | Museum of Utah*

PRESENTERS: Shazia Faizi, *Director, Al-Mustafa Foundation of Utah*  
 Kimberly Kronwall, *Director of Collections and Exhibitions, Utah Historical Society | Museum of Utah*  
 Bill Piard, *Senior Designer, The Design Minds*



**CONCURRENT SESSIONS 9:00 AM-10:15 AM**

D1 2026\_618

**BUILDING TRUTH TOGETHER: COMMUNITY INPUT AND EVIDENCE IN EXHIBITION DESIGN**

LEARNING FORMAT: ACTIVE LEARNING

LOCATION: Alpine East

How do you design galleries that reflect a divided public? This session shares a process for developing exhibitions that give equal authority to stakeholder perspectives and historical evidence. We will discuss the internal framework that kept our team steady while navigating social and political tensions as we collaborated with stakeholders across the state. Attendees will learn a practical path for balancing historical facts with authentic, object-based storytelling to create galleries where visitors see themselves in the stories being told.

MODERATOR: Holly Andrew, Exhibition Program Manager, Utah Historical Society | Museum of Utah

PRESENTERS: Shazia Faizi, Director, Al-Mustafa Foundation of Utah

Kimberly Kronwall, Director of Collections and Exhibitions, Utah Historical Society | Museum of Utah

Bill Piard, Senior Designer, The Design Minds



D2 2026\_541

**ASPIRING TO DO IT ALL**

LEARNING FORMAT: CONVERSATION

LOCATION: Alpine West

Do you often feel pressure to do it all? Museum staff face large, complex projects when preserving collections held in public trust. Small museums with limited staff and tight budgets must make difficult choices, while larger institutions, despite greater resources, may still struggle to prioritize and allocate time and funding effectively. In many cases, collections staff carry the burden of trying to do everything. This discussion-based session shares strategies for using resources wisely and challenges the expectation of doing it all.

PRESENTERS: Jessica Bocinski, Collections Manager, Escalette Collection of Art at Chapman University

Jennifer Gritt, Museum Curator, Woodburn History Museum

Dylan Hoffman, Collections Manager, Puget Sound Navy Museum



D3 2026\_616

**SUCCESS THROUGH EMPLOYEES: ASPIRE TO BE AN EMPLOYER OF CHOICE**

LEARNING FORMAT: PASSIVE LEARNING

Location: Canyon AB

Museums often face the challenge of attracting and retaining talented staff in a field where compensation lags behind other industries. This session examines how museums can become employers of choice by strengthening the employee experience beyond wages. Using various initiatives and case studies as a foundation, this session will highlight approaches to recognition, growth, and culture, followed by a facilitated discussion to surface practical, adaptable strategies across diverse museum contexts.

PRESENTERS: Robyn Anderson, Operations Manager, University of Oregon Museum of Natural

and Cultural History

Kate Boyle, HR Manager, Natural History Museum of Utah

Axel Estable, Director of Operations, Natural History Museum of Utah



D4 2026\_648

**TENDING THE FIRE IN DARK MOON TIMES: PART II**

LEARNING FORMAT: ACTIVE LEARNING

LOCATION: Canyon C

For many indigenous communities, darkness is a time of creative genesis and regeneration, a time for hope beyond the fear. From fiscal constraints to grants that have disappeared to federal staff that are no longer in positions of leadership and support, the impacts and despair are real and reach across our museum field. In these troubling times, we will hear from multiple museum practitioners who will share their programs, exhibitions, practices and beliefs that will help attendees keep the fire alive, stirring our passions and purposes.

MODERATOR: Noelle Kahanu, Associate Specialist and Acting Director, Museum Studies Graduate

Certificate Program, UH Manoa

PRESENTER: Meleanna Meyer, Artist and Educator, Kanaka 'Oiwi (Hawaiian)



D5 2026\_612

**COLLECTING ENGAGEMENT: THE ROLE OF COLLECTING INSTITUTIONS IN SHARING KNOWLEDGE**

LEARNING FORMAT: PASSIVE LEARNING

LOCATION: Wasatch

This session explores how museums use active collecting practices to shape exhibitions, education, and community engagement. Leaders from exhibits, curation, and administration (or management) will share behind the scenes perspectives on how collections foster authenticity, spark curiosity, and evolve with new scientific and cultural knowledge. The discussion will address transparency, community participation, and the balance between visible and functional workspaces. Attendees will consider how collecting institutions strengthen local relevance, stewardship, and meaningful visitor connection.

MODERATOR: Dan Clevenger, Architect / WMA Board of Directors, DLR Group

PRESENTERS: Ariel Hammond, Director of Research Library & Archives, San Diego Natural History Museum

Tim Lee, Director of Exhibits, Natural History Museum of Utah

Jennifer Ortiz, Director, Utah Historical Society



D6 2026\_610

**SUCCESSFULLY HERDING CATS: PLANNING FOR SUCCESS AT ANY SCALE**

LEARNING FORMAT: CONVERSATION

LOCATION: Seminar

If Saint-Exupéry was right, "a goal without a plan is just a wish," then join us and get excited about planning. Explore practical tools to create and work with your plan. Gain a deeper understanding of why we plan and how plans are practical tools across museum activities – exhibitions, programming, annual goals, "what if" scenarios. Bring your planning challenges and explore tools that can help you be successful now and in the future.

MODERATOR: Marta Bones, Director, U of AZ, Mining, Mineral & Natural Resources Museum

PRESENTERS: Celina Coleman, Director of Operations, Social Responsibility & Desert Financial Foundation,

Desert Financial Credit Union

Devon Hamilton, Learning and Experience Director, Blue Rhino Design

Barron Oda, Art and Intellectual Property Attorney, Invenio Legal Studio



10:15 AM–11:00 AM  
**POSTER SESSION**

LOCATION: Grand Ballroom

**MOUNTAIN WEST DIGITAL LIBRARY AT 25**

PRESENTER: Teresa Hebron, Program Director of Mountain West Digital Library, University of Utah - J. Willard Marriott Library

**ONE CALENDAR TO RULE THEM ALL? ONE MUSEUM’S QUEST TO MOVE FROM DOZENS OF CALENDARS TO ONE**

PRESENTERS: Jenny Woods, Installation, Design and Registration Specialist, Seattle Art Museum  
Chloe Hamilton, Senior Manager of Venue Experiences, Seattle Art Museum

**MORE THAN A SUPERHERO: MISSION, MEANING, AND MEASUREMENT IN A SPECIAL COLLECTIONS EXHIBIT**

PRESENTERS: Sharolyn Swenson, Continuing Resources Catalog Librarian, Brigham Young University  
Dainan Skeem, Curator-21st Century Manuscripts, L. Tom Perry Special Collections Library (Brigham Young University)

**A SURVEY OF MUSEUMS DOWN UNDER: WHAT CAN WE LEARN ABOUT INDIGENOUS COLLABORATION?**

PRESENTER:  
Emma Patterson, Curatorial Assistant, BYU’s Museum of Peoples and Cultures

**SUMMER CAMPS: FOSTERING CURIOSITY IN YOUR COMMUNITY**

PRESENTER: Audrey Gordon, Lead Student Educator, Monte L. Bean Life Science Museum

**A SQUARE PEG IN A ROUND HOLE: ACADEMIC PEER REVIEW AND EXHIBITIONS**

PRESENTERS: Cory Nimer, University Archivist, Brigham Young University  
Meg Frost, Life Sciences and Communications Disorders Librarian, Brigham Young University

**DRAWING CURIOSITY: THE ROLE OF ILLUSTRATION IN MUSEUM LEARNING**

PRESENTER: Aletta Day, Collections Technician, Brigham Young University Museum of Peoples and Cultures

**APPROACHES FOR RETAINING COLLEGE-AGE MUSEUM VOLUNTEERS**

PRESENTER: Carys Brumbaugh, Collections Technician, Brigham Young University Museum of Peoples and Cultures

**LEARNING TO ASPIRE: STRUCTURING INTENTIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

PRESENTERS: Gabby Holt, Special Projects Manager, Brigham Young University Museum of Peoples and Cultures  
Ann Rowan, Education and Programs Manager, BYU Museum of Peoples and Cultures

**UTAH MUSEUM LAW PROJECT**

PRESENTER: Paul Stavast, Director, Brigham Young University Museum of Peoples and Cultures

**A LITTLE GOES A LONG WAY**

PRESENTER: Carlie Breeze, Museum Assistant, The Gale Museum

**DISCOVERING MAGU: STUDENT RESEARCH IN MUSEUMS**

PRESENTER: Delaney Jennings, Curatorial Fellow, BYU Museum of Art

**SHUFFLING THE DECK: INCORPORATING TABLETOP GAMES INTO MUSEUMS**

PRESENTER: Maya Watkins, Exhibitions Coordinator, Brigham Young University Museum of Peoples and Cultures

**THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX: IMPLEMENTING PREVENTATIVE CONSERVATION AND LONG-TERM STORAGE SOLUTIONS FOR AN OCEANIA COLLECTION**

PRESENTERS: Melia LeDoux, Collections Technician, Brigham Young University Museum of Peoples and Cultures  
Chloe Burkey, Archaeologist, Horrocks Engineers

**TRANSLATING SCIENCE INTO STORIES**

PRESENTER: Rachel Boesenberg, Associate Curator, Anchorage Museum

**FUNDING THE FUTURE OF THE PAST: TRENDS IN STATE LEGISLATIVE FUNDING FOR MUSEUMS IN UTAH**

PRESENTER: Talia Gluch, Brigham Young University Museum of Peoples and Cultures

**DEVELOPING COMMUNITY, UNDERSTANDING SELF: UNCOVERING TACIT PROGRAM CHOICES**

PRESENTER: Katrina Romero Tran, Education Specialist, Japanese American National Museum

10:15 AM–11:00 AM

**EXHIBIT HALL NETWORKING BREAK & POSTER SESSION**

LOCATION: Grand Ballroom

FREE

The perennially popular Poster Session provides opportunities for individuals to present their research, ideas, or programs through illustrated and informative posters, and they want your feedback. Come explore projects and initiatives from around the region in an informal setting.





**CONCURRENT SESSIONS 11:00 AM-12:15 PM**

**E1 2026\_534**  
**THE THIRD PLACE: ETHICAL CUSTODIANSHIP IN TRANSITION**  
 LEARNING FORMAT: ACTIVE LEARNING

LOCATION: Canyon AB

Museums are often seen as permanent stewards...but what if we reimagined our role as temporary, ethical custodians? This session introduces the “Third Place” model, where museums provide culturally responsive interim care for ancestors when direct Tribal possession is not immediately feasible. Grounded in sovereignty, trust, and accountability, this framework reduces barriers to repatriation and reframes stewardship as transitional, collaborative, and community-driven.

PRESENTERS: Angela Linn, *Head of Anthropology Collection, University of Alaska Fairbanks*  
 Xitlaly Madrigal, *NAGPRA Supervisor, Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians*  
 Tamara Serrao-Leiva, *Chief Deputy Director, San Bernardino County Museum*  
 Kara Vetter, *Senior Director of Cultural Resources, Museum of Us*



**E2 2026\_557**  
**DON'T LEARN SAFETY BY ACCIDENT: SECURITY PROBLEM SOLVING AND TROUBLESHOOTING**  
 LEARNING FORMAT: CONVERSATION

LOCATION: Canyon C

Physical security walked into a bar... and got carded! Museum security is no joke, but it can be enjoyable. In this session, museum operations and security personnel will work with audience members to troubleshoot challenges in real time. Drop your own public safety quandary in the hat and collaborate with peers to find solutions.

MODERATOR: Seth Margolis, *Director of Education Operations, The Museum of Flight*  
 PRESENTER: James MacSkimming, *Safety and Security Manager, The Museum of Flight*



**E3 2026\_608**  
**BUILDING A CLIMATE OF HOPE: REFLECTIONS ON A CLIMATE EXHIBIT**  
 LEARNING FORMAT: ACTIVE LEARNING

LOCATION: Wasatch

At the Natural History Museum of Utah, A Climate of Hope (ACoH) offers a path to rational hope. This exhibit shows how climate change affects Utah's people and places, while also helping visitors envision a healthy, prosperous, low-carbon future. In this session, exhibit developers and learning researchers share stories of ACoH, from prototyping to research-based iteration that continues today. Audience members will participate in activities to collectively imagine new ways of supporting visitor learning towards constructive hope amid climate change.

MODERATOR: Lynne Zummo, *Curator of Learning Sciences, Natural History Museum of Utah*  
 PRESENTERS: Casey Mink, *Exhibit Developer, Natural History Museum of Utah*  
 Lisa Thompson, *Exhibit Developer, Natural History Museum of Utah*



**E4 2026\_578**  
**SHARING THE TEA: AANHPI EXPERIENCES IN THE MUSEUM SECTOR**  
 LEARNING FORMAT: CONVERSATION

LOCATION: Seminar

This highly interactive session builds upon previous sessions at WMA, CAM, AAM, and efforts to launch an Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Museums Association. Through polling and facilitated discussions, participants will engage with others who identify as AANHPI, those who work in AANHPI museums, and allies. Participants will have multiple opportunities to candidly share experiences, frustrations, and hopes from their personal/professional experiences. This session is open to all WMA conference attendees.

MODERATOR: Edward Tepporn, *Executive Director, Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation*  
 PRESENTERS: Eric Chang, *Arts Program Manager, East-West Center*  
 Jennifer Fang, *Director of Exhibits, Wing Luke Museum*  
 Johanna Jones, *Director of Evaluation and Visitor Insights, Oakland Museum of California*  
 Barron Oda, *Art and Intellectual Property Attorney, Invenio Legal Studio*



**E5 2026\_577**  
**ASPIRE TO SERVE: DEMYSTIFYING MUSEUM BOARD SERVICE**  
 LEARNING FORMAT: CONVERSATION

LOCATION: Zion

Serving on a museum board is often an aspirational but opaque goal for museum professionals. How are board members recruited and what does service entail? This moderated discussion demystifies board service from both sides, exploring pathways to participation, expectations around governance and fundraising, and the skills institutions need today. Attendees will gain practical insight into pursuing board roles and contributing to mission-driven leadership and public trust.

MODERATOR: Jen Weavers, *Director of Finance and Strategic Operations, BPOC*  
 PRESENTERS: Nik Honeysett, *CEO, BPOC*  
 Amy Oppio, *Chief Operating Officer / Deputy Director, Nevada Museum of Art*  
 Micah Parzen, *CEO, Museum of Us*



12:30 PM - 2:00 PM

**WMA & UMA COMMUNITY LUNCH**

Cost: \$63

Join us for a celebration of the WMA and UMA Communities with special guest speaker Laufou Jacob Fitiseanu Jr., Director, Sāmoana Integrated Learning Initiative and including the presentation of UMA Annual Awards.

*Sponsored by DLR Group*

*Sponsored by Utah Division of Arts & Museums and Utah Historical Society*

LOCATION: Alpine Ballroom

**CONCURRENT SESSIONS 2:00 PM-3:15 PM**

F1 2026\_584

**THE AI STACK: SCALING INNOVATION FROM POLICY TO COLLECTIONS**

LEARNING FORMAT: ACTIVE LEARNING

Location: Canyon AB

How does a museum move from a “cool experiment” with AI to a sustainable workflow? This session explores Utah’s intentional steps to integrate Google Gemini across its workforce, providing a macro-to-micro blueprint. From state-level policy and departmental change management to practical collections applications like transcription, learn and ASPIRE to innovate with a unified strategy. This session includes a live prompting lab to translate policy into effective daily practice.

PRESENTERS: Michelle Gollehon, *Digital Asset Specialist, Utah Historical Society*

Christian Napier, *Information Technology Director, Utah Dept of Government Operations*

David Wicai, *Director of Strategic Initiatives & Collaboration, Utah Department of Cultural and Community Engagement*



F2 2026\_634

**THE ROAD AHEAD: A SHARING SESSION FOR EMERGING BIPOC MUSEUM PROFESSIONALS**

LEARNING FORMAT: CONVERSATION

Location: Canyon C

This session will begin with several graduate students sharing their thoughts, fears, and concerns as they enter the museum field in the midst of a myriad of challenges. It will then broaden into a fishbowl session with others joining in the conversation. Leadership from WMA and other organizations will be in attendance to learn how to support, attend to, and address these issues into the future.

MODERATOR: Gabbi Lee, *Graduate Assistant, Museum Studies Grad Cert program, Museum Studies Graduate Certificate Program, UH Manoa*

PRESENTER: Hattie Keonaona, *MA Student in Conservation, UCLA/Getty Conservation program*



F3 2026\_546

**FROM DATA TO DECISIONS: HARNESSING THE POWER OF NUMBERS**

LEARNING FORMAT: PASSIVE LEARNING

LOCATION: Wasatch

Data acts as a “crystal ball” by leveraging predictive analytics, AI, and integrated data sets—such as visitor behavior, market trends, and historical performance—to forecast future outcomes. Learn how museums can collect valuable data and use it to transform raw information into predictive models, actionable insights, and data-driven decisions. From guest sentiment to retail sales, explore different data streams, how they can identify trends, and inform decisions across a wide range of museum operations.

MODERATOR: Justin Hall, *Associate Director, Hill Aerospace Museum*

PRESENTERS: Annie Bommer, *Executive Director, Alf Engen Ski Museum*

Axel Estable, *Director of Operations, Natural History Museum of Utah*



F4 2026\_566

**DONOR CULTIVATION AT ALL LEVELS**

LEARNING FORMAT: CONVERSATION

LOCATION: Seminar

Donor cultivation is an ongoing and deeply critical, component of development work. In this session, we will explore the challenges, constraints, and opportunities for building and maintaining these important relationships. After a rapid-fire series of short presentations in which development professionals from a variety of institutions share their own successful strategies for engaging donors, attendees will ask questions, engage in broader conversation, and think deeply about their own work.

MODERATOR: Jessica Proctor, *Director of Development & Membership, Utah Historical Society*

PRESENTERS: Ali Barker, *Director of Development, Loveland Living Planet Aquarium*

Kaitlin Mills, *Development Strategist, Utah Museum of Contemporary Art*

Luke Newey, *Individual and Corporate Giving Officer, Natural History Museum of Utah*

Morgan Pierce, *Executive Director, Park City Museum*



3:30 PM-4:45 PM

**EXHIBIT HALL CLOSING RECEPTION**

Fee: FREE

Join your colleagues for light refreshments and a last visit with our corporate members. The Exhibit Hall Closing Reception is your last chance to bid on silent auction items. All proceeds benefit the scholarship funds to help colleagues attend future gatherings of the Western Museums Association and the Utah Museum Association.

LOCATION: Grand Ballroom

4:45 PM-6:00 PM

**WMA LEADERSHIP RECEPTION**

INVITATION ONLY

WMA Board members, UMA Board Members, Program Committee, Host Committee, and Sponsors gather for drink, food, and conversation.

LOCATION: Trofi Restaurant Patio

*Sponsored by EDX Exhibits*

6:00–7:00 PM

**DINNER ON YOUR OWN**

Before tonight’s Evening Event, take the time to enjoy a dinner on your own, or with fellow WMA and UMA friends.

**EVENING EVENT**

6:00–10:00 PM

**RED BUTTE GARDEN AND ARBORETUM NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM OF UTAH**

**\$65**, includes transportation, tours, appetizers, and drinks (buses will be looping from the Hilton to Red Butte Garden and Arboretum starting at 6pm and Natural History Museum of Utah starting at 7pm)

Respite at Red Butte Garden and Arboretum  
Clear your mind and connect with Utah’s fall beauty at Red Butte Garden and Arboretum next door to the Natural History Museum of Utah. Situated in the city’s scenic Foothills, Red Butte Garden showcases native and non-native plants and trees in beautifully cultivated gardens and a spectacular Natural Area. Wander on your own or sign up for a guided tour. Enjoy panoramic mountain views of the city, mountains, and Great Salt Lake.



6:00 PM-7:00 PM

Respite at Red Butte Garden and Arboretum  
Clear your mind and connect with Utah’s fall beauty at Red Butte Garden and Arboretum next door to the Natural History Museum of Utah. Situated in the city’s scenic Foothills, Red Butte Garden showcases native and non-native plants and trees in beautifully cultivated gardens and a spectacular Natural Area. Wander on your own or sign up for a guided tour. Enjoy panoramic mountain views of the city, mountains, and Great Salt Lake.

7:00 PM-10:00 PM

Evening Event: Natural History Museum of Utah  
Join colleagues for an unforgettable evening at the Natural History Museum of Utah, where you will be surrounded by over 500 million years of Utah’s natural and cultural history! Located on the foothills of the Wasatch Range, the Museum’s home, the Rio Tinto Center, is an architectural masterpiece. Gather in the Canyon, the Museum’s most iconic space, inspired by Utah’s dramatic geology, and connect with old and new friends under the newly redesigned Collections Wall, a 40-ft case containing over 600 objects from the Museum’s unique collections. Enjoy access to the Museum’s world-class galleries, interact with gallery interpreters, take in the best sunset view in Salt Lake City from the Sky Terrace, and stop at the Museum Store to take home a piece of Utah! Throughout the evening, museum leadership, education, and collections teams will offer behind-the-scenes tours of the paleontology preparation lab, collection rooms, exhibits shop, and even the building’s mechanical systems, to offer you exclusive access to the science, craftsmanship, and engineering that power the Museum. With opportunities to explore, learn, and connect in a relaxed and convivial atmosphere, this reception offers an ideal way to close out the day and to experience NHMU from every angle.

8:00 AM–9:00 AM

**WMA BREAKFAST CLUB**

FREE

Join the WMA Book Club to discuss what you’re reading! Whether it’s fiction, non-fiction, or museum-related, we want to know about the books living rent-FREE in your head.

LOCATION: Grand Ballroom foyer

**CONCURRENT SESSIONS 9:00 AM–10:15 AM**

G1 2026\_571

**LEADING WITH VULNERABILITY: COURAGEOUS LEADERSHIP IN MUSEUMS**

LEARNING FORMAT: ACTIVE LEARNING

LOCATION: Alpine East

What does it mean to lead with vulnerability in museum spaces? Grounded in Brené Brown’s research, this panel explores how courage, trust, and authenticity strengthen teams and institutional culture. Presenters will share real-world examples, challenges, and practical strategies for applying vulnerability-based leadership in museums. Attendees will leave with actionable tools to foster connection, resilience, and innovation within their organizations.

MODERATOR: Katy Knight, Education Administrator, Bean Life Science Museum

PRESENTERS: Jami Van Huss, Museum Director, Hyrum City Museum

Emily Johnsen, Museum Director, UVU Museum of Art at Lakemount

Mindy Wilson, Marketing & PR Director, Red Butte Garden & Arboretum



G2 2026\_636

**DEVELOPMENT AND FUNDRAISING TOP THREE STRATEGIES**

LEARNING FORMAT: PASSIVE LEARNING

LOCATION: Alpine West

This session will address three of the top strategies that museums of various sizes can use when seeking funding from a variety of sources: Individuals, Foundations, Corporations, Government Agencies, Membership, Planned Gifts, and Capital Campaigns. These skills can be used by development professionals and any other staff involved in fundraising requests. This session covers basic Development skills as explained by seasoned Development professionals.

PRESENTERS: Gail Mandel, Interim Executive Director, Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education  
Ariel Weintraub, Associate Director, Institutional Giving, Oakland Museum of California



G3 2026\_582

**50 FOR 50: REIMAGINING COLLECTIONS CARE THROUGH A LANDMARK ART-SHARING INITIATIVE**

LEARNING FORMAT: CONVERSATION

Location: Canyon AB

Discover how the Smithsonian’s Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden’s “50 for 50” initiative is redefining collections care through a national model that shares American art across all 50 states and Puerto Rico. Examining the Utah Museum of Contemporary Art’s role as the host venue for Utah, this session highlights creative strategies for reimagining storage and stewardship through cross-institutional partnerships. Attendees will walk away with practical approaches to enhance collections care and access through intra-museum collaboration.

MODERATOR: Sarah Martin, *Partner Loan Network Manager, Art Bridges Foundation*

PRESENTERS: Laura Hurtado, *Executive Director, Utah Museum of Contemporary Art*  
Liza Strelka, *Acting Director of Exhibitions, The Smithsonian’s Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden*



G4 2026\_645

**BEGINNING WITH LAND: DECOLONIZING MUSEUM ENVIRONMENTS**

LEARNING FORMAT: PASSIVE LEARNING

LOCATION: Wasatch

Indigenous communities do not conceptualize knowledge, story, or experience as confined within museum walls. Land, movement, arrival, and narrative are interconnected and inseparable. Yet many museums remain grounded in a Western model that centers the building as object. This session explores how Indigenous-led approaches can support the decolonization of museum environments, using project precedents and academic research to share strategies for rethinking arrival, orientation, and site in both new and existing institutions to support more meaningful and culturally grounded visitor experiences.

MODERATOR: Dakota Keene, *Partner/Landscape Architect, Mithun*

PRESENTERS: Deana Dartt, *Principal, Live Oak Consulting*  
Isaac Marshall, *Principal, AldrichPears*



G5 2026\_591

**MEASURING WHAT MATTERS**

LEARNING FORMAT: CONVERSATION

LOCATION: Seminar

Museums in historic buildings come with their own set of challenges such as accessibility, environmental concerns in collections, and ongoing building maintenance. Because of these issues, our “wins” or measures of success often look different from those museums in purpose-built, modern facilities. Explore how reframing those metrics can demonstrate relevance to your community, improve staff mental health, and celebrate the unique things historic buildings can offer that more traditional museums often cannot.

PRESENTERS: Emily Bentley, *Museums Director, Kanab City*

Elisha Condie, *Visitor Services and Programs Assistant, Chase Home Museum of Utah Folk Arts*  
Jenna Ehlinger, *Museum Manager, Chase Home Museum of Utah Folk Arts*  
Hayley Noble, *Executive Director, Latah County Historical Society*



10:15 AM–10:45 AM

**COFFEE BREAK**

FREE

Join your fellow Annual Meeting attendees for coffee, while connecting with new colleagues and seeing familiar faces.

LOCATION: Grand Ballroom

**CONCURRENT SESSIONS 10:45 AM-12:00 PM**

H1 2026\_562

**DO MUSEUMS DREAM OF AI?**

LEARNING FORMAT: CONVERSATION

LOCATION: Alpine East

AI is in the building. The hype would have you believe it is authoritative, efficient, and transformative. Is it? This panel takes a clear look at AI “behind the mask,” examining how these systems function and where they fall short. From bias and inconsistency, to hidden labor and false authority, to ethics and governance, AI tools present both opportunities and risks that museums must understand. Rather than advocating for or against AI, this session offers an honest, grounded discussion of its realities alongside practical considerations for governance, transparency, ethics, and responsible use. Attendees will leave with a deeper understanding of how to evaluate AI in alignment with museum values of trust, stewardship, and public service.

MODERATOR: Nik Honeysett, *CEO, BPOC*

PRESENTERS: Koven Smith, *Principal, Koven J. Smith Consulting*  
Jen Snyder, *Chief Digital Officer, Detroit Institute of Arts*



H2 2026\_628

**EXPANDING AUDIENCES THROUGH INTERGENERATIONAL PROGRAMMING**

LEARNING FORMAT: ACTIVE LEARNING

LOCATION: Canyon AB

This session focuses on how museums bridge generational gaps to ensure long-term vitality. Leaders from the Utah Museum of Contemporary Art and Nora Eccles Harrison Museum of Art share innovative strategies for engaging children, college students, and seniors. This panel explores how tailoring programs to specific life stages fosters community engagement. Attendees will walk away with a “Life-Stage Toolkit” to broaden their audience base and build sustainable, inclusive institutional models resonating across the patron lifespan.

MODERATOR: John Sparano, *Museum Architect / Planner, Sparano + Mooney*

PRESENTERS: Laura Hurtado, *Executive Director, Utah Museum of Contemporary Art*  
Katie Lee Koven, *Museum Director, Nora Eccles Harrison Museum of Art*



H3 2026\_604

**WHEN BEST PRACTICES AREN'T PERFECT: REFLECTIONS ON RESILIENT EXHIBITION DEVELOPMENT**

LEARNING FORMAT: ACTIVE LEARNING

LOCATION: Wasatch

Developing exhibits is often messy, straying from a prescribed set of rules. No matter how hard you try, scope creep can devolve into scope slaughter. Teams end up frustrated or disappointed. What causes exhibit making to go off the rails? When can you loosen up and make your own process? In this session, we will explore common pinch-points, offer practical advice, and muse on aspiring to "best practices"—which maybe aren't that perfect after all.

PRESENTERS: Lorie Millward, *Principal, Lorie Millward Consulting*  
Maggie Schmidt, *Exhibit Developer, Self*  
Morgen Young, *Principal Historian, Historical Research Associates*



H4 2026\_632

**BEYOND THE BUILDING: PUBLIC ART AS MUSEUM SPACE**

LEARNING FORMAT: ACTIVE LEARNING

LOCATION: Seminar

What if museum work didn't depend on a building? This session explores how public art can extend museum practice into everyday community spaces or function as museum space where no building exists. Using Springville, Utah's Art Loops and statewide public art systems as case studies, panelists will share how collaboration, policy, and collections shape this work. Attendees will leave with practical strategies to create scalable, public-facing experiences in any community.

PRESENTERS: Hannah Elliott, *Director of Collections, Utah Division of Arts & Museums*  
Leslie Makai Gleaves, *Public Art Coordinator, Springville Museum of Art*



12:15 PM-1:30 PM

**AFFINITY LUNCHEONS**

*These events require pre-registration.*

**INDIGENOUS LUNCHEON**

Fee: \$62

LOCATION: Grand Ballroom B

Enjoy meeting your colleagues from tribal museums and supporters of Native American concerns. All are welcome! The Luncheon will feature guest Eileen Quintana, *Title VI Indian Education Program Manager, Nebo School Districts*. Discussion will follow.

*Sponsored by Barona Band of Mission Indians*

**REGISTRAR'S COMMITTEE WESTERN REGION LUNCHEON**

Fee: \$28

LOCATION: Grand Ballroom A

The Registrars Committee Western Region (RC-WR) Annual Business Meeting Luncheon is open to RC-WR members, as well as non-member Registrars, collections professionals, and related vendors.

*Underwritten by Registrar's Committee Western Region*

*Sponsored by TBD*

**DIRECTOR & LEADERSHIP TEAM MEMBER'S LUNCHEON**

Fee: \$62

LOCATION: Grand Ballroom C

This luncheon is open to Directors, Deputy Directors, CEOs, CFOs, Leadership Team Members, and Trustees. The Luncheon will feature guest Rebekah "Becky" Beaulieu, Ph.D, Louise Taft Semple President & CEO, Taft Museum of Art. Discussion will follow.

*Sponsored by Blue Rhino Design*

**STORYTELLERS AND SUPPORTERS LUNCHEON**

Fee: \$62

LOCATION: Alpine West

Especially for curators, development officers, editors, educators, evaluators, exhibit designers, and all who make possible the engaging stories that museums tell, but open to all. The 2026 recipient of the Charles Redd Award for Exhibit Excellence will present on the winning exhibition.

*Sponsored by TBD*



CONCURRENT SESSIONS 1:45 PM-3:00 PM

I1 2026\_540

**STOP BEING THE BEST- KEPT SECRET: AI, ADS & IMPACT**

LEARNING FORMAT: ACTIVE LEARNING

LOCATION: Alpine East

Your museum's growth depends on showing up where your audience lives: AI, Google, and social media. But how do you know if you're standing out—or even showing up? This session delivers a modern marketing playbook for the digital age. Learn to use AI tools to sharpen content, harness the \$10K/month Google Ad Grant, reach new audiences through smarter segmentation, and prepare for a future where AI handles everything from customer service to ticket sales.

PRESENTERS: TJ Crawford, *Founder & Head of Product, Innovative Transit*  
 Patrick Turner, *Chief Advancement Officer, The Discovery*  
 Andy Walden, *VP of Partnerships, KPS3*



I2 2026\_542

**PADDLING TOGETHER: NAVIGATING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND OCEANIC COLLECTIONS**

LEARNING FORMAT: CONVERSATION

LOCATION: Canyon AB

This session highlights examples of successful collections engagement strategies that aspire to improve community relations and public relevance while building mutual trust between indigenous Pacific Islander communities and the collections/archives that house Oceanic ancestral belongings.

PRESENTERS: Jacob Fitisemanu, *Director, Samoana Integrated Learning Initiative*  
 Laneta Fitisemanu, *Director, Samoana Integrated Learning Initiative*  
 Nuuausala Tilo, *Cultural Educator, Malama o Mataitooa*  
 Kimo Watanabe, *Traditional Knowledge Holder, Malama o Mataitooa*



I3 2026\_592

**BETTER TOGETHER: EXPLORING LARGE-SCALE CROSS-ORGANIZATION COLLABORATION**

LEARNING FORMAT: PASSIVE LEARNING

LOCATION: Wasatch

What methods can we use to work together in offering top-notch statewide programming and coordination? Join three organizations to discuss one model of large-scale cross-organization collaboration involving school programs teams from ten organizations. Through the iSEE partnership, museum and school staff work together to promote excellence in education, navigate challenging situations, maintain funding sources, and offer programming statewide. Participants will learn from presenters about the benefits and logistics of running programs of this kind.

MODERATOR: Glynis Bawden, *School Outreach and Teacher PD Manager, Natural History Museum of Utah*  
 PRESENTERS: Sarah Lambson, *Education Director, Ogden Nature Center*  
 Blair Williams, *Associate Director of Education, Loveland Living Planet Aquarium*  
 Annie Young, *Field Trip and Teacher Resources Manager, Natural History Museum of Utah*



I4 2026\_640

**FEASIBILITY IN ACTION: ASSESSING A POTENTIAL ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN MUSEUM**

LEARNING FORMAT: ACTIVE LEARNING

LOCATION: Seminar

Go behind the scenes to learn about the efforts of the Commission to Study the Potential Creation of a National Museum of Asian Pacific American History and Culture. Hear more about the Commission's process to create a comprehensive report examining the viability and long-term sustainability of a new national entity dedicated to the contributions and impact of Asian and Pacific Americans in the United States, and share your thoughts in a simulated visioning activity.

MODERATOR: Crystal Chum, *Associate, SmithGroup*  
 PRESENTERS: Linda Cheu, *Principal Consultant, Robinett Economics*  
 Eleanor Choi, *Principal, Project Manager, SmithGroup*  
 Ray Giang, *Partner, PROFUN*  
 Jay Xu, *Co-Chair of APA Commission, Commission to Study the Potential Creation of a National Museum of Asian Pacific American History & Culture*



3:00-3:30 PM

**COFFEE KLATCH**

Fee: FREE

Join your fellow Annual Meeting attendees for coffee, while connecting with new colleagues and seeing familiar faces.



3:15 PM - 5:00 PM

**ROUNDTABLES**

LOCATION: Alpine Ballroom and Grand Ballroom

**RELATIONSHIP BUILDING: DO YOU KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOR?**

PRESENTERS: Marina Gutierrez, Museum Education Coordinator, Agua Caliente Cultural Museum  
Carolina Zataray, Senior Manager of Education and Public Engagement, Agua Caliente Cultural Museum

**PATH TO DEACCESSION: GAME OF BEST PRACTICES**

PRESENTER: Sara Mercado, Registrar, San Bernardino County Museum

**RESISTANCE STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES**

PRESENTER: Stephanie Brown, Advisory Board Member, Western Neighborhoods Project

**ISSUES AND SOLUTIONS IN GOVERNMENT-RUN MUSEUMS**

PRESENTER: Hope Eggett, Museum Administrator, Museums at Union Station

**PASSION, PURPOSE, BOUNDARIES, AND BURNOUT: REFILLING YOUR CUP AND RETHINKING SELF-CARE IN MUSEUM WORK**

PRESENTER: Barron Oda, Principal, Invenio Legal Studio LLC

**UPDATING "PERMANENT" EXHIBITION TO REFLECT CHANGES IN HOW WE TEACH HISTORY**

PRESENTER: Dania Talley, Associate Curator of History, Oakland Museum of California

**EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT / EMPLOYEE WELLBEING**

PRESENTER: Robyn Anderson, Operations Manager, Museum of Natural and Cultural History

**"ADVICE TO MY 20-YEAR-OLD SELF" FOR EMERGING PROFESSIONALS**

PRESENTER: Johanna Jones, Director of Evaluation and Visitor Insights, Oakland Museum of California

**DESIGNING FOR CURIOSITY, NOT CLASSROOMS**

PRESENTERS: Alex Ayala, Senior Associate, Mithun  
Seth Margolis, Director of Education, The Museum of Flight

**EMPOWERING EDUCATORS: TECHNIQUES FOR CULTIVATING STAFF ENGAGEMENT AND GROWTH**

PRESENTER: Anna Swenson, Community Programs Supervisor, Clark Planetarium

**SHOWING PRIDE IN OUR COLLECTIONS AND PROGRAMS**

PRESENTER: Derek Jang, Director of Museum Programs & Guest Experience, Britannia Mine Museum

**ASPIRING TO DEEPER COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AT STATEWIDE SCALE**

PRESENTERS: Katie Worthen, Community Programs Manager, Natural History Museum of Utah  
Katie Vitti, Wasatch Front Engagement Coordinator, Natural History Museum of Utah

**UTAH'S BUFFALO SOLDIER HERITAGE TRAIL**

PRESENTERS: Robert Burch, Executive Director, Sema Hadithi African American Heritage and Culture  
Marco Van Dalen, SHPO Researcher, Utah Cultural Site Stewardship

5:00-6:30 PM

**DINNER ON YOUR OWN**

Before tonight's Evening Event, take the time to enjoy a dinner on your own, or with fellow WMA and UMA friends.

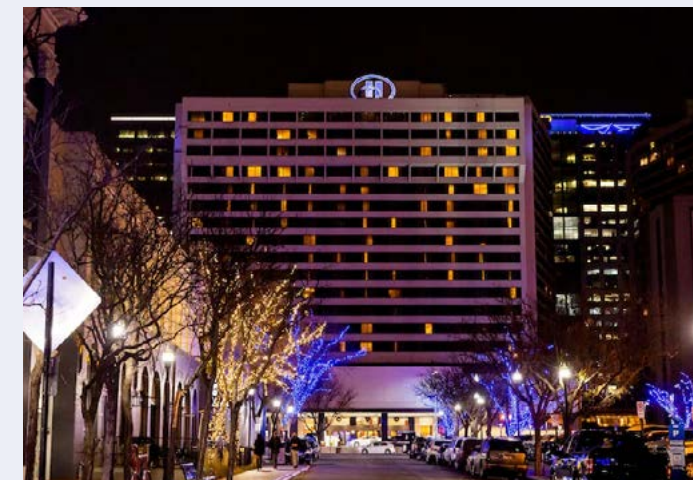
**EVENING EVENT**

6:30 PM-9:00 PM

**HILTON SALT LAKE CITY HOTEL**

**\$50**, includes appetizers and drinks

Spend the last night of the Annual Meeting chilling with colleagues at the Hilton Salt Lake City Hotel. Take it easy with libations, hearty appetizers, and an exciting mix of activities and educational offerings to connect with fellow attendees. Attend the hands-on play activities session "Aspire to Play: Designing Playful Museum Experiences" or watch a short museum film followed by Q&A. Through it all, forge new connections, find old friends, and recharge—with no need to rush to catch that last event



**ASPIRE TO PLAY: DESIGNING PLAYFUL MUSEUM EXPERIENCES**

LOCATION: Grand B

Dive into four diverse case studies of how play is used to develop skills, strengthen character, and promote learning outcomes for all different types of museums. Challenge your definition of play and its benefits. Learn how you can incorporate play into different levels of your organization. You will even get the chance to play yourself!

PRESENTERS:

Grace Tedrick, Programming Manager, Thanksgiving Point  
Bri Cencak, Visitor Experience Coordinator, Swaner Preserve and EcoCenter  
Katy Knight, Education Administrator, Bean Life Science Museum at BYU  
Virginia Catherall, Curator of Education, Utah Museum of Fine Arts

**SINYOHOW HAAWAAKM 'AAKNACH**

LOCATION: Seminar

Sinyohow Haawaakm 'Aaknach is Barona Cultural Center & Museum's latest film in our ancient philosophy series. This 20-minute animated film explains where our cultural protocols come from. Sinyohow, the woman who knows all, raises her twin boys, who are also all-knowing, but despite this, they struggle with motherhood and growing up. Even though this is an ancient story, it remains relevant today! See the film and learn about the importance of modern storytelling!

PRESENTERS:

Laurie Egan-Hedley, Director/Curator, Barona Cultural Center & Museum  
Ken Winikur, Creative Director/Principal, Winikur Productions

**BALBOA PARK ONLINE COLLABORATIVE**

BPOC is a nonprofit technology and cultural strategy consultancy that offers IT managed services and strategic consulting for digital and organizational strategy, IT infrastructure, audience engagement and development, capacity building, and human capital planning to museums and other cultural organizations. We also offer institutional psychotherapy at no additional cost.

**CALNONPROFITS INSURANCE SERVICES**

CalNonprofits Insurance Services (CNIS) is a nonprofit-focused insurance brokerage providing employee benefits, property and casualty coverage, and risk management support. Backed by decades of experience, CNIS helps organizations protect their people and missions with tailored solutions, trusted guidance, and exclusive programs designed specifically for the nonprofit sector.

**CLICK NETHERFIELD**

Click Netherfield has 50+ years' experience in the design and manufacture of high-quality showcases for the museums and heritage sector. Our experience across North America and in the Western USA is underpinned by a reputation for unrelenting customer service, innovative engineering and quality, and logistical expertise, resulting in the completion of over 200 projects in 35+ US States.

**COLLECTOR SYSTEMS**

Collector Systems is a secure, cloud-based platform for cultural institutions to manage art, archives, and more. It offers seamless collections management with an intuitive mobile app for condition reporting and location tracking, plus integrated web publishing. We empower teams to work together from anywhere, making collections management effortless and engaging for museums, libraries, and foundations.

**ERCO LIGHTING, INC.**

ERCO is a leading specialist in architectural lighting, using 100% LED technology. Our luminaires are carefully developed through in-house production to offer the best quality of lighting solutions for offices, galleries, and outdoor facilities. With our extensive range of products, we offer individualized support to our customers' needs and requirements.

**HOLLINGER METAL EDGE**

Hollinger Metal Edge is a supplier of archival storage products and museum display products for museums, government and institutional archives, historical societies, libraries, universities, galleries, and private collectors. With their experienced management and staff, they are dedicated to quality, customer service, and competitive prices.

**KUBIK MALTBIE**

Kubik Maltbie has been producing experiences for museums and visitor centers, worldwide, for 65 years. Our work includes Presidential, children's, science, natural, and traditional history museums. Our portfolio has over 500 projects, and our team's technical knowledge is unrivaled. We love what we do, and it shows in every project.

**SPARANO + MOONEY ARCHITECTURE**

Sparano + Mooney Architecture is a collective of craftspeople designing arts, culture and museum projects across the American West. Since 1997, we have created landmark facilities that enrich civic life and enhance communities. Our collaborative, research-driven approach balances tradition and innovation to produce meaningful, enduring architecture reflecting each client's mission, vision and sense of place.

**TOUR MATE**

Since 1988, Tour-Mate has been a trusted leader in interpretive solutions, offering both innovative hardware and engaging content creation services. We provide immersive audio and multimedia experiences. Our solutions bring stories to life in accessible, memorable and educational ways that inspire visitors. Tour-Mate - your partner in telling your story.

**UNRIVALED**

Unrivaled is a digital + dimensional exhibit partner focused on doing things a better way. From first sketch to final bolt, we design, develop, and fabricate in-house—because we're not interested in handing ideas off and hoping they survive. The result: environments that perform as intended and keep performing over time.

**U.S.ART COMPANY**

U.S.Art Company is one of the premier fine art handling companies in the country specializing in museum quality transportation, crating, installation, storage, international customs services, and exhibition coordination. U.S.Art offers the most extensive US shuttle network. With all of our services, safety and security are top priorities. [www.usart.com](http://www.usart.com)

**ZETCOM**

zetcom offers proven, flexible solutions for smarter collection management. Trusted by over 2,500 institutions worldwide, MuseumPlus connects collection data, workflows, and digital assets in one system: reducing complexity and enabling more efficient, consistent processes. Built for long-term stability, MuseumPlus evolves with your needs through modular extensions, from barcode workflows to exhibition planning and online collections. institutions worldwide.



**ABOUT SALT LAKE CITY**

Salt Lake City, Utah has a long and layered history rooted in the stewardship and presence of Indigenous peoples including the Ute, Shoshone, Goshute, and Paiute Nations. Nestled between the Wasatch Mountains and the Great Salt Lake, Salt Lake City emerged as a major crossroads in the American West and continues to serve as a center for culture, industry, and outdoor recreation. Known for its striking natural landscape and vibrant downtown, the city offers a unique blend of urban energy and access to the outdoors. Salt Lake City has grown into a forward-thinking urban hub — recognized for its thriving tech sector (dubbed Silicon Slopes), award-winning dining, craft beverage culture, a vibrant performing arts scene, and one of the highest LGBTQ populations in the nation. With five National Parks nearby, world-class ski resorts just 45 minutes from downtown, and four distinct seasons, Salt Lake offers something for everyone — without sacrificing the energy of a dynamic, welcoming city.

**GEOGRAPHY & CLIMATE**

Salt Lake City sits at 4,330 feet in a mountain valley framed by the Wasatch Mountains to the east and north, and the Oquirrh (pronounced “oaker”) Mountains to the west. The area was once covered by ancient Lake Bonneville, and the Great Salt Lake remains a defining geographic feature today. Fall is a beautiful time to visit as the nearby canyons blaze with color. September brings warm, sunny days and comfortably cool evenings, with average daytime temperatures in the mid 70s and cooler nighttime temperatures that make evenings especially pleasant. We recommend bringing layers, as temperatures can shift quickly in the semi-arid climate.



**GETTING AROUND & TRANSPORTATION**

Downtown Salt Lake City is highly walkable, with restaurants, cafés, shops, and cultural attractions conveniently located throughout the city center. The area is also well connected through public transportation, including the TRAX light rail system and bus routes, making it easy to navigate between conference venues, hotels, and local destinations. The Salt Lake International Airport is just 10 minutes from downtown by car, and rideshare, taxi, shuttle, and bus services are all readily available. The Utah Transit Authority (UTA) operates TRAX light rail directly.

Providing professional development to museum professionals since 1935

**MISSION STATEMENT**

Strengthening museums to serve diverse communities.

**VISION STATEMENT**

Dynamic museums inspiring a more just future.

**WHAT WE DO**

The Western Museums Association (WMA) is a nonprofit, membership organization dedicated to serving museums, museum professionals, as well as the related organizations and individuals, by providing vision, enrichment, intellectual challenge, and a forum for communication and interaction. The WMA is primarily comprised of members across the Western states of Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington, the Western Canadian provinces of Alberta and British Columbia, and the Pacific Islands, among others.



**CONTACT**

Western Museums Association  
 PO Box 11341  
 Indianapolis, IN 46201-9998  
 P: 707.433.4701  
 wma@westmuse.org

**OUR CORE VALUES**

**PROGRESS AND IMPROVEMENT**

WMA challenges museums — as we challenge ourselves — to keep pushing forward to grow their positive impact in their communities and in the advancement of their staffs.

**RESPONSIBILITY AND STRENGTH**

We believe museums have a responsibility to the communities of which they are an integral part, as we have a responsibility to museums and museum people.

**LEADERSHIP AND SUSTAINABILITY**

We promote professional development as a path to growing future leaders from within the field and creating new models for future success and vitality.

**COLLABORATION AND OUTREACH**

Through collaborative partnerships, WMA supports others in the museum field – including other associations – to strengthen the field’s capacity.

**TRUST AND RECIPROCITY**

We respect each other’s work and individual value as we build life-long relationships that support each other’s professional endeavors and personal well-being.

**CREATIVITY AND EXPERIMENTATION**

WMA serves as an incubator of ideas for the museum field through creativity in member engagement and program development.

**FUN AND PLAY**

We recognize that enjoyment facilitates learning, discovery, and relationship building among colleagues who energize each other to be creative problem solvers and happier people.

## ABOUT UTAH MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION

### MISSION STATEMENT

Utah Museums Association empowers museum professionals across Utah through professional development, community connections, and advocacy.

### VISION STATEMENT

We envision a thriving community of museum professionals across Utah with the capacity, connections, and support to preserve our diverse heritage, inspire learning, and strengthen their communities.

### CORE VALUES

#### EMPOWERING

We believe professionalism is a level of practice, not a pay grade. We connect museum professionals—regardless of role or pay grade—with the knowledge and tools to excel.

#### INCLUSIVE

We welcome museums of all sizes, types, and disciplines. We are committed to diversity, equity, and accessibility within our organization and throughout Utah's museum community.

#### COMMUNITY-FOCUSED

We listen to our members and respond to the evolving needs of Utah's museum professionals, ensuring our work stays relevant and valuable.

#### COLLABORATIVE

We believe museums thrive when they work together. We create opportunities for partnership, peer learning, and resource sharing across the state.

#### ACCOUNTABLE

We responsibly manage our resources, evaluate our impact regularly, and communicate transparently with our members and supporters about our work and results.

### WHAT WE DO

The Utah Museums Association empowers museum professionals across Utah through professional development, community connections, and advocacy. Through our work, museum professionals gain the skills, networks, and support they need to help their institutions thrive and better serve their communities.

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We equip museum professionals with relevant skills and knowledge through programs centered on best practices and emerging needs.

### COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

We sustain a collaborative and inclusive network that connects museum staff, volunteers, and partners across Utah, creating opportunities for peer learning and mutual support.

### ADVOCACY

We advocate for Utah's museums at all levels of government and connect museum professionals with the training, tools, and resources they need to champion themselves, their institutions, and the field.

### CONTACT

Utah Museums Association  
PO Box 2077  
Salt Lake City, UT 84110  
202.251.0549 | [info@utahmuseums.org](mailto:info@utahmuseums.org)

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BLUE  
RHINO  
DESIGN

### our approach

Blue Rhino Design creates interactive exhibits and immersive spaces that communicate through experience. Our exhibits encourage conversation and make complex topics accessible by putting the visitor first in every design.

### our mission

To design exhibit experiences that:

- Put visitors first.
- Are social, not isolating.
- Extend beyond institution walls.
- Touch people's hearts and minds.
- Offer something unique and memorable.
- Bridge cultures and embrace diversity.

### our services

Conceptualize | Develop  
Design | Prototype | Fabricate

- Museums
- Cultural Centers
- Children's Museums
- Science Centers
- Travelling & Pop-up Exhibits
- Visitor & Interpretive Centers
- Trade Show Booths
- Parks & Public Spaces
- Digital & Physical Interactives

### contact us

[info@bluerhino.com](mailto:info@bluerhino.com)  
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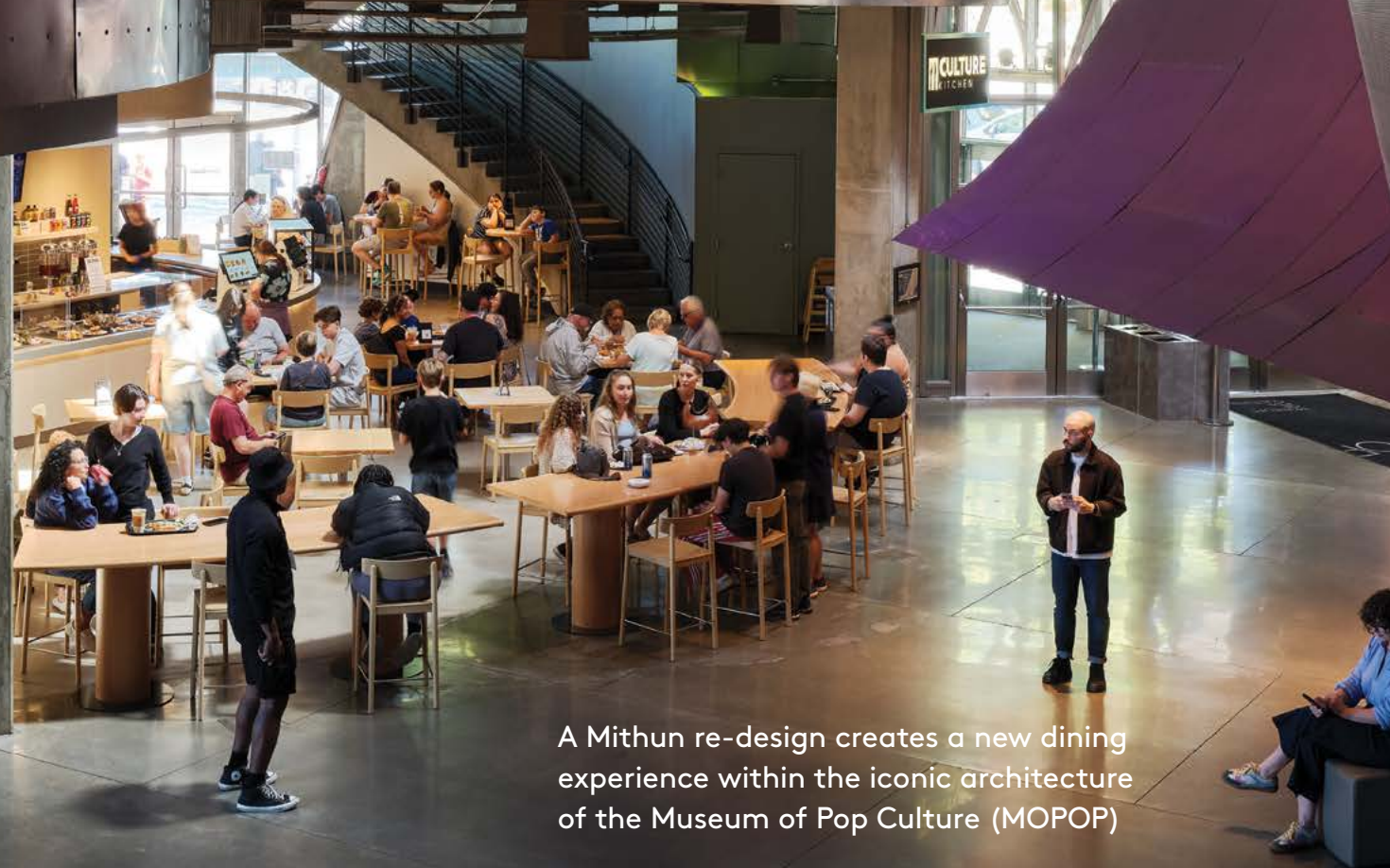
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A Mithun re-design creates a new dining experience within the iconic architecture of the Museum of Pop Culture (MOPOP)

## THERE'S ALWAYS A BETTER WAY.

Most exhibits are built across multiple teams—designers, fabricators, media producers, integrators. It works, but it comes at a cost: Ideas get simplified, details get lost, interactives get scaled back. Your vision gets watered down.

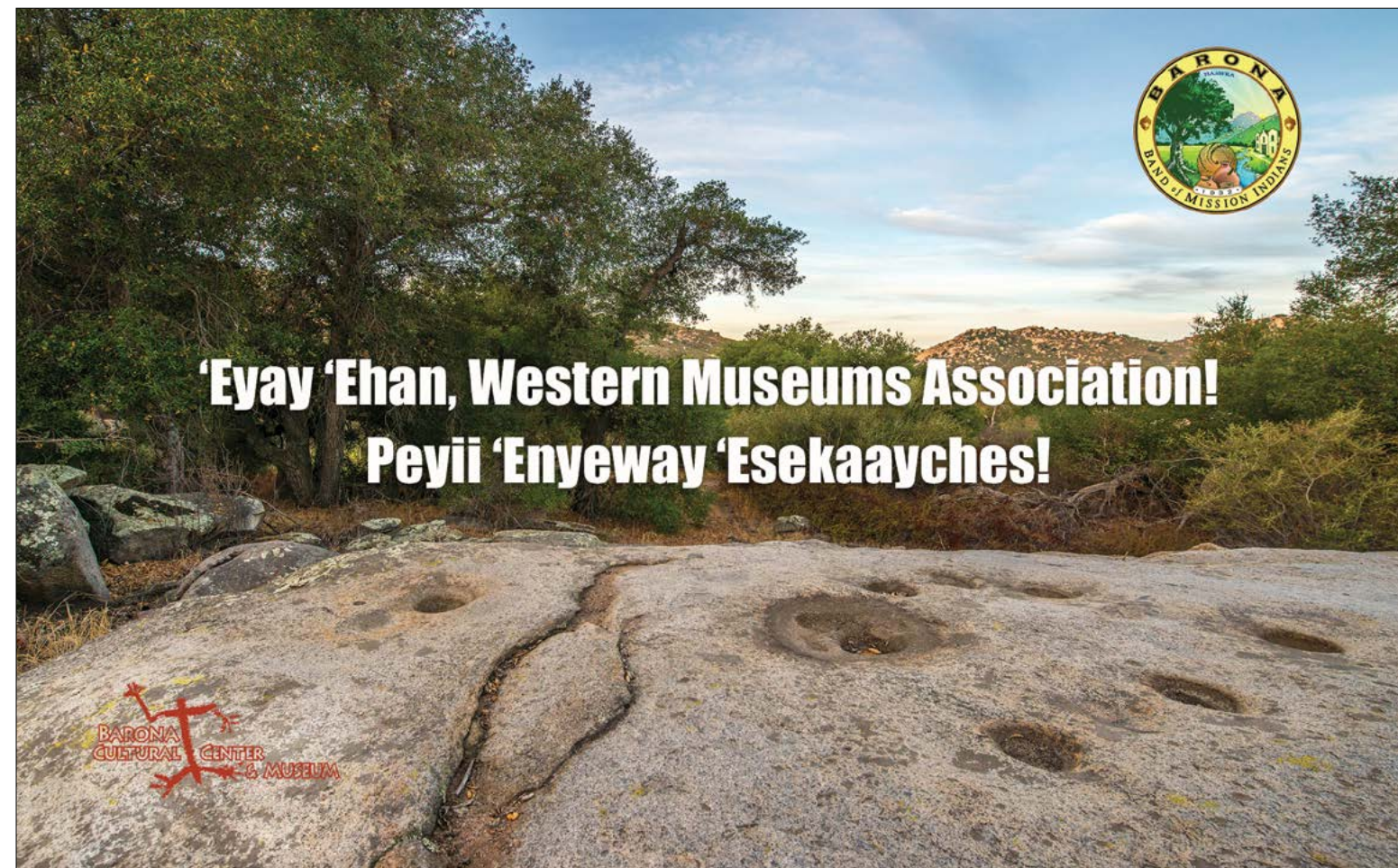
We've never been satisfied with that so we built a different process—bringing design, development, media production, engineering, and fabrication together under one banner. We prototype early, solve problems in real time, and push ideas forward instead of pulling them back.

Because if there's a better way to do something, we're going to find it.



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Peyii 'Enyeway 'Esekaayches!

# Building better museums, together.



## Partnering Together To Provide **Better Payment Solutions** For All Museums



Western  
Museums  
Association



Western Museums Association's engagement with Thrive Payments facilitates the ongoing support of WMA members through payment acceptance services and related technological advancement opportunities which are aimed at driving growth and value for the creative culture they promote.

- ✓ Transparent, fair, and customized pricing
- ✓ Dedicated customer service and tech support
- ✓ Robust reporting capabilities

### All-in-One Product Solutions that offer omnichannel acceptance:

- Online ticketing and scheduling
- Customized membership programs with reporting and insights
- Online gift shop and donation features
- Multiple events and digital ticketing management
- In person ticketing and retail/gift shop platform
- Loyalty programs, gift cards, and store credit capabilities
- Food and beverage options (quick service and full service)

Sign up and activate your Thrive Payments merchant account and we will donate **\$250** to the Western Museums Association in your museum's name.



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