

South Carolina Federation of Museums Strategic Plan

2002-2007

Mission Statement:

To serve, represent, advocate and promote the best interests of South Carolina museums thereby strengthening professional standards and procedures, facilitating communication, fostering inclusiveness and increasing professionalism and sustainability of institutional resources.

Vision:

"Sustaining and supporting excellence in South Carolina museums"

History:

Despite the fact that the oldest operating museum in the United States, The Charleston Museum, began in 1773, South Carolina's community of museums and museum professionals did not begin to seriously move toward the creation of a formal professional organization until the late 1960s. As South Carolina geared up for the celebration of its Tricentennial in 1970, museum professionals seized the opportunity to make a strong case for the advancement of the field within the state. After a series of initial exploratory meetings, the South Carolina Federation of Museums (SCFM) became a formal organization on December 18, 1970. The purpose of the new organization was to create an advocacy group that would represent museum issues and museum professionals before state officials and would promulgate the development of stronger professional standards among museums in South Carolina. Over its thirty-year history, SCFM has been heavily involved in the development of museums. During the early 1970s, SCFM members led the lobbying effort that resulted in the creation of the South Carolina State Museum. In the late 1970s, SCFM began a relationship with the State Museum's field services program to strengthen professional standards that continues today. SCFM members were at the forefront of the development and implementation of the 1987 South Carolina Abandoned Cultural Property Act. Today, SCFM remains active in observing issues that confront South Carolina's museums and helping them grow professionally.

Membership:

SCFM represents South Carolina's most active community of museums and museum professionals. The Federation, a not for profit 501 (c) 6, has four membership categories. Institutional members cover five sub-categories based on the member organization's

annual operating budgets. Although South Carolina's largest museums and all museum disciplines are active within the organization, SCFM's profile mirrors that of the state's overall museum community. Most of SCFM's institutional members are small- to medium-sized local history museums operated by counties, cities, or small private nonprofit organizations. The majority of SCFM's professional members are staff from the state's larger museums. The affiliate membership category includes a growing number of organizations that provide services or cooperate with museums including commercial firms, consultants, and training programs for new museum professionals. The associate membership comprises a cross-section of individuals interested in the state's museums, including students, volunteers, board members, and members of the general public.

Services:

SCFM provides a variety of services for South Carolina's museum community. The Federation's primary communication tool is its quarterly newsletter, Good Muse! The newsletter focuses on news and issues affecting the state's museums. SCFM also maintains an active array of professional training opportunities for its members. The SCFM Annual Conference in March welcomes nearly 100 museum professionals for seminars and forums on various professional topics. Throughout the year, SCFM partners with the State Museum and/or with other cultural organizations to produce daylong training workshops. In conjunction with the State Museum, SCFM supports the www.southcarolinamuseums.org web site. Through the web site, museum professionals and the general public can access a directory of all museums in South Carolina, an exhibit and event calendar for museums and a growing set of news and information for museum professionals. Members are offered joint promotional opportunities through SCFM's printing and production of a marketing brochure, "Palmetto Treasures," that is distributed to South Carolina's Welcome Centers and other visitor information centers. And, finally, SCFM offers its members the opportunity to participate in the state's largest network of museum professionals.

The 2001-2002 Strategic Process:

In late summer of 2000, the Executive Committee began an inquiry into the process of strategic planning for the short and long-term viability of this statewide organization. In November of 2000, Ron Fischer, 1st Vice President was assigned to lead a strategic planning process by creating a committee of museum representatives from around the state that represented individuals from institutions large and small, a variety of positions and at different points in their careers. The committee wished to survey and communicate with as many members, non-members and institutions as possible in a variety of forms (in person, telephone, e-mail and mail). They used the 2001 South Carolina State Museum Office of Museum Services survey to determine the needs, concerns and issues of the museum community. After the survey deadline, committee members called numerous individuals and institutions to increase the number of submittals. The total submittals both written and by telephone equaled an unprecedented 49% return rate.

Upon the compilation of the survey, the committee embarked on a series of forums around the state to permit the museum community to verbalize their needs, concerns and issues to members of the committee. Over 100 individual and institutional participants joined forums held in Anderson, Columbia, Rock Hill, Florence and Charleston, South Carolina.

This document is a result of intensive and extensive communication with the South Carolina museum community. Ron Fischer, chair & Park Manager of Charles Towne Landing State Historic Site, Betsy Olsen, Director, Florence Museum, Kevin W. Tucker, Curator of Decorative Arts, Columbia Museum of Art, Ray Sigmon, Manager, Interpretive Services for SCPRT and Catherine Bergstrom, Programs Coordinator, Anderson County Museum would formally like to thank the Executive Committee for the opportunity to make an impact on the future of South Carolina museums.

Statement of Focal Issues:

Based upon the above strategic process, the committee identified the following broad focal issues to guide the federation for the next five years:

1. [Fostering Communication](#)
2. [Sustaining & Improving Professionalism](#)
3. [Developing Financial Resources](#)
4. [Concentration on Education](#)

Statement of Goals, Objectives & Actions:

The following goals, objectives and action statements are intended to guide the Executive Committee in decision making for the next five years. The Strategic Planning Committee recommends that that Executive Committee determine on a yearly basis what the organization will pursue based upon these goals by assigning timeframes, accountability and appropriate resources. Although this is a five-year plan, it is also recommended that the Executive Committee utilize the triennial 2004 South Carolina State Museum Office of Museum Services survey to revise this document in 2005 for presentation at the annual conference.

Focal Area 1: Fostering Communication

Consistent communication in the museum community is critical to the survival of our treasured institutions. Communication between professionals and museums along with an ongoing dialog with our audience and community is integral.

Goal 1: SCFM will seek to understand, develop, respond and interact with our local and regional communities in appropriate ways.

- Action 1: Identify, model and promote best practices in community outreach and interaction.
- Action 2: Create or utilize existing relevant surveys to determine the demographic visitor base for a cross section of museums throughout the state.

Goal 2: Continue to provide marketing and public relations opportunities for the betterment of South Carolina museums.

- Action 1: Evaluate, revise and continue to offer "Palmetto Treasures."
- Action 2: Recognize excellence in marketing and public relations within the broader museum community and promote as appropriate model for South Carolina museums.

Goal 3: Expand, regularize, improve and monitor all current communication mediums.

- Action 1: Discuss, revise and strengthen Good Muse to include regular publication dates and a solid foundation for publication.
- Action 2: Investigate the possibility of making the SCFM website a comprehensive clearinghouse for museum needs, questions, issues and concerns. Consider hiring website development firm for regular updating and modification.
- Action 3: Investigate the current use of Scmusnet and consider policy to refine this valuable communication resource to include an assigned monitor.

Goal 4: Strongly consider opportunities for SCFM to be available on a more regular basis for the museum community.

- Action 1: Institute appropriate regional representatives to facilitate ongoing communication within the related areas.
- Action 2: Create a list of core resource needs for museums and identify and recruit existing professionals in the field to serve on specific resource groups.
- Action 3: Explore ways for SCFM to be consistently available between annual conferences.
- Action 4: Create a membership committee to develop additional members on all levels for inclusion in SCFM membership.

Goal 5: Promote the contributions of museums in South Carolina on the overall quality of life for our citizens.

- Action 1: Create, analyze and utilize an economic and educational impact study to determine actual influence on the financial and educational resources of our state.
- Action 2: Create and capitalize on opportunities for political advocacy for South Carolina museums.
- Action 3: Consider developing a comprehensive, collaborative major South Carolina travelling exhibit involving the resources of South Carolina's museums.

- Action 4: Continue, develop and expand yearly South Carolina Statewide Museum Day in conjunction with International Museum Day.
- Action 5: Develop on a yearly basis South Carolina's agenda for the Southeastern Museums Conference (SEMC) to further the goals of SCFM on a regional scale.

Focal Area 2: Sustaining & Improving Professionalism

Over the past decade, SCFM has made great strides and difficult steps in achieving a new level of professionalism within its ranks and for the overall museum community. It is imperative that the federation maintain momentum while expanding opportunities.

Goal 1: Utilize the existing means of professional development and look for options to expand offerings on a regularized, consistent basis.

- Action 1: The Professional Development Committee (PDC) should utilize the Office of Museum Services' survey to set annual conference sessions.
- Action 2: The PDC should expand its duties to include annual topical workshops formerly overseen by the Office of Museum Services.
- Action 3: Analyze the current annual conference award offerings, including scholarships, to determine whether or not the award program is effective, representative and meets future goals.

Goal 2: Investigate, develop and implement a statewide assistance program for museums.

- Action 1: Investigate the feasibility of a mentoring program to include established site visits, museum self examination, consultations and assistance with MAP and AAM accreditation.
- Action 2: Consider a statewide accreditation program and its potential relationship to national standards and accreditation programs.

Goal 3: SCFM should be a leader in the support of employee and trustee racial and ethnic diversity in the South Carolina museum community.

Goal 4: SCFM should identify and distribute to the museum community examples of best practices in the following areas: Volunteers, Collections Management, Storage, Museum Stores, Ethics, Board Development and Technology.

Goal 5: Identify and establish open partnerships with agencies, organizations and associations with similar interests and missions.

- Action 1: Work with similar agencies to determine successes in the management of large scale, statewide programs for the betterment of constituent museums.
- Action 2: Create a bylaws committee to revise and update existing bylaws for the long-term success of the organization based upon this and future strategic plans.

Focal Area 3: Developing Financial Resources

Whether it is in difficult financial times or booming economies, the S.C. museum community has a consistent need to secure financial resources, which solidify their institution's financial base.

Goal 1: Communicate with members, supporters, partners and friends the need to create a stable base of funding for museums.

- Action 1: Create, promote, advocate and help implement a statewide grant program.
- Action 2: Identify best practices in fund raising for museums and communicate opportunities and model excellence.
- Action 3: Assist museums to identify recurring fiscal support.
- Action 4: Pool grant-writing resources for the betterment of the larger museum community.

Goal 2: Assist in audience development for the long-term viability of S.C. museums.

- Action 1: Identify attendance numbers throughout the state and analyze for trend information.
- Action 2: Determine who repeat visitors are and determine reasons for multiple visitations.
- Action 3: Advocate the increased involvement of seniors in our institutions.
- Action 4: Proactively cater to new populations in the state thereby developing a new visitor in the early stages of interest.

Focal Area 4: Concentration on Education

Even as the state and nation looks to better education, museums have historically offered educational opportunities for people of all ages. Now is the time for museums to rise to preeminence in the sphere of future educational excellence.

Goal 1: Develop a relationship with schools on the local, county and statewide levels.

- Action 1: Identify excellent examples of curriculum based programming in member institutions and establish a statewide program for all museums.
- Action 2: Establish strong connections with school districts throughout the state.

Goal 2: Identify examples of developed and implemented long-range interpretive planning for museums and model for the larger community.

Goal 3: Assist museums with the broad-based integration of educational programming into every aspect of the museum and its mission.