

New Mexico Economic Development Department
Creative Industries Division

Project Title: *Growing Silver City's Creative Industries to Promote Tourism and Build Capacity*

Grantee: Silver City Museum

Interim GRANT REPORT

June 30, 2024

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INTRODUCTION: Support for this project from NM EDD CID was a boon to energizing this small, rural community's creative community. It has provided the financial incentive for three previously disparate theater organizations and the Silver City Museum to come together in a synergistic way. It has provided the small Silver City Museum the resources to bring in top notch interactive media company IDEUM from Albuquerque to regenerate and revitalize its "core" exhibit introducing local residents and tourist visitors to the region's deep and diverse and important history and culture. Already an attraction that most visitors come to experience, this new energy infused in the exhibit will enable it to become a central attraction that this grant provided repurposed to promote to a three-state region. Drawing more tourism to Silver City and Grant County. A new full-time position and several part-time positions have been created and will become part of this project's sustainable future. Much has already been accomplished but logistical challenges faced in creating a partnership alliance and museum staffing changes has slowed progress. Plans are in place along with several agreements to join the theater alliance and rebuild the exhibit and promote the project widely are in place and will be completed by the end of the grant's term.

PROJECT OUTCOMES TO DATE: Outcomes designed for the project fall into five major categories. Specific accomplishments toward each category are listed below.

Improve Core Exhibit to become a Must-See tourist attraction

*Museum staff have completed conceptual plans for redesigning the exhibit.

*An agreement with IDEUM has been signed and work will proceed actually in concert with another local project The Bayard Union Hall Project, in which IDEUM is also a consultant. Part of Five Points Project.....www.swnmact.....

Building a Local Theaters Alliance

After an initial meeting in which all three theaters agreed to join the alliance as coproducers of plays, support of actors engagement, prop build etc....only one theater group the Silver City Community Theater has signed an MOU committing to the project in full. A second theater the Starlight agrees to help construct costumes and the third The Virus Theater will help to produce training workshops. We think this is a great first step and although slightly different from the initial plan it will grow to see the benefits of more work in closer partnership.

Four STRENGTH development WORKSHOPS

*All presenters for each of the four workshops have committed to participating. We are confirming dates and detailed agendas. September and October 2024: 4 Workshops 1) Arts Promotion, 2) Set/Exhibit Design, 3) Interactive Media, 4) Using History in Theatre

Living HISTORY Program

- 2/10/24 Territorial Charter Day Event at the SILCO Theater – 2 original skits: The Santa Fe Ring, and Silver City Charter, written by Kris Isom, performed by 5 local enactors.
- 3/07/24 “Aldo Leopold Talks”, a Community Conversation in partnership with WILL and LULAC featuring Aldo Leopold Reenactor: Steve Morgan
- 5/15/24 “True Stories from the Empire Zinc Mine Strike”, a Community Conversation in partnership with WILL and LULAC featuring Michelle Munoz, the granddaughter of Mine Strike Organizers and Line Walkers: Jose and Minerva Carrillo, with support from SCCT Reenactors.
- 5/27/24 “Memory Lane Live”, produced by Town and Country Garden Club with Acting Coaching and Advertisement support from SCM. 20 + resident reenactors chose a

historical figure interred in Memory Lane Cemetery in order to tell the story of their lives.

Commitments in place for:

- 10/31/24-11/02/24 “Women in Health” Exhibit Grand Opening, featuring original scenes depicting the “unheard” stories of Grant County Women in Health Care and “Dia De Los Muertos” Celebrations, featuring a wide range of culturally diverse historical characters as they educate and entertain us with stories from their time.
- 12/14/24 “Victorian Christmas & More”, featuring “Scenes from the House” including Ailman family stories from the 1880’s, and “unheard” stories from its years as a Boarding House, or from its late 1960’s years as a Firehouse.

Regional PROMOTIONS Plan

*New Silver City Museum staffer Brittany Beers, Community Engagement Manager hired May 15, 2024. Made connections with Advance Air, provider of regional air travel to feature the Museum and this project in their Fall issue of their inflight magazine.

*Outline of Regional Promotion Plan developed. Major brochure distribution effort committed.

ANTICIPATED JOB CREATION

A new position Living History Coordinator (*See job description in Attachments*) has been created to be funded now and to continue in the future by the Silver City Museum with its non-profit support group the Silver City Museum Society's support. Additional part-time positions of Actors will be funded as needed.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

The involvement of the community has been mostly through the involvement of staff and volunteers from the three theater organizations. Multiple meetings, practices and planning sessions have taken place. Test performances of the Living History Program have been viewed by more than 500 area residents and tourists.

OVERALL ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTIONS:

In addition to the fulltime Living History Coordinator and contracts with various consultants, once the project is fully operational we expect to see an increase in the Museum's attendance of at least 5-10 percent which will reflect an Increase in tourist visits to the area.

IMAGES FROM THE PROJECT



Original play about the territorial
Charter adoption New Mexico Territory



Recreated biographical; sketches performed at Silver
City Cemetery



Oral histories and excerpts from "Salt of the
Earth" performances by the Silver City
Community Theater



One-person performance of
Aldo Leopold



Costumed interpreter performing at Give Grandly

EXPLANATION / RESULTS OF DELIVERABLES

The four main deliverables of this project are listed in ***Bold*** below.

A Living History Program uniting three local theater groups in partnership with the Silver City Museum.

Much has been done to coordinate the involvement of the three local theater groups. Although each will contribute in a different way. The Silver City Community Theater is the most deeply involved at this point having signed an m.o.u. detailing how the group and the museum will cooperate on developing characters, skits, and other performances and the development of these. The Starlight Theater will help to construct any costumes and the Virus will help develop training workshops. This loose alliance of four organizations will evolve as we continue into the second year of the project. All three theater groups have strongly endorsed the project.

Multiple characters and venues have been tested to this point. Various meetings among the theater groups' staff have produced many ideas for moving forward.

Four workshops to build local creative industry capacity.

All four have been designed with commitments in hand from all participating consultant. Dates need to be set after a planning meeting with all four partners scheduled for mid-July.

September and October 2024: 4 Workshops 1) Arts Promotion, 2) Set/Exhibit Design, 3) Interactive Media, 4) Using History in Theatre

An interactive core exhibit about the region's history and culture based in new scholarship and using high-tech interactive media in conjunction with the museum's rich object and photographic collection.

Museum staff have developed conceptual plans for the new exhibit. Research has been completed. A draft script has been outlined. Object and graphics and other media resources have been identified. A recent grant from the NMARTS to document by video six local culture bearers in the Grant County area. The museum staff will produce 10–15-minute documentaries for the NMARTS project. These will be used to enliven the renovated core exhibit.

A contract with IDEUM the media and museum exhibit company has been signed. Work will begin in full in August.

A new tourist-attractive brand for the museum dispersed widely across the southern parts of western Arizona, New México and west Texas.

Recent Museum staff changes have stalled our efforts to develop a full revisit of the museum's brand. A new Community Engagement Manager has been on the job for two months and has this project as her top priority. Matching funds have been secured and preliminary talks with Advanced Air, the sole provider of air travel from Silver City to all main cities in our project catchment area will enable the museum to build a very powerful regional partner to help get the word out. The Town of Silver City is in the process of hiring a new tourist promotion agency and once that agreement is settled the Museum, as a department of the Town will work closely with the agency to promote this project.

Attachments:



Position Description

Title: Living History Project Coordinator	
Department: Museum	Reports To: Museum Director
Status: PT 20 hours/week	Pay Scale and Benefits:
Working Conditions: office environment	Physical Requirements
Position Summary: The Living History Project Coordinator (LHPC) ensures that a partnership among local theater groups and the museum is built and sustained. The LHPC ensures that this partnership produces a range of excellent living history performances at various venues.	
Responsibilities: LHPC is responsible for managing the project’s budget, work timeline, partnership relations, character selection, drafting and updating goals and vision statements, costume and props research and purchasing, setting partnership meetings, agendas and notes, setting and arranging the four workshops spelled out in CID contact, organizing and managing costume and prop storage, aiding the Museum Director with any reports and presentations about the project, maintains membership in and awareness of professional associations for example the International Museum Theater Alliance (IMTAL). https://www.imtal-us.org/ and the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) https://www.aam-us.org/ and the Association for State and Local History (AASLH) https://aaslh.org/	
Certification and License Requirements: NM Class D Driver’s License	
Education Minimum Requirements: BA	
Preferred Skills, Experience and Attitude: Knowledge of museum operations and passionate about museum’s mission. Excellent organizational skills, attention to detail, excellent interpersonal communication, good research skills, self-starter, excellent writer; team player;	