



FY12-13 Final Report
Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund
Science Museum of Minnesota



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The Science Museum of Minnesota is pleased for this opportunity to submit a final narrative report of the work we've done with the generous allocation of \$1,000,000 for fiscal years 2012 and 2013 from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund of the Minnesota Legacy Amendment.

American Indian Programming

We Move and We Stay exhibition

During the first year of the biennium, we finished payment for the Bishop Henry Whipple collection, consisting of local and regional American Indian artifacts from the 1850s. In the second year of this project, we developed a small exhibition showcasing objects from the Whipple collection, as well as pieces from our own collection and modern objects used by individuals in Ojibwe and Dakota communities. The exhibition, titled *We Move and We Stay*, tells of generations of Dakota and Ojibwe people who have made their home in Minnesota, as well as traditions, change, and persistence within these communities. At the Science Museum, we are aware that interpretations of these artifacts and the stories they tell of Minnesota's past are not ours alone. Museum staff collaborated with our American Indian Advisory Council and other community members to create the exhibition, and we are grateful for their advice and support on this project.

One of our goals for this project is to increase audience understanding of the American Indian ethnology represented in the exhibition. In this pilot exhibition, we created several feedback stations for visitors to leave their comments, thoughts and questions. *We Move and We Stay* invites visitors to contribute to shaping future developments of the project by asking what type of artifacts they would like to see, or ask particular questions about the cultural heritage represented. We hope this detailed level of visitor feedback will not only contribute to our evaluation efforts, but help us respond to visitor interest levels and answer the frequently asked questions in future iterations of the exhibition. Some of the 5,000 comments we have already received include, "It's good to have input. Very rarely do we get to have a say in Museum decisions! Thank you!"; "Native pride!!! Pine Ridge"; and "Boozhoo" (hello in Ojibwe). These comments represent a fraction of the exhibition's attendance in the months since its opening. We look forward to continuing this important work in the next biennium, and to developing and expanding *We Move and We Stay* based on visitor feedback.



Culture is...

- ...our blueprint to life
- ...different
- ...what religion you are
- ...where our ancestors lived
- ...one tree, many leaves
- ...how we choose to live together
- ...set of often invisible rules
- ...dying
- ...being who you are
- ...Chippewa

School Services

Our second project enhances the programs and value we offer to schools and teachers. The first year of the biennium was a planning year to evaluate our field trip program, survey teachers for their feedback, and identify places of improvement. During FY13, we implemented improvements based on our findings; our improvements centered around three points – value, access and ease. In this period, we increased our field trip attendance by 31%.

To justify the time out of the classroom, teachers found value in the museum connecting their field trip to classroom content. We created package programs, *The Big Weather Experience* and *The Real Dino Experience*, which connect museum programming to Minnesota science standards around weather and paleontology. At *The Big Weather Experience*, 3rd-8th grade students saw the Omnitheater film *Tornado Alley*, had dedicated time in our expanded weather exhibits, and saw *Storms on Stage*, a theater production specifically created to address Minnesota education standards around weather. During *The Big Weather Experience*, 79% of teachers said that they saw their students learn about air and weather in ways that supported the Minnesota science standards. For K-2nd grade students, *The Real Dino Experience* highlights the museum's extensive collection of authentic dinosaur fossils, including new programming such as *Dinosaur Dentist*, a classroom program on dinosaur and modern reptile teeth, and *Fossil Feud*, a live stage show about dinosaurs and fossils. One teacher said, "*Dino Dentist* went along with standards they are working on like sorting, grouping and properties... The auditorium show [*Fossil Feud*] was great because of the visuals, preloading the vocabulary. The presenter was very likeable and did a great job engaging the kids. They learned something from it and they were definitely engaged."



To improve access and ease, teacher feedback suggested streamlining the process to book a field trip. Through packaged field trip content, online reservations and short how-to videos, we made it easier for busy educators to book a field trip. Transportation costs are an additional barrier to planning field trips. We expanded and streamlined the process for receiving a bus subsidy, making it easier and more accessible for schools across Minnesota. Funded by private donors, the Education Opportunity Fund provides a bus subsidy to schools more than 100 miles away from the museum or that have over 50% of their student population eligible for free or reduced lunch. This fund leverages Legacy dollars by expanding access opportunities for schools that may not be able to attend the museum due to distance or cost. We look forward to continuing our work with schools in the next biennium and reaching more students in all regions of Minnesota.

Suitcase Science



**Koochiching County Historical Museum
International Falls, Minnesota**



**Science Museum of Minnesota
St. Paul, Minnesota**

Our final project, Suitcase Science, is a live theater show that has been performed at the Science Museum and across the state of Minnesota. The show was developed through citizen engagement at workshops across the state; people brought in significant objects and shared stories with museum staff about the object's history and importance. The museum's staff researched the science and cultural heritage of the objects, and created a theater show featuring the objects. Our outcomes for this project are to create an engaging show that generated interest and enjoyment from its audience while also fostering an audience connection to the cultural heritage represented by the objects.

Suitcase Science was performed daily at the Science Museum, resulting in 755 performances in the last year. During the FY12-13 biennium, Suitcase Science performed shows at festivals, museums, historical societies, and other events in Rochester, Rosemount, Shakopee, International Falls, Bemidji, Duluth, Moorhead, St. Cloud, Mankato, and Laverne. 85% of audience members said they wanted to learn more about the science behind their own objects after seeing the show. Overall, over 45,000 people saw Suitcase Science during the last biennium. Suitcase Science performances ended at the close of fiscal 2013, and we are grateful for the opportunity to tell the stories of Minnesotans across the state.

We're proud of the work we have completed so far with the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund of the Legacy Amendment funds and are looking forward to continuing it. The museum is happy to answer any additional questions you have about this work and would be thrilled to show you in person what is discussed in this report. Please contact Brenda Raney directly for any additional information.

