

THE PRIDE OF ALASKA

Protecting the Past for Alaska's Future

ALASKA STATE MUSEUM EXPANSION PROJECT



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WHAT'S AT STAKE

**HISTORY OF THE ALASKA STATE MUSEUM,
THE STATE LIBRARY
AND THE STATE ARCHIVES**

SERVICES PROVIDED

THE VISION





WHAT'S AT STAKE

Alaska's political records, ethnography, visual arts, its mining, religious, and natural history, and much more, are to be found in the collections held by the Division of Libraries, Archives & Museums—a priceless heritage for the people of Alaska. These collections are currently held in under-sized, outmoded, or failing facilities.

The Alaska State Museum collection has grown from 5,600 to 27,000 objects since 1967. The building has been over capacity since the mid-1980s. A storage annex next to the museum houses the overflow collection.

The Alaska State Historical Collection preserves over 163,000 rare books, maps, and historical photographs. The library's shelves, holding over 3,500 linear feet of document and manuscript files, are now at 75% capacity only four years after adding compact shelving in the last available space.

For document collections, the efficient capacity is 75% of shelving space. After that, considerable labor is required to shift the collections in order to accommodate more documents.



The State Archives opened with several thousand cubic feet of records; it now houses 23,500 cubic feet of records and archival materials and is at 98% capacity. State Archives is an inefficient facility in a failing building.



*The museum
annex
building*





Construction of the Territorial Capitol was completed in 1931. Alaska's collections of books, manuscripts, natural history, and cultural artifacts were displayed on the second floor until the new Alaska State Museum was completed in 1967.

HISTORY OF THE ALASKA STATE MUSEUM, THE STATE LIBRARY AND THE STATE ARCHIVES

The U.S. Congress established the Alaska Historical Library and Museum on June 6, 1900. The purpose of the museum and library was to collect, preserve, and exhibit objects and written materials for the Territory of Alaska.

Initially, the museum collection was stored in wherever space could be found, with no provision made for public access. In 1920, the collection of the Alaska Historical Museum was made available to the public in the Arctic Brotherhood Building in Juneau. Three years later, the Territory assumed responsibility for museum operations. The museum continued to acquire and display important historical objects, and it also developed research and tour guide programs, and educational activities.

The museum moved into a portion of the second floor of the State Capitol building shortly after it opened in 1931. It remained there until 1968, when it moved into the current Alaska State Museum facility. The citizens of Juneau financed the building primarily through a one percent sales tax to honor the centennial of Alaska's purchase. The City of Juneau turned over ownership and governance of the museum to the State of Alaska after the January 7, 1968, ribbon cutting ceremony.

The state separated the Historical Library from the museum in 1968 and combined it with the recently created Alaska State Library. In 1974 the State Library moved into the new State Office Building. The legislature created the State Archives in 1970 and it moved into its newly constructed building in 1975. In 1988 the Governor placed State Archives in the Division of Libraries. The Commissioner of Education placed State Museums in the same division in 1991 and renamed it the Division of Libraries, Archives & Museums.

SERVICES PROVIDED

The **Alaska State Library** provides informational services and Alaskan resources to state agency personnel, the legislature, and the public. It promotes the development of local library resources through training, consulting, and grant funding. The State Library also acts as the state documents depository for materials published by State agencies and coordinates the statewide interlibrary loan program.



Archives and Records Management Services identifies, administers, preserves, and makes available state and territorial records of permanent value. The staff provides reference and research services to state personnel and the general public. The records management section assists state agencies in records retention scheduling and files management. The micrographics section provides microfilming services to state agencies.



The Alaska State Museum is the official repository of Alaska's history. It is charged with the acquisition, documentation, preservation, security, and interpretation of Alaskan historical and ethnographic material. The museum shares Alaska's heritage with other museums and historical societies through the exchange of information, cooperative research projects, distribution of educational materials, and by administering statewide grants.

THE VISION

School children gather in the multi-media auditorium to observe a team of Inupiat boat builders from Kotzebue construct an umiaq, a whaling boat made of driftwood, sinew, and walrus hide. Behind the team a stream of images—historical photographs and contemporary videos—appear on multiple screens.



In the atrium a group of volunteers set tables for an evening reception to be held in honor of a visiting foreign dignitary. Taking a break, several of the volunteers wander through the Alaska art gallery that displays works ranging from the earliest sketches by European explorers to modern expressions of Alaska Native art.

At the entrance, fifty tourists walk off their bus at the reception area designed to accommodate large vehicles. An interpretive guide greets the arrivals and escorts them into an orientation vestibule.

On the floor above, a researcher inspects a richly carved bentwood box he found on shelving holding the museum's collection of unidentified Pacific Northwest artifacts. He recognizes it from a sketch of what he believes is the identical artifact, an illustration he found in a rare book held by the Alaska Historical Library located on the same floor. Turning to a nearby computer station, he enters a description of the bentwood box into a search program and quickly finds a cross-reference to a similar object mentioned in a 70-year-old contested estate, legal files that are in the Alaska Court System records just down the hall in Archives. The researcher quickly succeeds in positively identifying the object and reconstructing its provenance.

On the same floor, conservators tackle the difficult task of restoring a priceless Russian Orthodox icon, a task made safer and easier in a spacious, modern, and properly ventilated laboratory.

The security system is efficient—one screening area at the entrance to the research area, a computer program that tracks the location of every record and object in the consolidated collections, and unobtrusive detection devices. The tight controls result in a major improvement for researchers—the exact location of every object and document can now be determined almost instantly.

As the visitors re-board their bus, their parting comments to the guide are similar to those he has heard many times before: praise for a facility that is as impressive as it is intimate and accessible.



Contact Information

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For more information, see the accompanying inserts entitled: *Purpose and Need*, *Collections in Crisis*, *Funding Request*, *Project Phases*, and *The Logic of Consolidation*

Purpose & Need

The Friends of the Alaska State Museum initiated the effort to raise funds for the expansion of the Alaska State Museum.

Museums Alaska and the Alaska Historical Society, statewide organizations, also support this expansion.

In 2002, the state acquired a 1.8 acre vacant lot contiguous to the museum campus in downtown Juneau with a \$1.5 million appropriation from the Alaska Legislature.

The plan is to consolidate the collections of the Division of Libraries, Archives & Museums in one building, a modern facility designed to properly showcase Alaska's past and protect its heritage for the future.



The new museum, archives, and library would provide a cornerstone building in the heart of the Capital City. The facility is envisioned as a dynamic public cultural center and major research institution for the State of Alaska.

The collections presently held in Juneau by the Alaska State Library, the Alaska State Archives, and the Alaska State Museum are located at three different sites, and housed in buildings that are either insufficient in size, lack proper security, or are structurally deficient—or all three.

The collections share similar needs: all must be stored under controlled environmental conditions, there must be adequate storage capacity to meet present and future needs, and the space has to be sufficiently secure to protect the collections without unduly restricting access.

For insurance purposes the appraised value of the museum and library collections is over \$80 million.

The expanded museum would:

- **Preserve and protect, in one building, the permanent collections held by the Division of Libraries, Archives & Museums**
- **Create, in the heart of the Capital City, new indoor space suitable for public, private, and state functions**
- **Provide educational opportunities for students**
- **Aid researchers by improving access to now separated records, photographs, and artifacts**
- **Provide conditions for increasing revenues during the tourist season**
- **Enhance management efficiencies**
- **Vacate valuable office space within the State Office Building**



Collections in Crisis



The Alaska State Historical Library

The huge volume of Alaska-Juneau Gold Mine records donated several years ago to the Alaska Historical Library required adding compact shelving to the library's last available space in the Alaska State Office Building. The library is now at 75% capacity, the efficient limit for shelving. After that, much labor is required to accommodate additional collections.

The Alaska State Archives

The Alaska Archives building holds the permanent records of the Territory and State of Alaska. The building suffers serious structural flaws, and water leaks are frequent. The building is also well over capacity: 98% of all storage areas are full.



The Alaska State Museum

Most of the collections and artifacts held by the Alaska State Museum are stored on shelving in the basement of the facility. Ideally, such storage areas should be located above, not below, a museum's main plumbing fixtures.



Funding Request

FY 2005: \$1.3 million

In 2002, the legislature appropriated \$1.5 million that was used to purchase a nearly two acre vacant lot contiguous to the Alaska State Museum property.

A 100,000 square-foot expansion of the present 28,000 square-foot museum building will meet the estimated space requirements of the consolidated collections of the Division of Libraries, Archives & Museums for at least 25 years. The combined property footprint is of sufficient size to accommodate all parking needs.

The project cost for this type of public facility is in the range of \$350 per square-foot. With parking, the expansion is estimated to cost \$39 million.

It is anticipated that funding will be acquired through federal, state, and local governments; private and public foundations; and individual donations and bequests.

The \$1.3 million request for fiscal year 2005 would be used to hire an architectural firm, which would be responsible for producing a conceptual design, an architectural design, engineering plans, and, finally, a construction bid package.

Developing a conceptual design would include a scoping process to determine architectural and layout characteristics expected by the public, private businesses, public officials, educators, researchers, and other users of the combined facilities.



Project Phases

Phase I

Land acquisition. Accomplished in 2003.

Purchased from the Alaska Land and Pier Co., the 1.8 acre lot is adjacent to and behind the Alaska State Museum.

Phase II

Planning and design: 2004-05 (FY05)

The Alaska Department of Education will hire an architectural firm following a competitive process. The first task will be to involve various user groups to determine design elements for a building that will accommodate the private, public, research, and educational uses of a consolidated library, archives, and museum.

This phase will culminate in a biddable construction package.

Phase III

Acquisition of funding: FY05 and FY06

The initial stage of Phase II will produce a conceptual design, a construction cost estimate, and sufficient information to begin raising funds. A fundraising drive will include the submission of grant applications to private and public foundations; funding requests to federal, state, and local governments; and solicitations of private contributions.

Phase IV

Construction: 2005 – 2008

Site preparation can begin as soon as funding is acquired. Construction could begin as early as 2006.

Grand Opening

2008



The Logic of Consolidation

The Division of Libraries, Archives & Museums provides services to state agencies, the citizens of Alaska, and visitors to the state.

A facility expansion of 100,000 square feet will accommodate the estimated growth of the consolidated collections for the next 25 years.

The collections require similar storage facilities; management of the collections also requires similar staffing. Security arrangements would be shared and consolidation would greatly improve access to the collections.

- **Ninety percent of the museum's collection is stored in the basement of the present building, or in a nearby annex.**
- **The State Archive Building is failing and is at 98% capacity.**
- **The State Library is at its efficient capacity.**
- **Security for all collections is inadequate.**
- **Improve access for researchers to now separated records, photographs, and artifacts.**
- **Increase revenues during the tourist season.**

