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**ANNUAL
MEETING
2026**

APRIL 19-22, 2026



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Sara W, Museum Executive Director

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WELCOME TO THE TAM 2026 ANNUAL MEETING

Welcome to McAllen and the Rio Grande Valley for TAM 2026—Stronger Together: Celebrating Community Stories.

This year, we gather in a region defined by connection: where cities, cultures, histories, and stories meet. Throughout this conference, we will move between McAllen, Edinburg, and Brownsville, experiencing firsthand the richness and diversity of the Valley. Just as important, we are here because communities across the entire Rio Grande Valley came together to make this possible.

Our Local Host Committee, with representation and support from cities and institutions across the region, has shown up at every turn with generosity, creativity, and deep pride in their home. This conference is a true reflection of collective effort.

Our theme, Stronger Together: Celebrating Community Stories, feels especially fitting here. Museums in this region preserve stories of borderlands, migration, resilience, land, family, art, and innovation. They remind us that museums are not just buildings—they are stewards of lived experience and community identity. As we gather, learn, and explore, may we consider how our own institutions can strengthen the communities we serve and amplify the stories that matter most.

On behalf of the Texas Association of Museums and the TAM Council, thank you for being here. Thank you for traveling to the southernmost tip of our state. Thank you for believing in the power of museums to connect us.

We are honored to be in the Rio Grande Valley with you and we cannot wait to celebrate, collaborate, and grow stronger together.

Cheers,

Brittany Petrilli

Brittany Petrilli
Executive Director
Texas Association of Museums



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TAM MISSION + VISION



TAM MISSION

The Texas Association of Museums strengthens the Texas museum community through collaborations, connections, professional development, and advocacy.



TAM VISION

TAM serves our museum community by nurturing and training museum leaders, developing and celebrating the field, and voicing the public worth of museums.

TAM CORE VALUES



WE EDUCATE OUR MEMBERS AS TO BEST PRACTICES IN THE FIELD.



WE PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR MEMBERS TO CONNECT AND LEARN FROM EACH OTHER.



WE EMPOWER OUR MEMBERS TO BECOME LEADERS IN THE FIELD.



WE STRENGTHEN TEXAS MUSEUMS.



WE RECOGNIZE EXCELLENCE.



WE ADVOCATE FOR THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF MUSEUMS.



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📍 1900 W. Nolana Avenue
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SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

START & END TIMES	EVENT	SESSION	LOCATION
SUNDAY, APRIL 19, 2026			
10:00 AM - 4:00 PM	Relic Wranglers at the Weslaco Museum		
6:00 PM - 9:00 PM	Opening Reception at Museum of South Texas History		
MONDAY, APRIL 20, 2026			
8:00 AM - 4:00 PM	Conference Registration		
8:00 AM - 9:00 AM	Breakfast with Exhibitors		Exhibit Hall A
8:30 AM - 8:45 AM	Opening Remarks		Exhibit Hall A
8:45 AM - 9:30 AM	Breakfast Keynote	A Conversation with the Future Elizabeth Merritt The American Alliance of Museums	Exhibit Hall A
9:30 AM - 9:45 AM	Break		
9:45 AM - 10:45 AM	Concurrent Sessions	Collaborating with Texas Tribes	Meeting Room 101 AB
		Funding Loss: Facing the Challenges with Creative Alternatives	Meeting Room 102 A
		Destination RGV - Rural Tourism, Culture, and Nature as Economic Powerhouse	Meeting Room 103 CD
		From Community to Gallery: Co-Curating LGBTQ+ History with Badge of Pride	Meeting Room 102 BC
10:45 AM - 11:00 AM	Break		
11:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Concurrent Sessions	Career Transitions and Challenges: Looking Back/ Moving Forward	Meeting Room 101 AB
		The MELT & HSHAG Crossover Episode	Meeting Room 101 C
		Community Museums and University Partnerships	Meeting Room 102 A
		Community, Culture and Collaboration in Action in Brownsville	Meeting Room 102 BC
12:00 PM - 12:15 PM	Lunch Buffet		Exhibit Hall A
12:15 PM - 1:00 PM	Keynote	Serving the Whole Community: A New Role for Museums Adam Rozan Smithsonian's National Museum of American History	Exhibit Hall A
1:00 PM - 1:15 PM	Break		
1:15 PM - 2:15 PM	Concurrent Sessions	Evolving Museums: Navigating Societal Shifts for a Resilient Future with the TAM Executive Leaders Affinity Group	Meeting Room 101 AB
		Public Programs That Wow: Engaging Audiences Where They Are	Meeting Room 103 CD
		Measuring What Matters: Using COVES Data to Build Social Connectedness and Empathy in Museum Visitors	Meeting Room 102 BC
2:15 PM - 2:30 PM	Break		


START & END TIMES	EVENT	SESSION	LOCATION
2:30 PM - 3:30 PM	Concurrent Sessions	Museum Hot Seat featuring Adam Rozan	Meeting Room 101 AB
		From Moonshots to Milestones: Building Creative Foundations with Workflows and Kanban	Meeting Room 103 CD
		Big Impact, Small Budget: Creating In-House Exhibits with Limited Resources	Meeting Room 102 A
2:30 PM - 3:00 PM	Burst Sessions	Expanding Museum Outreach Through Sustainable Offsite Engagement	Meeting Room 102 BC
3:00 PM - 3:30 PM		Salt of the Earth: Honoring the Hidden Backbone of Our Museums	Meeting Room 102 BC
3:30 PM - 4:30 PM	Open Houses	Museum Advocacy Open House	Meeting Room 101 C
3:30 PM - 5:00 PM		Affinity Group Information Stations	Exhibit Hall A
		Exhibitor Reception	Exhibit Hall A
5:00 PM - 6:00 PM	Directors & CEOs Reception (Invite Only) at the International Museum of Art & Science, co-hosted by the McAllen Heritage Center		
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM	Evening Event at International Museum of Art & Science (IMAS)		
TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 2026			
8:00 AM - 3:30 AM	Conference Registration		
8:00 AM - 9:00 AM	Breakfast with Exhibitors		Exhibit Hall A
8:30 AM - 10:00 AM	TAM Annual Business Meeting and Awards	Award Winners Join Us on Stage for Pictures	Exhibit Hall A
10:00 AM - 10:30 AM	Networking Break		
10:30 AM - 11:30 AM	Concurrent Sessions	Finding Your Balance: Navigating Earned vs Contributed Revenue	Meeting Room 101 AB
		Ancient Landscapes of South Texas: Public Heritage Tourism & Community Engagement	Meeting Room 102 A
		Small Town, 956	Meeting Room 103 CD
		Arsenic, Pharmaceuticals, and Mold, Oh My!: Hazards in Collections	Meeting Room 102 BC
11:30 AM - 11:45 AM	Networking & Exhibitor Break		
11:45 AM - 12:00 PM	Lunch Buffet		Exhibit Hall A
12:00 PM - 12:45 PM	Lunch Keynote	Ponte Trucha: Crafting a Narrative for La Frontera from La Frontera Josue Ramirez Trucha	Exhibit Hall A
12:45 PM - 1:00 PM	Break		
1:15 PM - 2:15 PM	Concurrent Sessions	Small Tools, Big Access: DIY Exhibits and Mobile Apps in Practice	Meeting Room 102 A
		Stronger Together: From Policy to Practice in Collection Management	Meeting Room 102 BC
		Sealing the Past, Strengthening the Future: Museums & Sustainable Community Partnerships	Meeting Room 101 AB
		Invitation to Relax, Recharge, and Refocus with the IDEA Affinity Group	Meeting Room 103 CD

START & END TIMES	EVENT	SESSION	LOCATION
2:00 PM - 2:15 PM	Break		
2:15 PM - 3:15 PM	Concurrent Sessions	Too Many Options! Reflections on Collections Management Systems with the Collections Managers Committee Affinity Group	Meeting Room 101 AB
		ConnectTEENing with Your Community: Building Mutually Beneficial Teen Volunteer Programs	Meeting Room 103 CD
		Interpretive Planning at Small & Medium Sized Historic House Museums	Meeting Room 102 A
2:15 PM - 2:45 PM	Burst Sessions	History in the Shadows: Incorporating Dark Tourism at Historic Sites	Meeting Room 102 BC
2:45 PM - 3:15 PM		Markers, Plaques, and Landmarks: How Historic Designations are Helping Save the Rio Grande Valley's Cultural Heritage	Meeting Room 102 BC
3:30 PM - 4:30 PM	Academic Showcase & Museum Activations		Exhibit Hall B
5:00 PM - 6:00 PM	Travel to Brownsville		
6:00 PM - 8:30 PM	Evening Event - Discover Brownsville		
8:30 PM - 9:30 PM	Travel Back to McAllen		

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 2026			
	Self Guided Tour	Tour the RGV using TAM's guide of the cultural institutions in the region	

TAM 2026 DIGITAL PROGRAM AND SCHEDULE

USE THE QR CODE TO ACCESS
THE TAM DIGITAL PROGRAM FOR
THE MOST UP-TO-DATE SCHEDULE.





SPEND YOUR WEDNESDAY EXPLORING THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY AT YOUR OWN PACE! FROM CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS TO BELOVED LOCAL FAVORITES, THERE'S SO MUCH TO DISCOVER ACROSS THE REGION. SCAN THE QR CODE FOR A CURATED GUIDE!



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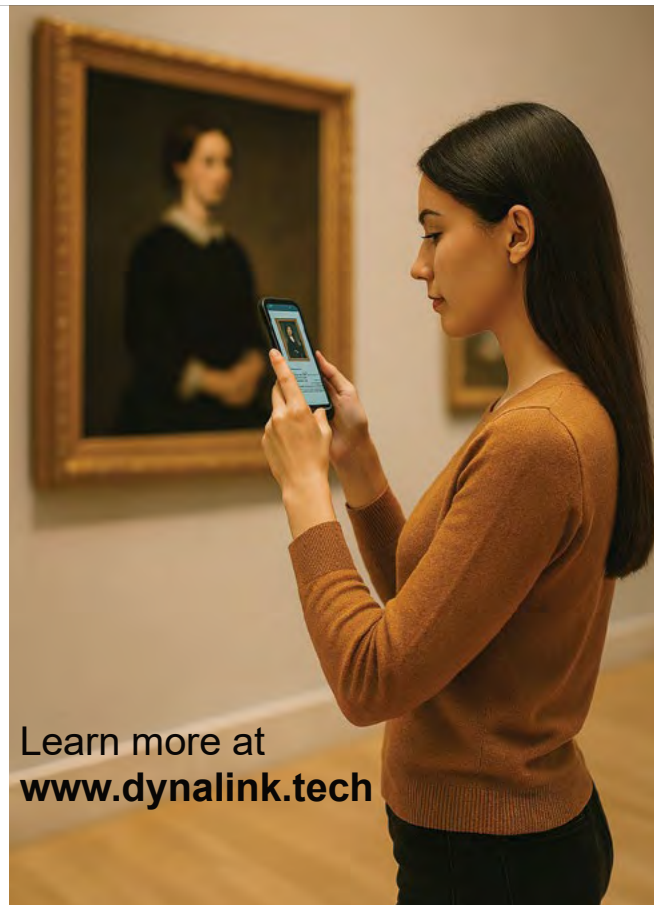
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HOST CONFERENCE CENTER



McAllen Convention Center
700 Convention Center Blvd
McAllen, TX 78501

HOST MUSEUMS AND ASSOCIATIONS



Museum of South Texas History
200 N Closser Blvd, Edinburg, TX 78541,
<https://mosthistory.org>



International Museum of Art & Science
1900 W Nolana Ave, McAllen, TX 78504
<https://theimasonline.org>



Brownsville Historical Association
1325 E Washington St, Brownsville, TX 78520
www.brownsvillehistory.org

I KNOW A PLACE TO MAKE HISTORY. *McAllen, TX*

WELCOME TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF MUSEUMS!



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HOST CITY WELCOME

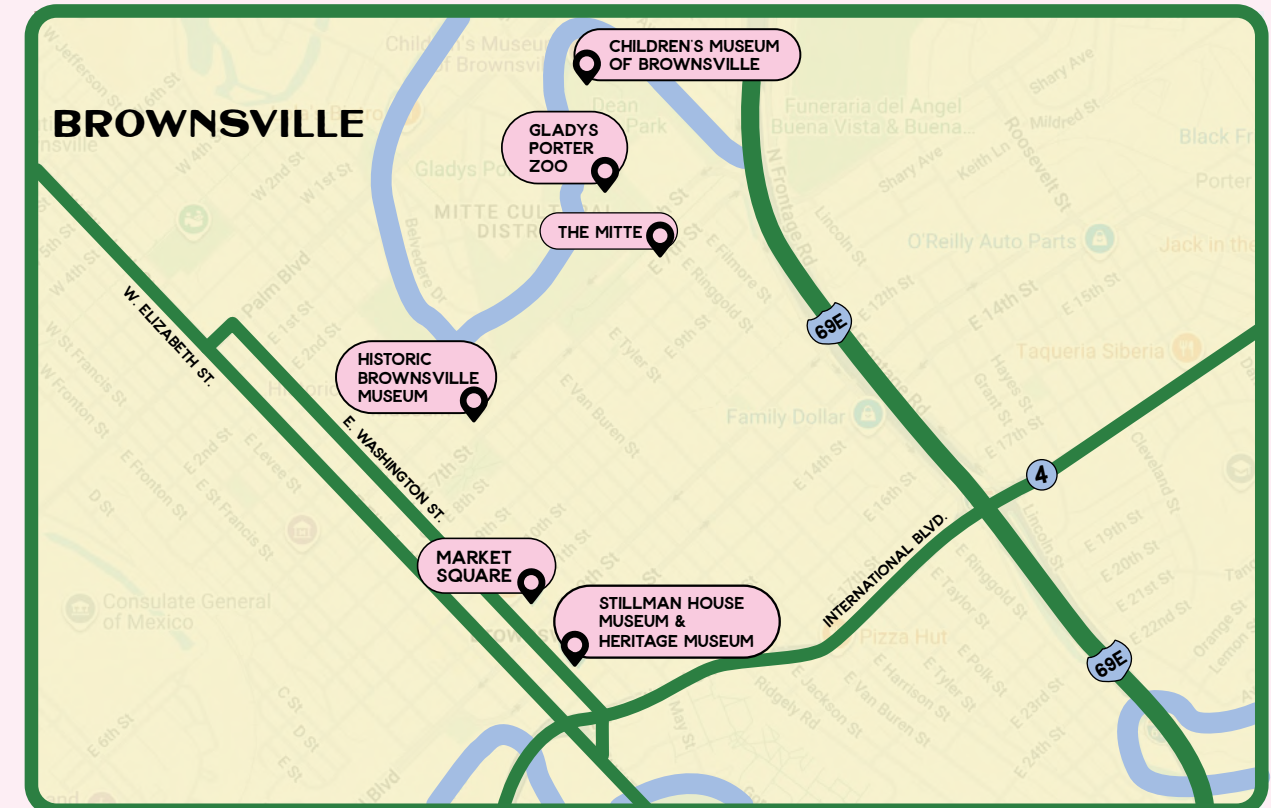
WELCOME TO MCALLEN, where hospitality isn't a slogan—it's a way of life. No other destination welcomes visitors quite the way we do: immediately, personally, and like family. From the moment you arrive, you're not just attending a conference; you're becoming part of a community that genuinely cares about your experience and the time you spend with us.

McAllen is a city shaped by culture, creativity, and connection. Our community reflects a rich blend of traditions, stories, and perspectives, and we take great pride in sharing that with our visitors. Every day, we strive to show the best of who we are—our warmth, our diversity, and our commitment to bringing people together in meaningful ways.

As professionals dedicated to preserving history, inspiring curiosity, and strengthening communities through museums, we believe you'll find a natural connection here. McAllen values storytelling, cultural stewardship, and the power of shared experiences—principles that align closely with the important work you do.

We are honored to welcome the Texas Association of Museums and hope your time in McAllen is both inspiring and memorable. Thank you for joining us, and welcome to a city where you're not just a guest—you're part of the family.

HOST CITY MAP



PARKING & TRANSPORTATION

MCALLEN CONVENTION CENTER LAYOUT MAP

SUNDAY, APRIL 19, 2026 – CONFERENCE REGISTRATION AND EVENING OPENING RECEPTION

MUSEUM OF SOUTH TEXAS HISTORY | 200 N Closner Blvd, Edinburg, TX 78541

- Transportation will be provided from the McAllen Convention Center via rotating buses. This service is scheduled from 5:30 pm to 9:30 pm.
 - Please meet the shuttle outside the south entrance of the McAllen Convention Center at Oval Park.
- Guests who choose to drive themselves may park for free at the neighboring lot. Located directly off Kuhn Street, look for the "VISITOR PARKING ONLY" sign at the lot entrance. Parking is limited.

MONDAY, APRIL 20 – TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 2026 – CONFERENCE HOTEL & DAYTIME PROGRAMMING

MCALLEN CONVENTION CENTER | 700 Convention Center Blvd, McAllen, TX 78501

- Guests staying at the conference hotels are encouraged to walk to the venue. Guests who choose to drive themselves may park for free in the adjacent lots on Houston Avenue

MONDAY, APRIL 20, 2026 – EVENING EVENT

INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM OF ART AND SCIENCE | 1900 W Nolana Ave, McAllen, TX 78504

- Transportation will be provided from the McAllen Convention Center via rotating buses. This service is scheduled from 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm.
 - Please meet the shuttle outside the south entrance of the McAllen Convention Center at Oval Park.
- Guests who choose to drive themselves may park for free in the museum parking lot. Please enter the lots off of North Bicentennial Drive. There is no entrance to the museum parking lot from Bicentennial Boulevard.

TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 2026 – EVENING EVENT

MARKET SQUARE, BROWNSVILLE | Market Square St, Brownsville, TX 78520

- Transportation will be provided from the McAllen Convention Center via rotating buses. Buses will start loading at 4:45pm and the last bus will depart for Brownsville at 5:30pm. There will be buses returning to McAllen beginning at 7:30pm until the end of the event. Please visit the registration desk for more details.
 - Please meet the shuttle outside the south entrance of the McAllen Convention Center at Oval Park.
- Guests who choose to drive themselves can find street parking available near Market Square or at these parking garages (parking fees may apply).
 - La Plaza Parking Garage | 1400 E Adams St, Brownsville, TX 78520
 - 1400 E Adams St Garage | 698 E 14th St, Brownsville, TX 78520



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LOCAL HOST COMMITTEE

CO-CHAIR: ANN FORTESCUE, INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM OF ART & SCIENCE
CO-CHAIR: LEIGH WOOLRIDGE, VISIT MCALLEN/MCALLEN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Aleida Garcia, *Museums of San Benito*
 Aubrey Nielsen, *Brownsville Historical Association*
 Crystal Rodríguez, *Weslaco Museum*
 Cynthia Lopez, *Mission Historical Museum*
 Dalia (Dolly) Garcia, *Gelman Stained Glass Museum*
 Daniella Lopez Valdez, *Mitte Cultural District*
 Debbie Gomez, *Museum of South Texas History*
 Elva Cerda, *McAllen Heritage Center*
 Felipe Pena, *Brownsville Children's Museum*
 Francisco Guajardo, *Museum of South Texas History*
 Gina Otvos, *South Texas College*
 Irma Murray, *McAllen Heritage Center*
 Isabel Saucedo, *Harlingen Arts & Heritage Museum*

Jeff Ward, Ph.D., *College of Fine Arts/UTRGV*
 Jenarae Bautista, *Museum of South Texas History*
 Lynn Beeching, *Retired - Museum of South Texas History*
 Mary Garza, *International Museum of Art & Science*
 Melissa Peña, *Museum of South Texas History*
 Melissa Terry, *South Texas College*
 Pamela Morales de Hendricks, *Texas Tropical Trail*
 Roseann Bacha Garza, *CHAPS/UTRGV*
 Sandy Pollock, *Museum of South Texas History*
 Shan Rankin, *Retired - Museum of South Texas History*
 Tara Putegnat, *Brownsville Historical Association*
 Trinidad Gonzalez, *South Texas College*

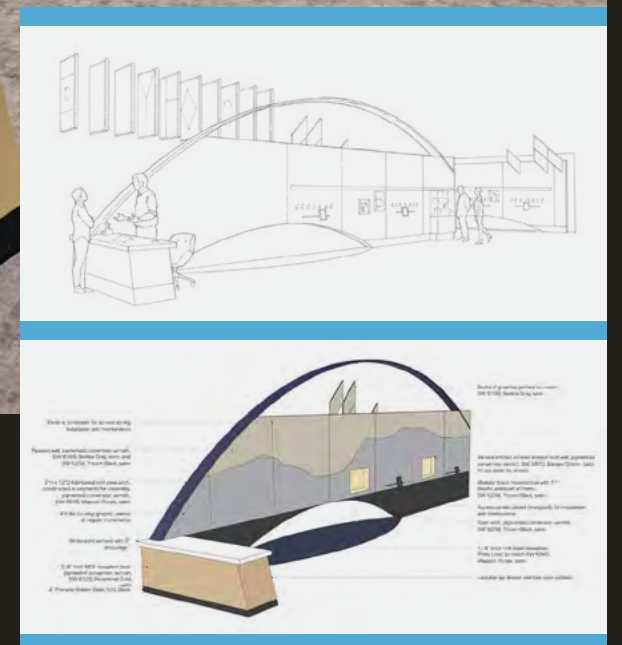
ANNUAL MEETING PROGRAM COMMITTEE

CO - CHAIR: DR. EMILY WILKINSON, MUSEUM OF THE BIG BEND
CO - CHAIR: CYNTHIA LOPEZ, MISSION HISTORICAL MUSEUM

Alysha Donaho, *Texas Parks and Wildlife, Fort Parker State Park*
 Amanda Brown, *Mansfield Historical Museum*
 Aubrey Nielsen, *Brownsville Historical Association*
 Debbie Gomez, *Museum of South Texas History*
 Dinora Harris, *Michelson Museum of Art*
 Gina Otvos, *South Texas College*
 Helen Howell-Graves, *Taylor Museum of Waco and McLennan County History*
 Jenarae Bautista, *Museum of South Texas History*
 Kali Ellis, *San Jacinto Museum and Battlefield Association*
 Kate Ryther, *Houston Fire Museum*
 KayLyn Bean, *Mabee Regional Heritage Center*
 Kayte Ricketts, *Bell County Museum*
 Kendal Smith Lake, *The Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth*
 Kheli Willetts, *Dira Professional Development*
 Latricia Davis, *Dallas Holocaust and Human Rights Museum*
 Liz Jackson, *Briscoe Western Art Museum*

Lindsey Maestri, *Louise Hopkins Underwood Center for the Arts*
 Michael Ables, *Texas Maritime Museum*
 Paula Summerly, *University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston*
 Rachel Hooper, *Lonestar Flight Museum*
 Rachel Smith, *City of Austin*
 Rachael Nadeau Johnson, *Dr Pepper Museum*
 Rayanna Hoeft, *Slaton Harvey House*
 Sandy Pollock, *Museum of South Texas History*
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FREE ADMISSION FOR TAM ATTENDEES

As part of our commitment to promoting the arts and culture of the Rio Grande Valley, TAM is pleased to announce that the following participating institutions will offer conference attendees free admission throughout the week of the conference (April 18 - April 24). To take advantage of this opportunity, simply show your conference badge at participating museums to receive free admission. We would like to thank our participating museums for their generosity and support of our conference.

PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS:

- Brownsville Children's Museum
- Brownsville Historical Association
- CHAPS/UTRGV
- College of Fine Arts/UTRGV
- Gelman Stained Glass Museum
- Gladys Porter Zoo
- Harlingen Arts & Heritage Museum
- International Museum of Art & Science
- Maria del Pilar Garza Museum
- McAllen Heritage Center
- Mission Historical Museum
- Museo 956
- Museum of South Texas History
- Palo Alto Battlefield National Historic Park
- Ponte Creative Studio & Gallery
- Port Isabel Lighthouse
- Quinta Mazatlan
- San Benito Cultural Arts Department
- Texas Conjunto Music & Hall of Fame Museum
- The Weslaco Museum
- Trucha

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McAllen Heritage Center
McAllen



Museum of South Texas History
Edinburg



Historic Brownsville Museum
Brownsville

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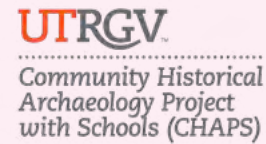
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The Texas America250 Commission is an officially recognized State/Territory Partner of America250.org, a nonpartisan, nonpolitical partner of a federal agency. Together, this partnership jointly commemorates American history and culture in honor of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States of America.



BRISCOE
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ON THE RIVER WALK
SAN ANTONIO, TX

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Jim Vogel (b. 1964) *El Fronterizo*, 2021, Oil on canvas panel. Courtesy of Donald and Denise Elliott

DAY 1 – SUNDAY, APRIL 19, 2026

10:00 AM - 4:00 PM | Relic Wranglers at the Weslaco Museum
The Weslaco Museum

The Relic Wranglers are back in 2026, lending their expertise and energy to support the Weslaco Museum. This dedicated group of collections volunteers from across the TAM community gathers each year to assist a host institution with hands-on collections care projects. This year's effort will focus on the inventorying, cataloging, and photographic documentation of the museum's military collection. Artifacts include historic photographs, paper documents, field artillery objects, and textiles.

6:00 PM - 9:00 PM | Opening Reception and Registration
Museum of South Texas History



OPENING RECEPTION AT MUSEUM OF SOUTH TEXAS HISTORY

The Museum of South Texas History will host a South Texas Fiesta reception to welcome attendees and kick off the conference. Guests will enjoy after-hours access to museum exhibits and Tex-Mex bites, including regional favorites such as tacos, aguas frescas, and pan de campo. Attendees will also get a first look at a special collaborative exhibit featuring signature artifacts from local museums, created just for the conference.




Brownsville
Historical
Association

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Heritage & Cultural Arts**

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DAY 2 – MONDAY, APRIL 20, 2026

8:00 AM - 4:00 PM | Registration | Palm Lobby

8:00 AM - 9:00 AM | Breakfast with Exhibitors | Exhibit Hall A

8:30 AM - 8:45 AM | Opening Remarks | Exhibit Hall A

TAM leadership officially opens the TAM 2026 Annual Meeting programming. Opening remarks will welcome attendees, introduce conference activities, and set the stage for several days of learning, connection, and celebration with the Texas museum community.

8:45 AM - 9:30 AM | Breakfast Keynote | Exhibit Hall A



A CONVERSATION WITH THE FUTURE

Elizabeth Merritt, Vice President for Strategic Foresight and Founding Director of the Center for the Future of Museums at The American Alliance of Museums
Ann Fortescue | Executive Director, International Museum of Art and Science

Sponsored by International Museum of Art and Science

Elizabeth Merritt, Vice President for Strategic Foresight and Founding Director of the Center for the Future of Museums at the American Alliance of Museums, and Ann Fortescue, Executive Director of the International Museum of Art & Science, engage in a lively conversation examining the future of philanthropy, leadership in museums, and safeguards for the nonprofit sector that are addressed in this year's TrendsWatch, the annual AAM publication from the Center for the Future of Museums.

9:30 AM - 9:45 AM | Break

9:45 AM - 10:45 AM | Concurrent Session | Meeting Room 101 AB



COLLABORATING WITH TEXAS TRIBES

Kate Betz, Story + Reason
Evan Windham, Story + Reason

Want to build meaningful relationships with Texas Tribes but not sure where and how to start? This session, based on THC's new workbook "Collaborating with Texas Tribes," offers practical training for anyone seeking to build stronger relationships with Tribal partners and integrate native perspectives into their work engaging communities, developing exhibitions, and caring for collections. Attendees will leave with tools and actionable strategies to implement the workbook's guidance in respectful and meaningful ways.

9:45 AM - 10:45 AM | Concurrent Session | Meeting Room 102 A



FUNDING LOSS: FACING THE CHALLENGES WITH CREATIVE ALTERNATIVES

Taylor Ernst, Louise Hopkins Underwood Center for the Arts
Lindsey Maestri, Louise Hopkins Underwood Center for the Arts

In recent years, we have seen a growing trend of grant funding being cut from the arts at local, state, and national levels. In the summer of 2024, The Louise Hopkins Underwood Center for the Arts (LHUCA), experienced this firsthand as the majority of a city

funded grant supporting its First Friday Art Trail program was cut by city council. The Hotel Occupancy Tax funded grant was to be used to promote tourism, pay artist and musician fees, and provide security for the event which brings in on average 5,000 visitors monthly. In this panel, the Executive Director and Curator of LHUCA will explore details of how they navigated the cuts and engaged their local and national community to gather support. This new-found support ultimately made up for the funding loss in donations and provided a future pathway to supplement the program's budget.

9:45 AM - 10:45 AM | Concurrent Session | Meeting Room 103 CD



DESTINATION RGV - RURAL TOURISM, CULTURE, AND NATURE AS ECONOMIC POWERHOUSE

David Garza, Cameron County Commissioner - Precinct 3
Edward Meza, South Texas Ecotourism Center

Sponsored by Visit Brownsville

There's no place like home! Rural placemaking is a tool for economic development that succeeds when the assets that make our communities special – like history, culture, and the great outdoors – draw visitors who learn what makes living here worthwhile. Creating a thriving recreation economy in a rural community requires creative capital, long-term vision, and (sometimes) unexpected partners. This fireside chat features lessons learned from over 20 years of rural placemaking in Cameron County. We'll learn how museums, economic development corporations, and local government can motivate each other to think expansively, and creatively, about what makes their rural community a destination.

9:45 AM - 10:45 AM | Concurrent Session | Meeting Room 102 BC



FROM COMMUNITY TO GALLERY: CO-CURATING LGBTQ+ HISTORY WITH BADGE OF PRIDE

Jennifer Landry, Irving Archives and Museum
Adrian Cardwell, Badge Of Prider

When museums collaborate with community partners, inclusive history becomes more than representation—it becomes shared authority. This session explores how the Irving Archives and Museum partnered with Badge of Pride to co-create Badge of Pride: From Silence...to Celebration!, a major exhibition centering LGBTQ+ voices. Presenters will unpack the co-curation process, from concept development to content creation, highlighting strategies for elevating lived experience, fostering trust, and navigating risk in politically charged environments. Attendees will gain practical tools for inclusive interpretation, building institutional support, and developing authentic partnerships that deepen representation and strengthen community connections.

10:45 AM - 11:00 AM | Break

11:00 AM 12:00 PM | Concurrent Session | Meeting Room 101 AB



CAREER TRANSITIONS AND CHALLENGES: LOOKING BACK/MOVING FORWARD

Inez Wolins, Texas Historical Commission
Karen Stevenson, Corpus Christi Museum of Science and History
Marsha Hendrix, Ph.D., Texas Historical Commission

Aimed at emerging and mid-level professionals, directors with more than 10-15 years of leadership experience at museums or sites respond to structured questions about their career changes, challenges, and what decisions they have made, and what they wish they might have done differently had they known then what they know now.



11:00 AM 12:00 PM | Concurrent Session | Meeting Room 103 CD



THE MELT & HSHAG CROSSOVER EPISODE

Rachael A. Nadeau Johnson, Dr Pepper Museum
Kayte Ricketts, Bell County Museum
Steve Baird, Wunderlich Farm Museum

Join the Historic Sites and Houses (HSHAG) and Mid-Career & Emerging Leaders of TAM (MELT) Affinity Groups for a dynamic roundtable session focused on the unique challenges and opportunities of working in historic sites and being an emerging museum leader. This interactive discussion provides attendees with a chance to ask questions and share ideas on topics such as preservation, maintenance, operations, programming, and leadership. This session offers a collaborative space to exchange insights, strategies, and solutions with fellow professionals.



11:00 AM 12:00 PM | Concurrent Session | Meeting Room 102 A

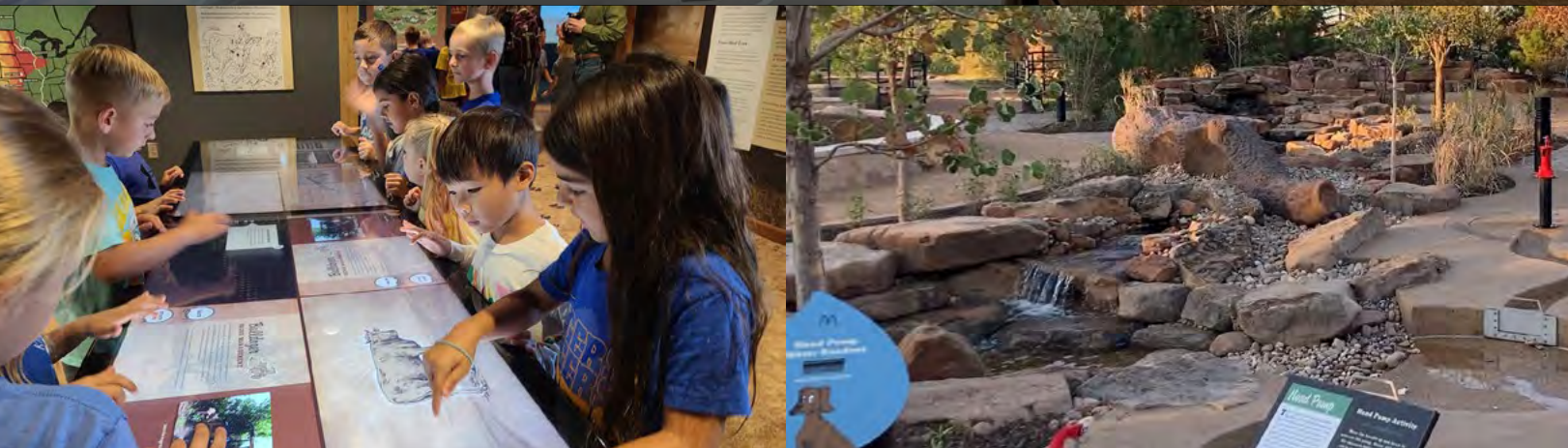


COMMUNITY MUSEUMS AND UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS

Daniel Carey-Whalen, Centennial Museum and Chihuahuan Desert Gardens
Andrés R. Amado, The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley
Dr. Monica Perales, UT San Antonio Institute of Texan Cultures
Joe Avila, Texas Conjunto Music Hall of Fame & Museum
Kathy Pawelek, John E. Conner Museum, Texas A&M University-Kingsville
Stephanie Alvarez, University of Texas Rio Grande Valley & Museo 956 de Derechos Civiles
Patricia Avila, Texas Conjunto Music Hall of Fame & Museum

Partnerships between universities and the communities they serve take many forms. Sometimes they are initiated by the university, while other times the community. Most universities are complex organizations, and sometimes it is unclear who is the collaborator. Is it a professor or a museum? This panel focuses on the challenges and misperceptions of academic museums and the restraints for those working inside universities. Come learn how university museums approach the community for partnerships, yet also how communities, especially community museums, interact with professors and museum professionals within the university. Who knows, maybe your next partnership will be with a university.





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RUBY CITY

DISCOVER WORLD-CLASS CONTEMPORARY ART IN SAN ANTONIO



Photo by Dror Baldinger.

Ruby City, a contemporary art center located in San Antonio, TX, is dedicated to providing a space for the city's thriving creative community to experience works by both local and internationally-acclaimed artists. Envisioned in 2007 by the late collector, philanthropist and artist Linda Pace, Ruby City presents works from the Linda Pace Foundation Collection of more than 1,400 paintings, sculptures, installations & video works. The building, designed by renowned architects, Adjaye Associates, is part of a campus, which also includes Chris Park, a one-acre public green space named in memory of Pace's son, along with Studio, an auxiliary exhibition space which presents curated shows, and programming throughout the year.

RUBY CITY IS FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.

CURRENTLY ON VIEW:

JOEY FAUERSO: BEDROOM PAINTINGS, THRU 5.10.2026
SENSING MEANING, ABSTRACT PAINTING, THRU 8.30.2026
DANIEL RIOS RODRIGUEZ: OPEN THIS WALL, THRU 10.4.2026

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON UPCOMING EVENTS AND PROGRAMS VISIT

RUBYCITY.ORG OPEN THUR TO SUN 10AM—6PM 150 CAMP ST
SAN ANTONIO TEXAS 78204 @RUBYCITY

11:00 AM 12:00 PM | Concurrent Session | Meeting Room 102 BC



COMMUNITY, CULTURE AND COLLABORATION IN ACTION IN BROWNSVILLE

Alan Guard, City of Brownsville
Candace Tangorra Matelic, Ph.D., CTM Professional Services
Daniella Lopez Valdez, Mitte Cultural District and Mitte Cultural Center
Lawrence Lof, UTRGV, Gorgas Science Foundation (GSF)
Tara Putegnat, Brownsville Historical Association

Sponsored by Musework



Engaging community, celebrating culture, and collaborating—this describes how colleagues are navigating dramatic shifts in Brownsville. An art museum closes, a new cultural center and art museum open, two museums expand, and the history enterprise re-invents itself to become more sustainable. Meanwhile, the city develops its historic downtown, preserves its oldest house, and the local university undertakes new arts initiatives.



In this session, TAM participants will learn how museums, cultural organizations, a university, a city, a school system, and funders are learning to trust one another and work together to create a renaissance of arts and culture amid real challenges—collections stewardship issues, labor shortages, competing development interests, funder tensions, and artists seeking attention and support.

Through collaborative efforts and shared objectives, cultural organizations and museums can solve problems, expand audiences, and build a more sustainable future.

12:00 PM - 12:15 PM | Lunch Buffet | Exhibit Hall A

12:15 PM - 1:00 PM | Keynote | Exhibit Hall A

HEADS OR TAILS FUNDRAISER FOLLOWING KEYNOTE



SERVING THE WHOLE COMMUNITY: A NEW ROLE FOR MUSEUMS

Adam Rozan, Director of Audience Research, Community and Strategic Partnerships, Smithsonian's National Museum of American History

Sponsored by Visit McAllen

Museums exist because of their communities, period. In this keynote, Adam Rozan will argue that what defines a museum's value isn't what it holds but how it serves. Drawing on real examples from across the field, he will explore how museums can build connection, foster belonging, and support their communities every day, not just in times of crisis. At a moment when communities are facing overlapping challenges, this talk offers a clear and practical reframing of museums as essential social infrastructure.

1:00 PM - 1:15 PM | Break

1:15 PM - 2:15 PM | Concurrent Session | Meeting Room 101 AB



EVOLVING MUSEUMS: NAVIGATING SOCIETAL SHIFTS FOR A RESILIENT FUTURE WITH THE TAM EXECUTIVE LEADERS AFFINITY GROUP

Emily Wilkinson, Ph.D., Museum of the Big Bend
Seth Hopkins, San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts

Sponsored by Museum Arts, Inc.

Museums are evolving from culture custodians to vibrant catalysts for community progress amid rapid social, tech, and environmental change. This session equips museum leaders to adapt strategically, staying relevant, inclusive, and impactful. Panelists will discuss their experiences adapting to shifts and share actionable strategies to foster innovation while navigating funding constraints and digital divides. Join us to shape a comprehensive, resilient future for museums.

1:15 PM - 2:15 PM | Concurrent Session | Meeting Room 103 CD



**PUBLIC PROGRAMS THAT WOW:
ENGAGING AUDIENCES WHERE THEY ARE**

Andrew Ross, Humanities Texas
Marco Buentello, Humanities Texas

Representatives from Humanities Texas will share public programs in partnership with the Texas Commission on the Arts that made staff say, "Wow, that's so cool!" Drawing on their work awarding grants, circulating exhibitions, and supporting cultural activities statewide, they will highlight successful and innovative approaches to program design, placing special emphasis on programs that meet audiences where they are—whether at small historical organizations or in unconventional exhibition venues.

1:15 PM - 2:15 PM | Concurrent Session | Meeting Room 102 BC



**MEASURING WHAT MATTERS: USING COVES
DATA TO BUILD SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS
AND EMPATHY IN MUSEUM VISITORS**

Molly Noah, Mayborn Museum

How can museums know if they're truly fostering empathy and building social connections? This session will explore how the Mayborn Museum has used the Collaboration for Ongoing Visitor Experience Studies (COVES) to measure visitor experiences beyond satisfaction—focusing on indicators like social connectedness, empathy, and belonging. We'll walk through the Mayborn's COVES journey, from survey design and data collection to interpreting results and making meaningful programmatic changes. Participants will leave with practical strategies they can adapt to their own context, whether they join COVES or create a customized exit survey that reflects their community and mission.

1:00 PM - 1:15 PM | Break

2:30 PM - 3:30 PM | Concurrent Session | Meeting Room 101 AB



**MUSEUM HOT SEAT
FEATURING ADAM ROZAN**

Adam Rozan, Smithsonian's National Museum of American History
TAM Council

Step into the Hot Seat! In this interactive session, participants bring their toughest questions and real-world challenges to the room. A panel of seasoned museum professionals join plenary speaker Adam Rozan to tackle your questions on the spot, sharing insights, strategies, and lessons learned from across the field. Come ready to listen, learn, and jump into the conversation—no question is too big or too small.

2:30 PM - 3:30 PM | Concurrent Session | Meeting Room 103 CD



**FROM MOONSHOTS TO MILESTONES:
BUILDING CREATIVE FOUNDATIONS
WITH WORKFLOWS AND KANBAN**

Lesa Bush, Mayborn Museum
April Love, Mayborn Museum
Kaleigh Reid, Mayborn Museum

Museums dream big—but without clear internal processes, even visionary goals can stall. At Baylor University's Mayborn Museum, we use workflow mapping and Kanban-style meetings to build collaboration, transparency, and creative problem-solving with staff and community partners. This session explores how strong internal systems support sustainable innovation. Through real-world examples and discussion, participants will learn how simple tools like workflows and Kanban boards improve collaboration, streamline projects, and increase accountability. Attendees will leave with practical templates, implementation tips, and adaptable strategies to strengthen creativity, execution, and communication in museums of any size.

EXPLORE MISSION'S HISTORY

Since its founding in 2002, the Mission Historical Museum has been dedicated to preserving the people, culture, and stories that shaped Mission and western Hidalgo County. With more than 11,000 historical items in the museum's collections, visitors can explore the rich legacy of the citrus industry, military history, community leaders, and everyday life, all showcased within two historic buildings.

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2nd Saturday of the Month: 10 AM - 1 PM

Business Hours:

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missionmuseum.org

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photo credit: Rose Baca



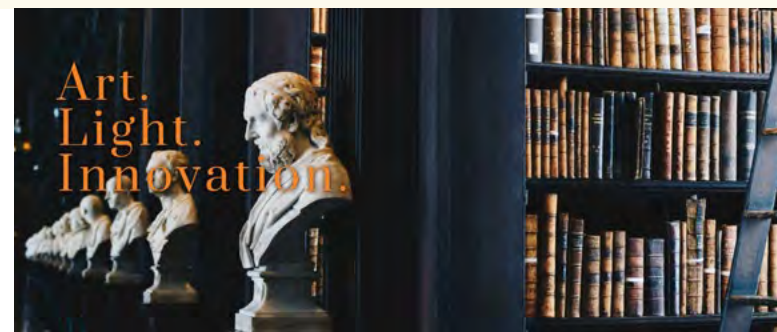
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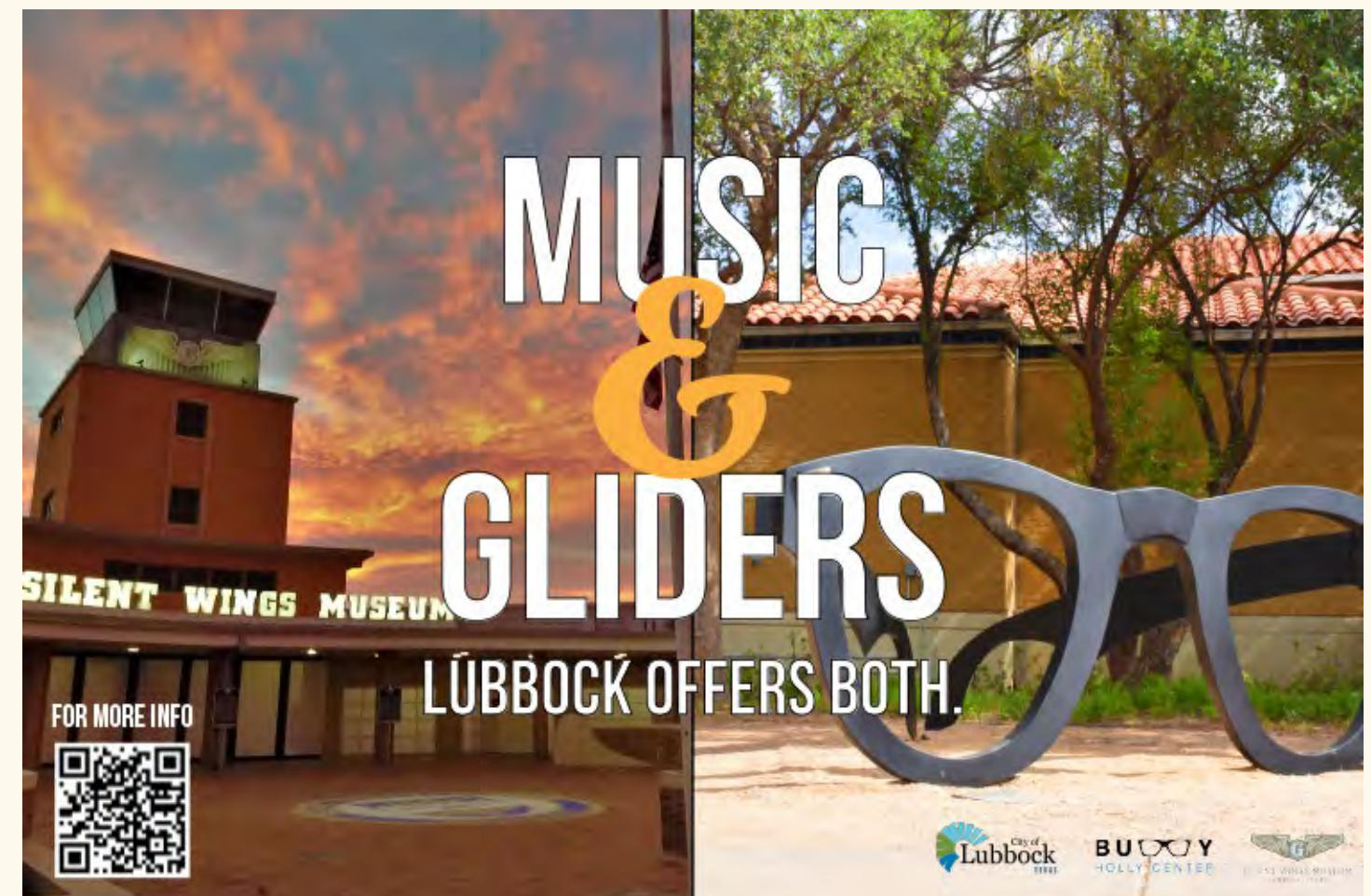
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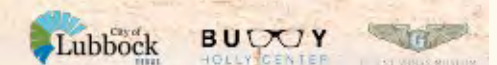
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FOR MORE INFO



2:30 PM - 3:30 PM | Concurrent Session | Meeting Room 102 A



BIG IMPACT. SMALL BUDGET: CREATING IN-HOUSE EXHIBITS WITH LIMITED RESOURCES

Beth Norvell, University of Mary Hardin-Baylor Museum

Erin Wheeler, Angelo State University

Kyndall Howard, Brown County Museum of History

Mikaela Young, Bell County Museum

Sponsored by Sietecolores

The session will emphasize how to maximize what you already have—whether it's exhibit furniture, tools, or staff creativity—and share examples of innovative, affordable exhibit builds. When the theme calls for it, panelists will also discuss the process of temporarily borrowing collections items from neighboring institutions, including tips for building partnerships, navigating paperwork, and ensuring proper care and display of loaned materials. Presenters will share successes, lessons learned, and challenges they've encountered in rural or underfunded museum settings.

2:30 PM - 3:00 PM | Burst Session | Meeting Room 102 BC



EXPANDING MUSEUM OUTREACH THROUGH SUSTAINABLE OFFSITE ENGAGEMENT

Cassandra Rivera, Meadows Museum, SMU

Sponsored by visiTOUR.US by PrimeSite Web

Art-on-the-Go is an outreach initiative by the Meadows Museum that brings free, all-ages art kits to children throughout the Dallas-Fort Worth area. This session examines how museums can extend their impact beyond gallery walls and build meaningful, lasting relationships with offsite communities. It will also explore how the program has elevated museum visibility, strengthened both new and existing partnerships, and deepened the museum's role in the community. Attendees will leave with insights and strategies for launching similar programs in their own institutions.

3:00 PM - 3:30 PM | Burst Session | Meeting Room 102 BC



SALT OF THE EARTH: HONORING THE HIDDEN BACKBONE OF OUR MUSEUMS

Sandy Pollock, Museum of South Texas History

This session highlights the people who keep our museums running: the groundskeepers, housekeepers, maintenance crews, and quiet caretakers whose work shapes every visitor experience. Through the stories of Manuel Sabino and Mari Lopez from the Museum of South Texas History, we will look at how daily labor connects to community history and pride. The session will offer simple, practical ways to document frontline work, strengthen internal culture, and honor the people who make our institutions function. Attendees will leave with ideas for recognizing and supporting the true backbone of their museums, the salt of the earth staff who keep everything going.

3:30 PM - 4:30 PM | Open House | Meeting Room 101 C



MUSEUM ADVOCACY OPEN HOUSE

Kate Betz, Story + Reason

Evan Windham, Story + Reason

What does it mean to speak up for your museum in your community? Whether you're a seasoned advocate or new to the work, drop in to swap ideas, ask for advice, and collect practical tools to support your efforts. Stay for ten minutes or the full hour. Your museum has a voice—this is a space to strengthen it.

3:30 PM - 5:00 PM | Open House | Exhibit Hall A
AFFINITY GROUP INFORMATION STATIONS

Curious about getting more involved in TAM? Stop by our Affinity Group Information Stations to meet the leaders and members of our many TAM Affinity Groups—including some new ones! This is an opportunity to learn what each group does, discover where your interests align, and find your place within the TAM community. All are welcome to meet the following groups: Art Affinity Group; Collections Managers Committee; Historic Sites & Houses Affinity Group; Mid-Career & Emerging Leaders of TAM; Marketing/PR & Media; Inclusivity, Diversity, Equity & Access; TAM Educators' Committee; TAM Executive Leaders; Independent Professionals; Archives & Oral History; Development & Membership; and the Exhibits Affinity Group.

3:30 PM - 5:00 PM | Open House | Exhibit Hall A
EXHIBITOR RECEPTION

Join us for networking and the latest innovations from our exhibitors. Connect with industry peers, explore new services and solutions, and don't forget to visit each exhibitor for a chance to win a free registration to the TAM 2027 Annual Conference!

5:00 PM - 6:00 PM | Directors and CEOs Reception Invite Only
International Museum of Art and Science co-hosted by the McAllen Heritage Center

Museum leaders and current and past TAM Councilors from across the state mix and mingle during this special VIP Invitation Only event. The exhibits at the International Museum of Art and Science will be open to VIP invitees during the reception.

6:00 PM | 8:00 PM | Evening Event at International Museum of Art & Science (IMAS) | International Museum of Art and Science

Join us for an exclusive evening at the International Museum of Art & Science, our gracious host for this special reception. Enjoy drinks and hors d'oeuvres while exploring the museum's diverse collections and exhibitions at your leisure. This is a wonderful opportunity to network with fellow museum professionals in a relaxed setting while experiencing one of the Rio Grande Valley's premier cultural institutions. Don't miss this chance to discover IMAS's galleries and connect with colleagues in an inspiring atmosphere.

DAY 3 - TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 2026

8:00 AM - 3:00 PM | Registration | Palm Lobby

8:00 AM - 9:00 AM | Breakfast with Exhibitors | Exhibit Hall A

8:30 AM - 10:00 AM | TAM Annual Business Meeting and Awards
Exhibit Hall A

Join us for TAM's annual business meeting, where members will hear the organization's top priorities and direction for 2026 and beyond. Immediately following the meeting, we will hold our annual Awards Ceremony. This is a chance to recognize museum industry award winners for their incredible work. Featured winners include the Jo Stewart Randel Outstanding Trustee Award, Jack Nokes Outstanding Service Award, TAM Advocacy Award, Mitchell A. Wilder Publication Design Award Competition, and the Texas Association of Museums Media Innovation & Excellence Awards (TAMMIEs).

10:00 AM - 10:30 AM | Networking Break | Exhibit Hall A
AWARD WINNERS JOIN US ON STAGE FOR PICTURES

10:30 AM - 11:30 AM | Concurrent Session | Meeting Room 101 AB



FINDING YOUR BALANCE: NAVIGATING EARNED VS CONTRIBUTED REVENUE

Chris Dyer, Dr Pepper Museum
Dr. Michelle Everidge, Witte Museum

There's no one-size-fits-all formula when it comes to museum funding. While some institutions lean heavily on ticket sales, rentals, or gift shop revenue, others rely more on grants, donations, and sponsorships.

The right mix of earned and contributed income depends on your museum's mission, size, audience, and capacity. This session explores how museums of varying scales and types strike their own unique balance—and how that balance can (and should) shift over time. Panelists will share real-world examples, financial strategies, and lessons learned from adjusting their revenue models in response to growth, crisis, or opportunity. Whether you're building a new revenue stream or rethinking an old one, this conversation will help you understand the trade-offs, challenges, and possibilities of shaping a funding strategy that truly fits your museum.

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Come see the twins in main gallery of the Museum of TTU

10:30 AM - 11:30 AM | Concurrent Session | Meeting Room 102 A



ANCIENT LANDSCAPES OF SOUTH TEXAS: PUBLIC HERITAGE TOURISM & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Roseann Bacha-Garza, University of Texas Rio Grande Valley
Juan Luis Gonzalez, University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

Sponsored by the City of McAllen

The Ancient Landscapes of South Texas is a comprehensive educational initiative aimed at creating a sense of wonder among local residents and visitors by showcasing 50 million years of natural history alongside 15,000 years of human history. Discover how UTRGV's CHAPS Program provides teachers in Texas classrooms, regional museums, public libraries, and the broader community with products and learning materials specifically designed for multigenerational families with children in K-12 education.

10:30 AM - 11:30 AM | Concurrent Session | Meeting Room 103 CD



SMALL TOWN. 956

Lolly Peña, Museum of South Texas History
Dr. Francisco Guajardo, Museum of South Texas History
Sandy Pollock, Museum of South Texas History

The feeling of a small town is often described as a close-knit family with personal connections and relationships. The pace of life is typically slower compared to larger cities, with less traffic, fewer crowds, and more opportunities for leisure activities; but small-town communities in South Texas have much more. These towns have a history. Each month, the Museum of South Texas History features a small town in South Texas. By using multimedia, small-town community leaders and/or historians will take museum patrons on a journey to their small community. From legends and local lore, guest presenters will share the uniqueness of their small town. Great efforts are made to invite the featured small-town inhabitants to their "hometown presentation." In doing so, the Museum of South Texas History strongly promotes each small town via social media, as well as through Rio Grande Valley publications in South Texas. Informative flyers are also distributed throughout the Rio Grande Valley promoting each event.

10:30 AM - 11:30 AM | Concurrent Session | Meeting Room 102 BC



ARSENIC, PHARMACEUTICALS, AND MOLD. OH MY!: HAZARDS IN COLLECTIONS

Rachael A. Nadeau Johnson, Dr Pepper Museum
Jennifer Landry, Irving Archives and Museum
Tom Andrews, Mayborn Museum

Encountering hazards when working in collections is inevitable. From mold to chemicals, dealing with these dangers in collections can be challenging and costly. Through this session, attendees will hear how presenters have handled hazards in their collections and come away with practical tips for identifying and dealing with risks in their own collections. Attendees will also learn how to identify resources within their own communities to help with potentially hazardous items and situations.

11:30 AM - 11:45 AM | Networking & Exhibitor Break | Exhibit Hall A

11:45 AM - 12:00 PM | Lunch Buffet | Exhibit Hall A

12:00 PM - 12:45 PM | Lunch Keynote | Exhibit Hall A



PONTE TRUCHA: CRAFTING A NARRATIVE FOR LA FRONTERA FROM LA FRONTERA

Josue Ramirez, Director at Trucha

Sponsored by Museum of South Texas History and Edinburg Economic Development Corporation

Trucha is a grassroots media platform serving the Rio Grande Valley, building a foundation of storytellers to share authentic narratives from the borderlands. Through movement journalism, documentary video, art programming, and local partnerships, Trucha confronts the negative framing and disinformation, instead celebrating the resilience, creativity, and diverse stories of la frontera. With over 48,000 social media subscribers, Trucha operates the Ponte Creative Studio and Art Gallery while providing professional development to local artists. This presentation explores how Trucha is filling the RGV's media infrastructure gap and creating space for the community's voices to be heard and celebrated with support from the Mellon Foundation. Follow their work at @truchargv.

12:45 PM - 1:00 PM | Break

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM | Concurrent Session | Meeting Room 102 A



SMALL TOOLS, BIG ACCESS: DIY EXHIBITS AND MOBILE APPS IN PRACTICE

Dr. Jennifer Rogers, Collin County Farm Museum
LaShell Martinez, Kaleidoscope Heritage Focus

This presentation explores Vanishing Spaces, an adaptive exhibit at the Collin County Farm Museum that interprets the loss of agricultural land while prioritizing visual accessibility. Working with limited funding, the team combined tactile elements, high-contrast design, and mobile apps to expand access and interpretation. The project demonstrates how small museums can use low-cost, app-based tools alongside DIY design strategies to create inclusive, flexible exhibits that evolve over time.

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM | Concurrent Session | Meeting Room 102 BC



STRONGER TOGETHER: FROM POLICY TO PRACTICE IN COLLECTION MANAGEMENT

Leslie Ochoa, Witte Museum
Emily Collins, Austin Heritage Museums
Rachel Smith, Austin Heritage Museums

Collection stewardship is a core standard for all museums, and strong policies and procedures are essential tools for bringing order to complex collections. This session explores how museums of varying size and structure have strengthened their collection management practices through intentional policy development and procedural standardization. Participants will learn how the Witte Museum and the Brownsville Historical Association approached updates to their Collection Management Policies during periods of institutional change, ensuring these foundational—and living—documents remained responsive and relevant. In addition, a Collections Manager and a Site Coordinator will share how standardizing procedures across three sites helped reduce uncertainty, improve consistency, and support staff collaboration. This session highlights practical strategies for making meaningful progress with available resources, demonstrating how collaborative efforts and clear guidance can calm the chaos—even without perfect conditions.

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM | Concurrent Session | Meeting Room 101 AB



SEALING THE PAST, STRENGTHENING THE FUTURE: MUSEUMS & SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Charlotte Underwood, Mission Historical Museum
Marissa Saenz, Mission CISD

In times of social and political uncertainty, museums must serve as trustworthy, informative spaces for dialogue and reflection. At the National Center for Civil and Human Rights in Atlanta – the birthplace of the civil rights movement – this responsibility informed a comprehensive expansion of our mission, programming, and on-site experiences. Ahead of the Center’s reopening in November 2025, our goal was to transform visitors into changemakers by involving communities and integrating their stories into the museum’s narrative. This process required rethinking existing structures, refreshing and adding galleries, and redesigning the visitor journey to balance emotional immersion with moments of reflection. In this session, we will share how experience design, programming, and community engagement now work together to foster empathy, encourage courageous conversations, and inspire civic action around civil and human rights.

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM | Concurrent Session | Meeting Room 103 CD



INVITATION TO RELAX, RECHARGE, AND REFOCUS WITH THE IDEA AFFINITY GROUP

Kate Horan, McAllen Public Library

In our high-energy, anxious world, focusing on ourselves can feel especially challenging during times of elevated tension. When anxiety builds in our minds and bodies, it can intensify both physical and mental stress. We perform our best when we feel grounded and secure in our path. Join us for a 30-minute relaxation session led by Kate Horan, MLS from the McAllen Public Library. After the program, there will be time for questions, so you can take what you’ve learned and share it with your home team. Let’s all remember to take time to breathe!



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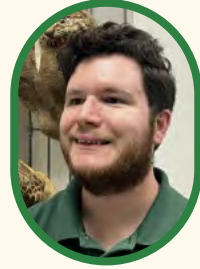
**Colors
to discover,
ideas to build**

- ◆ Museum planning
- ◆ Exhibit design and fabrication
- ◆ Learning spaces development



2:00 PM - 2:15 PM | Break

2:15 PM - 3:15 PM | Concurrent Session | Meeting Room 101 AB



TOO MANY OPTIONS! REFLECTIONS ON COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS WITH THE COLLECTIONS MANAGERS COMMITTEE AFFINITY GROUP

Aubrey Nielsen, Brownsville Historical Association

Paul Spana, Space Center Houston

Rachael A. Nadeau Johnson, Dr Pepper Museum

Tom Andrews, Mayborn Museum

Leslie Ochoa, Witte Museum

Choosing a collections management system shouldn't feel like wandering through a software maze, yet it often does! Join us for a candid, energetic conversation that gets to the heart of what really works (and what really doesn't) in today's CMS landscape. Our panelists will share snapshots of their institutions and dish on their real-world experiences with different systems, strengths, quirks, surprises, and all. Whether you need an all-in-one powerhouse or a specialty solution, you'll walk away with practical insights, helpful comparisons, and a handy CMS overview guide. No sales pitches, just honest talk to help you find the right fit.

2:15 PM - 3:15 PM | Concurrent Session | Meeting Room 103 CD



CONNECTEENING WITH YOUR COMMUNITY: BUILDING MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL TEEN VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

Kaleigh Reid, Mayborn Museum

Niki Davis-Vohs, Perot Museum

With the increase in importance of volunteer hours for teens and a need for extra summer coverage at many museums, teen volunteer programs have the potential to be an excellent resource for both a museum and a museum's community. In this session, hear about the Perot's ConnectTEEN Program, a teen volunteer initiative that engages youth in meaningful service while exposing them to STEM careers and civic leadership, and the Mayborn Museum's Teen Team Volunteer Program, a volunteer program that aims to increase museum literacy and provide professional development opportunities for its participants, and learn how both programs have evolved to meet both organizational needs and youth development goals.

2:15 PM - 3:15 PM | Concurrent Session | Meeting Room 102 A



INTERPRETIVE PLANNING AT SMALL & MEDIUM SIZED HISTORIC HOUSE MUSEUMS

Chris Godbold, Fort Bend History Association

Adrian Cardwell, Badge Of Pride

Madeleine Calcote-Garcia, Fort Bend History Association

Melissa Prycer, Prycer Consulting

How do you create cohesive storytelling across your historic house site? What does interpretive planning look like in action? Learn about how the Fort Bend History Association is using interpretive planning to update its storytelling, better understand its collection and make its museum more relevant to visitors. Consultant Melissa Prycer will discuss interpretive planning in general while the FBHA's Executive Director Madeleine Calcote-Garcia will share the History Association's efforts and the Association's Curator Chris Godbold speaks about the interpretive work with the collection. Adrian Cardwell from Badge of Pride will give another perspective on interpretive planning through his work on an exhibit in conjunction with the City of Irving Archives and Museum.

2:15 PM - 2:45 PM | Burst Session | Meeting Room 102 BC



HISTORY IN THE SHADOWS: INCORPORATING DARK TOURISM AT HISTORIC SITES

Karli Stansbury, Beaumont Heritage Society
Shelby Brannan, Beaumont Heritage Society

Karli Stansbury, Museum Educator for the Beaumont Heritage Society, and Executive Director Shelby Brannan share how their historic house museum has begun incorporating Dark Tourism into its interpretation strategy. They will discuss practical approaches for planning, marketing, and executing engaging programs that balance education, preservation, and visitor interest. Attendees will gain actionable strategies for designing immersive experiences, anticipating challenges, and ethically interpreting difficult histories, all while expanding audience engagement and fostering deeper connections with their communities.

2:15 PM - 2:45 PM | Burst Session | Meeting Room 102 BC



MARKERS, PLAQUES, AND LANDMARKS: HOW HISTORIC DESIGNATIONS ARE HELPING SAVE THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY'S CULTURAL HERITAGE

Gabriel Ozuna, Hidalgo County Historical Commission

Historic markers and landmarks are more than signs; they tell important stories about the places in your community and help keep them standing. This burst introduces local, state, and national historic designation types and explores how they support preservation and storytelling through Rio Grande Valley case studies. Attendees will learn to identify potential landmark sites, understand eligibility criteria, use designations to preserve and encourage the rehabilitation of historic resources. It will also highlight how museums can leverage markers and plaques in education, interpretation, and heritage tourism to build civic pride and a strong sense of place.

3:30 PM - 4:30 PM | Burst Session | Exhibit Hall B
ACADEMIC SHOWCASE & MUSEUM ACTIVATIONS

TAM is excited to feature Museum Activations highlighting the Rio Grande Valley's local institutions alongside the 2026 Academic Showcase in Exhibit Hall B. Museum Activations will showcase hands-on engagement experiences from local cultural organizations, offering attendees an opportunity to explore the creativity and impact of institutions across the region. The Academic Showcase will highlight exceptional projects from undergraduate and graduate students, featuring work that spans exhibitions, collections, technology, evaluation, and more. Discover innovative ideas and emerging museum leaders—all in one dynamic space

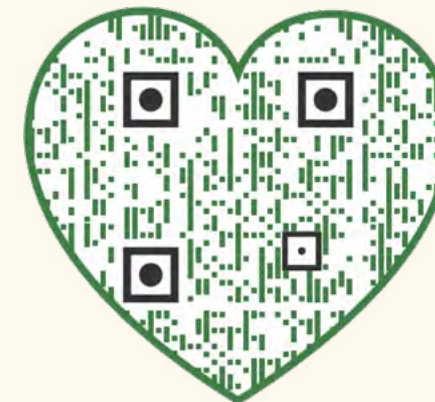
5:00 PM - 6:00 PM | Travel to Brownsville

6:00 PM - 8:30 PM | Evening Event - Discover Brownsville
Market Square, Brownsville

Join us for a lively evening reception at Market Square and The Mitte, surrounded by the historic sites of the Brownsville Historical Association. All while enjoying a curated selection of bites from local downtown businesses, celebrating the flavors of Brownsville's vibrant culinary scene.

8:30 PM - 9:30 PM | Travel Back to McAllen

DAY 4 - WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 2026



Self Guided Tour

Wednesday morning is yours to discover the vibrant cultural landscape of McAllen and the Rio Grande Valley at your own pace. TAM attendees will receive a curated map featuring local museums and the community's favorite dining spots, along with complimentary admission to participating museums. Whether you're interested in exploring world-class art collections, discovering regional history, or sampling authentic Valley cuisine, this is your opportunity to experience the rich cultural tapestry that makes this region unique. Use this time to connect with the community, enjoy local flavors, and visit the institutions that bring the Rio Grande Valley's stories to life.



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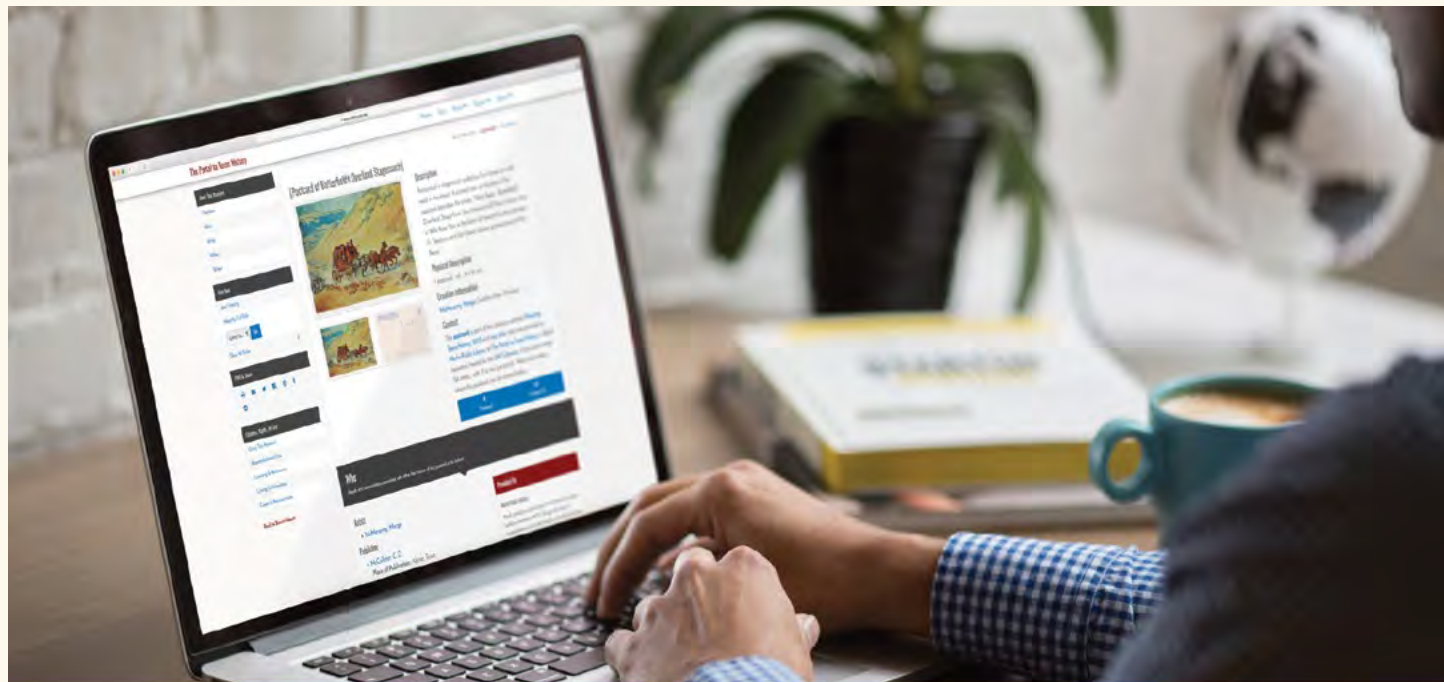
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ARE YOU PASSIONATE ABOUT ADVANCING THE MUSEUM FIELD? Consider becoming a Councilor for the Texas Association of Museums (TAM). Our council is a community of museum professionals dedicated to promoting the field's best practices and policies in museum management.

As a Councilor, you'll have the opportunity to connect with other industry experts, share your knowledge and experiences, and contribute to shaping the future of the museum industry in Texas. If you're interested in becoming a Councilor, please stop by our registration table to speak with a current member of the TAM Council, learn more about TAM and TAM's leadership, and fill out our nomination form. We look forward to meeting you and hearing about your passion for Texas museums!



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Hosting a session at TAM is a fantastic opportunity to showcase your research, network with fellow scholars, and contribute to the advancement of our field. Whether you're a seasoned presenter or a first-time proposer, we welcome and value your contributions.

Submitting a session proposal is easy and straightforward. You can propose a traditional panel discussion, a roundtable, a workshop, or a variety of other formats that suit your idea. Proposals can cover a range of topics, from theoretical perspectives to empirical studies, and interdisciplinary approaches.

So, if you have an idea that you think will spark discussion and learning, don't hesitate to submit your proposal. The TAM community is eager to hear from you, and we look forward to seeing you at the TAM 2027 conference in Arlington. We can't wait to see what you come up with!



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