



October 2020 Museline Transcript

I've always said that the summer in Texas is like getting a sweaty hug from a relative that has overstayed their welcome. That is until this year when surviving the heat is the least of our worries. Thankfully we can still enjoy the cooler weather that makes for pleasant bike riding -- one of my favorite things to do -- besides visiting museums of course. Open up your windows and your minds for our October 2020 Edition of the Texas Association of Museum's Museline our digital newsletter featuring all things T.A.M.

These past few months have seen TAM refocusing our work to address the most pressing issues facing museums today. To inform and support this effort, TAM is conducting needs assessments. These intense listening sessions will assist us in getting a better understanding of current challenges, and informing the development of resources and opportunities to help museums and museum professionals overcome them. Preliminary results show that these obstacles mainly revolve around the reduction of staff positions, the development and advancement of virtual programming, and the uncertain future of museums that remain closed.

To address these pandemic concerns TAM will be refreshing our current membership levels and accompanying benefits to provide furloughed and early-career professionals greater access to our networking community and museum resources. For Institutions, we are reviewing our current benefit levels to provide greater access for their existing staff by increasing the number of designees under each institutional umbrella. Both Individual and Institutional Members will also have access to a suite of technology-focused programming currently being developed.

Additionally, TAM is developing a major initiative with funding from the Houston Endowment, titled Finding Alternative Futures Phase 2 (FAF2). In FAF2, TAM will focus on building online courses and programming that will help museums assess their digital strategy, assist in developing proposals to support technology projects, use data to inform organizational decision-making, manage vendor relationships, and more. If you are a museum leader, please take part in our statewide needs assessment posted on TAM's website

To support the development of new school-based programming, TAM is taking to the Trails. The Texas Heritage Trails that is. We are currently convening focus groups in the Forts, Forest, Independence, and Tropical Trails around the topic of virtual school programming. Whether you are an educator or external relations staff just getting started or looking to share your successes and challenges, we'd love to hear from you. There is still time to join a virtual focus group. Shoot me an email this week to get your seat at the table.

While the future of many Texas museums in light of this disruption is still uncertain, TAM remains committed to finding ways to keep our community intact, build on our existing network, and help museums re-skill and re-invent. Strengthening Texas museums is at the core of our mission. We continue to listen and forge ahead for the benefit of all our members.

Annual Meeting

Now on to TAM 2021: Roots and Reckoning: Museums Respond and Redefine. Our premier conference will be held April 10-13, 2021, in San Antonio. As we announced last month, we are taking the right steps to prioritize our attendee's health by creating a decentralized event with tours and programming at various venues across the city. Our growing lists of hosts that include the Witte Museum, San Antonio Museum of Art, and Briscoe Western Art Museum -- you won't want to miss this event. We will release a preliminary schedule next month.

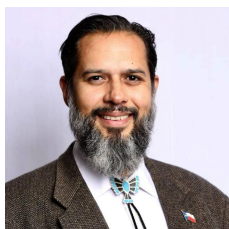
We are aware that no matter how great of a program that we produce, you may not be able to join us in person. That is why we are doubling the number of keynotes and selecting the most highly-rated sessions for live streaming and on-demand downloading. Look for our upcoming announcements where we will reveal our keynotes and featured sessions.

Member News

In member news, I would like to spotlight our Business Plus Member and TAM 2020 Virtual Sponsor, Aira. Aira is a technology company dedicated to making lives simpler, easier, and more fun. Based in San Diego, California, they use the latest technologies to connect people who are blind or have low vision with real, highly-trained professionals who provide visual information on demand. Check out their blog post on TAM's website and upcoming webinar that features their solution in action.

TAM's mission is to strengthen the Texas museum community through collaborations, connections, professional development, and advocacy.

To Learn more about TAM Membership and become more involved go to texasmuseums.org or reach out to me directly at alex@texasmuseums.org. Be safe out there - Goodbye!



Alex Freeman

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