2006 Utah Museums Survey

Conducted by
Dan Jones and Associates

Sponsored by
The Utah Office of Museum Services
The Utah Museums Association
The International Society of the Daughters of Utah Pioneers
# 2006 Utah Museums Survey

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Museums Matter!

Museums play important roles in our communities by improving the quality of life and providing beneficial services. Museums are protectors of our artistic, historic, scientific, and cultural heritage. Authentic artifacts in history museums are very significant in creating a strong connection to the past.

Museums provide experiences that families share across generations and that create lasting memories. In museums, grandparents, parents, and children together see history come alive, learn about scientific discoveries, and wonder at works of art.

Museums are centers of learning; the focal point of their service to the public is their educational role. People of all ages and backgrounds come to learn from museum collections, exhibits, and programs. Museums also offer educational programs to school children that help fulfill state curriculum standards.

Museums enhance economic development. Being significant tourist destinations, they are major partners in travel and tourism. Museums are key elements in attracting and retaining business activity. When businesses are planning to relocate, access to museums and other cultural resources are top priorities.

Why Utah Museums are Important

Utah museums perform a unique service to the state and its citizens by preserving its history. Their importance is illustrated by the fact that within years of settling the valley in 1847, plans were discussed for the establishment of a museum.

• Utah’s 255 museums are located in every county.
• Utah museums are the state’s greatest educational resource outside public education.
• Museums are an important part of cultural tourism, thus generating economic development.
• Utah museums host over 6 million visitors a year.
• More than 1½ million Utah school children in over 25,000 school groups visit museums as part of their formal education each year.
2006 Utah Museums Survey

This Survey of Utah museums was commissioned by three organizations: the Utah Office of Museum Services (OMS), the Utah Museums Association (UMA) and the International Society of the Daughters of Utah Pioneers (DUP). The goal was to assess the needs of Utah museums.

Questions were concentrated in the area of collections care and preservation. Future surveys will focus on various museum operations such as education and exhibits. This series of surveys, to be conducted over the next several years, will build a complete picture of the condition and needs of Utah museums.

The survey was administered by the firm of Dan Jones & Associates to ensure a professional and accurate result. They sent out forms to 253 museums and received completed surveys from 153 museums providing a 60% response rate.

The results reflect a healthy museum community, but one that has a great many needs.

"Utah holds a unique position within the context of national history. As a pre-planned settlement of sturdy pioneers, as an entrepreneurial stop on the Gold Rush of '47, as the meeting place of the trans-continental railroad, as the ancient home of culturally rich indigenous people, Utah contains within her borders numerous invaluable national treasures, central to the American story of settling an untamed West and surviving against the odds in rugged conditions. It is our job, today, to ensure that the artifacts that remain to tell this story also survive."
Kari M. Main, Pioneer Memorial Museum.

The Office of Museum Services, with the support of the International Society of Daughters of Utah Pioneers and the Utah Museums Association, is launching a statewide Preservation Initiative to preserve museum collections.
Utah has 255 museums; they are located in every county. As educational institutions, museums provide opportunities for people of all ages and persuasions to learn, to explore new interests, and to discover more about the world in which they live.

The great variety of Utah museums assures that there is something of interest for everyone. Museums range from one-room log cabins to large modern, climate-controlled buildings. Fine art, trains, dinosaurs, historic and prehistoric sites, and cultural artifacts are available for Utah museum visitors.

Utah museums annually host more than 6 million visitors. While museums are a major draw for tourists, most museum visitors are members of the local community, with school groups accounting for 25% of the visits.

More than half of the museums have an annual budget less than $25,000. Most museums tap many sources in order to raise enough money to survive. Because budgets tend to be tight, even small amounts received through grants and donations are important and allow museums to carry out projects and events.

Utah museums could not survive without volunteers. Volunteers spent more than 370,000 hours in 118 museums last year, an average of 3,140 volunteer hours per museum. These volunteer hours are equal to 177 full-time staff positions.

Computerized databases make it easier to catalog collections. In addition to record keeping, museums use computers to share information about their collections on their websites and to offer virtual exhibits to web browsers.
Museums are educational institutions first and foremost

Museum objects tell the stories of our past, of our world, and of our great cultural achievements. Museum education is informal and available to everyone. Family outings to museums provide learning in a fun, exciting, and interactive setting.

Collections are the core of the museum

Collections must be stored and exhibited under proper conditions, handled with care, and be accurately documented.

All Utah museums care deeply about preserving their collections. Much work remains to be done, however, to raise the quality of care to a level that will assure the collections’ survival.

Preserving museum collections must become a top priority

To help meet the needs indicated by the survey results, the Office of Museum Services, with the support of the Utah Museums Association and the Daughters of Utah Pioneers, is launching a statewide Preservation Initiative in which special technical assistance and funding will be provided to protect and ensure the safe keeping of Utah’s cultural, natural, and historical treasures.
Participating Museums

Alf Engen Ski Museum, Park City
Alliance for the Varied Arts, Logan
Anasazi State Park Museum, Boulder
Art Access, Salt Lake City
Bear River Pioneer Museum, Brigham City
Benson Grist Mill Historic Site, Stansbury Park
Blanding Pioneer Museum
Bountiful/Davis Art Center
Bountiful Historical Museum
Braithwaite Fine Arts Gallery, Southern Utah University (SUU), Cedar City
Brigham Young University Museum of Art, Provo
Brigham City Museum-Gallery
Camp Floyd State Park, Fairfield
College of Eastern Utah Prehistoric Museum, Price
Chase Home Museum of Utah Folk Arts, Salt Lake City
Clark Planetarium, Salt Lake City
Cleveland-Lloyd Dinosaur Quarry, Price
Crandall Historical Printing Museum, Provo
Dan O’Laurie Museum of Moab
Discovery Gateway, Salt Lake City
Dixie State College Sears Museum/Gallery, St. George
Draper Historical Museum
Eccles Community Art Center, Ogden
Eccles Dinosaur Park, Ogden
Echo Church & Museum
Farmington Historical Museum
Fielding Garr Ranch/Antelope Island State Park, Syracuse
Finch Lane Gallery, Salt Lake City
Ft. Douglas Military Museum, Salt Lake City
Gale Center of History & Culture, South Jordan Girl Scouts of Utah Heritage Museum, Salt Lake City
Great Basin Historical Society & Museum, Delta
Hatch Museum
Heber Valley Aero Museum
Hellenic Cultural Association, Salt Lake City
Heritage Museum of Layton
Historic Peteetneet Cultural Arts Center & Museum, Payson
Historic Pioneer Museum, Castle Dale
Historic Wendover Airfield
Hurricane Valley Heritage Park Museum
Iron Mission State Park Museum, Cedar City
John Hutchings Museum of Natural History, Lehi
John Jarvie Ranch, Dutch John

Iron Mission State Park
Taylorsville Bennion Heritage Center, Taylorsville
Thanksgiving Point Gardens, Lehi
This Is The Place Heritage Park, Salt Lake City
Thomas Whitaker Home, Centerville
Tintic Mining Museum, Eureka
Tooele Valley Railroad Museum
Topaz Museum, Delta
Tracy Aviary, Salt Lake City
Treehouse Children’s Museum, Ogden
Uintah County Western Heritage Museum, Vernal
Utah Arts Council/Alice Gallery, Salt Lake City
Utah Field House of Natural History State Park Museum, Vernal
Utah Firefighters Memorial Museum, Grantsville
Utah House, USU, Kaysville
Utah Museum of Fine Arts, U of U, Salt Lake City
Utah Museum of Natural History, U of U, Salt Lake City
Utah State Historical Society Museum, Salt Lake City
USU Museum of Anthropology, Logan
Utah Windmill Exhibit and Interpretive Center, St. George
Utah Wing - Commemorative Air Force, Salt Lake City
Utah’s Hogle Zoo, Salt Lake City
Wasatch Mountain State Park, Midway
West Jordan Historical Museum
Western Mining & Railroad Museum, Helper
Willow Park Zoo, Logan
Woodbury Art Museum, Utah Valley State College, Orem
WSU Museum of Natural Science, Ogden

Daughters of Utah Pioneers (DUP) Museums

Alpine Historic Pioneer Relic Hall
American Fork DUP Relic Hall
Beaver DUP Court House Museum
Box Elder South DUP Museum, Brigham City
Camp Belknap DUP Museum, Elsinore
Camp Christine DUP Cabin, Redmond
Camp Sally DUP Museum, Kanosh
Cedar City DUP Museum
Centerville Cabin DUP Museum
Charles W. Penrose Cabin DUP Museum, Farmington
Coalville DUP Museum
Ephraim DUP Museum
Escalante DUP Museum
Fanny Powell Cropper DUP Museum, Delta
Francis DUP Museum

Fremont DUP Museum
Gowans Log Cabin, Tooele
Henefer DUP Museum
Jeremiah Willey Cabin Museum, Bountiful
John Carver Cabin/Plain City DUP Museum
Juab County DUP Museum, Nephi
Laketown DUP Relic Hall
Lewiston - Wheeler Log Cabin
McQuarrie Memorial Pioneer Museum, St. George
Miles Goodyear Cabin/Weber County Pioneer Museum, Ogden
Moab DUP Museum
Monroe DUP Museum
Morgan County DUP Museum
Mt. Nebo Pioneer Memorial Relic Home, Mona
Old Bell School/DUP Museum and Log Cabin, Pleasant Grove
Orderville Kane County DUP Museum
Panguitch DUP Museum
Parowan Old Rock Church Museum
Pilot Peak DUP Museum, Enterprise
Pioneer Memorial Museum, Salt Lake City
Provo Pioneer Museum
Richfield Pioneer Relic Hall
Sagwich Camp DUP Museum, Paradise
Spanish Fork DUP Museum
Spring City/Canal Creek DUP Museum
Springville/Mapleton DUP Museum, Springville
Stockton DUP Museum
Wellington Pioneer Log Cabin
Wellsville Tabernacle DUP Museum
Woods Cross-Hogan Cabin
The diversity of Utah museums offers something for everyone.

Museums present a wide variety of educational programs aimed at children and adults.
More than half of Utah museums are governed by a private non-profit board of directors or board of trustees. The remaining museums are public non-profit.

Local governments provide an important service by contributing to utility expenses, repair and maintenance of buildings, and landscaping.

Government agencies are the primary source for staff salaries. Staff are dedicated, enthusiastic, and committed to their museums.
Museums do amazing things with little money, but they need help to carry out special projects that will ensure the preservation of their collections.

Even small amounts of money received through grants and donations are vital; they allow museums to carry out programs and events.
Types of Museum Visitors

- Local (Non-School): 43%
- School Groups: 25%
- Tourists: 32%

More than six million people annually visit Utah museums.

Annual Number of Museum Visitors

While museums are a major draw for tourists, local citizens make most of the visits to Utah museums.
Computerized databases make it easier to keep and access up-to-date collections’ records.

Museums are educational institutions first and foremost.
Collections Priorities

Examples of Collections Needs

Records
82% have objects that are not insured
49% have not inventoried paper/photograph collections
43% do not have all objects labeled
38% have not inventoried the condition of objects
20% of museums do not have all objects inventoried

Storage/Exhibit Environment
80% do not have humidity controls
70% do not have UV film on windows/fluorescent lights
65% do not monitor light levels
49% do not have temperature controls
43% do not monitor for pests
41% do not have fire detection systems

Objects Are Not Stored Properly
61% lack proper exhibit stands/materials
57% have objects on the floor
57% have objects in non-archival containers
38% have objects on open shelves

Policies and Procedures
82% do not have a written disaster plan
49% do not have a security policy or plan
48% do not have a written collections policy

Additional Training Needs
63% collections management (preventive conservation)
44% cataloging objects
35% labeling objects
35% how to handle objects

Preserving artifacts and the stories they tell is critical in safeguarding the history of our state.
Museum programs and projects are based on the objects in the museums’ collections.

Overall Priorities

This silk and tafetta flag was presented to Briant Wells on his return from the Spanish American War by his brother, Heber M. Wells, who was then governor of Utah. The deteriorated material needs conservation work to preserve it.

Pioneer Memorial Museum
The Utah Museums Preservation Initiative

Utah museums care for millions of objects that represent our artistic and historic heritage and scientific specimens that reflect our natural surroundings and the world’s past. To preserve these objects museums need to store and exhibit them in proper environments, including stable temperatures and low light conditions. Objects need to be handled carefully and be kept in a place that is secure and safe. Museums need to keep meticulous records of what the objects are, where they came from, and the stories that are associated with them. If these measures are taken, the cost of caring for the state’s treasures will be much lower without the additional financial burden of repairing deteriorated objects.

At present, many of the state’s most valued collections are already at serious risk. These treasures will be lost if action is not taken to preserve them. To address this threat, the Office of Museum Services, with support from the International Society of Daughters of Utah Pioneers and the Utah Museums Association, are launching a special Preservation Initiative. This initiative will provide both financial resources and expanded technical assistance to Utah museums to ensure that our collections are preserved for future generations.

This stage coach was owned by Heber C. Kimball’s Freight Company. Careful inspection shows it to be at grave risk. The axles are very weak and about to fail. In addition, the leather is cracked and the wood is split. This coach needs to be conserved and stabilized to prevent collapse.

Pioneer Memorial Museum
Survey Sponsors

This survey was sponsored by the Utah Office of Museum Services, the Utah Museums Association, and the International Society of Daughters of Utah Pioneers Museums

Daughters of Utah Pioneers Museums

The mission of all Daughters of Utah Pioneers museums is to collect, preserve, and display the artifacts belonging to the Utah Pioneers who settled the Territory of Deseret from 1847 to May 10, 1869, and additionally those artifacts which represent the local community. Our open storage policy and donor-based evaluation of artifacts establish collections that represent the entire pioneer community and serve as easily accessible educational/research facilities for both descendants and the greater community.

Utah Museums Association

Founded in 1972, the Utah Museums Association is a non-profit, professional membership organization for museums and individuals associated with museums and serves institutions of all sizes and disciplines. UMA provides professional development and networking opportunities to build the capacity of Utah’s museums; connects museums to information, resources, and best practice; and serves as an advocate to governmental authorities.

Utah Office of Museum Services

OMS is a state agency that promotes Utah museums and the essential role they play in our state as sources of community pride, centers of public education, and institutions that encourage economic development and tourism. The Office assists Utah museums in improving their ability to:

- care for and manage collections
- develop quality educational resources
- provide access to collections for research
- identify and successfully compete for financial resources.

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