

SOUTH DAKOTA AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE MUSEUM
STRATEGIC PLAN

Ag Museum 2020

"In everything museums do, they must remember
the cornerstone on which the whole enterprise rests
- to make a difference in people's lives."

-Stephen Weil

Introduction

South Dakota State University's strategic plan, *IMPACT 2018*, is a testament to the university's pledge to excellence and to its determination to positively impact the state, region, nation and world. As a department of SDSU, the South Dakota Agricultural Heritage Museum (SDAHM) is committed to assisting the university meet its strategic goals and accomplish the land-grant mission.

Farmers make up less than 2% of the US population. The museum has the opportunity to help educate the other 98% of the population about the importance of the history, culture and science of agriculture is in their everyday lives. In order to best accomplish this and in the spirit of SDSU's *IMPACT 2018*, the SDAHM has developed its own strategic plan and benchmarks: *Ag Museum 2020*. This document is a 5-year adaptive strategy to guide the museum in accomplishing its goals while enhancing the synergy of the university.

The South Dakota Agricultural Heritage Museum

The South Dakota Agricultural Heritage Museum is the official state museum that collects, preserves and interprets the history of agriculture in South Dakota. The museum collection contains the following items: approximately 3,500 agricultural and mechanical tools and equipment; 1,500 items classified as building furnishings, personal and recreational items; 8,300 communications and documentary items, such as maps, prints and agricultural business advertising; over 70,000 photographs of farms, ranches, small towns, 4-H and Cooperative Extension Services; and approximately 72 cubic feet of machinery operator's manuals, parts, lists, and sales literature.

The extensive holdings began as a zoological collection in 1884 and evolved to have a heavy concentration of farming equipment, mainly from the eastern region of the state, and mostly from 1880-1950. To better reflect a complete representation of agriculture in South Dakota, the collection's scope was expanded in 2014 to span from the time when humans first domesticated plants and animals in South Dakota to the present. The staff also diversified its exhibits, gathering history and artifacts both from the western part of the state and from various ethnic groups.

In 1976, the Museum moved into the Stock Judging Pavilion on the South Dakota State University campus. Built in 1918 and expanded in 1925, the Stock Judging was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978. The main level of the museum contains approximately 9,000 sq. ft. of exhibits and 500 sq. ft. of office space and gift shop, while the 4,875 sq. ft. basement of the museum contains small artifact storage and office work space. An 11,000 sq. ft. pole barn completed in July 2005 to house the machinery and large artifact

collections pieces sit north of the museum, and also contains a small workshop. Finally, the museum maintains a rammed earth building, which is located north of the Pavilion and is also on the National Register for Historic Places. Rammed earth construction was an experimental construction technique being investigated by the Cooperative Extension Service in the 1920 and 1930s. This 1,872 sq. ft. building houses yet another small workshop area.

South Dakota State University

The South Dakota State Agricultural Heritage Museum is a department of South Dakota State University (SDSU) administered by the College of Agriculture and Biological Sciences.

Founded in 1881 under the Morrill Act as the Dakota Territory's land-grant institution, South Dakota State University has become the state's largest, most comprehensive institution of higher education. SDSU confers degrees from six different colleges representing more than 175 majors, minors and specializations. The institution also offers 29 master's degree programs, 12 doctoral degree programs and two professional programs.

The work of the University is carried out on a residential campus in Brookings, at sites in Sioux Falls, Pierre and Rapid City, and through Extension offices and Agricultural Experiment Station research sites across the state.

SDSU IMPACT 2018

Over the past 150 years, South Dakota State University has built a foundation of excellence. The university's IMPACT 2018 strategic goals and action steps draw on these established strengths and represent a commitment to excellence to creating a pathway to a future that requires new ways of thinking, innovation and determination

Goals

IMPACT 2018 strategic goals are grounded in the University's commitment to core values. By achieving these goals, South Dakota State University will impact the state, the region, the nation and the world.

Goal 1: Academic Excellence

Goal 2: Research & Innovation

Goal 3: Outreach

Goal 4: High-Performing University

South Dakota Agricultural Heritage Museum

Vision & Mission

Mission:

To inspire a passion for the diverse history, culture and science of agriculture in South Dakota.

Vision:

We are a leader in the preservation of South Dakota agricultural history and in connecting multigenerational audiences to the importance of agriculture in their everyday lives.

Core Values

Integrity

We are the stewards of South Dakota's agricultural history. The community turns to us to preserve their historic treasures and to tell the stories of bygone eras with accuracy and honesty.

Service

We exist for the public. We serve our patrons through preservation of historic artifacts, educational outreach, and by supporting the community in endeavors that enrich our society. We depend upon the support of the people to succeed and we honor that by serving our patrons to the best of our abilities.

Approachability

We are open to all. We believe that museums are unique places where people can share existing ideas while learning about new ones. We take a grassroots approach in developing educational platforms and in interpreting history and culture.

Innovation

We explore and create. We look for new and innovative ways to create meaningful connections with the community.

THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

This Strategic Plan will guide the museum and its efforts to achieve a high level of professional museum practices set by the American Alliance of Museums. It identifies the challenges the museum is facing and the strengths it possesses to address those challenges. It creates a new approach to exploring the history, culture, and science of agriculture in South Dakota and in turn enhances an ecology of learning across the state.

The South Dakota Agricultural Heritage Museum’s Strategic Plan is a living document, so the museum’s Advisory Board and staff will annually review it and make any necessary adjustments or corrections.

The Strategic Planning Committee

A new advisory board was established in 2015 to assist in developing a more dynamic museum that reflects the mission and resonates more with the community that the museum represents. Members from SDSU and the Brookings Community joined the advisory board and staff to create a Strategic Planning Committee. The South Dakota Agricultural Heritage Museum commissioned the SDSU Sociology and Rural Studies Department to assist the committee in developing a strategic plan that reflects the needs and expectations of the community state wide.

Advisory Board members

Wesley Tschetter
Abbie Cribbs
Reid Christopherson
Stacey McMahan
Patty DeZeeuw
Al Johnson
Heather Venenga-Whipple
Sue Turnipseed

Museum Staff

Gwen McCausland
Dawn Stephens
Carrie Van Buren
Michelle Glanzer

Members at Large

Barry Dunn, Ph.D.
Michael Lockrem
Van Fishback
Mary Emery (Facilitator)

AAM Accreditation

In order to be a vital community resource for education and enriching the public's connection with agriculture, the South Dakota Agricultural Heritage Museum must continually seek ways to improve and fulfill its mission and commitment to preserving South Dakota agricultural history. As the museum enhances its level of operation, it will obtain accreditation by the American Alliance of Museums, a national recognition of the museum's commitment to excellence and the highest professional standards of museum operations. The process of attaining accreditation gives a clearer sense of purpose and understanding of the museum's strengths, goals, priorities, and mission. Having the mark of accreditation opens new opportunities for funding and enhances SDSU's the level of excellence.

Assessment

The strategic planning committee made use of two sets of assessment data. Below is a listing of strengths and challenges from the 2008 Museum Assessment report and 2015 Focus Group and Survey Results.

Mac Harris (director 2006 – 2011) began the process toward accreditation by creating a Museum Assessment report (MAP) in 2008. William Galvani, Director of the Naval Undersea Museum and a museum professional trained by AAM to conduct museum assessments, spent several days interviewing the staff, reviewing the policies and procedures, and analyzing the museum's space. In his report¹, Mr. Galvani identified several areas needing improvement (see Figure 2).

In 2014, Gwen McCausland became the new SDAHM Director to address the areas Mr. Galvani had identified as opportunities for improvement upon the museum's operations. By the time Ms. McCausland was hired, the South Dakota Agricultural Heritage Museum had been without a Director for almost three years, a situation that caused stagnation in growth, but also provided an opportunity for change and a space in which key stakeholders could reflect: assess the SDAHM's purpose, identify its strengths, analyze its current impact in the community, and pinpoint areas for improvement—all essential steps in moving towards accreditation.

¹ Galvani, William. *Agricultural Heritage Museum South Dakota State University Collections Assessment Report*. (January 23, 2008). AAM.

Strengths and Challenges from 2008 MAP Report

Figure 1: Strengths

Collections have great research potential
Vast collection
Historic Buildings that are unique in structure and historic significance
Solid core of supporters
Long history in the community

Figure 2: Challenges

2008 Needs	2016 Status
Reorganize the staff for better management	Complete: Fall 2015, staff were reorganized to align with professional museum standards
Lack of climate control for collection storage and galleries	In Progress: A new HVAC unit is on the docket to be installed but humidity control is not part of that HVAC unit. That is an issue still to be addressed.
Additional collection storage and staff office space	
Improve Collections Management	In Progress: Expanded the scope, merging databases and addressing restrictions on donations.
Define Policies for: Collections, Education, and Exhibits	In Progress:
Create an Interpretive Plan	In Progress
Create an Emergency Plan	In Progress
Increase funding to address current and future needs	

Focus Groups and Surveys

In 2014, the SDSU Sociology and Rural Studies Department conducted a series of focus groups around the state to identify opportunities for the museum. In addition, a number of audience surveys provided feedback from patrons and suggestions for future development, including the following goals:

- Incorporate hands-on, interactive opportunities for children and adults.
- Showcase diversity of people as well as commodities in South Dakota agriculture.
- Emphasize storytelling and the people who are a part of the history.
- Rotate in new exhibits while maintaining a core of exhibits.
- Focus on the past, present and future of agriculture.
- Integrate the science behind agriculture along with the history.
- Strengthen partnerships with other museums, institutions and community groups.

A copy of the report² is available at the Museum office.

The strategic planning committee reviewed this data to support development of the *Ag Museum 2020* goals and objectives. Because they will change based upon annual review, this document does not list the specific tasks required to reach these goals.

² *Survey of the South Dakota Agricultural Heritage Museum Audiences*. South Dakota State University Sociology and Rural Studies Department: 2015.

Ag Museum 2020 Focus

Identity.
Infrastructure.
Interaction.

Upon review of all assessment data, the strategic planning committee identified three keys areas to address: identity, infrastructure, and interaction.

IDENTITY

1.1. **Goal:** Maintain a Strong Public Image and Consistent Message that Reflects our Mission and Values.

Objective:

1. Implement the mission statement and vision statement.
2. Develop a marketing strategy with consistent messaging to a targeted audience.
3. Develop and Implement an internal training program for staff and volunteers program to fully understand the core values, mission, vision and brand.

Performance Measures

- ✓ Attain a brand that is easily recognized by the public as measured by a survey of museum visitors.
- ✓ Launch a rebranding project and a campaign to promote the new identity.
- ✓ Increase attendance of exhibits and programs by 25% by 2020.
- ✓ Convey the museum's mission, vision, core values and brand through staff and volunteer training.

1.2. **Goal:** Accreditation from the American Alliance of Museums.

Objective:

1. Fulfill the requirements for accreditation from American Alliance of Museums.

Performance Measures

- ✓ Obtain accreditation from the American Alliance of Museums.

INFRASTRUCTURE

2.1 Goal: Establish a Program Statement and Facility Master Plan to Address the Needs of the Museum.

Objectives:

1. Conduct a needs assessment for the site, collections storage, public space and operations.
2. Develop a plan for additional space in conjunction with SDSU's Master Plan.
3. Address needed repairs to the Stock Judging Pavilion mentioned in the 2015 building assessment report.³

Performance Measures

- ✓ Complete an operations assessment report that addresses the needs of the staff, collection storage, education operations, and exhibition to properly carryout the tasks required.
- ✓ Conduct an economic comparison between building a new facility versus adding on to the existing building completed and results reported to administration and advisory board.
- ✓ Submit a five-year building-repair plan for approval by the advisory board and to be submitted for the master SDSU facilities plan.
- ✓ Reduce maintenance deferment.

³ Modify recommendations as needed to meet accreditation standards and strategic plan.

2.2 Goal: Improve Collections Management

Objectives:

1. Complete an inventory of the artifact collection.
2. Assess the collection to deaccession items no longer fitting the mission.
3. Reduce the cataloging backlog for the archives and artifact collection.
4. Digitize the collection for the database and online archives.
5. Develop an emergency plan to protect and preserve the collection in an event of a disaster.
6. Improve the collection storage environment and use of space.

Performance Measures

- ✓ Reduce backlog of non-cataloged items by 25% each year for five years.
- ✓ Increase the number of archive material available online for research by 25% each year for five years.
- ✓ Submit an emergency plan to SDSU Emergency Management Specialist by June of 2017.
- ✓ Reduce the collection's exposure to water, pests and dust.

2.3 Goal: Implement a Financial Development Plan

Objectives:

1. Develop a plan for increasing the Museum's funding to finance the tasks required to reach the goals set forth in this plan.

Performance Measures

- ✓ Attain approval of a financial development plan by the SDSU Foundation and SDSU Administration.
- ✓ Increase private funding, grant funding, and sponsorships.

INTERACTION

3.1 Goal: Facilitate Meaningful Connections between Patrons and the Museum.

Objectives:

1. Develop an Interpretive Plan for exhibits and education based on the Museum's mission and vision.
2. Increase outreach and audience engagement across the state.
3. Develop and implement a social media plan to increase investors, advocates and stewards for the museum.

Performance Measures

- ✓ Complete an interpretive plan that integrates educational programming, online resources, and exhibitions and includes evaluation indicators and metrics.
- ✓ Implement an annual schedule of rotating exhibits, both traveling and in-house.
- ✓ Create and offer new educational outreach efforts each year.
- ✓ Increase the number of hits on our website, followers to our social media outlets by 10% each year in order to build audience engagement.

3.2 Goal: Be a Valued Partner and Educational Resource for Preschools, K – 12 Schools, SDSU, Home-schools and Youth Organizations.

Objectives:

1. Increase school and day-camp visits.
2. Develop an online presence with educational materials to be used independently in the classroom and/or in connection with a school tour.
3. Develop an outreach program to bring the museum into classrooms across the state.
4. Increase school and youth involvement with National History Day.
5. Increase the number of SDSU professors and students utilizing the museum for educational endeavors.

Performance Measures

- ✓ Increase school tours to 2500 students by 2020.
- ✓ Expand and improve the webpage to include educational material for pre and post K-12 visits.
- ✓ Increase the number of participants by 50% in the National History Day program by 2020.
- ✓ Have 20 new professors or classes utilize the museum for their curriculum by 2020.
- ✓ Increase in SDSU student involvement in projects and events organized by the museum.

3.3 Goal: Increase Investors and Community Stewards

Objectives:

1. Increase the number of new and renewing members.
2. Increase monetary private donations.
3. Increase Museum Store sales.

Performance Measures

- ✓ Double the membership to 800 by 2020.
- ✓ Double the Friends of the Ag Museum's Foundation account to \$200,000 by 2020.
- ✓ Increase in the Museum Store's net profit by 25% every year for five years.

Infinity and Beyond

The implementation of this strategic plan will put the South Dakota Agricultural Heritage Museum at the forefront of the museum field in interpreting the history, culture, and science of agriculture. The staff and the advisory board will review this plan on an annual basis to see if any changes need to be made as the museum navigates the future. Yearly updates of the plan will be published in the museum's newsletter.