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# SIouxLAND HERITAGE FOUNDATION

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## *Our New Museum - Downtown!*

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### **Museum Announces \$3 Million Challenge Gift From Waitt Family Foundation and Start of Public Fundraising Campaign**

In the first major gift announcement of the Siouxland Heritage Foundation's "Our New Museum" public capital campaign, the Waitt Family Foundation announced a minimum matching contribution of \$3 million at a press conference today. In conjunction with the \$3 million donation, the Siouxland Heritage Foundation has agreed to establish the Waitt Challenge Grant, which is designed to inspire contributions and challenge the SHF to raise at least \$3 million that can be applied toward the "Our New Museum" campaign. The non-profit 501(c)(3) Siouxland Heritage Foundation was created to oversee design, construction and fundraising of the new Sioux City Public Museum in downtown Sioux City.

The gift from the Waitt Family Foundation was announced by Joan L. Waitt on behalf of the Foundation. Waitt also serves as the Museum's Honorary Campaign Co-Chair, along with businessman Irving F. Jensen, Jr. "Now that our public campaign has begun, we hope you all will become part of our history and support our efforts to build the best museum in the Mid-West," said Joan L. Waitt.

"I'm happy to be able to support this project and honor my Mom at the same time. Sioux City's history is amazing and it's important that we present it in an exciting manner that does it justice. In addition to the tremendous educational and cultural value, it's also my hope that by memorializing the stories of historic Siouxland entrepreneurs, people who started their businesses in Siouxland and helped the region grow and prosper, it can act as an inspiration for the next Currier Holman or Howard Smith to learn from the past and positively impact the future," said Ted Waitt, Founder of the Waitt Family Foundation.

Cindy Waitt, Director of the Waitt Family Foundation, said, "We are so pleased to be involved in this exciting and much needed project. Sioux City has such a rich and diverse history, and this wonderful new building can help preserve this history for future generations."

Mike Bennett, President and CEO of Terra Industries, serves as the General Chairman of the capital campaign. In reference to the Waitt gift, Bennett said, "This tremendous, generous challenge grant by the Waitt Family Foundation provides a wonderful incentive for the Siouxland community to donate the remaining needed contributions to make our new museum a reality. We are thrilled to enter the public phase of this campaign and to establish a first class facility that will showcase our Siouxland heritage."

The development of a new museum facility represents an extensive public/private partnership. The City of Sioux City purchased the former JCPenney building at 607 Fourth Street for use as a new museum, and has appropriated \$1.5 million for the project. The new museum will occupy the entire first floor of the building — approximately 55,000 square feet of floor space, with about 10,000 square feet of two-story space as an atrium in the southwest corner of the building. A portion of the second floor currently houses a Northwest Airlines call center.

"A new facility will allow the Sioux City Public Museum to increase educational opportunities, dramatically expand permanent exhibits, host exciting traveling exhibits, and build new partnerships," said Steve Hansen, Director of the Sioux City Public Museum. The SHF board has hired the architectural firm of Neumann Monson Wictor of Sioux City as the principal designers. The local company partnered in their application with Bahr Vermeer Haecker Architects of Lincoln, Nebraska, which has extensive museum design experience.

Early architectural renderings call for a dramatic façade with a glass exterior through which artifacts and activities can be seen from outside. The location, at 4th and Nebraska Streets, places the museum at the heart of Sioux City's recently designated downtown cultural and entertainment district, in proximity to the Sioux City Art Center, the Orpheum Theater, other cultural and entertainment venues, and the central business district. The Foundation's board envisions the new Public Museum as a regional destination, adding to the cultural attractions in the central business district.

In addition, the new facility will allow more space for the display and storage of the Sioux City Public Museum collections. Currently, the Sioux City Public Museum is only able to showcase 15 percent of its collection which includes more than 250,000 photographs and 50,000 objects. The new museum will contain multipurpose classrooms, offices, a conference room, artifact and exhibition preparation rooms, food prep space, a theater, large temporary exhibit spaces, archival storage, and a gift shop.

The Sioux City Public Museum traces its roots back to late 1800s, later becoming a division of the City of Sioux City in 1938. The Museum opened in the Peirce Mansion in 1961.

The Waitt Family Foundation is a charitable organization founded by Ted Waitt in 1993. The Foundation has made over 2,000 grants to programs that help us understand our past, improve the present, and prepare for the future.

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