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Sioux City Public Museum Receives Highest National Recognition

Awarded Re-Accreditation from the American Association of Museums

The Sioux City Public Museum has again achieved accreditation by the American Association of Museums (AAM), the highest national recognition afforded the nation's museums. Accreditation signifies excellence to the museum community, to governments, funders, outside agencies, and to the museum-going public. The Sioux City Public Museum was initially accredited in 1974 soon after AAM's accreditation process was developed, and was reaccredited in 1984 and 2000. All museums must undergo a reaccreditation review at least every 10 years to maintain accredited status.

AAM Accreditation brings national recognition to a museum for its commitment to excellence, accountability, high professional standards and continued institutional improvement. Developed and sustained by museum professionals for 35 years, AAM's museum accreditation program is the field's primary vehicle for quality assurance, self-regulation and public accountability. It strengthens the museum profession by promoting practices that enable leaders to make informed decisions, allocate resources wisely, and remain financially and ethically accountable — all in order to provide the best possible service to the public.

"We applaud the museum's audience evaluation efforts and successful community involvement, achieved with a modest budget and small staff," wrote James A. Welu, chair of the Accreditation Commission, in the notification letter. "Since the last review, the museum has made great strides in improving stewardship of its collections." The letter and accompanying report made numerous mentions of how the Sioux City Public Museum's expanded downtown site will further strengthen collections care, accessibility, and exhibit and educational offerings.

"I want to acknowledge the staff and volunteers who contributed to this process and made our reaccreditation possible," said Steve Hansen, Museum director. "This honor speaks to the high level of programming and service we provide."

Of the nation's estimated 17,500 museums, 775 are currently accredited. The Sioux City Public Museum is one of only 19 museums accredited in Iowa.

Accreditation is a very rigorous but highly rewarding process that examines all aspects of a museum's operations. To earn accreditation a museum first must conduct a year of self-study, then undergo a site visit by a team of peer reviewers. AAM's Accreditation Commission, an independent and autonomous body of museum professionals, considers the self-study and visiting committee report to determine whether a museum should receive accreditation. While the time to complete the process varies by museum, it generally takes as much as three years.

“Accreditation is emblematic of an institution’s commitment to public service and to overall excellence,” said Ford W. Bell, AAM president. “Attaining accreditation involves taking a hard look at yourself, allowing your peers in the field to do the same, and being judged to be superior in all areas. The people of Sioux City can take great pride in the fact that their local institution is one of America’s premier museums.”

The Sioux City Public Museum is housed in the historic John Peirce Mansion. Other museum locations include the Sergeant Floyd River Museum and Welcome Center, Pearl Street Research Center, and the Loren D. Callendar Gallery in City Hall. A new museum facility will open in downtown Sioux City in 2010. Admission is free. For more information, call 712-279-6174 or visit www.siouxcitymuseum.org.

The American Association of Museums has been bringing museums together since 1906, helping to develop standards and best practices, gathering and sharing knowledge, and providing advocacy on issues of concern to the entire museum community. With more than 15,000 individual, 3,000 institutional, and 300 corporate members, AAM is dedicated to ensuring that museums remain a vital part of the American landscape, connecting people with the greatest achievements of the human experience, past, present and future. For more information, visit www.aam-us.org.

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