

Museum on Main Street

OVERVIEW: LOCAL EXHIBITION DEVELOPMENT

Between Fences

A key component of a successful MoMS experience is the local exhibition that accompanies the Smithsonian exhibition. We strongly encourage each community to develop an accompanying exhibit which examines the themes of *Between Fences* from the perspective of the local community and tells the local story. The exhibit may be installed at the museum if space is available or may be installed at a nearby exhibition space in the community.

The primary goals are to put together a **Local Exhibition** that supplements *Between Fences* by putting a local spin on it and examining the history of land ownership and perceptions of property rights in your community. There are a number of ways to approach exhibition development. You can start by putting out a call for artifacts and then developing an exhibition around them, or you can start by collecting oral histories to determine the story you want to tell about your community and then collecting specific objects to support your exhibition thesis. Both are valid approaches. If the end result is an object-based exhibit that documents local land traditions, then you were successful!

If you've never developed a local exhibition before, we've posted some helpful and brief exhibition development articles from the Wisconsin Historical Society on the Museum on Main Street web site (<http://museumonmainstreet.org>). In addition, there are numerous books available through the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) and the American Association of Museums (AAM) that are excellent resources for exhibition development. Take a look at their web sites, www.aaslh.org and www.aam.org. Also, *Good Show: A Practical Guide for Temporary Exhibitions*, available through SITES, is a good resource for designing and fabricating an effective exhibition. And remember, the MoMS staff, your state tour coordinator and your state scholar are also available to provide guidance and assistance.

You'll want to establish a **Local Exhibit Planning Committee** to be responsible for the following:

- Planning and design of local additions to *Between Fences*
- Developing exhibit ideas and lists of resources and items needed. (See attached Ideas for Local Exhibitions and Programs)
- Developing lists of potential resource providers for the desired artifacts. (See below for listing of suggested community partners.)
- Soliciting those potential providers/partners for help and donation/loan of artifacts. (NOTE: Forms for incoming loan receipt/agreement, deed of gift and receipt of return are provided on the Museum on Main Street web site at <http://museumonmainstreet.org>).
- Inventory/track borrowed resources and provide appropriate thanks and recognition for gifts and loans
- Overseeing the physical installation of the exhibit
- Overseeing the dismantling and return of exhibit materials

An **Exhibit Installation Sub-Committee** should also be organized for the specific purpose of the physical installation of the exhibit. To assist the museum staff in fabricating the local exhibition this committee could be composed of local architects,

handymen, finish carpenters and cabinet-makers, electricians, Plexiglas technicians, graphic artists, and/or printers as needed for the local exhibit.

Suggested Community Partners

- Local businesses—especially surveying and fencing businesses
- County Zoning Offices
- Farmers and Farming Co-ops/Ranchers and Ranching Co-ops
- Local courts and legal community
- Library
- Cooperative Extension Services office
- Chamber of Commerce, Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Newspapers
- Video rental store and movie theatre owners/managers
- Photography clubs