

# **Museum on Main Street**

## **LOCAL EXHIBITION DEVELOPMENT**

### ***New Harmonies***

We strongly encourage each community to develop an accompanying exhibit, which examines the themes of *New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music* from the perspective of the local community. 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 *New Harmonies* by putting a local spin on it and examining the music traditions of your community—how it is produced, prepared and consumed. 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 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://www.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](http://www.aaslh.org) and [www.aam.org](http://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.

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

- Planning and design of local additions to *New Harmonies*
- Developing exhibit ideas and lists of resources and items needed. (See attached listing of exhibition ideas and suggested objects to collect)
- 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://www.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**

- Music organizations and music stores
- Churches
- Library
- Fairs and Festivals
- Clubs and dance halls
- Historical societies, genealogical societies
- Chamber of Commerce, Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Radio Stations
- Video rental store and movie theatre owners/managers