

Museum on Main Street

OVERVIEW

Marketing / Public Relations

Public Relations Strategies

We recommend a three-pronged approach for public relations activities with Museum on Main Street: national, state, and local.

At the national level, the Public Relations staff at the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES) will issue press releases and press packets to national media on behalf of the multi-state tour of the exhibition. In addition, complete state itineraries and basic information will be available at the MOMS web site, www.museumonmainstreet.org. Downloadable exhibition images may be gathered by the press at the Web site as well.

At the state level, it is recommended that the State Humanities Council devise a statewide marketing initiative that positions itself as the state's "presenter" of the exclusive Smithsonian tour. The council may want to solicit media sponsors (radio, TV and print) of the tour, initiate statewide programs that expand the project's reach beyond the selected towns, or partner with cultural tourism agencies to produce printed materials for broad distribution. Some councils have even elected to contract with outside public relations firms to handle project publicity; others have been successful in conducting PR themselves. In short, councils' histories with MOMS show that the project can garner unprecedented media coverage.

At the local level, it is recommended that each host organization be left to devise and implement their own marketing and public relations strategies within their town and surrounding area (using supplementary materials provided from both state and national sources). The exact responsibilities of each venue, including their geographic breadth of media coverage, should be spelled out clearly from the outset in order to avoid conflicts with state PR plans and other host venues.

Credit

The following section contains specific credit requirements that should be used in all print materials and program applications. State humanities councils will want to make conscious efforts to ensure that their own organizational credit is used prominently in the exhibition's state tour. While the Smithsonian name is an enormous magnet in garnering publicity, its cachet can also overshadow the important contributions of the state humanities council and/or its partners. Many veteran program officers of Museum on Main Street can add sound advice to help achieve balance in project credit.