

Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service Receives Additional Funding for Rural Programs

The Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES) has received a \$500,000 increase from Congress in order to expand its outreach to rural towns and communities in the United States. Part of the Smithsonian Institution's fiscal year 2002 appropriation from Congress (which began Oct. 1, 2001), this marks the first time both the House and the Senate have approved a proposed increase in spending for "Museum on Main Street," a unique partnership which brings together SITES, the Federation of State Humanities Councils, individual state humanities councils, and small museums in a collaborative effort to serve rural audiences.

With a focus on American history and culture, "Museum on Main Street," established in 1991, provides small museums and historical societies in communities of, on average, 10,000 or fewer the opportunity to present quality exhibitions and programs based upon Smithsonian collections and research.

"We are so pleased that Congress has recognized the success of 'Museum on Main Street'," said Secretary Lawrence Small, director of the Smithsonian Institution. "The combined efforts of the Smithsonian Institution and the state humanities councils have had a long-lasting impact on each rural community touched by the program. Now, we expect even more small towns across the country to be able to participate in the program and, thereby, reap the benefits, such as increased professionalism and visibility, associated with access to the wonderful resources the Institution has to offer."

The first three exhibitions in the program—"Produce for Victory: Posters on the American Home Front, 1941-1945," "Barn Again! Celebrating an American Icon," and "Yesterday's Tomorrows: Past Visions of the American Future"—have traveled to nearly 250 towns in 31 states.

The appropriation is particularly timely as November marked the beginning of simultaneous, yearlong "Barn Again!" tours in Ind., Iowa and Neb. Visitors will be able to explore the history, architecture and meaning of barns in America through the exhibition, as well as have the opportunity to participate in the numerous programs organized by each small community. "Museum on Main Street" has also recently begun production on a fourth exhibition, which will explore American foodways. For descriptions of all "Museum on Main Street" exhibitions, click: www.si.edu/SITES/projects/moms.htm.

"Museum on Main Street" is made possible through the generous support of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and the Hearst Foundation. Additional funding has been provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the

Rockefeller Foundation, the Smithsonian Institution Special Exhibitions Fund and the Smithsonian Institution Educational Outreach Fund.

Each year, SITES shares the wealth of Smithsonian collections and research programs with millions of people outside of Washington, D.C. One of the Smithsonian's four National Programs, SITES makes available a wide range of exhibitions about art, science and history, which are shown not only in museums but wherever people live, work and play; including libraries, science centers, historical societies, community centers, botanical gardens, schools, and shopping malls. Since its founding in 1952, SITES has developed and circulated more than 1,500 exhibitions. In 2002, SITES will celebrate 50 years of connecting Americans to their shared cultural heritage. Exhibition descriptions and tour schedules are available at www.si.edu/sites.

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