

Delaware Department of State / Division of Libraries

Media Release

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RELEASE

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DELAWARE RECEIVES \$220,000 GRANT TO HELP PROTECT CULTURAL TREASURES

(DOVER, Del.) – The Delaware Division of Libraries (DDL) has been awarded a \$220,000 grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to train staff and volunteers in small museums, libraries, archives, and historical societies to properly care for collections that are important to their communities. Delaware is one of only five states to receive this grant. Workshops on archival basics and collections management will begin this fall.

A consortium led by the Delaware Division of Libraries—and including the Delaware Public Archives, Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, Delaware Museum Association, University of Delaware Museum Studies Program, LYRASIS, and the Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts in Philadelphia—will use the IMLS funds to address key findings of a recent statewide study, most notably that almost none of the 40 responding cultural institutions in Delaware had developed a long-range preservation plan. The great majority of institutions also currently lack disaster plans, and very few staff members are trained to carry out the disaster plans that do exist.

“As the First State, Delaware’s historic collections contain the formative heritage of our nation,” said Secretary of State Jeffrey Bullock. “This grant from IMLS will lay the groundwork to preserve our history and to improve public access to it into the future.”

State Librarian Annie Norman added that “the Delaware Division of Libraries appreciates the opportunity provided by this grant to initiate the inventory of historic holdings of Delaware libraries, museums, and historical societies to ultimately make them accessible to all.”

A large portion of the grant funding will be used for staff education. For instance, the Consortium will be able to offer free workshops and statewide conferences on important preservation issues to all of Delaware’s cultural heritage institutions. Some of the specific topics to be addressed will be creating disaster preparedness and recovery plans, providing collection security, establishing specific exhibit policies, and ensuring fire safety. In addition, resource

guides and booklets for each of the workshops will be given to participants to be used for reference long after the workshops and the grant are complete.

The funding will also be used to develop a methodology and custom databases for cultural heritage organizations to properly inventory their collections. Working with leading Delaware institutions, such as the University of Delaware, will allow for sustainability of the project past the end of the grant period. Finally, a portion of the grant will be used to purchase kits with equipment to measure conditions which can damage collections, such as temperature and humidity.

The successful grant application is built on a planning grant that the Delaware Division of Libraries received from IMLS in 2008. With its partners, DDL completed a comprehensive statewide preservation assessment and increased public awareness of the conservation needs of Delaware's treasures. The results of the Heritage Health Index (HHI), a report on the dire state of the nation's collections, show that Delaware is certainly not alone in its need for better collection stewardship. The HHI survey, conducted by Heritage Preservation with IMLS support, found that 80 percent of collecting institutions throughout the country did not have an emergency plan for their collections or trained staff to carry it out. They concluded that approximately 190 million objects could be lost in just a few short years without immediate attention.

UPCOMING WORKSHOPS

Archival Basics

Led by Certified Archivist Beth Bensman of the National Archives, Mid-Atlantic Region

Tuesday, October 12, 2010

Buena Vista Conference
Center
New Castle, DE

Tuesday, October 19, 2010

Delaware Public Archives
Dover, DE

Thursday, October 28, 2010

Lewes Public Library
Lewes, DE

Learn the theories and practical applications to more effectively choose what materials to include in your collections, and how to organize them. To register call 302-739-4748 ext. 5116 or E-mail: beth-ann.ryan@state.de.us

Collections Management: Essential Policies and Procedures for Cultural Institutions

Led by Laura Hartz Stanton, Director of Preservation Services at the Conservation Center for Art & Historic Artifacts, Philadelphia, PA

Tuesday, November 9, 2010

Buena Vista Conference
Center

New Castle, DE

Tuesday, November 16, 2010

Lewes Public Library

Lewes, DE

Thursday, December 2, 2010

Delaware Public Archives

Dover, DE

Discover how to design and implement a collections management policy and handling and maintenance guidelines. You will also learn how to delegate staff responsibilities and work with volunteers and boards of directors. To register call 302-739-4748 ext. 5116 or E-mail: beth-ann.ryan@state.de.us