

Recommended Practices *for* **Railway Museums**

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A Note of Thanks

These Recommended Practices for Railway Museums represent the summation of many months' worth of selfless effort on the part of numerous individuals representing ARM member institutions in both the United States and Canada. A Recommended Practices Working Group convened several times in Washington, D.C., thanks to the availability of meeting facilities there graciously provided by National Public Radio, and other meetings took place elsewhere as well.

The Working Group's membership remained fluid, and numerous helpful comments and suggestions were received from far and wide in connection with each of eight succeeding drafts that were circulated leading up to the final document. A complete listing of those who assisted in the process is therefore simply not possible here, but several persons and one association in particular deserve mention:

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The Association of Railway Museums is deeply indebted to all who took part in this document's thoughtful production.

Preamble

Railway museums represent a diverse mix of organizations and institutions that traditionally have been driven by several primary forces:

- *The tremendous interest shared by numerous individuals in the main line and urban railways of North America, and the significant impacts of these railways on their lives, particularly in times past*
- *The realization that failure to acquire many railroad artifacts in a timely manner would result in their immediate, deliberate destruction*
- *The fact that other museums and historical societies were unable to preserve and interpret these fields in a comprehensive way*
- *The evolution of a committed, volunteer movement which fulfilled the need to preserve the memory and history of this fundamental developmental force in North America's heritage*

The railway preservation movement began almost entirely with concerted volunteer efforts and some corporate or civic attempts to preserve and secure for posterity the artifacts, documents, equipment, and structures of this railway heritage. These pioneering efforts have nurtured the public memory of railway transportation history, and institutionalized the preservation of its many physical reminders. As caretakers of history, the resulting organizations have attempted—through a variety of static and operating venues—to present their collections and materials to a diverse and broad-based audience throughout North America.

The stewardship and trust practiced by dedicated volunteers and emerging institutions during these early years have formed a foundation upon which to build, and provided a large body of knowledge. Today, these institutions wish to share this knowledge with the visiting public, with other railway heritage preservation institutions, and with the museum field.

The railway heritage preservation field is now in transition, from inward-oriented preservation organizations to outward-oriented educational and public service institutions that recognize a responsibility to hold their collections in the public trust. Recommended Practices for Railway Museums is a document intended to help guide this transition.

Use of This Guide

The Association of Railway Museums has formulated these Recommended Practices to serve as a self-help guide for institutional growth and development. As with any comprehensive document, not all parts apply to or affect all institutions. Recommended Practices for Railway Museums identifies the unique characteristics of railway museums and integrates these characteristics with practices that are today standard in the broader museum field. Its goals are:

1. To serve as an educational tool for railway preservation and interpretive efforts, and to communicate the expectations commonly accepted in the field.
2. To function as a guide and to provide a framework for existing museums and organizations as they strive to achieve higher levels of professionalism.
3. To serve as a benchmark for railway museums seeking accreditation from the American Association of Museums (AAM), the Canadian Museums Association (CMA), and others. By keeping the unique concerns of the railway preservation community foremost, Recommended Practices for Railway Museums will be a guide by which visiting accreditation committees can evaluate levels of professionalism at each institution.
4. To define and emphasize the railway museum community's commitment to holding its collections in the public trust, ensuring the long-term care of the historic objects entrusted to its protection.
5. To demonstrate to a public audience and to the museum field each institution's commitment to serving and educating the public through a variety of means, including effective interpretation techniques.
6. To help ARM member institutions increase the effectiveness of their fundraising and development efforts through demonstration—to the public and potential donors—of their commitment, not only to collections care and interpretation but also to professional management practices and community involvement.

Organized railway preservation began as a series of grass-roots efforts by individuals, communities, and corporate leaders. Professionalism levels therefore must evolve, increasing as each institution matures and develops additional resources.

Limited resources may necessarily preclude or delay adoption of some of the initiatives recommended in this document. Nevertheless, the Association believes that member organizations should review these Recommended Practices, and establish eventual achievement of the recommendations as an institutional goal.

The Association recognizes that the Recommended Practices are part of an evolving document, and welcomes comments and suggestions.

Contents

<i>Preamble</i>	1
<i>Use of This Guide</i>	2
1. Institutional Purposes	4
<i>public interests; mission statements; periodic reassessment</i>	
2. Governance	5
<i>governing authorities' responsibilities; selection processes and criteria</i>	
3. Staff Structure and Evolution	6
<i>training; professional development; personnel practices; number and types of staff positions, diversity</i>	
4. Programs and Support Activities	8
<i>development of interpretive goals; basic activities; educational programming; well-being of visitors; re-creation of authentic railway experiences; railway operations; visitor feedback; operational training and safety</i>	
5. Collections Stewardship	11
<i>development of collections management policies (categories of collections, use versus preservation, collections staff roles and responsibilities, acquisition, accessioning and deaccessioning, loans, ethics and regulations); preservation and conservation practices (categories of objects, use decisions, maintenance); spare parts</i>	
6. Museum Facilities and Infrastructure	15
<i>restoration workshops; track, signaling, communication, and power distribution systems; security concerns; emergency preparedness and safety</i>	
7. Funding	17
<i>fees and proceeds; establishment of funding priorities; development of fundraising strategies</i>	
8. Accessibility	18
<i>making facilities and equipment accessible to all possible audiences</i>	
9. Corporate Relations	19
<i>promotion and maintenance of positive relations; channeling of contacts; development of business plans; unethical representation; timeliness; sensitivity to corporate images; conduct while on properties</i>	
Appendices	
A. Definition of Terms	20
B. Staff Position Definitions	22

1. Institutional Purposes

Railway museums need a clearly stated purpose, giving them a reason to exist and providing a means from which to set their direction.

- 1.1 Museums are not-for-profit institutions that collect and preserve artifacts and related documents in the public interest
 - a. Holding collections in public trust, museums strive to conserve these items in the most responsible manner possible, and to display, demonstrate, and interpret them in ways that educate and enlighten people
 - b. In order to convey the idea that railroads and street railways existed to provide a system of transportation, railway museums also often preserve and interpret skills, crafts, and processes, not just objects. They may choose to operate parts of their collections for the visitor by providing experiences such as rides aboard authentic rail vehicles

- 1.2 Each institution must clearly establish its purposes through adoption of a Mission Statement that articulates the museum's broad institutional goals and objectives as they relate to the acquisition, preservation, care, and use of items collected in the public interest. Items to be addressed would typically include
 - a. What kinds of things a museum will collect, limited in terms of types of artifacts and documents (*e.g.*, rail equipment, ephemera, or photographs), technologies, or other subgroupings (*e.g.*, interurban electric or main/short line railroading), geographical areas, and time periods
 - b. How these tangible items will be used for the public good, in terms of such things as displays, demonstrations, programming, and scholarly access

- 1.3 In order to assure continued validity of institutional goals and their relevance to public involvement and interest, railway museums should conduct periodic or ongoing reassessment

2. Governance

The governing authority protects and enhances the museum's collections and programs and monitors its physical, human, and financial resources. It ensures that all these instruments and resources support the museum's mission.

- 2.1 Museum governance must be in conformance with museum community and governmental policies, ethical standards, and regulations. Governing authority members must
 - a. be aware of their fiduciary, legal, and ethical responsibilities as trustees of collections held in the public trust
 - b. ensure that all those who work for or on behalf of a museum understand and support its mission and public trust responsibilities
 - c. understand and fulfill their trusteeship duties, acting corporately rather than as individuals
 - d. ensure that a formal mechanism (*e.g.*, a code of conduct) exists to disseminate standards and expectations regarding working relationships among trustees, employees, and volunteers, based on equity and mutual respect
 - e. be aware of applicable provisions of non-profit law, tax and accounting regulations, and related legal and fiscal concerns including institutional and individual liability and exposure

- 2.2 As most railway museums depend on a high level of volunteer staffing and management, and have traditionally been financed largely by grassroots support from many small donors directly interested and involved in museum activities, museum boards often include heavy participation or even control by member/volunteer staff members. Governing authorities
 - a. must understand that the demands and concerns posed by holding differing and potentially conflicting roles within an organization (*e.g.*, governing authority member and department head) pose added challenges for those affected to act responsibly and ethically
 - b. must consider that management involvement by dedicated staffers can be both a strength, in terms of commitment to a museum, as well as a possible source of insular or myopic thinking, factors which must be weighed carefully
 - c. should ensure that new candidates are encouraged in the processes by which individuals are selected or nominated for the governing authority. Consideration should be given to nominating candidates based on a diversity of qualifications such as objectivity, business and/or management background, leadership abilities, and other appropriate abilities or skills. Levels of popularity with other members, degree of organizational participation, or accumulated volunteer service hours should not be the primary criteria in such processes
 - d. are encouraged to formulate policies and plans for broadening their organization's community representation and participation, either in terms of adding members of the community-at-large to the board itself, or by involving such community representatives in advisory or review capacities
 - e. are encouraged to think broadly and make decisions for the good of the institution, not just to advance ideas, improvements, or programs that fall within the areas of their greatest personal interest

3. Staff Structure and Evolution

Railway museums, historically heavily dependent on volunteer labor, should consider how they might enhance or even alter the makeup and organization of their staffs in order to better direct the pursuit of institutional goals and professionalism.

- 3.1 Many railway museums are primarily and heavily dependent on volunteer labor at all levels in their organizations. Full and part-time volunteers often fill the required staff positions and learn through experience and exposure to the field. The cultural transition from an enthusiast orientation to one embodying accepted museum field of public service and education evolves through effective management and oversight, enfranchising and motivating both paid and volunteer staff members. Characteristic aspects of railway museums affect the path to professionalism, and the following are to be considered:
 - a. The primacy of safety and compliance with regulatory requirements means expertise in railway operations and related issues may be equally as important as training or experience in educational programming and museum curation. Nevertheless, railway museums are expected to provide opportunities for paid and volunteer staff to participate in professional museum development seminars and workshops in order to develop and improve their competency with such programs and practices.
 - b. While financial constraints of railway museums have often imposed limitations on professional training, institutions should establish staff development and improvement goals, and look for innovative ways of encouraging professional development, networking, and collegial exchanges.
 - c. Some institutions will evolve in directions requiring the engagement of compensated staff to either accomplish institutional missions or manage organizational growth. Such museums should anticipate the impacts of such changes, and develop organizational structures appropriate for the integration of volunteer and paid staff.
- 3.2 Personnel practices established by the governing authority shall be used to supervise both volunteer and paid staff members. The following are to be considered:
 - b. Railway museum staff members, whether paid or volunteer, are often active members of the institution or interested parties who are very dedicated. Wherever reasonably possible, sensitive management techniques should be employed to allow development by such workers of a sense of ownership in their efforts, so long as it is to the organization's benefit
 - c. In similar fashion, financial constraints have often allowed paid employment only at below-market rates. In order to assure a future for such positions, and to retain talented and qualified individuals, museums desiring to fill such positions should also work to identify or develop adequate financial resources to support them
 - c. Funding of staff participation in conferences, seminars and workshops is recommended, as it can reinforce a museum's commitment to developing and improving staff, procedures, and programs, among other benefits.
- 3.3 Railway museum staff typically includes positions in several major categories, with an executive who is responsible to the governing body for overall staff supervision. The number and variety of job types in a museum depends on its size, needs, and resources. Combining and/or dividing positions to suit specialized requirements is encouraged.
 - a. The institution must establish an organizational structure that meets its major major functional needs. Examples of functional areas might include:

- Museum programs management and development
 - Collections management and exhibits development
 - Business management and resource development (fundraising)
 - Railway operations and visitor interaction
 - Facilities maintenance and development
- b. Museum programs, collections management, and exhibits development require staff who have knowledge of the history, philosophy, and ethics of museums; knowledge of the museum's mission; an understanding of the physical and historical nature of objects; good background in various types of history; an understanding of learning development patterns and human interaction skills; and an understanding of other areas of museum expertise with which the individual staff member comes in contact in the regular course of work
- c. Business management, resource development, facilities maintenance and development, and railway operations and visitor interaction require staff who have knowledge of the museum's mission; an understanding of the physical and historical nature of railways; an understanding of appropriate safety practices and procedures; and an understanding of other areas of museum expertise with which the individual staff member comes in contact in the regular course of work.
- 3.4 The diversity of railway museum audiences and staffs is encouraged and recognized as an essential strength by the museum community. Discrimination on any basis should not be tolerated.

4. Programs and Support Activities

Museums recognize their role as interpreters of history and social change through the display, demonstration, and interpretation of collections.

- 4.1 Interpretive goals must be developed for each museum. Existing or planned collections and resources should be considered in determining these goals, which can be broadly or narrowly focused, and need not be restricted to themes suggestive only of chronological history or to simple statements of fact. These goals might include:
 - a. Demonstrating the impacts of railroads and rail transit on social, political, technological, and economic history
 - b. Relating how the availability of inexpensive rail passenger and freight transportation influenced patterns of agriculture and natural resource development, urban growth, suburban living, and business expansion
 - c. Conveying how innovations in transportation have produced profound and lasting changes to our society
 - d. Demonstrating fundamental engineering concepts such as rolling resistance, inertia, strength of materials, and deflection
 - e. Demonstrating fundamental chemistry concepts such as power generation, fuel transformation, and conversion of chemical energy to mechanical energy

- 4.2 Successful interpretation results from integration of exhibits, demonstrations, and trained interpreters, resulting in vivid and meaningful experiences for each visitor that
 - a. Provide the historical context not offered solely by exhibits, demonstrations, or explanations—the how, when, where, and why
 - b. Go beyond simple factual information and technological detail to explain how the exhibited artifacts changed people’s lives
 - c. Help people to challenge “common wisdom” or other widely held views that may be based solely on inaccurate history or lack of competing, scholarly viewpoints
 - d. Are best measured, in terms of success, by the reactions and interest shown by everyday visitors, not just by particular interest groups or enthusiasts

- 4.3 The successful conveyance of information to visitors relies on attention by railway museums to several basic activities, including:
 - a. Differing types of exhibits located throughout the museum. Each must be accompanied by interpretive labeling. Explanatory brochures or audio-visual programs should be used to supplement self-guided tours. Highly visible, simple directional signage should be posted to aid visitors. Tours led or directed by interpreters are strongly encouraged to help supplement these. Examples include:
 - Permanent and temporary exhibits in indoor exhibit space
 - Outdoor exhibits involving artifacts, buildings, and railway infrastructure
 - Displayed vehicles and other artifacts in carhouses/train sheds. Consider especially providing viewing facilities (such as raised platforms) or supervised access, as appropriate, to rail vehicle interiors, not just exteriors
 - Exhibits (perhaps including viewing of actual work-in-progress) of ongoing and appropriate conservation/restoration, tools, and documentation techniques
 - Exhibits inside cars used for interpretation
 - Historic buildings already on-site, or ones relocated to the site, that help by re-creating proper ambiance and context, and/or can be utilized as appropriate facilities in which to demonstrate various railroad activities and functions
 - b. Educational programming, which should seek to reach out and involve members of your community and might include:

- Classroom orientations, school field trips, and use of prepared curriculum/study guides by teachers
 - Printed publications, videotapes, and other media materials about the museum, its collections, and associated history
 - Formal classroom courses at the primary, secondary, or college level, perhaps in conjunction with local schools/universities
 - Presentations by scholars, staff, or other interested persons
 - Collecting oral histories from railroad employees, past and present, as well as community residents and related persons
 - Other innovative programming (*e.g.*, summer camps, Elderhostel, and cooperative programs with other institutions or service organizations)
- c. Demonstrating concern for the well-being of visitors physically, intellectually, and emotionally, by
- Keeping public safety, security, and comfort in mind at all times, especially as it relates to museum facilities, demonstration activities, and programs
 - Showing respect for a diversity of opinions and perceptions
 - Ensuring that a lack of knowledge or background in various subjects does not unduly impede enjoyment or learning processes
 - Periodically surveying visitor reactions to interpretive programs, operations, and exhibits, in order to improve their effectiveness for and increase interest among the general public
- 4.4 Re-creation of an authentic railway experience is one of the most powerful teaching tools available to railway museums. It helps in preserving and promulgating crafts, skills, and entire historic railroading environments
- a. The unique atmosphere of railroading and rail transit is something railway museums often choose to conserve, preserve, or re-create—almost as if it were another exhibit. If a museum chooses to interpret a particular atmosphere, it should consider codifying what the desired interpretive goal is and how the following points relate to its mission:
- Fidelity to a given time period
 - Consistency with museum collections and other interpretive goals
 - Completeness of overall atmosphere
 - Accuracy of the effort in terms of architecture, technology, and other displayed items
- b. Each museum has unique interpretive theme possibilities related to its collections, geographical location, proximity to major cities, and/or specific site, facility, or right-of-way history
- c. Actual use of historic rail rights-of-way, passenger and freight handling facilities, and railway mechanical installations for demonstration purposes can be an important means of interpreting these sites
- 4.5 Railway operations can provide a unique interpretive tool for capitalizing on the sights, sounds, and smells of “live” rail vehicles, operating personnel, and the entire railway operating environment
- a. Operating equipment can supplement interpretive use of vehicles in static exhibits
- b. Operations personnel can play a major role in interpretation, thus interpretive training should be considered for inclusion in formal qualifications standards
- c. Use of period-appropriate dress and uniforming is encouraged
- d. Role playing, in which interpreters assume the persona of a rail worker or passenger from a bygone era, is an effective interpretive tool

- e. The difference between a simple ride or visit and an interpretive experience must be understood by staff and communicated to visitors, either implicitly or explicitly
- 4.6 Sampling and measurement of customer (visitor) feedback is a necessary component of any successful museum. In order to develop high levels of attendance and community support for institutional facilities and programs, visitor input must be sought at regular intervals. Based on the responses, museums can decide how to best target their future course while still remaining true to their organizational mission.
- a. Development of a marketing plan should be based on numerous factors, and address visitor reaction to such quantifiables as:
 - Quality and interpretive value of demonstrations and/or operations
 - Relevance of museum demonstrations, exhibits, and programs to visitors' daily lives and experiences
 - Relevance of displays and exhibits to persons without specialized railroad-related knowledge
 - Success or failure of displays, exhibits, and/or programs to properly communicate or interpret the desired messages
- 4.7 Operational training and safety programs protect people, equipment, and artifacts, and help ensure the future for all railway museums. An appropriate allocation of the institution's financial and management resources must be devoted to operational training and safety. These programs include:
- a. Development and use of written operating procedures and rules, consistent with recognized and appropriate railroad, rail transit, and railway museum operating practices
 - b. Formalized training of operating crews, which includes:
 - Periodic verification of physical and mental qualifications of operators, dispatchers, and instructors
 - Formal instruction and written tests to achieve qualification for various levels of service, administered by trained instructors
 - Disciplinary procedures established for handling infractions
 - Maintenance of individual personnel files to record qualification attempts, successful completions, infractions, and any disciplinary actions. These shall be discarded after an appropriate period of time
 - Frequent inspection and reevaluation to ensure quality control
 - Written and taught procedures, developed well in advance of actual need, for handling emergencies
 - c. Development and use of appropriate dispatching mechanisms to ensure safety. These may include the use of radio, phone, or other communications systems to ensure accurate message transmission and receipt, and to provide the ability to summon emergency services in case of need. The use of appropriate traffic control systems (*e.g.*, hand-held batons or automatic signaling systems) can also help to demonstrate technologies developed in the interest of safety
 - d. Development of a formalized system for incident/accident reporting, required in many jurisdictions
 - e. Compliance with applicable governmental regulations relating to rail operations

5. Collections Stewardship

Railway museums, like all museums preserving and utilizing collections, should strive to adopt and follow accepted standards in caring for these collections and assuring their long-term survival.

- 5.1 A comprehensive, written Collections Management Policy must address all aspects of the institution's collections, and relate care and treatment of collections back to the institution's mission.
 1. Written collecting criteria includes:
 - a. What the museum will collect, and why
 - b. How each collection will support the museum's mission
 - c. How each collection and its individual items will be used and cared for (*e.g.*, research, display, operation, education, outreach, etc.)
 2. Categories of collections should be developed, as the artifacts of railway museums are typically grouped into discrete types of related objects that form the basis for evaluating levels of care, utilization, and documentation. These categories may include the following, and can include further subsets:
 - a. Vehicles of all types, *i.e.*, railway, highway, etc.
 - b. Three-dimensional artifacts (large or small items) that are able to support the museum's mission
 - c. Architecture and archeological sites such as buildings, architectural fragments, remains, and historical structures preserved for the express purpose of supporting a museum's educational mission
 - d. Engineering works such as trackwork, ballast, right-of-way, bridges, tunnels, signal systems, overhead wire, and related items
 - e. Documentary collections such as manuscripts, corporate records, timetables, and paper ephemera
 - f. Graphics collections including photographic images, prints, and drawings; engineering documents including prints, tracings, and reproducibles; and fine art
 - g. Museum archives including corporate records of the institution, including board minutes, financial records, publicity items, and collections documentation
 - h. Special collections of those objects rare or unique enough to warrant special recognition and care. Includes items that are extremely valuable, associated with important persons or events, or extremely fragile and/or hard to care for
 - i. Storage collections including artifacts or equipment that may have been acquired specifically in order to be saved from destruction. As adequate care may be especially lacking for items in this category, a basic level of caretaking should be established at the outset before such items are accepted. Separate documentation justifying each item's value and relevance to the collection may be desired before accepting additions to this category
 3. Artifact and equipment categories by use may also be developed to reflect the museum's operational needs and the responsibility to preserve the collections for the public and for future generations. For example, as operation of historic rail vehicles is a primary interpretive experience at many railway museums, vehicles are often categorized in terms of their intended use, such as:
 - a. Accepted for display in the permanent collection
 - b. Accepted for operation/use in the permanent collection
 - c. Accepted for trade
 - d. Kept for consumption/disposal
 - e. On short- or long-term loan or lease
 - f. Kept in storage and/or for study

4. A policy must be developed to define the roles and responsibilities of all individuals involved in collections management. This policy recognizes the potential for conflicts with regard to individual versus institutional collecting, and inherent issues of valuation and personal gain. The policy may specify:
 - a. A collections management committee that is responsible for establishment and adoption of policy
 - b. The roles of the Administrator, Curator, Collections Manager, Registrar, and others caring for the collection
5. Acquisition Policies and Procedures
 - a. Objects that are desired for long-term or permanent display should become part of the museum's permanent collection through a formal process of acquisition and accessioning. This process is to follow current accepted standards in the museum field.
 - b. It should be a clearly-stated goal for the institution to own all objects entrusted to its long-term care, even if highly desirable objects are available through lease or loan. Such leases or loans, even if available at minimal or no up-front cost, often divert institutional resources away from museum-owned objects. In extreme instances, such diversion can raise questions of impropriety that could threaten an American museum's 501(c)3 tax-exempt status.
 - c. Objects considered for accessioning are to be evaluated in terms of:
 - Their relationship to the museum's mission
 - Their rarity or typicality, condition, and provenance
 - The museum's capacity to store and ability to conserve the object
 - Whether the object duplicates others already in the collections
 - Whether there are conditions attached to the acquisition
 - Appraisal for insurance, donation documentation, or market value purposes

Object appraisals must be conducted by persons certified in such work (e.g., recognized as such by tax authorities, insurers, and other museums) and having no connections to prospective donors, recipients, or insurance beneficiaries. To avoid potential conflicts of interest regarding object valuations for donor tax credit or insurance purposes, museums should encourage prospective donors to obtain and pay for appraisals beforehand.
 - d. The actual acquisition process should include:
 - A receipt or record for donated objects
 - A bill of sale for purchased objects
 - A document specifying treatment of loaned objects and condition
 - Records that document all decisions regarding each object
 - Application of accepted registration procedures
6. A deaccessioning policy recognizing the museum's trust responsibility is to be developed in advance, for removing items accessioned into the permanent collections. (Note: Objects not accessioned into the museum's permanent collections do not need to go through a formal deaccessioning process.) Whenever possible, and consistent with the museum's fiduciary responsibility, the museum should dispose of deaccessioned objects to other museums, historical organizations, or similar education institutions, and by means of gift, trade, or sale, in that order. The policy addresses:
 - a. Use of funds generated from deaccessionings, restricting such use to acquisition of additional objects or care of museum collections.

- b. The conditions which must be present for deaccessioning to be considered, including such concerns as non-relevance to mission, poor condition, duplication, or lack of authenticity
 - c. Any conditions or restrictions stated in original deed of gift. If possible, the donor of an object should be notified of any deaccessioning decisions made regarding an item he or she has donated, purchased for, or otherwise made available to the museum
 - d. Conditions by which members of the museum, its governing body, or staff must abide in order to receive any deaccessioned object
7. A clearly-articulated access policy must be developed, putting forth criteria for allowing entry or accessibility to museum collections for research and for public use, and criteria for entry or access to restricted areas and/or objects
8. A loan policy must be adopted that defines the conditions under which the museum will loan out objects in its collections and accept loans from other institutions and private individuals, or for non-museum, commercial activities such as television or movie production. This policy addresses:
- a. Outgoing loans/leases
 - Availability of the object and period of the loan
 - Conditions under which the object will be exhibited, handled, stored, insured, and moved
 - Duration of the loan
 - Fees to be charged
 - Information from the borrowing institution as to its loan procedures and care practices
 - Evidence of insurance and appropriate financial security

Leases to commercial users such as motion picture/television producers should incorporate the best practices developed by ARM members and promulgated at ARM conventions and other gatherings
 - b. Incoming Loans
 - Term of loan
 - Specific purpose for loan/furtherance of museum mission
 - Assessment of physical condition, and periodic updates
 - Insurance coverage
 - Provisions for termination
9. Ethics and Regulations
- Because there are recognized ethical standards within the museum field, as well as regulations that affect the conduct of collections management, the Collections Management Policy includes a section on ethical practice, addressing the following:
- a. Allowable uses of any collection object by staff, members, or members of the governing authority
 - b. That presentation of collections is done honestly and objectively to the public, in accordance with the best current information, scholarship, and museum practice
 - c. That all potential conflicts of interest will be avoided—or, if deemed unavoidable, fully disclosed—when dealing with suppliers and staff
 - d. Staff use of museum affiliation to promote personal collecting activities
 - e. Any and all government regulations that may affect collections management or care (*e.g.*, copyright law, trust law, etc.)

5.2 Conservation Practices

1. Railway museums recognize their responsibility to care for *all* the objects entrusted to them, and to have a clearly defined policy for performing those functions that is in keeping with general museum practice.
2. Preservation and conservation practices are codified in a written document that provides guidelines for making responsible preservation, conservation, and restoration decisions for each of the museum's collections. These guidelines provide for:
 - a. Object condition reports
 - b. Procedures to provide short, medium, or long-term stabilization and storage
 - c. An evaluation and justification for the level of each object's use for display, operation, etc.
 - d. A comprehensive restoration plan, developed prior to the initiation of restoration work, that addresses:
 - The extent of restoration proposed for each object, and scope/amount of alterations from present condition that would be necessary
 - Proposed appearance/time period of restoration, including supporting historical and interpretive justification
 - Use, conservation, preservation, or replacement of original fabric
 - Degree of historical accuracy to be achieved
 - e. Use of original versus replica material or objects
 - f. Documentation procedures, including photographs and written notes of all aspects of work performed
 - g. Funding sources and cost estimates
3. Railway museums create categories of objects to determine which objects will be used, which will be stored or given special treatment due to condition, and how all objects in all categories will be used, stored, and cared for.
4. Railway museums must pay particular attention to objects that may be designated for operation. While safe, reliable performance must remain a primary concern, documentation and preservation of original materials, parts, or configuration should be undertaken and samples retained, in keeping with standard museum practice.
5. Restoration and maintenance practices are to be developed that differentiate the type of work performed on an object, based on its classification and use. Restoration serves several different preservation- or operation-related purposes, and is separate from maintenance.

5.3 Spare Parts

1. Because ongoing operation of rail vehicles often depends on replacement parts, railway museums may have many such items on hand, intended for this purpose. These should be treated as maintenance items, rather than objects accessioned into the permanent collection, as their ultimate use is a consumptive one.
2. If duplicates do not exist, or especially if only one does, options such as fabrication of replica parts or entire replica vehicles must be considered. This way, the “last one” can be preserved as “the original.”
3. Appropriate storage facilities must be provided for replacement parts inventories, keeping in mind that:
 - These items are not intended for public viewing
 - Their presence, especially in outdoor storage, can communicate unintended and potentially negative messages about an institution's collections care policies
 - Their usefulness to an institution is greatly diminished if they cannot be accessed and inventoried in a comprehensive manner

6. Museum Facilities and Infrastructure

The infrastructure necessary to sustain railway museum storage, exhibit, conservation, and restoration activities is often much greater than that of many other types of museums. Demonstration railway operations add greatly to these infrastructure requirements, especially as safety and security must remain paramount.

6.1 Restoration workshops are a unique component of many technology museums, and the restoration and maintenance of rail and road equipment requires heavy machinery of many different types. This equipment is capital intensive, requires specialized training, and requires development of procedures for its proper use to ensure protection of those using the equipment, of the collection, and of the environment.

a. Regulatory areas to be recognized and followed in these museum industrial environments include, among others:

- All national and local safety regulations
- Workers Compensation, liability, and health insurer requirements
- Hazardous materials handling and use, including proper observance of procedures such as Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)
- Proper labeling, storage, and disposal of waste materials
- Proper labeling and handling of hazardous and/or toxic materials

b. In addition to training in proper conservation procedures, appropriate restoration/maintenance shops staff members must also be trained in areas such as:

- Safety awareness and promotion
- Environmental issues
- Emergency procedures including CPR and First Aid

6.2 Track, signalling, communications, and power distribution systems must be constructed and maintained to safe and suitable standards, as these are essential to safety of personnel and conservation of collections. When adopting standards, institutions should consider:

- Physical characteristics of rail equipment to be operated (*e.g.*, weight, width, height, wheel profiles)
- Speed and frequency of operations
- Local weather conditions and relevant long-term data (*e.g.*, rainfall as it relates to culvert capacity, frequency/severity of lightning storms, etc.)
- Local utility construction and maintenance standards and requirements
- Applicable local, regional, and national regulations (*e.g.*, overhead wire height restrictions, grade crossing protection installation and maintenance standards)
- Availability of adequate staff and financial resources to provide proper and ongoing maintenance and rehabilitation

Whenever possible, consideration is given to appropriate period appearances of such systems. Regional variations, specific site history, and historical and/or interpretive relationships between equipment and systems may play important roles in determining appearance and maintenance standards of track, overhead, and related technological support systems.

6.3 Security levels at railway museums are dictated by the characteristics of each institution's collections, its site, and its operational environment. Factors to consider include:

- size of objects and scope of collections
- fragility and value of collections, artifacts, and equipment
- surrounding locale (differs greatly for urban vs. rural museums)

An important dimension of security may be taking steps to prevent encroachment of residential development close to operating rail facilities. Purchase of neighboring land as a buffer may be prudent. For large sites, especially rural ones, use of fencing, full property patrolling, and on-site residency should be employed in a manner appropriate to the environment and the museum's experience. Physical security of facilities and collections must remain paramount. In addition:

- Protection from fire, flood, and vandalism must be developed, and provided in a manner appropriate to the site and the museum's resources
- Issues of controlling illegal dumping, hunting, or use by recreational vehicles may be of great importance
- Emergency preparedness planning, including maintaining close relations with local law enforcement, fire authorities, and abutters, is an important component of effective security. Emergency and disaster plans are to be prepared and adopted as appropriate
- Extra attention must be given to operational safety in congested areas, and equipment operations conducted in a manner designed to minimize disruption to neighbors

7. Funding

Railway museum funding should be understood in terms of a variety of sources, both short- and long-term in nature, that can meet a variety of needs, both capital and non-capital. In nearly all cases, museums need to consider raising additional monies to supplement proceeds from admissions, membership, and demonstration rides fees.

- 7.1 Membership fees, admissions fees, demonstration rides proceeds, and museum store proceeds have historically provided funding for non-capital (operating) expenditures at railway museums. These sources of funding are continuous and ongoing, and this use is considered appropriate by the larger museum community. In the long term, however, these funds in most cases will not be adequate to cover the additional costs of capital improvements and educational programming.
- 7.2 At times, individual donors or groups of donors, by the size of their gifts or force of their personalities, have directed the priorities of institutions to reflect their personal goals and desires. These donors remain valuable funding sources. However, museums must take charge of actively setting and directing institutional priorities, and developing the necessary resources to achieve them, rather than allowing these priorities to be set and driven solely by donor-directed funding mechanisms.
- 7.3 Museums must develop funding priorities, expressed in terms of both short-term budgets and long-range fiscal planning, to address the non-capital needs of the institution. These needs include collections conservation and acquisition, exhibits development, and educational programming. Establishment of endowments for maintenance and/or operations is a recommended approach.
- 7.4 Development of fundraising strategies must be aimed at meeting the needs and goals of the institution rather than simple individual desires or wishes. Partnerships should be developed with the local educational, commercial, and political communities for support and funding. Funding strategies might include annual giving, institutional membership, and planned giving programs
- 7.5 Commercial and fundraising uses of an institution or its resources must not compromise the institution's mission.

8. Accessibility

Museums must make facilities and operating equipment accessible to all, to the extent this can be done without compromising historical integrity, collections security, and visitor safety.

- 8.1 Museum buildings and facilities must be accessible as defined by state and/or federal law; in the U.S., the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 is the relevant document to reference. Specific information is contained in standards set by the American National Standards Institute; such regulations generally exempt historic vehicles if historic quality would be compromised. Historic buildings do not receive a blanket exemption, especially in the case of buildings receiving substantial remodeling or alteration. However, some U.S. states also have historic building codes, which offer alternative solutions to providing accessibility, among other items.
- 8.2 Museums must devote an appropriate portion of their resources to developing strategies that provide for intellectual and/or physical access to collections by all, regardless of ability or disability.

9. Corporate Relations

Railroads are generally commercial pursuits undertaken for shareholder benefit; transit facilities are generally owned by governmental agencies ultimately responsible to the public. In dealing with these and all other business entities, the conduct of railway preservationists at all times must be businesslike and professional.

- 9.1 ARM member museums should strive to promote and maintain positive long-term relationships with all business entities (“companies”) they come in contact with, both public and private and especially including rail operators.
- 9.2 Museum contacts with companies should be channeled through, and limited to, specific museum representatives designated by the institution, who have authority to negotiate on behalf of their institution. Expressions of interest in or requests for equipment or services should be in writing, directed to the proper official within the company. Clearly identified exploratory discussions may be needed for a museum’s governing authority to make a proper decision. Transactions with companies should be ratified by the museum’s governing authority or its designee, which should additionally ensure that the museum’s financing arrangements or other resources permit transactions to be completed without delay.
- 9.3 Inquiries or requests to companies should be supported by a business plan which clearly identifies:
 - a. The equipment or services of interest
 - b. The intended use, presentation, and/or interpretation
 - c. The historic or operational rationale for the request
 - d. Services or assistance requested from the company
 - e. Benefits to the company arising from the transaction
 - f. The museum’s mission, goals, and relevant achievement
 - g. Relevant information regarding the museum’s financing of the transaction
- 9.4 It is unethical for anyone to represent him/herself as the authorized agent of a museum for any purpose whatsoever when such is not the case.
- 9.5 Transactions should be completed in a timely manner. If an unexpected delay occurs, the museum must notify the company of the current status and of subsequent developments.
- 9.6 Museums must promptly acknowledge the cooperation and assistance of companies in an appropriate manner.
- 9.7 Museums must be sensitive to protecting corporate images in the storage, display, and conservation of equipment and artifacts. Subsequent restoration should preserve, present, and interpret in a historically and environmentally responsible manner, and properly respect the company, the profession, the museum, and the community at large. Photographs of restored artifacts, or other appropriate tokens or expressions of gratitude, may be provided to the company in recognition of its assistance. Museums must be particularly sensitive to inappropriate use of corporately identified equipment or objects during commercial use.

9.8 Museum personnel may need to obtain written permission from authorized company officials prior to entering the company's property, and must conduct themselves properly and safely at all times while a guest of the company.

Appendices

A. Definition of Terms

- Accession:** The formal process of creating an immediate, brief, and permanent record of an object for which the museum has title and assigning a unique control number to the object.
- Accuracy:** The degree to which objects, operations, equipment, practices, etc. represent and/or remain specific to a given time period, geographic region, railroad, locale, and/or architectural or cultural heritage.
- Atmosphere:** The somewhat intangible aura, 'feel' or 'look' that is structured to enhance the experience a museum is trying to present. The sights, sounds, smells and impressions left with visitors, staff and the general public.
- Building (or New Construction):** A structure having little or no original fabric or historic relevance to the museum's mission (i.e. a visitor center or shop space).
- Civil Engineering:** The specific railroad structure that consists of the sub-base, base, ballast, cross ties, rail, overhead, bridges, right-of-way and supporting elements such as signals or grade crossing protection. Overhead is the structure of wire, supporting pieces and energizing equipment utilized on electric railways. Specific documentation related to track should include history of construction, evidence of ownership/use, evaluation of historic significance and extent of preservation/restoration to original or period form.
- Conservation:** Planned management of a collection to prevent deterioration, exploitation, destruction or neglect
- Consumption/disposal:** A specific class of objects not accessioned into the permanent collection, primarily designed to be used or depleted; as by supplying parts for other equipment, as a pattern for replication, through regular use, or by scrapping to supply funds for other museum needs.
- Deaccessioning:** The formal museum process of removing an accessioned object from the permanent collections by due process and legal means.
- Display:** A specific class of objects accessioned into the permanent collection to be used primarily for display, interpretation, and long-term protection in an authentic state. Not intended to be consumed, altered, or worn out through regular use.
- Extent:** The proportion of original versus replica items or equipment, or the degree of overall 'look' or 'feel' that is to be preserved or re-created.
- Fidelity to Period:** The degree to which a time period will be adhered to.
- Loan/lease:** A specific class of objects to which the museum does not hold title. Items may or may not be subject to other museum conservation/preservation practices.
- Maintenance:** The ongoing systematic work performed on objects, machinery, structures, etc., designed to enable them to continue to reliably perform their intended functions. Maintenance records are kept indefinitely for each object, structure, or other item considered part of a museum's collection.
- Operation/use:** A specific class of objects accessioned into the permanent collection that are primarily to be used for operation on a regular or semi-regular basis. Original fabric, machinery, material or appearance may be secondary to safe and reliable function. May be further formally subclassified as a demonstration collection-to be operated heavily, kept in general historical form though materials may be substituted for safety; may include creating replicas or near-replicas for operating use; or equipment designated for limited use to ensure

preservation, yet available for some operation to supplement normal role as static exhibits

Part or Spare Part: An item whose intended use is to replace a similar item in a collection object. A part is not an accessioned item of the collection. Museums should appropriately sort, identify, store, and inventory all parts.

Permanent Collections: The collected, accessioned objects of a museum, acquired and preserved because of their potential value as examples, as reference material, or as objects of aesthetic or educational importance, all relating to the museum's stated purpose. Collections justify a museum's existence.

Preservation: The act of keeping an object intact and safeguarding it from any further changes beyond those which it has already undergone.

Provenance: The origin, source, history, and cultural and historical significance of an object.

Registration: The formal museum practice of creating, controlling and maintaining information about all objects owned by and in the care, custody and control of the museum.

Replica: The use of new or non-historic materials or items to accurately duplicate an original object.

Restoration: The act of returning an existing object to an original appearance and condition through treatments such as cleaning, painting, removing later additions, replacing missing parts, etc. Original fabric or exact reproduction parts, finishes, or materials may be used. All work is based on a specific restoration plan for that object. If an object is restored and intended for operation or demonstration, subsequent work performed to ensure continued use is often not classified as restoration.

Site: An integrated complex of structures, buildings, track, and physical plant (utilities, etc.).

Storage/study: A specific class of objects which the museum has acquired to save from destruction, for future reference, or for some future project, for which the museum does not presently have funds. Written documentation explains the object's historic significance, relevance to the collection, and anticipated use.

Structure: An enclosed or semi-enclosed space that a human is capable of entering, being in or standing on. A structure contains all or part of its original fabric and has a purpose related to the museum's mission.

Time: The specific year or period of years to be re-created.

Trade: A specific class of objects not accessioned into the permanent collection, designed to be sold or traded for the benefit of the museum's permanent collections.

B. Staff Position Definitions:

- Archivist:** appraises and edits permanent records and historically valuable documents, participates in research activities based on archival materials, and directs or oversees cataloging, retrieval, reproduction, indexing, accession, deaccession, and safekeeping of such materials.
- Business manager:** is responsible for financial management which may include budgeting; accounting; purchasing; administering personnel procedures, salaries, and benefits; handling contracts; and maintaining endowment, fund-raising, and tax records. Museum store and food service managers may assist.
- Conservator:** coordinates and oversees examination, repair, and conservation of historically significant items such as rail vehicles and smaller artifacts, documents, furnishings, ethnological materials, or textiles. Examines and tests properties of objects to determine condition, need for repair, methods of preservation or restoration, and authenticity, and works with curatorial and facilities maintenance staff to assure use of proper handling, mounting, care, packing, shipping, and storing techniques.
- Curator:** a railway museum specialist providing management and interpretation for all objects in collections. Makes recommendations for acquisition, deaccession, attribution, and authentication of objects; and publishes the results of research about objects in collections. Archivists, collection managers, conservators, editors, librarians, and registrars may assist.
- Development officer:** plans, organizes, directs, and coordinates ongoing and special project funding programs. Confers with management and board to determine needs; develops public relations materials; identifies potential supporters and contributors; plans and coordinates special fund drives and benefit events; establishes ongoing support programs; writes and submits grant proposals; provides proper follow-up and contributor recognition.
- Educator:** develops interpretive exhibits and programs, facilitates public access to objects, and provides docent training. Exhibit designers and curatorial staff may assist.
- Executive director:** Serves as chief official for overseeing all staff-related activities. Assures understanding of and adherence to directives of governing board; provides input and feedback to board from staff; assists board in establishing organizational vision, personnel policies, and institutional objectives.
- General Manager:** is responsible for business/railway practices (financial management, membership development, public relations, railway and structures operations) provides conceptual leadership through specialized knowledge of business/railway procedures to facilitate staff activities and execute governing board direction.
- Membership officer:** fosters membership benefits to attract and retain the interests of a broad museum public by hosting special programs, maintaining membership records, and publishing a newsletter. Editors, educators, business managers may assist.
- Museum administrator:** responsible for assuring adherence to consistent and professional practices (acquisition, preservation, research, and interpretation) while keeping museum true to its mission. Provides conceptual leadership, through specialized knowledge of museum discipline, to establish policies which facilitate staff activities in keeping with governing board directives.
- Public relations officer:** promotes the museum by establishing useful relationships between the museum's mission and the perceived needs and interests of its various publics. Museum program staff may assist.

Superintendent of railway equipment shop: implements the recommendations of the curatorial staff with safe and proper procedures in the care and management of railway equipment collections.

Superintendent of railway operations: administers policies for supervising and training operating crews in safe and proper railway practices. Museum program staff and operations instructors may assist.

Superintendent of ways and structures: maintains the buildings, communication systems, grounds, and railway for the safety of people and collections with consideration for their usefulness in interpretation of collections. Museum program and railway operations staff may assist.

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