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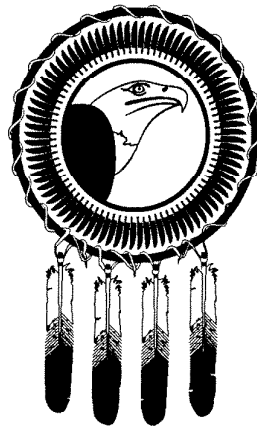
*Completing the White Mountain Apache
Tribal Museum and Culture Center*

by

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Executive Summary

COMPLETING THE WHITE MOUNTAIN APACHE MUSEUM AND CULTURAL CENTER

by

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On January 4, 1985, The White Mountain Apache Tribal museum and cultural center at Fort Apache, Arizona burned to the ground. An insurance settlement allowed the Tribe to construct the shell of a new museum at the historic Fort Apache site. Unfortunately, over the past three years, it has been unable to complete the structure and bring the new museum into operation. The Tribe has asked the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development for assistance in developing a plan to achieve this goal.

The Tribe envisions the new museum as both a repository for White Mountain Apache culture and an opportunity to attract more visitors to the reservation. They also see it as the centerpiece of a future tourist development at Fort Apache.

The Tribal Engineer has estimated that the project will cost about \$400,000 to complete. Further, operating costs will probably well exceed \$100,000 per year. Admission and gift-shop revenues will probably not meet this cost. Because the scale of the new museum far exceeds that of its predecessor, the Tribe will most likely have to look to sources off of the reservation for the provision of exhibits and funding. This will have a number of important implications for the Tribe.

Outside organizations and institutions will be far more likely to support the project if the Tribe can demonstrate its commitment to ensuring the venture's success. One of the ways the Tribe can send such a message would be to increase its financial commitment to the project. It should also consider reorganizing the museum's management structure and recruiting individuals trained in registrarial, collections management and grantwriting/fundraising skills. Finally, it should seriously consider establishing an independent Board of Directors for the museum.

While revenues from admissions will probably not cover the costs of operating the new museum, the project will generate tourism on the reservation while serving as a source of pride to tribal members and a repository for important elements of Apache culture.

I. INTRODUCTION

On January 4, 1985, The White Mountain Apache Tribal museum and cultural center at Fort Apache, Arizona burned to the ground. A \$259,000 insurance settlement allowed the Tribe to construct the shell of a new museum at the historic Fort Apache site. Unfortunately, over the past three years, it has been unable to complete the structure and bring the new museum into operation. The Tribe has asked the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development for assistance in developing a plan to achieve this goal.

This exercise will address some of the issues which the tribe should consider as it moves forward with completing the new facility. These include:

- *The Tribe's strategic vision for the museum;
- *The implications of that vision for the museum's collections;
- *Its financial implications;
- *Its implications for museum management and the relationship between the museum and the Tribe.

In doing so, it will also provide some guidelines for obtaining grant funding and staffing the museum.

II. BACKGROUND

II.A History

In 1969, the White Mountain Apache Tribal Council established a museum/cultural center in a small log cabin at the historic Fort Apache military post.¹ The Council appointed tribal member Edgar Perry Museum Director. In 1976, a \$95,000 grant from the American Revolution Bicentennial Project funded the museum's expansion into restored Fort Apache Army barracks. The 1985 fire destroyed the building and most of its contents.

In the aftermath of the fire, the Tribe decided to construct an ambitious new 7500 square foot facility for the museum on a site overlooking the main highway through Whiteriver, the Tribal headquarters. Under the original plan, the insurance settlement would pay for constructing the shell of the new museum while Tribal planners applied for grant funding to complete the interior and exhibits. Before the planners could secure funding, however, the Tribe elected a new Chairman. It appears that the work which had been done on the grant proposals did not survive the staff turnover following the election.² Further, for the next few years, tribal planners' energies appeared to be focused on other, more urgent projects. As a result, the Tribe found itself with the shell of a new museum and no funding to complete the structure.

¹In compiling this section, I have drawn heavily on Ed Goldstein's "A Strategic Plan for the White Mountain Apache Culture Center and Fort Apache historic Site", as well as on an interview with Edgar Perry (5/11/88).

²Edgar Perry, Interview, 5/11/88. I also heard in passing from other sources that the J.F.K. Foundation and University of Arizona had in fact offered the tribe funding but withdrew that offer when the Tribe failed to act. I was unable to confirm this assertion nor am I entirely confident of the source.

II.B The Museum Today

For the past three years, Edgar Perry has operated a scaled-down museum in its original four-room log cabin. The exhibition consists of various photographs and artifacts salvaged from the fire. In addition, Perry managed to save the museum's extensive oral history collection. He is currently undertaking a project to transcribe these conversations and translate them from the Apache language into English. Despite the absence of any marketing effort and an extremely limited exhibition, 4600 visitors signed the museum's guest book in 1987. Many of these visitors came from out of state and a number, from abroad.³

In addition to Perry, the staff includes a secretary, historian/guide, and oral history transcriber. The Tribal Council funds staff salaries and operations which amounted to \$83,578 in 1986-1987. This allocation decreased to \$71,257 in 1987-1988 and Perry expects a further 5% cut for 1988-1989.⁴ The Tribe projects donations and gift-shop revenues at about \$3,000 annually.

III. STRATEGIC VISION

³For the first four months of 1988, the guest book recorded 65% of visitors coming from outside of Arizona and 10% from foreign countries.

⁴Figure taken from "Budget Preparation Listing, 4/18/88" supplied by tribe. Perry, interview.

Edgar Perry and David Ingram, Tribal Social Services Planner, envision the museum serving two primary purposes: as a repository for Apache culture and history and as a potential tourist draw - economic development project for the reservation.⁵

III.A Museum Content

According to Perry, the completed museum's exhibits will trace the historical development of White Mountain Apache civilization and culture. It will include presentations on Apache life before contact with Europeans, White Mountain Apache cooperation with the U.S. Army during the Fort Apache era, and a depiction of present conditions on the reservation. Perry plans to use photographs, artifacts, and audio-visual presentations as the basis of these exhibits. The museum will also feature exhibits on the Apache language, a library, and an oral history archive.⁶

The exhibits would include items presently held by the museum as well as acquisitions from tribal members. Other potential sources of bequests or loans include the Arizona Historical Society, University of Arizona, New York's Heye Foundation Museum, the Smithsonian Institution and Harvard's Peabody Museum. Finally, exhibits could be created by volunteers or museum staff.⁷

⁵For a discussion of the cultural content vs. tourism issue, see Goldstein, 1988, pp. 6 - 14.

⁶Perry, Interview, 5/11/88.

⁷Ibid.

III.B Economic Development Element

In addition to the museum's cultural and educational objectives, David Ingram expressed the Tribe's view that a high-quality facility could help draw visitor revenues to the reservation. The museum could also serve as the centerpiece of a larger tourist attraction at the Fort Apache site. In either case, the existence of a tourist attraction in the Fort Apache area would help to draw recreationalists away from U.S. Highway 60 on the outskirts of the reservation onto Highway 73 through Whiteriver. This traffic could generate revenues at service facilities, stores and the motel/restaurant in Whiteriver as well as at the museum itself.

IV. IMPLICATIONS

Thus far, Edgar Perry has operated the museum with minimal assistance from outside the tribe. In order to achieve the strategic vision outlined above, however, the Tribe will probably have to depend on outside sources for providing both exhibits and financial assistance. This dependence in turn will require a reevaluation of the way in which the Tribe approaches the museum project.

IV.A Exhibits

One of the prerequisites for developing a collection which will attract visitors to the museum will be its ability to secure artifacts and exhibits from sources outside of the tribe. Edgar Perry has noted, for example, his desire to borrow pieces from both the Heye Foundation's Museum of the American Indian in New York and Harvard's Peabody Museum.⁸ Discussions with Peabody Museum officials revealed their willingness to negotiate a loan provided the Tribe pays the processing fee (usually \$200 or more per item plus insurance) and adheres to the Peabody's policies and procedures.⁹ The Peabody Museum generally loans objects for one year with options for up to five years.

The receiving institution's ability to care properly for borrowed exhibits constitutes the primary concern of any lending museum. In order to secure a loan from the Peabody, for example, the White Mountain Apache museum will have to meet minimum standards for display of the items, security, climate

⁸Perry, Interview, 5/11/88

⁹Interviews with Dr. Rosemary Joyce, Assistant Director, Peabody Museum and Dr. Ian Brown, Associate Curator of North American Collections, Peabody Museum, 5/9/88.

control, and fire prevention.¹⁰ More importantly, it will have to demonstrate an administrative capacity for properly logging and keeping track of borrowed items.

IV.B Financial Implications

Completing and operating the new facility as envisioned will require significantly greater financial resources than the Tribe has been used to allocating to the current museum. This section will discuss the estimated costs and outline several potential revenue sources.

IV.B.1 **Costs**

IV.B.1.a **Capital Costs**

The Tribal Engineer has estimated that completing the facility will cost approximately \$390,000. This figure includes \$127,000 for climate controls. This amount could be reduced significantly by installing evaporative air conditioning and climate-controlling individual display cases instead of the whole facility. I also believe the \$130,000 for floor coverings to be a bit high. I have itemized these costs in Appendix A.

In addition, the museum will need about \$50,000 - \$70,000 and in additional fixtures and equipment. This figure includes furniture and display cases, lighting fixtures, shelves, office and workshop equipment, audio-visual, signs, etc. (see appendix B for itemization). This expense will vary based on the specifications of the exhibition plan and the extent to which volunteers or lower-paid laborers can construct some of the museum's fixtures.

¹⁰Peabody Museum Orientation manual, 1986 - 1987., Appendix 14.

IV.B.1.b Operating Costs

It will be difficult to project accurately the expected cost of operating the museum. The figures for items such as utilities, marketing, and salaries will depend on decisions yet to be made by the Tribal Administration. I have developed an estimate based on current allocations and a sample staffing scenario. This estimate presumes the following staff costs:

*Museum director/collection manager	\$17,300 ¹¹ ,
*Administrator/grantwriter	\$16,000 ¹² ,
*Secretary/ticket vendor/gift shop attendant	\$10,800 ¹³ ,
*Program specialist (guide/historian/transcriber)	\$10,400,
*Maintenance staffer (half-time)	\$ 5,000.

It also presumes the ability to attract volunteer guides or docents to the museum. Total personnel costs (including 18% benefit factor) equal \$70,210.

Other operating costs prove even more difficult to estimate because they depend on decisions which have not yet been made. I can estimate, however, that they will be smaller than personnel costs. Total operating costs will probably run about \$120,000 annually. This category includes items such as utilities, marketing and publications, operating supplies, vehicle expense, travel, subscriptions and memberships, and contract labor/professional services. They also should include the cost of borrowing items from other museums. They do not include acquisitions costs.

IV.B.2 Obtaining Funding

The W.M.A.T. Museum and Cultural Center can expect to obtain revenues for construction, operations and acquisitions from five primary sources:

¹¹Current director salary (source: Tribal Office).

¹²Joyce, Interview, 5/9/88. Based on current salaries in the field.

¹³Current secretary's salary

admission fees, gift shop revenues, tribal support, government grants and private foundation grants. In addition, the Tribe should consider small-scale private fundraising and developing a strong volunteer pool as additional sources of support.

IV.B.2.a Admission Fees.

According to officials from the Peabody Museum at Harvard and the Cherokee Museum in Oklahoma, admission fees alone rarely cover a museum's operating costs.¹⁴ They do, however, provide a significant source for museum operating revenues. Estimates of revenues for the W.M.A.T. museum will depend both on the admission charge and on assumptions about the expected number of visitors.

Of the five museums that Ed Goldstein examined¹⁵, two impose no admission fee, Makah charges \$2 for adults (\$1 for seniors and children), Cherokee (OK) charges \$2.50 (\$1.25 children) and Cherokee (NC) charges \$3 (\$1.50 for children). Based on the museum's distance from major population centers and highways as well as its size, I will assume an admission fee of \$2.50 for adults and \$1.25 for children. Tribal members enter without charge. Also, based upon examination of the current museum's guest register, I will assume the ratio of children to adults to be 2|1.

It is hard to project the number of visitors to expect. Because the Ft. Apache area has no major operating tourist attraction, there is no basis for estimation. Nevertheless, rough figures do exist for attendance at the

¹⁴Joyce, Interview, 5/9/88, Interview with Dr. Gene Hileman, Director Cherokee National Museum, Talequah, OK., 5/6/88.

¹⁵Goldstein, 1988, Appendix E.

temporary museum. The 4600 persons who signed the guest register in 1987 probably understates the actual number of visitors on the assumption that not everyone who visits signs the register. Nevertheless, if current visitation levels were to continue, the museum would realize about \$9500.

Because of the current museum's limited exhibitions and the absence of any promotion or marketing, it is reasonable to assume that the new museum will attract significantly more visitors. For one thing, Fort Apache's history, highlighted in western movies, has made the location widely recognized throughout the world. Further, the Tribe attracted over 200,000 skier days, 107,000 days of fishing and 35,000 nights of camping to the reservation between May, 1986 and April, 1987. Given an extensive marketing effort, the potential exists for the museum to draw large numbers of these and other visitors. I would estimate an appropriate range to be 15,000 to 35,000 paying visitors per year. This corresponds to between \$30,000 and \$72,000 in revenues.

IV.B.2.b Gift Shop Revenues

In 1986-1987, the museum brought in \$3195 in revenues from gift-shop sales and donations. This works out to about \$.70 per visitor. Using a more conservative \$.50 per visitor estimate (the cost of one post card), the museum should be able to generate between \$7500 and \$17,500 from its gift shop.

IV.B.2.c Tribal Support.

Continued financial support from the Tribal council will prove an essential element of the museum's funding package. The level of funding which the Tribe allocates to the project sends an important message to potential outside

funding sources. The Federal Government and private foundations will probably not grant money to the museum if they do not see significant tribal participation in the venture.¹⁶ In 1986-1987, the Tribe contributed \$83,500 to the museum's operating budget. Unless the museum can qualify for Institute of Museum Services (IMS) operating funds, the Tribal Council should be prepared to match that commitment on an annual basis. Similarly, it should be prepared to make a significant contribution to the museum's capital costs. Such Tribal participation will make granting agencies more likely to pledge matching funds.

IV.B.2.d Grant Funding.

Perhaps the most important source of support for museums across the nation are the various governmental and private granting organizations. One of the keys to the museum's success will be the degree to which it can build a successful grantwriting capability. Currently the Tribe does have such a capacity. Tribal planners have applied for and received several economic development and other forms of grants in the past. In fact, the museum itself received a Federal Bicentennial grant in the 1970s.

There exist a number of Federal agencies which provide funds to museums. The most important of these are the National Endowment for the Humanities, National Endowment for the Arts, Economic Development Commission and Institute for Museum Services (IMS). The first three provide funds for some capital items such as climate control, security, storage units and acquisitions. IMS provides operating funds. Locally, the Arizona Community Foundation, Arizona Commission on the Arts and the Valley Bank Foundation

¹⁶Joyce, Interview. Also, Interview with June Tracy, Legislative Aid to Senator Dennis DiConcini (AZ), April, 1988.

all indicated their willingness to consider supporting the project.¹⁷

Ed Goldstein lists a number of private granting agencies in Appendix B of his report. He also outlines the elements of effective grant proposals.¹⁸ I have included a successful grant proposal from the Peabody Museum in the Appendix. Above all, an effective grant proposal must be able to convince reviewers that the museum is well organized and has a clear sense of its mission and goals. In putting together its grant proposals, the tribe should include:

- *A statement of the museum's mission and goals;
- *A comprehensive exhibition plan, including photographs or sketches of exhibits;
- *An itemization and explanation of the funds requested;
- *A resolution of support from the Tribal Council;
- *Letters of support from tribal members including pledges to supply artifacts for the collection;
- *Resumes of museum staff members;
- *Other documents which help to establish the museum's credibility;
- *Any other documentation requested by the agency or foundation.

The Tribe should consider applying to a number of organizations to fund various aspects of the project.

IV.B.2.e Other Sources of Support.

A number of other potential support sources exist. Northwoods Pioneer College's Building trades Department has offered to finish the framing, insulation, electrical and drywall of the new facility without charge as its

¹⁷Telephone interviews, 5/23/88.

¹⁸Goldstein, 1988, pp. 36-39.

summer field exercise. This could save the Tribe tens of thousands of dollars in capital costs. I strongly recommend that the Tribe take advantage of this resource.

The Museum could also undertake fundraising activities both on the reservation and in the boarder towns of Pinetop/Lakeside and Showlow. One technique used by museums across the country is to create a "Friends of the Museum" association. Association Members serve both as a means for raising funds and as a potential volunteer pool. Perhaps the membership base could be extended outside of the immediate vicinity to Phoenix and Tucson. Having a group of supporters across the state can only help the museum in its publicity and fundraising efforts. The Tribe could also approach corporations with which it has business relations for contributions.

One of the most important sources of support for many museums is a strong volunteer pool. As noted above, the existence of such a group of individuals committed to the museum's success sends an important signal to potential funders. Also, it is a good way to involve members of the Tribe in museum activities and give them a sense of ownership over the project. Finally, it provides the museum with the resources to engage in special projects for which staff members might not otherwise have time.

IV.C Managerial Implications

IV.C.1 **Management Structure**

In order to operate the new museum as envisioned, the Tribe should reevaluate the management structure currently being utilized. The need to obtain exhibits and funding from outside sources requires a greater managerial capacity than has been necessary thus far. Lending museums expect that

borrowers have personnel trained in registrarial procedures, collections management and conservation either on staff or under contract. Additionally, the museum will need someone to write and administer grants and manage its fundraising efforts.

Dr. Joyce suggested that the museum should consider filling the following positions:

*Registrar: Catalogues all items in permanent collection, negotiates loans of exhibits, keeps track of visiting collections and accompanying documentation.

*Collections Manager (curator): Works with and documents the collections. Plans and implements exhibitions.

*Conservator: Prepares objects for exhibition to prevent physical deterioration.

*Development Administrator: Writes and administers grant proposals, coordinates other fundraising efforts.¹⁹

In addition, the museum will probably want someone to handle promotions, marketing and community outreach as well as a secretary/administrator and historian/tour guide. These duties could be combined in a number of ways. The Museum Director, for example, could also serve as collections manager and coordinate community outreach. An additional staff member could be hired to perform the more administratively oriented tasks of registrar and development administrator. Because conservators command relatively high salaries (\$25-\$30,000 annually for a beginner), the Apache museum could obtain conservatorial services under contract on an hourly or daily basis.

The Tribe must decide whether it wants to fill these positions from on or off the reservation. In either case, it should hire persons trained in their respective tasks. The American Association of Museums monthly newsletter,

¹⁹Joyce, Interview, 5/9/88

"Aviso", advertises openings in the museum field. If hiring from within, the Tribe should seriously consider sending staff members to schools such as the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico or the University of Arizona for training.

If the Tribe decides to reorganize the museum's management structure, it should also consider implementing the changes now rather than waiting for the new museum to be built. Completing the structure will require an exhibition plan which the collection manager and registrar could compile. It will also require grantwriting and community outreach/fundraising. Further, the new museum will operate much more smoothly if the staff is already in place and ready to begin operations when the facility is completed. Finally, implementing such a reorganization will send an important message to potential funders and lending museums about the Tribe's commitment to the project.

IV.C.2 Tribe-Museum Relationship

In his report, Ed Goldstein discussed the important role that a Board of Directors could play in raising funds and guiding the museum's operations.²⁰ Without repeating that discussion, I would like to urge the Tribal leadership seriously to consider establishing an independent Board of Directors for the museum. While Tribal leaders could serve as directors, the Board's existence sends a message that the museum falls outside the realm of Tribal politics. Unfortunately, many institutions have become wary of dealing with Indian tribes because of their reputation for political instability. While this might not be the case at White Mountain, establishing an independent museum Board will help to remove some of the doubts which might remain.

²⁰Goldstein, 1988, pp. 17-19.

V. CONCLUSION

Completing and operating the White Mountain Apache Museum and Culture Center as envisioned by the Tribe will require the cooperation of many outside agencies and institutions. This represents a significant change from the current museum, run by Edgar Perry with the support of the Tribal Council. In order to secure this outside cooperation, the Tribe must send a strong message that it is committed to the project and is willing to institute long-term changes in its relationship with the museum to ensure the projects stability. Such actions will not only help to attract outside support but also help to create an enduring Tribal resource, one which will serve as a source of pride for Tribal members.

VI. APPENDIX A. Capital Costs for Completing the new Museum.

CAPITAL COST ITEM	COST

Framing	\$4,840
Rough Plumbing	\$3,800
Climate Control	\$126,680
Insulation	\$17,000
Electrical	\$3,240
Drywall	\$33,960
Carpentry Finish	\$32,920
Electrical Trim	\$4,120
Plumbing Trim	\$800
Paint	\$4,640
Climate Control Trim	\$1,680
Floor Coverings	\$129,560
Parking Lot (gravel)	\$26,100
Security System	\$3,300
TOTAL CAPITAL COST	\$392,640

Source: Tribal Engineer's Office

VII. APPENDIX B. FIXTURES AND EQUIPMENT COST

FIXTURES AND EQUIPMENT ITEM	COST

Shelves	\$3,000
Workshop Equipment	\$4,000
Office Furniture	\$4,000
Safe	\$5,000
Gift Shop Displays	\$6,000
Light Fixtures	\$10,000
Exhibit Cases	\$16,000
Cash Register, Calculator	\$1,000
Vacuum Cleaner	\$300
Picnic Tables & Benches	\$4,000
Indoor Signs	\$500
Folding Chairs	\$2,000
Slide Projector	\$500
Overhead Projector	\$1,000
P.A. System	\$10,000
Outdoor Signs	\$2,000
Dry Mount Press	\$500
Copier	\$800
Filing Cabinets	\$465
Video Machine	\$300
Television	\$300
Cassette Players	\$100
TOTAL FIXTURES	\$71,765

Source: Edgar Perry