



MINUTES

SEK Museum Alliance Meeting

September 8, 2025

9:00 am – Noon

Host: Mem-Erie Historical Museum
Erie, Ks

Thirty-four people, representing 19 museums attended the SEK Museum Alliance quarterly meeting in Erie, Ks. Lois Carlson introduced the volunteers for Erie that were present. SEK Alliance Board President Leanne Githens opened the meeting with a welcome and announcements.

Reports:

Jolene Born gave the treasurer's report. We have \$8,486.34 in our bank account and we have a \$2,000 CD at Community National. She reminded everyone that the invoices for 2026 membership dues will go out the first of November.

Ray Rothgeb reminded the group about turning in your passport data and visitor information for each quarter. He provided data on the first and second quarter for passport usage and visitor data. Still need attendance information from several museums. For the second quarter only 19 of 49 museums had reported, but those reporting showed 6,149 visitors. Remember 3rd quarter is due in October. We will continue to collect the data in 2025 as it is good information for future grants. Ray still had 200 passports at the meeting for museums wanting more.

Gina McBride emphasized the KMA member listing, on the KMA website. Reminding all KMA members to be sure and update your listing with a photo. She also ask everyone to be sure they were on the Kansas Tourism email list. These emails contain information about grants and happenings in Kansas, feature webinars on tourism. Be sure to keep your information up to date on the Kansas Tourism website on the Extranet.

Announcements:

Thumb Drives -Leanne reminded everyone, that we had Thumb Drives available containing the SEKMA Promotional Video, each member museum can pick up their thumb drive at the today's meeting.

November 10 Board Elections There are 3 expiring terms, West Region: Gina McBride, East Region: Suzanne Shaffer, At-Large: Gila LaRue. She had nomination forms available.

Suzanne Shaffer gave a brief announcement on the Scholarship and Grant program. The **"Be Present" Award** has three \$100 awards for museums attending 3 or 4 meetings in 2025. **KMA 1st time attendee Scholarship** in the amount of \$250, with the deadline of September 19. This scholarship can pair with the KMA scholarship.

Project Grant applications are located on the SEK Alliance Web Page for a \$750 grant. This years theme is "Museum Display". The deadline to apply is October 15. The successful candidate will be announced at the November 10 meeting. An update on the status of the grant will be required at April 13 meeting and the project must be completed by September 1, 2026 with a final report at September Alliance Meeting.

Leanne pointed out that part of doing this Project Grant is learning to write a grant in a safe environment. It allows you to learn how to apply and gives you an opportunity to practice.

Planning for 2026 – there are several important events happening in 2026 that will affect attendance at our museums.

100 Year Celebration of Route 66 will be in 2026. For those on Route 66 or near it, start planning your events. Carol mentioned that she has two tour company magazines that are featuring bus trips on Route 66 and they will be stopping in our museum areas. Individuals who follow these tour companies may plan their own driving vacation along similar routes.

2026 FIFA World Cup in Kansas City June 11 – July 19 will draw people to our areas. Attendees will be looking for things to do outside the Kansas City area.

250th anniversary of Declaration of Independence. The America 250 website (<https://America250.org>) contains information about projects that are being done for the celebration and can provide ideas for your local museum. Leanne pointed out that the AASLH has a handbook “Making History at 250” that has ideas on things you can do in your local museums.

KS Tourism Regional Itineraries – Kansas Tourism is looking for 5-10 itineraries on each region that will focus on activities, places, events for the family and individual. They would like the region to create the itineraries, route and theme. If your interested in doing this let the board know.

Success and Challenges – Carol Staton read the Alliance members success and challenges.

Educational program – “Grant Funding & Writing Resources” – Brandon West , Development Coordinator Independence Public Library and Humanities Kansas Board Member

Brandon explained that grants are a way to expand your resources (budget) beyond your local base of visitors, board members and donors. They let you strengthen your community impact, build capacity and sustainability by helping with new equipment – displays – projects. They raise the visibility and creditability of your museum.

He uses the Google Suite tools in his grant writing to save his essential documents/maintain timeline calendars and shared folders. In preparing to write a grant he always starts with four folders. The Essential Document Folder contains – his mission statement, his IRS determination letter, yearly 990's, organizational history and strategic plan. The Supporting Document Folder contains community research and statistics, newspaper article about the museum, photos. The Project Folder contains narrative of what needs funded, supporting research, project budget. The Grant Folder – every grant you write should have its own folder, drafts of narratives, grant applications.

He provided handouts that talked about using the BLUF (Bottom Line Up Front) method of writing a grant. He stressed that grant reviewers read hundreds of grants and they are looking for the information up front and will stop and read where they see statistical numerical data. Proof read your draft, have someone else proofread, submit early, ask for feedback from the reviewer. He provided a list of places to look for grants.

Member Museum Presentation

President of Mem – Erie Historical Museum gave some history on the museum and talked about the museum. Lunch was provided to attendees for a donation.

Respectfully submitted, Carol Staton, Board Secretary