

September 19, 2014

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SAMA EMBARKS ON ARCHIVAL STORAGE EXPANSION PROJECT

Loretto – The Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art at Loretto is embarking on an archival storage expansion project that will include renovation of the ground floor of the Loretto Museum. The project was announced at SAMA’s Board of Trustees meeting on September 18. Also announced was that the Museum received two prestigious grants to help fund the \$500,000 construction project. The Colcom Foundation has awarded SAMA a \$250,000 grant, while the Museum also received \$125,000 from the Donald & Sylvia Robinson Family Foundation.

The project is expected to begin in early 2015 and will provide crucial storage space for the Museum’s ever-growing permanent collection. “We are excited about SAMA’s archival storage project at the Loretto Museum,” said SAMA Executive Director Gary Moyer. “This project is a critical component of museum operations. We are committed to preserving and protecting the art treasures entrusted to our care.

“The generous support we have received from the Colcom Foundation and the Donald & Sylvia Robinson Family Foundation were keys to the realization of this important project. The archival storage project will greatly expand the Museum’s art storage capacity from the current square footage (1,000 square feet) to approximately 5,000 square feet. As we look to the future, this expansion will address the Museum’s immediate archival storage needs and position SAMA to properly store artwork for years to come.”

SAMA’s Loretto Museum occupies a building that was constructed in 1929 as a gymnasium and redesigned as an award-winning art museum in 1976. Recent assessments have highlighted the cramped storage matter as a serious issue for the Museum. Since the renovated space will be in SAMA’s existing building, accessibility, shipping and control should be greatly improved when compared to remote storage. Improvements are planned for every aspect of the Loretto Museum’s storage area. The project is scheduled for completion in the spring of 2016.

Over the years, SAMA’s art collection has expanded significantly from a collection of 87 pieces to more than 4,200 works today. The collection includes 18th-, 19th- and 20th-century works by artists including Albert Bierstadt, Mary Cassatt,

Thomas Moran, Gilbert Stuart, Thomas Sully, and Andy Warhol, among others. Additionally, SAMA is the repository of a major collection of works on paper including a two-century survey of American prints, vintage photography, and noteworthy drawings. SAMA also houses a number of important special collections, such as a comprehensive survey of Steuben glass, the culturally significant Rezk Collection of Tibetan and Nepalese Art, and a collection of Old Master prints and drawings. Works from the permanent collection are available for exhibition to thousands of visitors annually.

The Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art has been a cultural and educational resource for this region since its founding in 1976. SAMA's exhibitions are open to the public free of charge and attract more than 60,000 visitors yearly. SAMA also offers award-winning education programs that serve more than 15,000 students (K-12) in this region annually. Among the Museum's education initiatives is the Arts-in-Education program, which brings art from the SAMA collection into the classrooms of public and parochial schools throughout the Museum's six-county service region of Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Fayette, Somerset and Westmoreland counties. The Museum also offers a Museum/Healthcare Partnership Program that helps area residents suffering from mental and physical disabilities.

The Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art at Loretto is located on the campus of Saint Francis University. Hours of operation are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and 1 to 5 p.m. Saturday. The Museum is open to the public free of charge. For more information, call the Museum at (814) 472-3920 or visit www.sama-art.org.

For more information on the Colcom Foundation, visit www.colcomfdn.org.