

# Museums Policy

YUKON TOURISM

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*Building the Future*

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## MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Over the years, museums have become increasingly important to the present and future social and economic development of the Yukon.

Knowing our past helps define who we are and forms part of the social foundation we are building for the future. A better understanding of our collective history paves the way for improved cross-cultural communication among all peoples of the Yukon. An enhanced awareness of the Yukon's past also helps newcomers make a stronger commitment to the territory as their permanent home.

As noted in the 1987 Yukon Visitor Exit Survey, our tourists also have indicated a strong interest in attractions which show the unique history of the Yukon. Improving the appeal of our museums to our visitors will result in positive economic spin-offs to local businesses and encourage the development of new local industries.

The impetus to develop a Yukon Museums Policy arose in the mid-1980's. At that time it became obvious that several crucial questions about the future development of our museums needed to be addressed. Consequently, a major study was initiated and a broad-based consultation process was undertaken.

This study, called the Yukon Museums Policy and Systems Plan, was publicly released in 1987. Following the release of this study, further consultations were held in 1988 with individual community museum boards, the Council for Yukon Indians and the Yukon Historical and Museums Association to obtain more input.

The government's commitment to addressing the issues facing the territory's museums were stressed in the Yukon Economic Strategy and in the Yukon Tourism Action Plan, released in the spring and fall of 1988, respectively.

The Yukon Museums Policy is the government's response to the consultations it held in 1987 and 1988. It is a fundamental first step: a framework to encourage future museum growth and development that will foster a better understanding and appreciation of the territory's collective history.

The Museums Policy confirms the primary role which community museums will continue to play in presenting and interpreting the Yukon's history. It also outlines the kind of Government support which museums can expect to receive, subject to the capital planning and budgetary process and legislative approval of funds.

The Yukon Museums Policy gives the Heritage Branch a clear mandate to act as a facilitator and catalyst for the Yukon museums community. It allows for the provision of various government programs and services to museums and encourages government agencies and museums to work together to achieve shared objectives.

The policy is also consistent with the provisions of the Heritage Sub-Agreement of the Yukon Land Claims Framework Agreement and will make assistance available to interested Yukon First Nations which wish to establish community museums.

The policy as it is presented here is not engraved in stone. The key to the Museum Policy's success will be a productive on-going dialogue with the museums, heritage interests, other levels of government and the private sector. Further changes to the policy will be made as the aspirations and objectives of our museums evolve.

To those who played a part in mapping out this policy, many thanks.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Art Webster', written in a cursive style.

Art Webster  
Minister of Tourism

December, 1989

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Museums Policy is to:

- protect and preserve the Yukon's historic resources presented in its museums for all Yukoners and visitors to the Yukon;
- establish a framework to enhance the long-term development of the Yukon's present and future museums which recognizes the constraints posed by the Yukon's unique geographic, demographic and historic factors;
- enhance the capability of Yukon museums to provide museum visitors with an appreciation of the Yukon's historic resources through exhibits and interpretation which reinforce the distinctive characteristics of Yukoners, and the Yukon, to both residents and tourists; and
- provide the means by which museums can increase their appeal to tourists and Yukoners travelling within the Yukon, thereby generating museum revenue and positive economic spin-offs to local businesses and to communities throughout the territory.

**POLICY**

The Yukon Government is committed to the integrity of strong, independent community museums operated by local, non-profit volunteer boards.

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## **YUKON MUSEUMS POLICY**

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### **POLICY GUIDELINES**

- The priority of this Policy is to first address the museological needs of the Yukon's existing museums and then to address the needs of future museums.
- The Yukon Government will provide various museums programs and support services, subject to annual appropriations, to fulfill the purpose of this Policy.
- The Yukon Government will work cooperatively with Yukon community museums and will facilitate museums taking collective and individual initiatives to achieve the purpose of this Policy.
- This Policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure its relevance to the continued development of the Yukon's museums. An on-going dialogue with museums, other heritage interests, other levels of government and the private sector will be maintained.
- The Yukon Government recognizes the need to establish a Historic Resources Service Centre. One of the Historic Resources Service Centre's functions would be to support community museums by providing specialized services or services which are more economical when centralized. Such services would include a specialized computer data base for artifact collection management, and conservation support programs. Another function would be to provide public display and educational facilities as a means of heightening public awareness of Yukon's historic resources.
- The Yukon Government encourages multi-source funding support for Yukon museums. This will be achieved through continued liaison, advocacy and cooperation with agencies representing local, municipal and federal governments and with Yukon Indian Bands. Museums are expected to generate other sources of operational funds through such endeavors as: fund raising, admission fees and gift shops.

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## YUKON MUSEUMS POLICY

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- The Yukon Government will ensure the interests of all Yukoners will be protected should a Museum Society fail or disband. This will be a condition of all funding support.
- The Yukon Government is committed to strengthening its museums program in the following ways to achieve the purpose of this Policy and to enhance the ability of Yukon museums to obtain funds from the federal and municipal governments and the private sector:

### —Artifact Inventory and Cataloguing

Assistance will be provided to museums to ensure Yukon artifacts are catalogued systematically and that collections portray the Yukon's history. The repatriation of significant Yukon artifacts will be undertaken wherever possible.

### —Conservation and Security

Museums will be assisted in ensuring the conservation, safety and security of their displayed and stored artifact collections and the safety of museum visitors and workers.

### —Exhibits Assistance

Assistance will be provided to Yukon museums and museum organizations to enable them to develop/upgrade museum exhibits.

### —Museums Assistance

Assistance will be provided to Yukon museums and museum organizations to enable them to develop/upgrade museum infra-structure, staff and programs.

- Before receiving Yukon Government funding, museums would need to have strong community support and to indicate how a high museological standard could be achieved in the following areas:

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## YUKON MUSEUMS POLICY

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- collections,
  - documentation and research,
  - conservation and preservation,
  - exhibits and interpretation,
  - marketing, and
  - facilities.
- The Yukon Government recognizes the Museum Sub-Committee of the Yukon Historical and Museums Association as a vehicle by which the Yukon's museums can cooperatively enhance their development.
  - For the purposes of this Policy a museum:
    - is a permanent institution with sufficient space to carry out the normal functions and mandates of a well balanced museological program;
    - is governed by a responsible community organization, such as a non-profit society which is incorporated under the Yukon Societies Act, or by a municipal government or by a Yukon Indian Band;
    - has its primary role focussed on museological functions and mandates in the service of society and of its development;
    - has a primary museological function to acquire, conserve, research, communicate and exhibit the material evidence of Yukoners and their environment for the purpose of study, education and enjoyment; and
    - is open to the public.