



NEWS RELEASE

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Board adopts plans to revitalize County Museum

SAN BERNARDINO – The Board of Supervisors today took an important step toward revitalizing the County Museum system by unanimously directing staff to begin implementing a series of recommendations made by a consultant, including filling the vacant director position with someone adept at business and management, and forging a more productive relationship with the independent nonprofit Museum Association.

“Today marks a new beginning for the San Bernardino County Museum,” said Board of Supervisors Chairman James Ramos. “We are on our way to build upon the great facilities we have today and create a modern, fiscally healthy, and respected educational and cultural institution that will attract and engage visitors in record numbers, compete with all other Southern California museums, and responsibly preserve our county’s heritage.”

“I look forward to working with the San Bernardino County Museum Association, my fellow Board members, County staff, and the community to make our County Museum second to none,” Chairman Ramos added.

The County’s immediate focus will be on recruiting a director and developing a short-term action plan to set the Museum on the right track as soon as possible, until a long-range strategic plan can be developed under the leadership of the new director.

The Museum includes a main facility in Redlands, the Victor Valley Museum in Apple Valley, and historic sites in Chino, Colton, Rancho Cucamonga, Redlands, and Yucaipa. The Museum has struggled in recent years with drops in attendance, revenue, and association membership, as well as economy-driven budget cuts and staff reductions.

A County-commissioned study by San Francisco-based Museum Management Consultants concluded that the San Bernardino County Museum has tremendous potential and could benefit greatly from business-minded management provided by the County and a greater focus on fund-raising by the Museum Association.

The study pointed out that the country’s best museums survive not primarily on government support, as has been the case with the County Museum, but rather on robust and consistent fund-raising by non-profit associations.

The recommendations adopted by the Board of Supervisors today include:

- Recruit a Museum director who is competent in business and management.



- Develop a public-private partnership between the County and a re-energized Museum Association focusing on fund-raising, grant acquisition, and Museum management and services.
- Prioritize programs that attract visitors and revenue, such as Museum summer camps.
- Complete the Hall of Geologic Wonders, which broke ground in 2007.
- Consider bringing in an attendance-building temporary exhibit.
- Redesign the Museum website.

The consultant also advised the Museum Association to partner with a fund-raising consultant, increase the size and scope of its board, and consider assisting the County in funding key staff positions.