



# 2022-27 Strategic Plan



MUSEUM of  
NORTHERN  
ARIZONA





## Director's Message

The Museum of Northern Arizona was founded in 1928 to increase and diffuse knowledge, encourage the appreciation of science and art, provide facilities for research, and offer opportunities for aesthetic enjoyment. Throughout its history MNA has adhered to those uplifting principles, for which it occupies a place deep in the heart of the community.

We embarked on strategic planning as an opportunity to draw inspiration from the Museum's illustrious past and to chart a path for our time, laying the foundation for our Centennial in 2028. The team from Lord Cultural Resources led us through six months of thoughtful and thought-provoking activity. The planning process has been an inclusive one, engaging staff, Trustees, supporters, volunteers, colleagues, and community members. I am grateful to everyone who generously shared their thoughts, ideas, and aspirations for the Museum. Our plans are the richer for these many contributions.

The past two years have been challenging. Emerging from the global pandemic, we understand the world has changed. We learned to be resilient, flexible, and responsive. We discovered that our audience is diverse and far-flung. Responding to new expectations, we reviewed our mission and vision. We realigned our priorities with a sharp focus. We recommitted to engaging with our many communities in thoughtful ways.

We have emerged with a plan that gives focus to our ambitions and is deliverable. It will be our north star by which we can confidently advance towards MNA's next century with energy and enthusiasm, expressing a shared and unified vision of who we are, what we do, and why we do it.

We now move forward with our renewed mission to be the gateway to understanding the Colorado Plateau, engaging local, regional, and global audiences with life-enriching knowledge and experiences. We can learn universal lessons through greater understanding of this remarkable place. These insights are timely and widely relevant, illuminating the connections between people, place, and time through science, art, and culture.



Mary J. Kershaw  
Executive Director & CEO

## Chairman's Message

As the Museum of Northern Arizona approaches its 2028 centennial, we welcome this new strategic plan to guide us there and beyond.

Our Museum is cross-stitched into the social fabric and identity of Flagstaff, the largest community that lies atop the Colorado Plateau. Nearly 100 years ago Museum founders Harold and Mary-Russell Ferrell Colton understood the importance of establishing a place-based cultural institution that fostered a deep respect and sense of wonder for the environment around us.

It's just as important today.

For this reason, our new strategic plan was created with a reach far greater than the Museum itself. Nearly 150 interviews with scientists, researchers, artists, writers, philanthropists, volunteers, tribal members, and community stakeholders provided input and direction.

We thank the many contributors and Lord Cultural Resources for their expertise in conducting interviews, compiling information, and distilling it in a way that honors and supports our past – but also opens the door and welcomes an exciting future.

Now, with roadmap in hand, we see a bright destination for our wonderful and venerable community institution.

Troy Gillenwater  
Chairman



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**+ With this plan as our north star, we confidently advance towards MNA's next century with energy and enthusiasm, expressing a shared and unified vision of who we are, what we do, why we do it.**

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## Land Acknowledgement

The Museum of Northern Arizona sits at the base of the San Francisco Peaks, on homelands sacred to Native Americans throughout the region. We honor their past, present, and future generations, who have lived here for millennia and will forever call this place home.



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**This plan will align and empower staff as they move forward, championing MNA's advancement and garnering support among primary stakeholders and the wider community.**

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## **Introduction**

The Museum of Northern Arizona (MNA) is a private, non-profit, educational institution located in Flagstaff, Arizona on the edge of the Colorado Plateau. The Museum was founded in 1928 by a group of Flagstaff citizens – including scientist Harold Colton and artist Mary-Russell Ferrell Colton – to protect and preserve the natural and cultural heritage of northern Arizona through research, collections, conservation, and education.

Over the last several years, the Museum's activities have been guided by an institutional plan developed in 2014. Although progress has been made towards the implementation of the initiatives described, there remains more work to be done so that the Museum can expand its reach and impact, both locally and beyond.

This strategic planning process comes at a challenging but opportune time, as the world begins to move forward from the coronavirus pandemic. The museum sector has experienced many roadblocks and challenges as a result of this pandemic, some of which were temporary, and some of which will carry forward. Strategic planning now will help MNA respond to these challenges and transform itself for a new future. MNA itself is at a pivotal moment, as it looks towards the centennial anniversary of its founding in 2028. This strategic plan will help position MNA for success as it embarks on its second century.

The goal of this strategic plan is to provide a robust, actionable, and visionary framework that leads the Museum from 2022 to 2028, and guides the way towards the revitalization of, and reinvestment in, its primary assets: its magnificent collection, dedicated staff, and unique context on the rich landscape of the Colorado Plateau. This plan will align and empower staff as they move forward with creativity and intentionality, championing MNA's advancement and garnering support among the Museum's primary stakeholders and the wider community.



**PHASE 1**

**PHASE 2**

**ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN**

**EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT**

**INTERNAL ASSESSMENT**

**KEY OPPORTUNITIES +  
STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS REPORT**

**STRATEGIC PLANNING  
WORKSHOP**

**WORKSHOP REPORT**

**DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN**

**FINAL STRATEGIC PLAN**

**EVALUATION PROCESS + KPIs**

**THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS**

## Our planning process

Over seven months, MNA undertook a wide-ranging and thoughtful process of research and discovery – led by a Strategic Advisory group consisting of four Trustees and four Staff members – which culminated in this strategic plan. To facilitate this work, MNA engaged the services of museum planning firm Lord Cultural Resources.

Having worked with the Museum in the past, the Lord team had a fundamental understanding of the overall context in which the Museum operates.

The strategic planning process was conducted in two phases:

Phase 1 – research, data collection, and consultation

Phase 2 – strategy development

**Phase 1** included an environmental scan presentation, an internal assessment, and an external assessment. This research process involved a number of inputs, including engagement with 142 individuals through surveys, interviews, and group discussions as identified below.

Research included in Phase 1 was a benchmarking study comprised of data surveys and interviews with five peer institutions across the country, and a digital assessment studying MNA's external digital footprint and internal capabilities. The research process provided insights into MNA's strengths, weaknesses, needs, and ambitions, as well as opportunities and challenges that would shape its future.

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### SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS

<b>5</b> Tribal roundtable + consultations	<b>65</b> Volunteer survey responses
<b>16</b> Board members interviewed	<b>3</b> Staff workshops
<b>7</b> Individual staff interviews	<b>20</b> External stakeholders interviewed



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**Phase 2** began with a 5-part Key Findings report, which compiled the research outcomes of Phase 1 and identified the most significant challenges and opportunities facing the Museum. The Key Findings report was issued in advance of a two-part strategic planning workshop, that focused on eliciting and capturing feedback from the Museum's Board of Trustees. Out of these discussions emerged the Draft Strategic Plan, and updates to MNA's Mission and Vision statements.

## **Mission and Vision**

As part of the strategic planning process, the Board of Trustees reviewed MNA's mission and vision and determined they required changes to accurately reflect the direction of the Museum moving forward. The mission and vision statements were drafted based on discussions which took place in the workshops and were subsequently reviewed and agreed upon by the Strategic Advisory Group and members of the Board.

### **MISSION**

**MNA is a gateway to understanding the Colorado Plateau, engaging local, regional and global audiences with life-enriching knowledge and experiences.**

### **VISION**

**We illuminate the connections between people, place, and time through science, art, and culture.**



## Goals and Objectives

The goals and accompanying objectives set the stage for MNA's future, giving focus to activity across the organization, creating alignment of activity, and an understanding of impact for all staff. They offer a framework for the development of yearly operational plans with measurable outcomes, ensuring that the strategy lives on, guiding the organization through its daily operations both now and in the future.

### + Goal: Activate the comprehensive and integrated mission and vision

#### Mission and Vision

##### **Objectives:**

- Rebalance and integrate MNA's operations to advance the mission and vision
- Develop a communications strategy around the mission and vision
- Strengthen existing and forge new partnerships to improve the Museum's positive impact in our communities
- Build communities of MNA-connected people to realize the mission and vision
- Unleash the potential of MNA's collections to activate the integrated mission and vision



## + Goal: Make lifelong learning and education the heart of what we do

### Education

#### **Objectives:**

- Create and deploy an education team
- Establish robust relationships with local school districts and educational institutions/organizations
- Create and implement a lifelong learning program
- Use the strength of collections and research to grow and share knowledge.





## + Goal: Grow the audience in depth and breadth

### **Audience Focus**

#### **Objectives:**

- Define and understand MNA's audiences
- Broaden engagement with visitors and the community
- Evaluate the user/visitor experience
- Create exhibitions and programs in response to feedback
- Develop a user/ visitor experience that integrates MNA's landscape and setting
- Design and implement a marketing and outreach plan



## + Goal: Create a comprehensive and diversified financial plan

### **Financial Plan**

#### **Objectives:**

- Evaluate current revenue sources and spending priorities
- Expand, support, and implement philanthropic strategies
- Explore entrepreneurial opportunities aligned with mission, vision, and goals
- Create a campus-wide Master Plan that advances MNA's mission, vision, and goals
- Define and implement a capitalization strategy for long-term financial planning

## + Goal: Develop full digital potential

### Digital Potential

#### **Objectives:**

- Introduce a digital mindset and promote digital proficiency in work culture
- Create a new role to lead digital development and operations
- Integrate digital tools and objectives into project planning across the organization
- Define and implement a strategy for digital audience engagement





## Thank you to 65 MNA volunteers who completed our Volunteer Survey.

### **BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Sharon Angelo  
Kelly Dunagan-Johnson  
Troy Gillenwater  
Robert Gunnarson  
John Haro  
Maury Herman  
Kristine Herzog  
Michael Hofmann  
Karletta Jones  
LuAnn Leonard  
Sherra Lyon  
Cheryl Ossenfort  
Susan Schroeder  
Alexandra Schroufe  
Marsha Sitterley  
Dean Taylor

### **EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS**

Drew Barringer  
Steve Carothers  
Greg Clifton  
Shelley Cohn  
Billy Cordasco  
Jamie Dempsey  
Paul Delaney  
Gwenn Gallenstein  
Jeff Hall  
Jan Haury  
Laura Heunneke  
Matthew Kent  
Rosemary Lamberson  
Larry Lang  
Marj McClanahan  
Tammy McCleod  
Mike Penca  
Steve Peru  
Peter Pilles  
Jonathan Stone

### **STAFF**

Nic Beckett  
Sue Brannan  
Andy Bryan  
Jan Busco  
Cindy DeAngelis  
Darvin Descheny  
Rachel Eubanks-Rhoades  
Tory Foster  
Janet Hagopian  
Kelley Hays-Gilpin  
Andrea Hazelton  
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Amy Horn  
Elaine Hughes  
Kristan Hutchison  
Jeff Jenness  
Mary Kershaw  
Amber King  
Melissa Lawton  
Jeri Ledbetter  
Kate Pasch  
Alan Petersen  
Suzanne Shenton  
Mari Soliday-Larsen  
Kim Spurr  
Larry Stevens  
Josh Terronez  
Jill Thomas  
Tony Thibodeau  
Signe Valentinsson  
Lynn Yeager

### **TRIBAL ADVISORS**

Richard Begay  
Stewart Koyiyumptewa  
Phillip Tuwaletsiwa

### **BENCHMARKING INSTITUTIONS**

Autry Museum of the West (Stephen Aron)  
Buffalo Bill Center of the West (Rebecca West – *data information only*)  
Natural History Museum of Utah (Jason Cryan)  
Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture (Wesley Jessup)  
High Desert Museum (Dana Whitelaw)

### **STRATEGIC PLANNING ADVISORY GROUP**

Tory Foster  
Troy Gillenwater  
Kelley Hays-Gilpin  
Michael Hofmann  
Kristan Hutchison  
Karletta Jones  
Mary Kershaw  
Cheryl Ossenfort

### **STRATEGIC PLANNING COORDINATOR**

Jill Thomas





3101 North Fort Valley Road, Flagstaff, AZ 86001



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