



SOUTHEASTERN ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONFERENCE

NEWSLETTER

Volume 49, Number 2

October 2007

Edited by Robert Moon, Savannah River Archaeological Research Program,
SCIAA-USC P.O. Box 400, New Ellenton, South Carolina, 29809

READY FOR KNOXVILLE....

The University of Tennessee welcomes you to SEAC 2007 at World's Fair Park in downtown Knoxville, adjacent to UT's campus. A paper packed program is planned at the Knoxville Convention Center with up to six concurrent sessions in addition to nearly 8,000 square feet of book, poster, art, and commercial displays. Hotel accommodations are in the adjacent Holiday Inn Select. The famous Cherokee Warriors, an interpretative reenactment group sponsored by the Museum of the Cherokee Indian in North Carolina, will perform during the Thursday evening reception at the nearby historic railroad station a few hundred steps from the hotel. Friday evening's entertainment, on the Park Concourse overlooking World's Fair Park, will include the Lonesome Coyotes band (7-9 pm), a locally famous band with its own sound, followed by the Soul Connection (9-12), a 9 piece dance band that does it all! Friday night party goers are encouraged to wear favorite costumes in celebration of the Halloween season! For your convenience, food will be available at the reception and dance, and for purchase during lunch in the Convention Center. Saturday morning sessions will include a public symposium on Tennessee Archaeology. We'll finish our activities at noon on Saturday, plenty of time to miss the downtown rush for the Tennessee home football game starting at 4 pm.

IMPROVING YOUR APPLICATION FOR THE SEAC PUBLIC OUTREACH GRANT AWARD

by Mary L. Kwas
Grant Committee Chair

Once a year, SEAC provides a \$2,000 grant to fund a Public Outreach project through a competitive application process. The deadline to receive applications is December 1, which is coming up in the very near future. The Grant Committee, consisting of three or four members and a Board liaison, weighs the merits of each application and chooses the best

one to receive the grant in a given year. Information on the history of the grant, past winners, grant guidelines, and the grant application are available year-round on the SEAC web site at www.southeasternarchaeology.org.

Although the Committee has received many worthwhile applications, only one project can be funded each year. Just because an application didn't receive funding in a given year does not mean it was unworthy, only that it was bested by another. We encourage applicants who failed in previous years to resubmit.

At the same time, we have found that many otherwise worthy applications fail when funds are requested for a use outside the purpose of the grant, or inadequate information is provided to judge how the money will be used. Although the grant application is only a few pages in length, this does not mean that details aren't needed. To assist future applicants, I will discuss a few additional guidelines for producing a good application for the SEAC Public Outreach Grant Award.

Things To Avoid

This is a grant for Public Outreach projects; be sure you understand what that means. The grant does not provide funds for research, so funds should not be requested for radio-carbon dates, specialized analyses, or underwriting salaries of the principal investigator or field assistants. While grant projects may be related to specific field projects, don't waste your limited space in the application providing a detailed technical report on the field project. Summarize it in a paragraph, and then give us details on the public outreach components.

Do some research on best practices in public outreach. While most archaeologists understand the need for public outreach, many still operate from a very basic level. While a site tour, handout, or PowerPoint show at the local library is better than nothing, it is a very elementary form of public outreach. Exhibits, books, web sites, special events, and

other creative ideas interest the Committee much more. Look at the SAA's new web site "Archaeology for the public" at www.saa.org/public/home/home.html for ideas on best practices.

Things We Like to See

Give us details on what you want to do. The Committee will judge your application on the description you provide. If you leave us guessing, we will assume the worst. For example, if you are planning an exhibit, tell us what the theme and elements will be, provide a list of artifacts and images that will be used, include text samples. How will the exhibit be constructed? Provide an itemization of costs. If there will be matching funds, show specifically what the SEAC funds will pay for. If it's a traveling exhibit, show that you have a commitment from the venues where it will be placed. How will you advertise the exhibit? How many people do you expect to see it?

If you want to do a publication, what kind is it—a tri-fold handout, a booklet, or a full book? Will there be illustrations? Who are the authors and what are their qualifications? What is the proposed title and theme? What are the chapter titles? What is the proposed page length? Provide a sample of the writing and illustrations to let us see your vision. How will you distribute the publication? Will it be free or how much will it cost? How many copies will be produced? How will you advertise it? Consider similar questions for the development of public outreach web sites or special events or classroom training. What are the qualifications of your participants? How many people will it reach? How will you advertise it?

Besides details of the program or project itself, we also weigh other concerns. Impact is a very important consideration. How many people will the project reach? This might be small groups for an exhibit that adds up to a large number over a couple years. It might be one large group for a special event of only a weekend. It might be a workshop for 20 teachers that allows them to make a product for their school or community, thus spreading the information further. It might be a small publication distributed to every library in your state. So, it's not just about raw numbers, but the quality and long-term impact of your project. Impact also has to do with the message you are spreading. Use good education practices and a preservation message. Be careful not to inadvertently teach the wrong thing.

The Evaluation Plan

The Committee requires an evaluation plan as part of the grant application. This has been the weakest element of

the applications we have received. A very basic evaluation is the exit interview or questionnaire. These are of limited benefit, and the Committee knows they can be designed to support just about anything you want. So we are looking for something beyond that. The Committee recommends that your project have minimally a three-person evaluation team selected in the planning stages of the project. The evaluation team should ideally consist of a project member, an audience member, and an independent evaluator. The team should design an evaluation plan in advance that might consist of multiple elements, such as the exit questionnaire, professional review of the product, and assessment of a change in behavior or knowledge.

The evaluation plan should never consist solely of what the members of the evaluation team think about the project. Rather the job of the evaluation team is to develop a set of criteria for measuring the success of the project for the intended audience. The Committee expects to see the evaluation plan and criteria described in the application, and a detailed reporting of the evaluation results—whether good or bad—in the final report. The report might also include what the team learned based on the evaluation and how future projects might be improved.

Spread the Word

Finally, the job of the successful grant applicant does not end with the public outreach project itself. The Committee requires that a final report, which includes an itemized fiscal report and detailed evaluation report, must be completed in a timely manner after the end of the project. Because we want to spread the word to SEAC members, we also require a short narrative report to be published in the SEAC newsletter and on the SEAC web site. We also appreciate receiving photographs of your project that can be posted on the web site as well. An interim report by the fall deadline for the newsletter is also appreciated when possible. This reporting, after all, is also a form of public outreach.

The information presented above is meant to help you put together a successful application, not discourage you from applying. Not all questions above are pertinent to all applications, and leaving something out won't necessarily eliminate you. But the more good information you can provide to the reviewers, the better your chances are likely to be. What we have in mind, however, can still fit into the few pages of the application, just use your allotted space thoughtfully.

And don't forget, applications must reach the chair by the December 1 deadline, if you want to guarantee

consideration. Applicants with any questions about the process are welcome to contact me at mkwas@uark.edu.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE MARKSVILLE SITE: A SEAC PUBLIC OUTREACH GRANT PROJECT

by Chip McGimsey
Southwest Regional Archaeologist
University of Louisiana at Lafayette

The 2006 Public Outreach Grant award provided funds for developing a series of new exhibits at the Marksville State Historic Site museum. The Marksville prehistoric archaeological site (16AV1) is a Middle Woodland Hopewell period complex of earthen embankments and mounds; a portion of the site is preserved as a State Historic Site. The Museum was established in 1953 and still presented some of the original exhibits. The grant application was occasioned by the creation of three views of the site by artist Martin Pate which could form the basis for a series of new exhibits drawing upon 50 years of subsequent research at the site.

The \$2,000 in grant funds, together with an additional \$350 from the Regional Program, was utilized to print new figures and text panels for the Museum exhibits. With these funds, 11 new exhibits were created and 13 exhibits revised and updated (see below); six exhibits remain unchanged. In addition, the entire organization of the museum was revised so that the exhibit sequence told a more coherent story about the site. The first third of the exhibit hall presents information specifically about the Marksville site, while the second third illustrates the broader Hopewell and Marksville culture, along with some exhibits on the archaeological investigations at the park. The final third of the exhibit hall examines the broader scope of human cultural history in the region to place the Marksville site in a broader context. A final exhibit introduces the visitor to the State's new driving tour of mound sites across northeast Louisiana.

The museum reorganization was completed in the late fall of 2006. During the first five months of 2007, the site had 3,799 visitors. The Historic Site's standard visitor evaluation form was revised at the beginning of 2007 to include three questions specifically addressing the new exhibits. All of the responses to the questions were positive and no respondent indicated a problem or concern with the exhibits. Twelve of 17 respondents "strongly agreed" with the question Does the Museum provide a good understanding of the site and the Hopewell period; the other five respondents "agreed" with this statement.

All of the respondents felt that the paintings helped their understanding of the site. This question generated the most comments, ranging from "helps to see the reality of the site" to "very informative and well done." The final question asked whether the visitor had previously visited the museum and if so, whether the new exhibits provided a more informative experience? All of the respondents to this question (n=6) indicated yes.

The Marksville State Historic Site is one of the key sites on the state's new Mounds Heritage Trail driving tour. With publication of the tour pamphlet later this year, it is hoped that the site and museum will see an increase in visitation. In addition, a draft of a booklet about the site that includes a detailed walking tour around the mounds has been prepared and will hopefully be published in the near future. Both of these events will result in greater site visibility, thus increasing the significance of the Public Outreach Grant for improving the educational and interpretive value of the State Historic Site museum.

SEAC STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE NEWS

by Theresa McReynolds
Student Affairs Committee Chairperson

The Student Affairs Committee is sponsoring four events for students at the Knoxville meeting. In addition to the traditional student workshop and reception, we've added two lunchtime roundtables. Undergraduate and graduate students are invited to attend all of these events.

This year's student workshop focuses on CRM careers and is scheduled for Thursday afternoon. Boyce Driskell, Ramie Gougeon, Adam King, Joe Parfitt, and Ruth Troccoli will talk about their experiences and share tips on preparing for and finding a fulfilling CRM career. Afterwards, plan to join us at the student reception for light refreshments and the opportunity to continue the conversation with other students and professionals.

The lunchtime roundtables will occur on Thursday and Friday, and lunch will be provided. At the Thursday session, T.R. Kidder and Gayle Fritz will discuss preparing and submitting journal articles. On Friday, David Anderson, Ken Sassaman, and Margie Scarry will offer advice and answer questions about applying to archaeology graduate programs. There are a limited number of spots available for the lunchtime roundtables, so please sign up in advance by contacting Theresa McReynolds (temcre@email.unc.edu). Note that the Friday roundtable is designed for undergraduate and master's-level students, although there