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The Asheville Art Museum Plans to Expand

The Asheville Art Museum Presents Preliminary Expansion Plans

ASHEVILLE, NC — The Asheville Art Museum, celebrating its 60th anniversary and its extraordinary growth and success since it relocated to Pack Square in 1992 as a founding partner in Pack Place, is pleased to announce plans for a future expansion. These plans were discussed at a meeting with the Asheville City Council and Buncombe County Commissioners on Tuesday, July 14, 2009.

As Pack Place partner The Health Adventure plans to leave downtown, the Asheville Art Museum is taking advantage of this opportunity to expand and create larger, state-of-the-art galleries, public art-filled space and education space to meet the demands of the large and diverse audiences it serves. With the agreement of all Pack Place partners, the Asheville Art Museum determined that it could develop its facility creating a central arts destination and 21st-century museum for the community by expanding in its current location.

“The new design will bring a contemporary feel to the most important corner of downtown. It will also honor our great history of architecture and the sense of place on Pack Square. My dad, Roger McGuire, helped found Pack Place, and he hoped that Pack Place would grow and change. This is exactly the kind of exciting evolution he would have wanted,” said Kim McGuire, a community leader and Museum supporter.

After an exhaustive recruitment process conducted by the Asheville Art Museum staff, board and a building committee of local design professionals including Jim Samsel, John Rogers, Peter Alberice and others, the renowned firm Polshek Partnership Architects of New York has been chosen to design the new Asheville Art Museum and restore the

historic Pack Memorial Library building. Polshek is continuing to work with John Rogers, Beverly-Grant and the building committee.

The Museum needs to expand in order to better serve Western North Carolina and visitor audiences of all ages and to help Asheville remain competitive with other cities' as a top arts destination. A study completed by the Asheville Art Museum documented the overall economic impact of the Museum's current activities and the future increase that will be generated by the expansion. The Museum's planned expansion project is anticipated to generate as much as \$31.7 million in local economic impact with up to 80% of construction funds spent regionally. The new Museum will be a destination and art-filled civic center.

The Pack Place Board and the Asheville Art Museum are planning with all of Pack Place's partners for a successful transition and even more success in the future. The new building will anchor the new Pack Square Park and continue to be the central arts destination spurring economic and cultural activity in the region and downtown Asheville.

Attached: Asheville Art Museum Expansion Fact Sheet

For more information, to set up an interview, or for a high-resolution image, please contact Kim Zdanowicz, Communications Manager, at 828.253.3227, ext. 116 or kzdanowicz@ashevilleart.org.

Image Credit:

Night View of the new Asheville Art Museum. Courtesy of Polshek Partnership Architects, New York.

Asheville Art Museum Expansion Project Fact Sheet

Who: The Asheville Art Museum

What: A plan to increase and improve exhibition space, collection storage, conservation space, education space and art-filled public gathering space.

Where: The Museum will expand into Pack Place when The Health Adventure moves, renovating interior space, restoring the Pack Memorial Library and constructing a new 21st-century signature building on the corner of Biltmore and Patton on the new Pack Square Park.

When: Concept design is complete and schematic design is underway. Depending on when spaces are made available, groundbreaking is anticipated for 2011 with completion and re-opening of the expanded Museum in 2013.

Why: Exponential growth in audience participation, wildly successful programs and rapidly increasing permanent collections require expanded space for continued excellence. In the last five years the Museum served 1.2 million children and adults from 24 Western North Carolina counties, plus visitors to the region from 50 states and abroad.

The permanent collection is currently stored in overcrowded conditions. The size of the permanent collection has tripled since 1996 and now includes an outstanding collection of nearly 2,500 works of art. Only 3% of the collection can be on exhibit at any given time in the current facility and new, improved galleries are necessary to showcase these American and Western North Carolina treasures. Important special and traveling exhibitions need spaces significantly larger than the Museum's current galleries. They require higher ceilings, larger uninterrupted areas of wall space, specific lighting and climate control.

Education partners ask for more tours, teacher workshops and hands-on studio experiences for students; current limited gallery and classroom space restricts the number of students and groups that can be served. The current facility has no space equipped with adequate multi-media technology to support lectures, film/slide presentations, concerts or symposia. New space is necessary to accommodate media arts and new technology.

How: Polshek Partnership Architects, working with a local contractor and architects, has designed a facility that will allow development of a new and improved active schedule of changing exhibitions developed in-house or brought from major national museums. The expansion will double the size of the Museum from 24,400 to 50,900 square feet. Public areas and visitor services space will increase, including an expanded shop and a rooftop sculpture garden and café. The Museum's permanent collection, at the core of its programs, will be housed in the spine of the new building. Permanent exhibition space will increase by 70%. Exhibition support and collections storage will provide twice as much clean secure work area for preparators and registrars. Public programs, classrooms and education support areas will be 75% larger.

The project will be funded through a comprehensive capital and endowment campaign to secure public and private support.

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The Asheville Art Museum is the only nonprofit visual arts museum serving the 24 counties of Western North Carolina. Incorporated by artists in 1948, the Museum collects, preserves and interprets American art of the 20th and 21st centuries with a focus on work of significance to the Southeast.

Centrally located in downtown Asheville on Pack Square, the Museum is open 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday and 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Sunday. Special docent-guided tour packages are available for groups and students.

Admission to the Museum is \$8.00 for adults and \$7.00 for seniors, students with ID and for children 4-15 (children age three and younger are admitted free). Members are admitted free to the Museum.

The Asheville Art Museum is accredited by the American Association of Museums and receives general operating support from businesses, foundations and individuals, as well as from the North Carolina Arts Council, an agency funded by the State of North Carolina, and the National Endowment for the Arts, which believes that a great nation deserves great art. Additional support is provided by the City of Asheville and Buncombe County.

The Asheville Art Museum asks when reprinting images, please keep all artwork at their original proportions; please do not crop them or alter them disproportionately. Provided image credit information is mandatory and images are not for resale.