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TAM RECEIVES SIGNIFICANT FUNDING FOR SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE ***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

Texas Association of Museums (TAM) will launch a major initiative on September 1 called ***Finding Alternative Futures: Sustainability through Coaching***. Focused on history organizations in the greater Houston area, this two-year project is made possible by a lead grant from the Houston Endowment in the amount of \$520,000 and additional support from the Summerlee Foundation in the amount of \$40,000.

Finding Alternative Futures: Sustainability through Coaching will enable the institutional advancement of 15 history organizations, museums, or historic sites in and around Houston. The selected organizations will engage in an intensive 18-month coaching relationship designed to honestly assess their options for sustainability, elevate professionalism, and prepare for transformative change. Selection will be competitive; however, all museums in the greater Houston area will be invited to participate in a series of local programs for the broader museum community.

Billy Fong, Executive Director of TAM, commented:

“As the cornerstone of the Texas museum community, TAM has long been committed to assisting organizations with navigating sustainability challenges and elevating professional practices. ***Finding Alternative Futures: Sustainability through Coaching*** continues our work in an important way. We are grateful to the Houston Endowment and the Summerlee Foundation for their support and for seeing the merit of this project.”

Beyond the immediate improvements to the participating organizations, ***Finding Alternative Futures: Sustainability through Coaching*** is a pilot program to encourage struggling history organizations to seek alternative futures—virtual exhibits, online collections, oral history portals, e-publications, mergers, strategic collaborations, or even a graceful exit strategy. Currently no literature exists in the museum field as a concise guide to alternative options. This project will provide a framework for creating a model. Expressing new definitions of success—or alternative futures—will serve as a meaningful demonstration to the Texas history community as a whole, breaking down barriers to thinking imaginatively about ways to tackle serious sustainability issues.

Ruth Ann Rugg, Director of Special Projects, TAM, will serve as project director and is currently assembling an elite team of museum professionals to implement the project. Brian Crockett, Principal, Two-Headed Goat Consulting, Albuquerque, will serve as Head Coach and Coach & Lecturer Coordinator. Gary Smith, Program Officer for Texas History, The Summerlee Foundation, Dallas, will serve as Project Advisor. Susan Smyer, President, South East Texas Museums Association (SETMA), Humble, will serve as Local Field Assistant. Other team members will be announced after the planning period.

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