

June 22, 2012

News Release

For Immediate Release

City Announces Art Museum Director Finalists

The City of Springfield is pleased to announce the selection of two finalists for the position of director of the Springfield Art Museum. The candidates will be in Springfield on Monday for interviews with the Art Museum Board. The candidates also will meet with the City Manager, the City of Springfield's Leadership Team and will participate in a meet-and-greet session with the public 5-6 p.m., Monday, June 25 in the lobby of the Springfield Art Museum, 1111 E. Brookside Dr.

In alphabetical order, the candidates are:

- Connie Gibbons has more than 25 years of experience leading strategic change and growth. She graduated from Drury College in 1984 with a bachelor's degree in art, and from Texas Tech University in 1987 with a Master of Fine Arts degree in photography and art history. The founding director of the B.B. King Museum and the Buddy Holly Center, she has led diverse teams in the planning and development of multi-media and award winning exhibits and served as project manager for construction of new facilities and development of new programs. Her experience includes development of numerous contemporary art exhibitions, interpreting material, educational programs and outreach initiatives, and oversight of collections and archives. In addition Gibbons serves as a peer reviewer for the American Association of Museums MAP and Accreditation programs. She has served as a grants reviewer for the State Arts Agencies in Texas, Mississippi and Wyoming, as well for the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Institute of Museum and Library Services. Gibbons serves currently as the executive director of an art museum in Wyoming.
- Nick Nelson has served as the executive director of the Albany Museum of Art in Albany, Georgia, since 2009. During his tenure, the Albany Museum of Art expanded its outreach and education programs, hosted award-winning exhibitions, and cultivated community and statewide partnerships with other museums and organizations. Nelson has overseen major facility upgrades and oversaw the reinstallation of the museum's permanent collection galleries and the launch of a new website featuring downloadable audio tours, gallery guides, and other web-based educational provisions. Nelson also led the Albany Museum of Art through a successful re-accreditation bid with the American Association of Museums. Nelson serves as a peer reviewer for the AAM's accreditation program and has served as a grant reviewer for the Georgia Council for the Arts. Prior to becoming director, he served as the museum's curator of education, where he established programs for a variety of audiences including adults, school children, families, and college and university students. These programs included: internships, curriculum-based school tours and outreach programs, lectures, summer art camps, after school art classes, and a variety of family events. Nelson has a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Georgia Southwestern State University in Americus, Georgia, and a Master of Fine Arts degree from Georgia Southern University in Statesboro, Georgia. He taught drawing and design at Georgia Southern where he also directed the University's art gallery, the University's summer art camps,

and ArtsFest, a regional arts festival with an attendance of 6,000. Trained as an artist, Nelson has exhibited his artwork in venues across the country.

About the Search Process

The City began a nationwide search on February 3, 2012 and approximately 132 applications and resumes were received. The Art Museum appointed a search committee comprised of four art museum board members: Kirk Elmquist, Paula Ingram, Sally Scheid and Judith Fowler; the assistant city manager, Collin Quigley; and the director of human resources, Sheila Maerz.

The search committee initially screened the applications to the top twelve candidates who met all the qualifications of the position which included, but was not limited to: a bachelor's and master's degree in the fine arts, art history, or museum studies and a minimum of four years of professional work experience in an art museum.

The search committee narrowed the field from twelve to seven candidates, upon further review of each candidate's overall scope of experience, including significant managerial experience as well as a proven track record in community collaboration and implementing fresh ideas and program in an art museum environment. Web-based interviews were offered to those top seven candidates.

Two finalists were then invited to Springfield for an on-site interview. The Art Museum Board will make the final selection, as required by the City Charter.

"As with previous searches for the Police Chief and the Director of Aviation, we have been deliberate about gathering community input during this search," said City Manager Greg Burris. "I am committed to an open and transparent process when it comes to hiring those who lead some of our community's most vital institutions."

Input from the public at the Art Museum Board's meeting has been incorporated into the interview process, and additional feedback from the public following Monday's meet-and-greet session will be provided to the Board.

Both candidates will briefly introduce themselves and will then be free to talk to those in attendance for the remainder of the session. They will also be available to the media at that time.

For more information, contact: Collin Quigley, Assistant City Manager, (417) 864-1116; or Sheila Maerz, Director of Human Resources, (417) 864-1600.

About the Museum

The Springfield Art Museum is the permanent home for some 8,895 art objects representing thousands of years of culture. Special collections include 19th, 20th, and 21st century American paintings, watercolors, sculptures, and prints.

Incorporated in 1928, the Museum was first operated entirely by volunteers and still relies heavily on community support in a variety of ways. The Museum has had several homes along the way. The present Museum, on the edge of Phelps Grove Park, first opened in 1958.

A 392-seat auditorium was completed in 1974 and extensive renovation of the Museum was completed in 1984. In 1994, the Jeannette L. Musgrave Wing with four new exhibition galleries and storage for the permanent collections was completed. In 2008, a new wing with an entry hall, galleries, gift shop, and a new library was completed.