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News Release

For Immediate Release

Nick Nelson Named Art Museum Director



The City of Springfield is pleased to announce Nick Nelson has been selected as the City of Springfield's Art Museum Director.

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.

"We are extremely please to have Nick as our next director," said Ron Hawley, Art Museum Board Chairman. "He will bring to the museum an energy, enthusiasm and expertise that will serve to propel the museum to the forefront of Springfield and Southwest Missouri's cultural mission. Besides his education and professional experience, his record of collaboration among the various community organizations has been impressive and we look forward to that effort continuing here in Springfield."

Nelson oversaw major facility upgrades and the reinstallation of the Albany Museum of Art's permanent collection galleries and the launch of a new website featuring downloadable audio tours, gallery guides, and other web-based educational provisions.

He also led the museum 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.

“The Springfield Art Museum is an extraordinary museum with an incredible collection, a fantastic facility, and a wonderful board and staff,” Nelson said. “There is an obvious appreciation for the arts and their potential to create a better community here in Springfield. As a significant cultural resource, the Art Museum can play an important role in the community and this effort. I look forward to reaching out to the community and making the Springfield Art Museum a leader in the cultural life of Springfield and Southwest Missouri. I am so excited about coming to Springfield and the opportunity to be part of such an exciting community.”

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.

Nelson’s anticipated start date is Aug. 6, 2012.

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.

Input from the public at the Art Museum Board's meeting was incorporated into the interview process, and additional feedback from the public following a public meet-and-greet session was provided to the board.

For more information, contact: Collin Quigley, Assistant City Manager, (417) 864-1116 or Nick Nelson at (229) 485-8871 or nicknelson35@hotmail.com.

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.