



Museums for America

Sample Application MA-10-17-0380-17

Project Category: Learning Experiences

Funding Level: \$5,000 – \$500,000

Buffalo Bill Historical Center

Amount awarded by IMLS: \$255,000

Amount of cost share: \$6,830,228

Attached are the following components excerpted from the original application.

- Abstract
- Narrative
- Schedule of Completion

Please note that the instructions for preparing applications for the FY2018 Museums for America grant program differ from those that guided the preparation of FY2017 applications. This year, the maximum that may be requested from IMLS is \$250,000. Be sure to use the instructions in the FY2018 Notice of Funding Opportunity for the grant program and project category to which you are applying.

Abstract

When the Olin Corporation announced the permanent loan of its Winchester Collection of firearms to the Buffalo Bill Historical Center in 1975, little did they know it would be the seed for what has become the most comprehensive assemblage of American and European firearms in the world. By 1988, Olin had deeded the collection to the Center and, soon afterward, the Marlin Arms Company placed its arms collection at the Center as well, along with the L.C. Smith and Hunter Arms Company. In 1991 the current footprint for the Cody Firearms Museum—two floors with a total of 45,000 square feet of gallery space housing these important collections—was dedicated.

With the most significant and comprehensive collection of American firearms in the world, plus a selection of guns from around the globe, the Cody Firearms Museum (CFM) tells of the history and culture of firearms from design and manufacturing innovations to the evolution of their use for hunting, protection, and sport. Such an amazing wealth of firearms—more than 7,000—plus another 20,000 related artifacts, makes the CFM one of the top museums of its kind in the world, and the only firearms museum that has earned American Alliance of Museums accreditation.

The significance and size of the collection makes the meaningful display of artifacts difficult. The challenge has always been to tell the background stories of the objects themselves, rather than to just exhibit row after row of firearms. After twenty-five years, the Buffalo Bill Center of the West (formerly the Buffalo Bill Historical Center) is undertaking a major reinstallation of the main floor of the CFM. The goal of the reinstallation is to attract visitors of all ages and interest levels by telling the stories of people associated with the guns and how they used them through meaningful interpretation using interactive displays, video, audio, and hands-on activities.

The CFM collection includes objects dating back to the 1400s through the present day and is international in scope. The art and craft, and science of making firearms in an industrial context are fully revealed in this collection. The encyclopedic collection appeals to firearms enthusiasts as well as the general public, interpreting firearms in the context of military history, the development of technology, manufacturing, and the art of embellishment. Additionally, the Center houses the entire archives of the Winchester Repeating Arms Co., with records spanning from 1855 to 1976, in the McCracken Research Library. The collection contains the original sales ledgers for firearms models 1866-1907, photographs of all Winchester firearm models, correspondence documenting the company's role in two World Wars, a large collection of domestic and foreign catalogs, and several thousand engineering drawings. A portion of the collection contains original patents for the firearm technology. The CFM, and the firearms-related collections of Winchester factory drawings in the McCracken Research Library, make the Center the premier institution for the scholarly study of firearms.

The reinstallation process began in 2015 with front-end evaluation and the creation of a master plan. The sixteen-member CFM Advisory Board approved the master plan, and in early 2017, the project team will move into the design development phase, consulting with panels of experts (and novices) to refine interpretive text and messaging. On-site fabrication will begin in October 2018, and the new CFM—*The Tools of Our Endeavors*—is scheduled to open to the public in June 2019. From a total project budget of nearly \$8 million, the Center of the West requests \$255,000 from IMLS to provide for the delivery of interpretive content that will spark interest in all of our visitors. The stated vision that guides the reinstallation is to make the CFM a primary destination for both the firearms enthusiast and the general public. Firearms experts and novices alike will find their visit rewarding and come away with a better understanding of this important aspect of our history and complex facet of our present.

Project Justification

What we will do

The Cody Firearms Museum (CFM) at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West (Center) tells the story of the history and culture of firearms from design and manufacturing innovations to the evolution of their use for hunting, protection, and sport. More than 7,000 firearms and 20,000 related objects make up the CFM collection. Currently there are approximately 4,000 firearms on display in the 22,500 square-foot upper gallery of the CFM. The Center is embarking on an \$8 million total renovation of this space. *The Tools of Our Endeavors* will feature seven new galleries that tell the story of firearms from iron “handgonnes” dating back to the 1400s to the synthetic handguns of today. The Center of the West respectfully requests \$255,000 from IMLS to support interpretive components of this reinstallation, the first since the CFM opened in 1991.

The challenge, how identified, and who will benefit

The bulk of the CFM collection was acquired from the Olin Corporation and its subsidiary, the Winchester Repeating Arms Company. The Winchester Collection of more than 3,500 firearms and related objects encompassed much more than the company’s own guns. Systematic acquisition of competitors’ firearms, strategic purchases of historic pieces, and the purchase of company vice president and noted firearms collector Edwin E. Pugsley’s collection created an important assemblage of sporting guns spanning six centuries.

With such a large and impressive collection, the challenge has always been how to best display it. After twenty-five years, the Center is undertaking a major renovation and reinstallation of the CFM. A totally new layout will group the arms and artifacts into intuitive categories, with enhanced interpretation through interactive technologies. Important historical pieces will be more prominently displayed, making them easy to find for even the casual visitor. The magnificent artistry of embellished firearms and other specialty pieces will be highlighted, and visitors will come away with a sense of how firearms were essential tools in the Old West, and how they continue as an integral part of western culture today.

In preparation for reinstallation planning, the Center arranged for a front-end evaluation of the CFM by Visitor Studies Services in 2014. Recognizing that some visitors to the Center elect to bypass the CFM, surveyors were specifically interested in why people choose not to enter this gallery. Three reasons were cited most often:

We’re not interested in firearms, and the CFM looks like it’s just a bunch of guns in cases

We’re more interested in the other museums in the Center, and we have limited time

We are opposed to firearms

Further interviews revealed that people who avoid the CFM because it seems boring, or because they disapprove of firearms, would be inclined to visit if the objects were put into context, with dynamic delivery, and if the firearms-related issues that worry them were addressed directly. More than 600 visitors participated in the study, and findings confirmed that CFM visitors and would-be visitors want the same things: stories about the people associated with the guns and how they used them; historic and visual contextualization of the firearms; and dynamic presentation systems in the galleries (interactives, video, audio, demonstrations).

Few firearms museums in the United States go beyond the exhibition of objects to put them in a larger context of their role in history and the culture at large. In the report, *The Science of Learning*, a central finding is that we learn new information and ideas by relating them to what we already know: in other words, context is essential. An expert collector may lack an understanding of the influence of firearms on history, economics, and culture. And often there is little explanatory information for the novice about different types of firearms and how they work. *The Tools of Our Endeavors* will be filled with innovative educational interpretation and media offerings that put firearms into the larger context of history while still providing the technical information of interest to collectors. Offering varied types of exhibits and delivery systems will better engage our visitors and will serve a wider range of people both in terms of multisensory learning styles and level of firearms interest.

The Tools of Our Endeavors - Step into the museum. . . .

“The story of firearms is about people, ingenuity, and artistry. Behind every firearm, past and present, is a

unique story about owners and users, manufacturing, technology, and art.” A stroll through the **Introductory Gallery** serves as an overview to the story of firearms, including definitions of the various types of firearms and terms, and facts about firearms safety. Here visitors will be invited to handle replica firearms and try the simulated shooting experience. The orientation space will provide a basic level of understanding that can lead to a greater appreciation of the collections that follow.

Beyond this gallery, visitors move through the **Evolution of Firearms**, a timeline beginning with the first firearms from the fifteenth century and continuing through the present. “*Why do guns change? Firearms technology impacted nations, individuals, and industry and, in turn, these entities impacted firearms technology.*” The timeline will show contemporaneous historical events and industrial innovations, pointing out where changes in firearms sometimes were made in response to events and, conversely, where changes in firearms influenced subsequent events. Again, context is key. For example, Samuel Colt’s mid-nineteenth-century revolver was the first to be machine-made, with interchangeable parts. This, in turn, led to the development of assembly-line production—pre-dating and influencing Henry Ford’s assembly line. In this gallery, tactile interactives will aid in understanding the mechanics involved in the percussion revolver, the bolt action loading and locking mechanism, and the separation of metallic cartridges. Videos illustrate various action types: matchlock, wheelock, flintlock, and percussion. Other alcoves illustrate how the artistry of individual craftsmen led to assembly-line production, and how target shooting became a national pastime in the wake of the Civil War. The Evolution of Firearms gallery is designed to be a mini-version of the entire museum, so visitors with limited time or interest still will be able to have an overview of the CFM.

Interactive media in the **Story of the West** gallery will illustrate supply routes and movements of people heading west, from traders, to settlers, to American Indian tribes. By immersing visitors in a replica of a late nineteenth-century town, interpretive panels explain how firearms were everyday tools used to procure food, earn a living through the sale of meat and pelts, and, of course, for protection from animals and other humans. The demand for improvement in these tools drove innovation that created better products at affordable prices and eventually led to new uses: shooting prowess became entertainment by the likes of Buffalo Bill and Annie Oakley. Inside The Hunter’s Cabin, visitors see how firearms transformed the hunting experience in the American West, from the American Indians’ use of guns to defend hunting territories to sport hunters like Theodore Roosevelt, who organized the Boone and Crockett Club to lobby for conservation policies for more sustainable use of wildlife. A mini-theatre shows the story of sportsmen and the conservation effort. The walk through this gallery ends with The Store where visitors learn that the most popular guns in the West were utilitarian and affordable. And because ownership was widespread, there were early regulations on the use of guns across the frontier.

The **Military History** area will feature two main components: a comprehensive representation of the firearms used from wars fought on American soil to those fought by Americans abroad; and a look at the soldiers’ experiences. From shoulder-to-shoulder combat with relatively primitive weapons to unmanned distance warfare, the soldier’s experience has been shaped profoundly by the advancements of weapons technology. The search for superior firepower has changed the way we fight wars, think about wars, and commemorate them. Inside a tent, visitors can read and hear oral histories of soldiers. And finally, an area in the rear of the gallery will serve as a Room of Reflection where soldiers, veterans, and other visitors can leave comments and record their own stories in an oral history booth.

The physics of shooting will be explored in the **Science of Firearms** gallery. Basic mechanics such as the trigger press, various firing systems, and sighting will be demonstrated, along with ammunition and “bells and whistles” designed to improve accuracy, such as scopes, red dot sights, and the rifled barrel—*The Pursuit of Precision*. Common myths will be investigated, such as how bullets behave when fired underwater, and whether modern polymer handguns can evade airport security (they can’t—we’ll explain why). Again, there will be hands-on opportunities to learn about different technologies of gun sights: front, rear, iron and telescopic. Videos will illustrate *A Groovy Solution*—what it looks like inside a gun barrel as the bullet goes down—smooth bore versus rifling.

With examples dating back to the 1700s, *The Art of Firearms* gallery will exhibit firearms that have been used as canvasses by engravers and other embellishers. Visitors will see firearms as art, pieces that were prized not for their utilitarian function, but as works of art as unique as the individual for whom they were made. “*What’s more important – Beauty or Function?*” Presentation and commemorative arms will be included here, and interactive media in this gallery will demonstrate the engraving process.

Working with curatorial staff, the reinstallation designers, Gallagher & Associates, have developed an informational hierarchy for individual exhibits to allow visitors to “skim” or to learn in more depth, according to their interest. Each topic will have a title, explanatory subtitle, and 80-100 words describing the relevance of the display. Each object will have an identification label as well. Font size acts as a visual cue regarding the level of detail contained in the copy. In addition to photos and other static visuals incorporated into the museum’s design, there will be seven locations where linear videos will be available, either via a loop or on-demand. A video will provide demonstrations of how different types of firing mechanisms work, for example, and a brief film will talk about the conservation movement started by famous hunters like Theodore Roosevelt and the Rockefeller family.

Interpretive opportunities that address cross-generational learning include:

Aural—Recordings of soldiers’ war experiences as written in their letters and diaries from a variety of conflicts will be shared with visitors in the Military History area. Veterans will have the opportunity to record their own reminiscences in a private area. Of course many of the videos throughout the museum will be narrated as well.

Tactile—Several mechanical interactives will enable visitors to handle non-working firearms, experience trigger mechanisms, attempt to assemble a firearm, use various sighting technologies, and more. Some of the interactives, such as the triggers, allow visitors to compare different mechanisms, not merely operate them. By encouraging users to observe the differences in how they work, the interactives move from the realm of “fun” to actual learning, from “experience” to active study.

Participatory—“Doing” for most people is a more powerful way to learn than watching, but in this instance, actually holding and using firearms goes beyond learning to help reduce misconceptions and fear. Many people have never had the opportunity to hold and closely examine a firearm, and increased familiarity may open the way for better learning throughout the museum and, ultimately, a better understanding of firearms and the issues surrounding them in contemporary America.

Advancing the strategic plan

Five goals are delineated in the Center’s 2014-2020 Strategic Plan. Three of these goals speak directly to the reinstallation project. **Goal #1** is to “expand the Center’s reputation through, among other things, exhibitions and high-quality educational programming for all audiences.” **Goal #2** specifically mentions the reinstallation of the CFM as a way to “attract, engage, inform, and inspire new and diverse audiences.” And the reinstalled museum will “leverage visual, aural, and tactile technology to reach twenty-first century learners” to satisfy **Goal #3**.

Addressing MFA and Learning Experiences goals

Improving historical and cultural context of the CFM collection for the casual visitor, and exposing the depth of firearms examples for the enthusiast will be the hallmarks of the reinstallation. All visitors will be able to experience the many facets of the story of firearms in both sequential and thematic contexts, sparking life-long learning and increasing their knowledge and appreciation of the role of firearms in history, particularly in the United States.

The Tools of Our Endeavors has adopted the following vision statement to guide all phases of the reinstallation process: “*The CFM will become a stronger destination for both firearms enthusiast and the general public as the foremost institution in the nation for interpreting firearms.*” This vision will be accomplished through:

- Cutting-edge collections display techniques

The CFM exhibit design firm Gallagher & Associates has extensive experience planning museum installations that exhibit collections in the most compelling way. In the reinstalled CFM, for instance, cases with firearms that are visible from two sides will tell two sets of stories about a gun— a separate story on each side.

- Larger proportion of collections on display

The current CFM museum has 3948 firearms on exhibit. In *The Tools of Our Endeavors*, exhibit space will be increased to accommodate 4500 firearms.

- More engaging interpretation

Media interactives of all kinds will be increased – from 8 in the current museum to 18 in the new CFM. These include aural, tactile, and visual experiences.

- Enhancing awareness, understanding, and appreciation

Firearms will be shown as an integral part of history, and their multiple uses today—tools, objects of sport, and works of art, in addition to defensive and military uses—will be explored as well. As a non-advocacy, accredited institution, the CFM provides information and perspectives objectively, helping visitors build a more comprehensive picture of firearms, past and present.

Project Work Plan

With the project vision clearly in mind, Gallagher & Associates, in collaboration with key project staff, has developed a detailed exhibit schematic plan outlining specific areas within the total museum footprint. This design was influenced by the results of the front-end evaluation of the CFM conducted by Visitors Studies Service in 2014. Work on the master plan (Phase I) began in 2015 and spanned four months. Phase II, schematic design, began in February 2016 and continued throughout the year. The project team, which includes curatorial staff, a staff project manager, educators, chief conservator, and facilities staff, has worked closely with Gallagher & Associates and with the CFM Advisory Board.

Specific activities

In early 2017, the project team will begin the design development phase (III) of the project, which will continue roughly through the end of the year. During this time, the content for the six thematic areas will be fully developed. Experts in each area will serve as consultants to advise the team on relevant content. By the beginning of the grant period, October 2017, the project team will have formed three advisory panels that will evaluate factual information presented in text panels and labels as well as how successfully the exhibit substantiates the project vision to become a stronger destination for both firearms enthusiast and the general visitor. The three panels involved in formative evaluation are:

Industry/Expert Panel—Scholars and representatives from various companies in the firearms industry will review content for accuracy, offer suggestions as to what items from the collection should be displayed, and ensure that significant innovations and events pertaining to firearms are included. They will be of particular assistance with the Introduction, Evolution of Firearms, Story of the West, and Science of Firearms areas.

Collectors Panel—A committee of respected firearms collectors will offer guidance with an emphasis on firearms of historical importance, presentation pieces, and embellished objects. They will also advise on what type of information resonates most with collectors and other experts, including adequate depth of information, so that knowledgeable visitors will find the museum informative.

Novice Panel—This committee, perhaps the most important, will consist of people who know nothing about firearms. They will examine the introductory gallery to tell the team whether it actually prepares visitors for the rest of the museum and whether the interpretive information is successful in integrating the story of firearms with the rest of history. These advisors will determine the effectiveness of interactives in understanding the mechanics of firearms, and whether the information on text panels tells the story in a compelling way. Most importantly, the project team will find out if what these panelists learn encourages them to examine their perceptions of firearms and think about them in a new, more nuanced way. In summary, they will help the team identify what interpretive elements work, and which don't.

Curatorial staff attend several arms conferences each year where another opportunity for formative evaluation presents itself. For instance, Wanenmacher's Arms Show and the Antique Arms Show attract knowledgeable owners and experts of antique, collector, and modern firearms. Center staff will present an overview of the proposed reinstallation, complete with examples of interpretive text and illustrations of interactive components of the new galleries. Visitors will be asked to complete an evaluation form after viewing the presentation.

During the design development period, curatorial staff will determine which objects will move to the Center's Special Exhibitions area for a temporary display that will remain open during the reinstallation phase of the CFM. This phase, which will necessitate closing the CFM, is expected to run from October 2018 to June 2019.

Risks

The reinstallation project, which includes some infrastructure upgrades including fire and security, will require an intricate project management process, monitored by experienced staff members. Even with careful oversight, it is possible that the timeline for completion might have to be adjusted, and the risk is that the reinstalled CFM might not open in time for the Center's peak summer season. However, Center staff have managed large reinstallations in the past, following a similar timeline, and they are confident that the CFM project will proceed smoothly and on time.

Plan, implement, manage

Ashley Hlebinsky, CFM curator, is responsible for content and design development of the reinstallation project. She has worked closely with Gallagher & Associates exhibit designers from the outset. Hlebinsky has completed preliminary text panels, which will serve as the overarching themes for the remainder of the content in each area. Assistant Curator **Daniel Michael** will coordinate the temporary exhibition of firearms that will be of interest for visitors while the CFM is closed for reinstallation. This exhibit will showcase unusual firearms, as well as some visitor favorites, and will remain open until these guns are reinstalled into the CFM in May 2019. Information Technology Manager **John Gallagher** (no relation to Gallagher & Associates) will continue to manage the project, coordinating the staff team and outside consultants. Gallagher has been involved with the project since work on the master plan began in 2015; he managed the 2010 reinstallation of the Whitney Western Art Museum at the Center.

Gretchen Henrich, Director of Education, will continue to assist with content and interpretive education in the galleries. She, too, has worked closely with Gallagher & Associates from the outset and has been the contact person for outside evaluators. She will coordinate the formative evaluation with advisory panels, as well as summative evaluation during the summer of 2019. Chief conservator **Beverly Perkins** will oversee the deinstallation of objects from the main CFM gallery to the temporary storage area in the lower gallery. She will also work closely with Hlebinsky during the reinstallation of objects to the main floor gallery. While fabrication will take place off-site, **Mike Brown** will be the staff liaison with construction contractors and with staff members who will assist with installation.

The firm **Gallagher & Associates** has been working with project staff on the CFM reinstallation since spring 2015 when the first phase, the master plan, began. Led by director Bruce Lightbody, the team has defined the parameters of the project and developed the design in phases. Gallagher & Associates will continue to work with the project team through the next phase of design development and through phase IV, construction documentation and phase V, implementation. Gallagher & Associates is an internationally recognized museum planning and design firm.

Several participants have been identified for the Industry/Expert panel. **Jeremy Johnston**, Curator of the Buffalo Bill Museum at the Center and Manager of *The Papers of William F. Cody*, will advise the project team, specifically for the Story of the West gallery, helping to separate myth from reality. **Herbert Houze**, Curator Emeritus of the Winchester Arms Collection and the CFM, is a well-known scholar in the field of firearms and has published widely on the subject. His familiarity with the collections will make Houze an especially valuable consultant. **Paul Hutton**, Professor of History at the University of New Mexico, will also sit on the panel. As a cultural historian, Hutton will offer insight into the Evolution of Firearms and Story of the

West areas. **Phil Schreier**, Senior Curator at the National Firearms Museum, will bring another curatorial perspective to the evaluation process. The National Firearms Museum, governed by the non-political arm of the NRA, examines the history of firearms with a special emphasis on the American experience.

Sequence of activities

October 2017 to March 2018 – advisory panels for each thematic area meet; storyline hierarchy advances from large text panels to in-depth labels; complete design development phase (phase III); interpretive education components are developed; begin construction documentation phase (IV), including object list; deinstall lower CFM gallery; build temporary storage in lower CFM gallery; begin media hardware installation; prepare object list for temporary exhibition; complete construction documentation phase (IV).

April 2018 to September 2018 –begin implementation phase (V); selection of mechanical interactives; begin off-site fabrication; create print-ready production files; begin graphics design; temporary exhibition installed.

October 2018 to March 2019 – temporary exhibition opens; implementation phase (V) continues; main floor of CFM closes to public; deinstall main floor of CFM using temporary storage in lower CFM gallery; deliver, install cases, fabrication; on-site construction begins.

April 2019 to September 2019 – complete reinstallation phase (V); close temporary exhibition; install temporary exhibition objects into main floor CFM; main floor gallery opens June 2019; summative evaluation begins and continues through September 2019.

Resources

The scale of the CFM reinstallation necessitates a well-planned fundraising endeavor. With \$8 million to raise, the Center has created a multi-level budget for contributions. One foundation that has supported the CFM in the past has committed to a substantial lead gift, and other such foundations will be approached. The Center is applying to the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) for a Preservation and Access grant in support of CFM infrastructure work. Though not technically part of the reinstallation, upgrades to the CFM galleries, specifically humidification, fire, and security, will improve protection for the collections. State agencies will also be approached for smaller pieces of the plan, such as gallery guides to interpret individual alcoves. Individual donations from CFM Advisory Board members will be solicited as well.

Tracking progress

The project manager will track the reinstallation process using Microsoft Teams. Meetings of the project team will take place periodically, as they have throughout the master plan and schematic phases of the project. Gallagher & Associates will be on-site for meetings several times during the next design development phase. Input from the advisory panels of experts, collectors, and novices will inform the education department as they develop interpretive elements for each thematic area. Themes and delivery techniques will be assessed and modified if necessary.

Sharing results

As with previous reinstallation projects, the Center will mount a comprehensive public relations plan in advance of the opening of the CFM in June 2019. In the past, the Center's major improvements have been covered by the New York Times and other national news sources. In addition to major outlets, the firearms industry publishes popular and scholarly publications, many of which have recently featured CFM Curator Ashley Hlebinsky. She has also appeared on the Travel Channel, the Outdoor Channel, and National Geographic channel in the past. It is reasonable to expect these outlets to promote the opening of the CFM.

The Center will celebrate its centennial year in 2017 with increased media exposure and centennial-related activities all year. Embedded in these stories about our first successful 100 years will be the mention of our major reinstallation of the CFM. The Center's communication department will also make use of social media to promote the opening of the reinstalled museum, including a blog on the website that takes readers behind the scenes of the reinstallation process.

Project Results

Collect and report data

Beginning in June 2019, a variety of summative evaluation techniques will be used to collect data in order to determine whether visitors' understanding of firearms, or their interest in firearms, has changed. Time tracking will record the time spent in each thematic area. Individual interviews will be conducted as visitors exit the museum in order to determine, among other things, what visitors learned, which thematic areas interested them most (and least), and how their viewpoint of firearms changed. Interviews will also be conducted with visitors who are reluctant to enter the CFM, repeating the front-end evaluation questions for those who bypass this part of the museum. If any of these visitors elect to give the CFM a try, follow-up interviews will be conducted to determine whether their interest in firearms has changed. In the Military History area, a special section is reserved for leaving comments. These comments will be collected and reviewed, and suggestions evaluated. Summative evaluation will continue through September, covering the Center's four busiest months. Results of this evaluation will be compiled and shared with the CFM reinstallation team and Center administration.

Intended results

As mentioned in the Project Justification section, the vision statement of the CFM reinstallation describes our intended results: *The CFM will become a stronger destination for both the firearms enthusiast and the general public as the foremost institution in the nation for interpreting firearms.* When the CFM re-opens to the public, we will have accomplished this goal by greatly improving our exhibit techniques; we will have a larger proportion of our firearms collection on view; we will have vastly improved interpretive elements throughout the museum; we will have heightened awareness and appreciation of firearms and their role in the history of the nation; and we will have related the relevance of firearms to a general public who may now view them in a different light.

Knowledge and attitude of audience change

Throughout the CFM, visitors will see ephemera and firearms grouped thematically, with a clear hierarchy of labels and concise information. In addition, a variety of media, including curatorial videos, recorded stories and reminiscences, and background on significant innovations will bring the collection alive. For the aficionado, electronic access to in-depth information on specific firearms will be available. Visitors will be able to download many extras onto their own personal electronic devices.

Tangible products

In addition to the permanent installation itself, the Temporary Exhibits area represents a tangible product within the CFM that will allow for shorter-term exhibits from collectors, manufacturers, or other museums. As a Smithsonian Affiliate, we will be able to present special programs with objects on loan from Smithsonian collections. The Temporary Exhibits area allows curatorial staff to be nimble in exploring current firearms-related topics without dismantling the larger exhibition space (please see CFM Design in supporting documents).

Sustain benefits

CFM galleries will be compartmentalized such that routine maintenance, object rotation, and upgrades can be accomplished without a major deinstallation of the museum. This will allow for changes, not only with the artifacts themselves, but also in messaging. The CFM will continue to address and discuss the diverse story of firearms, both positive and negative, and interpretive text addressing opposition to firearms will be integrated into the galleries when relevant. This flexibility means that the CFM can react to national issues and place them in context with relative ease. Behind every firearm, past and present, is a unique tale about owners and users, manufacturing, technology, and art, and the CFM will continue to tell these tales.

