

# Frequently Asked Questions about the Juneau-Douglas City Museum

## General Information about the City Museum

### **What is the mission of the City Museum?**

The Juneau-Douglas City Museum fosters among its diverse audiences an awareness of Juneau's cultural heritage, values and community memory so we may draw strength and perspective from the past, inspire learning, and find purpose for the future. As a public trust, we collect, preserve, interpret, and exhibit those materials that document the cultures and history of the Juneau and Douglas area.

### **What does it mean to be a public trust?**

Museums operate as public trusts under a common law doctrine, holding collections for public benefit rather than private gain. This means collections should be preserved for public study, enjoyment, and education, often managed through ethical standards like those of the American Alliance of Museums (AAM). Key legal precedents involve stewardship, fiduciary duties, and restrictions on selling assets. (from AAM).

### **How is the City Museum different than the State Museum?**

While both the City and State Museums are located in Juneau, they have very different mandates and serve different stakeholders. The City Museum focuses specifically on the Juneau and Douglas gold belt region, collecting material culture and interpreting the multifaceted history tied specifically to this place. While the City Museum serves as a public trust for preserving the history of the area on behalf of the Juneau-Douglas community, the City Museum also strives to connect and serve the Juneau-Douglas community in the present through such programs as Solo Artist exhibits, school group visits, and restorative justice projects. The City Museum is part of the City & Borough of Juneau and is overseen by the Library Department.

The Alaska State Museum's (ASM) mandate is to collect, preserve, and exhibit the history of the entire State of Alaska. While Juneau is represented, it is a small portion of their overall collections and exhibits. They serve a much wider community than just Juneau. The ASM is part of the division of Alaska State Libraries, Archive, and Museums and is governed by the State of Alaska.

### **What is the City Museum's role in CBJ?**

The City Museum acts as a public trust to collect, preserve, interpret, and exhibit materials that document the cultures and history of the Juneau and Douglas area. We often provide CBJ staff with historic images, information, or other resources that help with various projects implemented throughout CBJ. We also work collaboratively with the HRAC. When appropriate historic City documents past retention, artwork, or objects may be transferred to the City Museum for consideration to be included in the permanent, reference, or education collection.

### **What history/stories/people/voices does the City Museum represent?**

The City Museum aims to represent all facets of our diverse community. You can find permanent exhibits on precolonial life, the arrival of gold miners, the mining period, local businesses, fishing (both traditional and commercial), the connection of local LÍngít to the wood and waterways of the area, Indigenous art, maritime culture, the political history of Juneau, and much more. Past temporary exhibitions have highlighted underrepresented voices like the Japanese-Americans and Unangax to bring forward their stories of racial bias which led to internment during World War II. The City Museum has also highlighted the distinct Filipino culture in Juneau.

**Whose voice/stories/history is missing or could be better represented at the City Museum?**

The City Museum is constantly striving to tell the most inclusive and equitable history possible. This pursuit is ongoing through outreach projects to smaller communities, the collection of material culture, and the planning of new exhibits to present a richer and more accurate representation of the Juneau Douglas community. Some underrepresented groups in the permanent exhibitions include the Filipino, Latinx, Black, and LGBTQIA+ communities.

**How does the City Museum serve the local Juneau community?**

The City Museum is the caretaker of the history of the Juneau Douglas area while also providing opportunities for our community to connect and gather for exhibition openings and tours, programs, and other events. October through April admission is free to all visitors thanks to a variety of community financial sponsors. Also, throughout the winter the City Museum works with local artists through the Solo Artist exhibit program to guide them through the process of developing, marketing, hanging, and opening a museum exhibit that highlights their unique work. A new Solo Artist show opens each month (November through February) and then in March the City Museum hosts the 12x12 Community Art exhibit where local artists are encouraged to submit a piece of art measuring 12 inches by 12 inches on a topic put forth by the City Museum based on suggestions from the community at the previous year's 12x12 show.

The City Museum has also been involved in several large-scale restorative justice projects such as the Funter Bay Project and the reraising and dedication of the Wooshkeetaan Kootéeyaa (totem pole).

The City Museum also serves local schools through tours and take home education kits and local researchers and historians through consultations with our Curator of Collections and Exhibits. The City Museum also seeks out grant opportunities that help highlight historical and artistic endeavors in the community. Finally, the City Museum has a robust volunteer program that provides opportunities for mostly retired community members to lead walking tours, act as a docent, work with collections and interact with visitors and ring up sales at our front desk.

**How does the City Museum serve visitors to Juneau?**

While the City Museum welcomes out-of-town visitors all year round, from May-October the City Museum extends business hours and is open seven days a week to welcome both independent and cruise ship visitors. Through well rounded exhibits about the history of Juneau, historical walking tours, State Capitol tours, visitors get to know our community and engage with local citizens who share their expertise and unique stories.

**How much revenue does the City Museum earn annually from admissions?**

FY23 - \$46,849, FY24 - \$53,125, FY25 - \$53,285. This revenue is earned from summer admissions May-September. Winter admission from October-April is free thanks to the financial support of sponsors which donate \$3,858 annually.

**How much revenue does the City Museum Store earn annually in merchandise sales?**

FY23 - \$23,064, FY24 - \$19,546, FY25 - \$23,414. Most of the inventory in the museum store is purchased outright, however some revenue comes through artist consignments. The JDCM consigns items for artists in the museum store year-round and during Solo Artist shows in the winter months. Here is a breakdown of how much revenue the City Museum retains(included in amounts above) vs. how much local artists earn through consignment:

FY24:	Artists - \$9,224.68	Museum - \$3,806.94
FY25:	Artists - \$10,983.65	Museum - \$4,241.75
FY26 (to date):	Artists - \$17,495.06	Museum - \$6,106.14

**How much revenue does the City Museum earn annually from user fees?**

FY23 - \$13,795, FY24 - \$8,708, FY25 - \$7,384. Revenue through user fees is from walking tours which are 100% led by volunteers.

**How many visitors does City Museum host annually?**

The City Museum reports annual visitation by Fiscal Year for the CAFR Parks, Recreation, and Culture Operating Indicators by Function/Program. Prior to COVID-19 in FY18 there were 23,366 visitors, in FY19 there were 24,178 visitors, FY20 saw no cruise ship visitors during the first part of summer so there were 17,475 visitors, and FY21 saw no cruise ship visitors which reduced visitation to the museum to 11,205 visitors. In both FY20 and FY21 the City Museum was periodically closed or on reduced open hours. FY22 there were 27,316 visitors. FY23 there were 39,084 visitors, FY24 there were 40,964 visitors, FY25 there were 36,382 visitors.

**What year was the City Museum established?**

Founded in 1976 as the Last Chance Mining Museum by a community effort to preserve the City’s mining heritage, the museum’s mission broadened in 1982 and was renamed the Juneau-Douglas City Museum.

**How much is admission to the City Museum?**

Free admission due to sponsorships from November-April. Sponsorship brings in \$3858 for these six months. May-October \$7 general admission, \$6 Senior (65 and older), free for 12 and younger, free for Blue Star/active military.

**How many staff members (FTE) does the City Museum have?**

We have four staff members that make up 3.75 FTE. This includes the Director, the Curator of Collections of Exhibitions, the Curator of Public Programs and Education, and a ¼ time Administrative Assistant who manages the City Museum Store.

## **Collections and Exhibits**

**How many objects does the City Museum have in its permanent collection?**

The City Museum cares for about 100,000 items in our permanent collection that includes objects (3-D pieces), photographs, and archival material (paper-based items).

**What other collections does the City Museum manage?**

In addition to the Permanent Collection, the City Museum also manages an extensive Reference Collection with nearly 4,000 items that is accessible to researchers, as well as an Educational Collection that is mostly comprised of material that can be handled and used.

**Does the City Museum have an archive?**

The City Museum has archival material meaning that we have paper-based objects in our collection like documents, logs, records, and other materials of that kind. However, the way a museum manages a collection is very different from how an archive would manage a collection, often causing confusion about the ease of identifying particular items in the archival portion of our Permanent Collection. As a result, we do not have an archive in the way the State has an archive.

**Does the City Museum ever de-accession things from the permanent collection?**

Deaccessioning is the act of removing an object from a museum's permanent collection and disposing of it in some manner consistent with the ethics of the home museum. However, a museum's mandate is to protect all items in their permanent collections in perpetuity. There are some grounds on which a museum could deaccession objects, such as not fitting into the collecting/interpretive scope of the museum or the item has degraded to a point of being relatively useless for research or display. But general museum policy is that once an item has been added to a collection, it is meant to stay there for the rest of its life. Removing items from a collection could seriously hinder the ability of the institution to provide accurate interpretation of the community it represents.

**Does the City Museum loan permanent collection objects?**

The City Museum loans out permanent collection objects to recognized institutions that can provide the museum standard level of safety and security necessary for maintaining such collections. We do not loan items to any location where the objects would be displayed in private, unprotected spaces.

**What are some of the highlights in the City Museum's permanent collection?**

The City Museum cares for four totem poles (kootéeyaa), three of which are over 35 feet. There are also art pieces by renowned Alaskan masters such as Sydney Laurence, Eustace Paul Ziegler, Nathan Jackson, Ray Peck, Dan DeRoux, and Fred Machetanz in the permanent collection.

**How many research questions does the City Museum receive annually?**

The Curator of Collections and Exhibitions responds to about 100 questions a year requiring varying degrees of depth and time

**How many new exhibits does the City Museum develop and open annually?**

The City Museum develops and opens 8-12 new exhibits a year.

**How often does the City Museum change exhibits?**

Winter – once a month (however sometimes there will be multiple new exhibits a month in different galleries). Summer – multiple galleries are prepared for the season (May to October).

**How many objects does the City Museum accession each year?**

The City Museum accessions (accepts into the permanent collection) 300-600 new objects each year. About 1000 objects are cataloged (including new accessions and previously accessioned but not yet processed objects).

**How does the City Museum determine what objects are added to the permanent collection?**

The Curator of Collections and Exhibitions determines if the object fits within the Museum's mission and geographic collection area, if the object can be used to interpret a part of the Juneau-Douglas history, and if there is adequate space to store the object safely. After these determinations have been made the Curator consults with the Museum Director to make the final determination. Most donations are passively collected, which means they are items that are brought in by a member of the public as a donation.

**Programs****How many programs does the City Museum host annually?**

2025 Walking Tours= 182

Other Programs = 30-40

Total Programs= Between 212-246

**How many people are served by programs?**

2025 Walking Tour Participants= 1850

Other Program participants =2000-3000

Total Participants = 3850-4850

**How many volunteers does the City Museum have?**

25-30 mostly retired professionals and over the age of 50.

**What is the economic impact of the City Museum's volunteer program?**

Volunteers provide over 2000 hours of service annually. The national average for the value of a volunteer is currently \$36.14/hr. and for Alaska is \$37.13/hr. Therefore, at the AK amount volunteers donate the equivalent of over \$74,000 annually.

**What are some of the popular programs at the City Museum?**

Popular programs at the City Museum include First Friday openings each month including Gallery Walk in December. The City Museum collaborates with the School District, ANS, ANB and the Juneau Delegation each year to celebrate Elizabeth Peratrovich Day. Dr. Walter Soboleff's birthday is celebrated in November each year through a program that encourages writing letters of encouragement. We also host artist talks and workshops throughout the winter featuring our solo artists. We also host a Free Little Art Gallery where community members can make art and leave and take art they enjoy.

**What ages are served through the programs?**

City Museum programs engage and serve all ages from preschoolers to older adults age 65 and over. The City Museum hosts a number of class visits and the Friends of the Juneau-Douglas City Museum provides free bus transportation for teachers and students.

# **Veteran's Memorial Building**

**What year was the Veteran's Memorial Building built?**

1951

**What year did the City Museum move into the Veteran's Memorial Building?**

1989

**Where else has the City Museum been located?**

1976-1982 Compressor Building at the Last Chance Basin, CBJ owned.

1982 – July 1985 Davis Log Cabin Visitor Information Building, CBJ owned.

July 1985-June 1986 No facility. Temp office in P&R and storage in Mt. Jumbo building

May 1986- October 1987 South Franklin Street Facility, Rental.

November 1987-November 1988-Merchants Wharf Building, Donated/In-Kind Space

December 1988-Present Veteran's Memorial Building, CBJ Owned.

**When was the Veteran's Memorial Building added to the National Register of Historic Places?**

June 7, 2006

**Why was the Veteran's Memorial Building added to the National Register of Historic Places?**

The Veteran's Memorial Building was the first building in Juneau to be built entirely with public funds and it was the site of the July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1959, Statehood Ceremony when the 49-star flag was officially flown in Alaska's Capital. In honor of this long-awaited day for Alaskan Statehood and our Veterans past and present, the 49-star flag is still flown at this site.

**What does it mean to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places?**

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation. Properties listed include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture.

**What is the square footage of the Veteran's Memorial Building?**

6000 square feet.

**What are some of the past improvement projects done at the Veteran's Memorial Building?**

Electrical upgrades; gallery lighting upgrades; ventilation/HVAC; carpet and flooring; building repainting; exterior lighting; false gallery walls; landscaping; entrance upgrade; addition of museum store; basement block window replacements; roof; bathroom tile and upgrades.