Foundation Funding Proposal Template for *New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music*

Project Overview/Abstract:
New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music is the sixth exhibition in an ongoing partnership between state humanities councils and the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES) known as Museum on Main Street. Through a selection of photographs, recordings, instruments, lyrics and artist profiles, *New Harmonies* explores the distinct cultural identities of gospel, country, blues and other forms of roots music as they record the history of the American people and set the foundation for many musical genres appreciated world wide today. The ******state humanities council ***** will bring *New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music* to ** state ** for an exclusive tour in**year(s)**. The exhibition will travel to ***list state's communities**in a **length of tour in months** itinerary that will bring the Smithsonian to our state's rural audiences for the first time ever.

Allowing *all* of our state's residents to have access to the cultural resources of our nation's premiere museum is a priority of the ** state humanities council **. With this exclusive tour, we intend to augment the exhibition's educational impact with free public events such as ***list sample activities***. This proposal summarizes the compelling needs for this project among our state's rural communities, its promise for a high quality educational experience, and our request of ****amount requested** for exclusive sponsorship for the**list corporation /foundation **.

The *****state humanities council ***
***You will want to use the 2-3 sentence description of your state humanities council, its outstanding features and mission—be sure to mention state agency status ***

What is Museum on Main Street?
Museum on Main Street is an ongoing partnership of the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES) and state humanities councils nationwide that aims to serve the small town museums and audiences of rural America. Now in its thirteenth year, Museum on Main Street developed from a cooperative national study of one hundred rural cultural organizations and their specific needs and preferences, specifically their severe budget and space constraints. Museum on Main Street combines the cachet of the Smithsonian' s name with the program expertise of state humanities councils and the unbridled enthusiasm resident in small town America to create an educational and entertainment experience that is characterized by its high quality, innovation, imagination, fun, and popularity. Public reactions to Museum on Main Street exhibitions and its attendant public activities are nothing short of astounding as local organizations and volunteers demonstrate unparalleled enthusiasm for welcoming the Smithsonian to town.

In its first decade, Museum on Main Street toured three exhibitions: *Produce for Victory: Posters on the American Home Front, 1941-45*, toured from 1994 to 2007 and reached 120 rural communities in 20 states; *Yesterday's Tomorrows: Past Visions of the American Future* toured from 2001 to 2005 reaching 120 communities in 23 states; and *Barn Again: Celebrating an American Icon* toured from 1997 to 2005, reaching 138 communities in 25 states. Although these exhibitions are now retired and have been permanently placed in rural museums across the country, they had a profound impact on the communities they visited. Each added immeasurably to our collective understanding of how small towns examine and commemorate

their history and community. The Smithsonian exhibitions, coupled with local exhibitions and public humanities programs such as reading/discussion programs, guest speakers, school art and writing contests gave each host community a opportunity to shine and celebrate their unique story.

Currently, in addition to *New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music*, Museum on Main Street is touring the exhibitions *Key Ingredients: America by Food* and *Between Fences*. Another exhibition, *Journey Stories*, is in development for a 2009 launch. *Key Ingredients: America by Food,* explores the ways in which the food we eat connects us to our communities and our national culture. By highlighting regional cooking styles and American specialty dishes, the exhibition demonstrates how food celebrates and perpetuates our nation's unique cultural identity. Curated by Charlie Camp, this exhibition opened in 2003 and is currently in its fourth year of touring. By the time *Key Ingredients* is retired in 2009, it will have reached 174 communities in 24 states and the US territory of Guam. Program highlights to date include community cookbooks with historical emphases, multicultural food festivals, demonstrations of Native American cooking, displays on butchering and meat preservation in pioneer days, "etiquette schools" for children and of course, a smorgasbord of cooking competitions.

Between Fences is a cultural history of fences and land use. It tells the story of the settling of the United States, the establishment of its communities and the building of its borders. It explores the question: How do fences reflect who American's are (as individuals and in groups) as they shape interactions and define landscape? Curated by Gregory K. Dreicer and modified from the origin exhibition of the same name at the National Building Museum in 1996, *Between Fences* opened in 2004 and continues through 2010. To date it has reached 72 communities in twelve states, with eleven more states lined up for future tours. Program highlights to date include a two mile long "freedom fence" in Yerington, NV, interactive digital exhibitions on the history of surveying, community art fence projects, photography exhibitions and a life-size "Battleship" game demonstrating land ownership.

Journey Stories will examine the intersection between modes of travel and Americans' desire to feel free to move. The story is diverse and focuses on immigration, migration, innovation, and freedom. It examines myriad accounts of immigrants coming in search of promise in a new country; stories of individuals and families relocating in search of fortune, their own homestead, or employment; the harrowing journeys of Africans and Native Americans forced to move; and, of course, fun and frolic on the open road. The story of the intersection between transportation and American society is complicated, but it tells us much about who we are – people who see our societal mobility as a means for asserting our individual freedom. Curated by Bill Withuhn from the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History and with inaugural tours scheduled for May/June of 2009, *Journey Stories* will use engaging images with audio and artifacts to tell the individual stories that illustrate the critical roles travel and movement have played in building our diverse American society.

Why Rural? An Expression of Need

Despite recent technological advancements to bridge great distances, residents of America's small towns still experience severe geographic, economic, and cultural isolation. The present concentration of people in sprawling metropolitan areas leaves millions of rural residents effectively cut off from high quality educational and cultural opportunities.

A recent report to Congress by the Institute of Museum and Library Services highlighted the acute financial and programmatic needs of small, rural museums, noting that 75% of museums in the U.S. categorize themselves as "small" and nearly 60% as “rural.” Likewise, as the overwhelming majority of museums in our nation, these institutions hold a disproportionate share of important historical and natural history artifacts. However, they are financially strapped, with few, if any, opportunities for professional training or advancement. As a profile, these museums typically employ fewer than two full time staff, rely on twenty-five part-time volunteers, work within a program budget totaling less than $500 annually, maintain fewer than 500 square feet of temporary exhibition space, but annually host more than12,000 visitors.

Still, **state’s** small rural museums are not without some compelling virtues. Because they are organized by *place*, they’re typically less concerned with the disciplinary divisions we find in larger museums. Under one roof, they often house everything from anthropological, geological, historical, and paleontological specimens, to regular showings of the local high school’s watercolor show. ***may want to cite an in-state example of a museum here **** They are, in fact, true community centers, safe places for learning and fine conservators of a town’s objects and values. Their “amateur” status, while limiting in some ways, serves them well in many others; for instance, they are unashamed experts in volunteerism and well-positioned to offer exciting public events that engage every age level and every organizational type, from libraries to businesses, hospitals to schools.

Answering The Need

Most of **state’s** museums are restricted from hosting national traveling exhibitions by their limited budgets and insufficient staff. Typically, they cannot accommodate large structural components, complex installations, and expensive shipping and participation fees. With *New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music,* Smithsonian designers have developed a novel structural format that is free-standing, durable, easy to install, adjustable to a wide variety of exhibit spaces, and features objects, photographs, interpretive texts, interactive and audio/video components. Like previous Museum on Main Street exhibitions, this exhibit delivers high-quality content in a compact package as it is tailored so precisely to the specific needs of resource-poor museums.

However, there are other key project components for participating museums with *New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music*. Each host community will augment the Smithsonian exhibition with its own stories and artifacts in the development of a companion exhibition. In this way, the national story will be localized and its pertinence and appeal will be strengthened. ****add at least two strong examples of how host towns will build on the exhibition’s themes with their own exhibition: may be lecture series on influential local musicians or an exhibition of instruments used by local bands***** The **state humanities council ** has employed **state scholar/exhibit developer** to work in cooperation with each local museum to ensure that their efforts are accomplished with historical accuracy and improved levels of museum professionalism.

With *New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music*, **state’s** rural museums will have an opportunity to shine. Not only will they benefit from the prestige of hosting a Smithsonian traveling exhibition and from learning to build their own high-quality exhibition, but they’ll embark on a year-long process of comprehensive institutional advancement. In concert with the **state humanities council**and our peers at the Smithsonian, we’ re providing these isolated institutions with opportunities for advancement and hands-on training in **list specific emphases here; may include: grantwriting and fund raising, marketing and public relations, educational

programming, docent training, exhibit design, collections management, etc.** Through on-site consultations, a statewide planning workshop, and a hands-on installation workshop **list other tech asst efforts here**, we're committed to seeing that each participating museum is significantly improved because of their participation with *New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music.*

Most rural museums which have partnered with Museum on Main Street around the country have recognized multiple key benefits. In **state** our tour of *New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music* will:

- allow participating museums to reach rural audiences with a high-quality, portable exhibition, which in turn sparks ambitious, locally-organized public programming;
- allow the Smithsonian imprimatur and name-recognition to work on behalf of fund raising and programming efforts and to leverage public support to embark on institutional advancement and capital development projects;
- compile federal, state, and local resources to address local needs;
- develop and implement public events at local levels;
- provide training opportunities for small museum staff and volunteers in **number** towns across **state**;
- attract a broader audience because of the appeal of the Smithsonian name;
- establish local and statewide networks and partnerships between museums, schools, libraries, colleges, historical societies, adult education groups, and area businesses.

New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music
Exhibition Description
With it's variety of sounds and styles and its century old traditions, American roots music acts as this nation's soundtrack. Rising out of America's story, the music reflects essential American values such as freedom, democracy and diversity and often is the connecting force between the immigrant experience and the process of "becoming an American." Roots music carries in its songs many of our country's cultural emblems—and a good bit of our history too.

New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music is curated by Bob Santelli, a noted blues historian and music journalist. Santelli is the author of The Big Book of Blues: A Biographical Encyclopedia and has served as an editor and advisor to numerous projects including two PBS series and companion books: *American Roots Music* and *The Appalachians. New Harmonies* is 800 square feet and contains 13 interactive and audio components. The exhibition is divided into five main sections:

The first section, "Sacred Song," follows the development of sacred music from the drum beat of the early Native Americans praying to the Creator to African "spirituals" to the different styles of Gospel music that developed across the country. This section of the exhibition also chronicles the importance of Shape Notes to the development of early sacred music and the impact of gospel performers such as the Fisk Jubilee Singers and Tommy Dorsey, known as the Father of Gospel.

The second section of the exhibition explores Country music. As European settlers brought folk music with them from the Old World to the New, their music took on American traits and was eventually transformed into American folk traditions with American themes. As it evolved, it was called by many names: old time music, mountain music, hillbilly music, but eventually it matured into the sound known as "country. This section of the exhibition features the impact of the Grand Ole Opry radio program in 1927 on Nashville's WSM radio station, which saturated the South and eventually other parts of America with the music of such artists as Uncle Dave

Mason, Minnie Pearl and later Hank Williams, Patsy Cline, Chet Akins, Merle Haggard and Willie Nelson making country music one of America's most popular roots music forms. Singing cowboys such as Gene Autry, the development of Western Swing and the break-neck tempos and hair-raising rhythms of bluegrass are also featured in this section.

The third section of the exhibition focuses on the blues, the single most important black music of all time. Simple in form yet infinitely adaptable, the blues left its mark on country and gospel, and gave rise to jazz, rhythm and blues, rock and roll, soul and rap. The exhibition follows the earliest incarnation of the blues in the Mississippi Delta of the 1890s, to the migration to urban centers such as Chicago, Detroit, Memphis, St. Louis and Atlanta. It features the impact of early bluesmen like Charlie Patton, Son House, Blind Lemon Jefferson and Robert Johnson, the blues divas Bessie Smith and Gertrude "Ma" Rainey as well as Muddy Waters, the "father of Chicago blues." This section also chronicles the importance of the instruments essential to development of the blues, from the diddley bow to the harmonica to the guitar.

"Other Sounds, Other Songs" is the focus of the next section of the exhibition, which examines the way virtually every immigrant group has contributed to America's music treasury. The versatile accordion takes center stage here as the essential ingredient in a wide range of American roots music styles, from polka to tejano, and from Cajun to zydeco to klezmer—all of which are highlighted in this section of the exhibition. .

The final main section of the exhibition, Roots Revival, explores the return to roots music that developed in the 1960s led by the success of such artists as the Kingston Trio, Burl Ives, Joan Baez, and especially Bob Dylan, whose protest song "Blowin' in the Wind" became a huge hit for Peter, Paul and Mary in 1963. This section also explores roots music celebrations from the annual Newport Folk Festival and Chicago Blues Festival to the thousands of powwows across the country that connect the present moment to the distant past, via the oldest American roots music, that of the Native Americans.

Two smaller sections of the exhibition remain to be mentioned: Stand Up and Sign Out, which visit the lives of Woody Guthrie and other artists who used folk songs to rally people to stand up for civil rights, peace and a host of other causes and Reviving Roots Music which features the work of a number of collectors such as Alan and John Lomax and Moses Asch, who, in the 1930s and 40s, made it their mission to track down and record as many of these roots music songs and sounds as they could find.

In closing, *New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music* asks us to consider the fact that as new audiences discover roots music, new musical groups are constantly forming to renew and refresh old traditions of country, gospel, folk and blues. At the same time immigrants continue to bring sound and songs from their homelands and these songs will gradually become "Americanized" and integrated into the nation's diverse music heritage. Today music from Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Central and South America are the latest influences on the American roots music tradition. What will roots music be like in the next hundred years?

Sample Humanities Programs and Local Activities

New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music is a humanities-rich exhibition as it invites visitors to explore our country's rich heritage through our musical traditions, and so the opportunities for local communities to build ancillary public programs are rife with possibilities. Stretching easily to the public and performing arts arena, we envision exhibition hosts sponsoring lecture series and concerts featuring various musical styles. The exhibition will serve as an obvious impetus for oral history initiatives, biographies or local songwriters and

musicians, musical and theatrical productions, and, of course, reading, film, and poetry discussions.

Instate**, Our State's Plans**

********As required, it may be helpful to outline the specific state initiatives that are in place for your hosting of *New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music.* This section may be particularly relevant as it sets up the following paragraphs detailing the requested support ****

Evaluation

Too often projects rooted in the arts and humanities rely on purely anecdotal evidence of their value. With *New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music'* tour of **state**, project evaluation is a key ingredient to success. In addition to the ongoing consultations of program officers and state scholars, each participating host of the exhibition and public programs will complete a Close-Out Summary of their overall experience. This summary gathers both qualitative and quantitative data on the project, investigating everything from visitorship, attendance, and fund raising to marketing and organizational partnerships. The evaluation process is designed to augment the training aspects of the project, recording areas of marked improvement for participating rural organizations and highlighting their future needs for advancement.

Request

We respectfully request **dollar amount*** of the **foundation** to support the exclusive **state** tour of the Smithsonian's *New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music.* We are approaching the **foundation** because of your long-standing support for **add rationale/ pertinence of this request to this foundation**. **how do the project and fundor mesh?** The **state humanities council** is contributing ** dollar amount ** in direct costs to this project; local communities are also adding **dollar amount ** in cash and in-kind contributions to ensure that this project will be successful. Among our outstanding expenses, **dollar amount** is needed for **list specific element of dollars requested; may be to off-set national fee, add tech asst component, publication or website initiative***. We have attached a complete project budget to this proposal as well as the most recent annual report from the **state humanities council** for additional financial information.

It is understood that **foundation name** will be generously credited in ***name specific guarantees for credit in state and local programs, publications, etc.—depending on amount requested you may want the sponsor' s name added to the exhibition credit panel on Smithsonian exhibition****.

Conclusion

The support of **foundation name** will provide our state's rural residents with first-time access to the excellence and scholarship of the Smithsonian Institution. This opportunity for cooperation at national, state, and local levels is truly rare. And in answering the compelling needs of **state's** highly motivated rural museums, *New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music* can prove a catalyst for strategic institutional improvement. In addition, the exhibition and its attendant educational programs, events, and activities will reach thousands of **state's** citizens, engaging them in fruitful examinations of their futures and asking that they participate actively in the planning and design of their homes, transportation and communities. With this project we can offer these museums the opportunity to host popular public events that can serve to invigorate otherwise isolated communities

** Don’t forget to attach:
IRS tax exempt confirmation letter
state exhibition itinerary (may be expanded to include project timeline)
in-state project budget
latest shc statement of revenues and expenses (audit info as required)
listing(with one sentence descriptions) of current board members listing of key project personnel and scholars(s), including one sentence description of roles;
resumes available as needed
** You may also want to include:
New Harmonies: Celebrating American Roots Music brochure
most recent shc annual report / newsletter