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## Getting up to speed

Technology planning builds a foundation for the future

What is a technology plan? And why is it important to have one? Answering those questions is the easy part of technology planning. What's tougher is figuring out how to develop a system that will meet your organization's needs. Tougher still: finding the resources to put it together.

### What is technology planning?

Technology planning should be part of every organization's strategic plan for growth and development. It can help you analyze your current technology infrastructure. It can clarify your goals. And it can guide both the short-term and long-term decisions you'll need to make to build a solid technology foundation.

Why is that important? Having up-to-date technology enables you to work efficiently, apply industry best-practices and improve service to your members and the public – all with an eye to fulfilling your mission.

### Get expert advice

The following case study illustrates one group's journey down the technology highway.



Among high-priority items in the Hennepin History Museum's strategic technology plan is revision of its web site at [www.hhmuseum.org](http://www.hhmuseum.org).

In 2005 the Hennepin History Museum set out to plan for its technological future. The first step: a thorough planning process under the guidance of an outside expert. HHM contracted with a consultant from MAP for Nonprofits, a management assistance program designed to augment the expertise and resources of nonprofit organizations. The MAP consultant, Sue Ponsford, began her analysis by interviewing all staff and brainstorming with the board to gauge their objectives.

The entire process lasted several months and culminated with Ponsford's strategic technology plan, which will help the museum manage its technology needs for the next three years. Says Jack Kabrud, the museum's acting director and curator, "The process we went through to see where we stood and where we wanted to go turned out to be just as important as the final plan."

**Getting up to speed** continued on page 2

# Features

## Getting up to speed – continued

### A phased approach

Ponsford helped the staff dream big. But because making those dreams come true would take time and money, she devised a phased schedule for implementing the plan. Her outline will guide the museum's next steps as it works to reach its goals.

#### **1** First on the to-do list are some critical tasks that lay the groundwork:

- Set up a peer-to-peer computer network (wired or wireless) that enables staff to share files and a printer.
- Using an Internet Service Provider with a good reputation for customer service, add high-speed DSL internet service and obtain e-mail addresses for all staff, branded with your agency name.
- Get a new computer that acts as the network server, where all documents and financial data are backed up regularly.
- Collect e-mail addresses from all stakeholders. Include a request for e-mail addresses on all visitor sign-in logs, on program registration forms and in your newsletter.
- Form a board committee to oversee web site development and improvements.

#### **2** Once those basics are in place, larger technology projects can be tackled. Things to accomplish in three to nine months:

- Acquire the newest, networked version of PastPerfect to create a collections database, and get training for all staff and volunteers who work with the collections.
- Create a database of all donors, volunteers and mailing lists to facilitate fundraising and publicity.
- Acquire PDF software to allow development and electronic distribution of professional-looking publicity.
- Replace older computers on a staggered schedule, recycling outdated equipment.
- Post museum events on the county's intranet and in its e-mail newsletter.



Hennepin History Museum

Archivist/librarian Susan Larson-Fleming catalogs the Hennepin History Museum's photo collection using PastPerfect software to make the collection more accessible to researchers.

#### **3** Short-term tasks come next, to be done in the following nine to 18 months:

- Find a volunteer webmaster to take on development of the web site.
- Obtain a laptop computer to increase staff flexibility.
- Obtain an LCD projector to allow use of PowerPoint presentations and to add an audiovisual component to exhibits. (Be sure to establish a sign-out procedure and secure storage for the new equipment.)
- Develop and distribute an e-newsletter.
- Purchase a Hosted Exchange Server service for sharing staff calendars and accessing e-mail from home.

#### **4** Long-term tasks fill the next 18 to 30 months:

- Purchase the Multimedia/Digital Imaging and Virtual Exhibit modules for PastPerfect to facilitate access to museum collections via the web site.

- Obtain a scanner with slide scanner attachment so the museum's slide collection can be documented electronically.
- Offer copies of photos from the collection for sale on the web site as a money maker.
- Set up an in-house file server and e-mail server.
- Contract for ongoing computer maintenance.

#### **5** Last come the "someday dreams" – those wish-list projects that await more staff, more time and more money.

- Two such projects came up during the Hennepin History Museum's planning:
- Add interactive technology to museum exhibits.
  - Computerize the card catalog.

## Getting up to speed – continued

### One step at a time

“We’re still implementing the basic steps,” says Kabrud. “That may seem like a small part of the grand scheme but, for a latecomer to the computer age like me, those are huge accomplishments. By doing something as simple as networking our computers, we’re working so much more efficiently.”

Big gains from small steps. That’s what technology planning can bring to your organization, even if your goals are less

ambitious and your resources more limited than those of the Hennepin History Museum.

The important thing to remember about any technology plan, says Ponsford: It is not set in stone. Revisit your plan annually, she advises. Revise it, add to it, implement it at a pace that fits your staffing and your budget. But whatever your strategy, the result is the same: a good technology plan will revolutionize the way you do business. ■

## AASLH honors Minnesota’s 2006 award winners

By Ben Leonard, AASLH Awards State Chair

Matching a record-setting 2004 showing, Minnesota has once again garnered eight awards from the American Association for State and Local History. Now called the Leadership in History awards, they recognize outstanding accomplishments in the collection, preservation and interpretation of state and local history. The following organizations and individuals will be honored in September at the AASLH annual conference in Phoenix.

### Artspace for Hotel Kaddatz restoration and rehabilitation

When the historic Hotel Kaddatz in Fergus Falls was threatened with demolition in the 1990s, Otter Tail County Historical Society director

Chris Shuelke joined forces with Rebecca Peterson of the city’s Center for the Arts to lead the charge for its preservation and reuse. They found a willing partner in Artspace Projects, a nonprofit real estate developer for the arts. Artspace’s \$3.4 million renovation, completed in 2005, created 10 units of live/work space for artists, 6,000 square feet of commercial space and a gallery operated by the art center. Says Wayne Hurley of the Fergus Falls Heritage Preservation Commission, “The Hotel Kaddatz once again fulfills its role as a community gathering spot. And the renovation has served to fuel continued efforts to improve downtown Fergus Falls.”

**AASLH** continued on page 4

## Resources



Management Assistance for Nonprofits (MAP) pairs professional consultants with nonprofit organizations needing help in such areas as strategic planning, accounting, legal services, marketing and communications, board recruitment, fundraising and leadership development. Go to [www.mapfor nonprofits.org](http://www.mapfor nonprofits.org) or call 651-647-1216.

Some resources developed by MAP consultants are available on the agency’s web site. For example, you’ll find a basic guide to technology planning or sample Information Services Policy and Procedures, which you can use as a guide to write your own.

Scholarship funds are available to qualifying groups.



This one-stop resource for nonprofit technology assistance offers free information, resources and support. At [www.techsoup.org](http://www.techsoup.org), you’ll find:

- TechSoup Stock, with access to donated and discounted technology products.
- Learning Center, organized by subject, offering worksheets, case studies and product comparisons for all budgets and levels of expertise.
- Community, where you can ask technical questions of online experts.

## AASLH award winners – continued

### Henderson Heritage Preservation Commission for general excellence

Winner of a 2005 Preservation Alliance of Minnesota award, the Henderson Heritage Preservation Commission now gains national recognition for its efforts to restore its 19th-century downtown business district. In addition to rehabilitating key buildings along Main Street (below), the Henderson HPC has sponsored a series of public programs to educate citizens about the community's historic architecture. Citing the city's longtime dedication to historic preservation, Michael Koop of the State Historic Preservation Office says, "The Henderson HPC is a leader among Minnesota communities in promoting a local preservation ethic that is firmly rooted in their community development plans."

### Haehn Museum for the exhibit 'The Living Culture of the Anishinabeg'

Focusing on three Indian reservations served by the Sisters of St. Benedict's Monastery since the 1890s, this groundbreaking exhibit examines how Ojibwe people have continued to honor their traditional culture even as new expressions of it evolved. Collaboration with tribal members gives the exhibit a personal dimension, and consultation with staff from the Minnesota Historical Society and the Stearns History Museum helped the Sisters tackle controversial historical issues. Those partnerships, says history professor Annette Atkins, "grounded the exhibit in the most recent thinking about Indian objects and in the development of relationships essential for Indian exhibits mounted by whites."



Photo by Marcia Anderson

*Objects acquired by the Sisters of St. Benedict's Monastery during their mission work on Minnesota reservations are featured in the exhibit "The Living Culture of the Anishinabeg," along with items borrowed from tribal members.*



Photos courtesy of Jeff Steinborn



*"Before" and "after" views of this 19th-century commercial building in Henderson show the dramatic transformation of the city's business district, led by the Henderson Heritage Preservation Commission.*

### Duane Thein for 'Father Joseph Goiffon: A Tale of a French Missionary'

Thein spent 20 years researching the life of Père Joseph Goiffon, a French missionary who came to Minnesota in 1857. Thein's book centers on a 1908 account by Father Goiffon, translated from French sources for the first time, of his harrowing journey in 1860 from St. Paul to a distant settlement, surviving a blizzard, fire and grievous injuries. Photographs, supporting documents and an essay on oxcart trails place this riveting narrative in the wider context of the region's frontier history.

## AASLH award winners – continued

### Minnesota Digital Library Coalition for the Minnesota Reflections web site

Minnesota Reflections, a web-based collection of more than 5,000 digitized historic images of Minnesota, was gathered from some 50 participating libraries, archives, historical societies and museums across the state. Since MDLC launched the project in September 2005, the collection has been used by more than 22,000 visitors to the site. The MDLC's technological capabilities and expertise have allowed many smaller organizations to make their photo collections accessible online to new audiences.

To view Minnesota Reflections, go to <http://reflections.mndigital.org>.

### Richfield Historical Society for the film 'Richfield Home: 150 Years of Richfield History'

Supplanting the only other publication on Richfield's history, a book that ended at 1951, this DVD expands the body of knowledge with new research, interviews and photographs. It covers not only the community's founding and early agricultural history but also Richfield's suburban growth, modern redevelopment and new waves of immigration. The program has enabled the RHS to reach a broad public and sparked widespread community interest in local history.



Photo by Gori McShane, Albert Lea Tribune

*By the time she retired as executive director of the Freeborn County Historical Society in 2005, Bev Jackson had transformed it from a seasonal attraction to a year-round venue for changing exhibits and popular programming.*

### Individual achievement for Beverly J. Jackson

Bev Jackson became the Freeborn County Historical Society's first paid executive director in 1987. Through her energetic and thoughtful leadership over the next 18 years, the society grew its budget and membership income sevenfold, quintupled its volunteer base, professionalized operations and greatly raised its stature in the community. Jackson worked tirelessly to promote local history in Freeborn County and beyond, authoring a newspaper column, doing a weekly radio show, serving on local committees too numerous to name and, from 1990 to 2004, serving successive terms on the State Review Board and the State Records Advisory Board. Says Tim Glines, manager of the Minnesota Historical Society's Outreach Services, "Bev exemplifies the committed, community-involved leader that has made our local history movement so strong."

### Individual achievement for Scott T. Hosier

When 32-year-old Scott Hosier died unexpectedly last year, he left a legacy as an ambassador of history. An experienced re-enactor, teacher, researcher and writer, Hosier parlayed his passion into an all-too-short career that left its mark in many arenas. Perhaps none of his many contributions were more important than those he made as a high school history teacher in New Ulm. Through his hands-on lessons and class field trips, he brought history to life for hundreds of students. Describing his classroom as a "time machine," a colleague praised Hosier's ability to connect past with present. Read one sign on his classroom wall, "We may be through with the past, but the past is not through with us." ■

### About AASLH

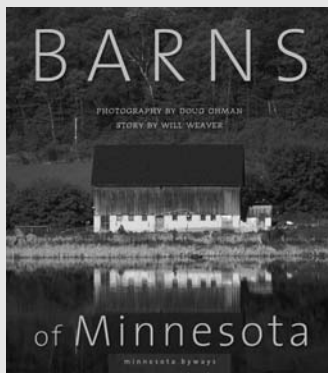
The AASLH awards program, initiated in 1945, encourages standards of excellence in preserving and interpreting state and local history. All honors this year were bestowed in a single category – awards of merit, presented for performance deemed excellent compared nationally with similar activities. For more information, go to [www.aaslh.org](http://www.aaslh.org); call Ben Leonard, AASLH Awards state chair, at 507-934-2160; or e-mail [ben@nchsmn.org](mailto:ben@nchsmn.org).

## Order now for holiday gift-giving

Minnesota Byways series showcases architectural landmarks

For years, photographer Doug Ohman crisscrossed the state to capture on film Minnesota's classic architectural icons. Now the Minnesota Historical Society Press has paired his striking photographs with narratives from some of Minnesota's best writers in a series of books called Minnesota Byways. All titles, sized 8 by 9 inches for easy handling and display, are available for resale in your museum gift shop. To order, see below.

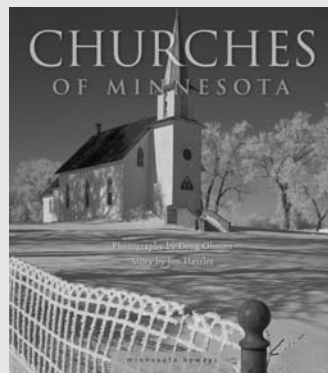
### Barns of Minnesota



First in the series, published in May 2005, is "Barns of Minnesota." Fast disappearing from the rural landscape, barns have become one of today's most urgent preservation issues. Ohman's photographs showcase the many forms taken in wood and stone, brick and metal – by these testaments to a Midwestern way of life. A companion story by Will Weaver follows the tale of one barn through several generations of a family that settled the land in 1922 and farmed into the age of agribusiness.

**128 pages, 85 color photos,  
\$19.95 cloth  
ISBN 0-87351-527-7**

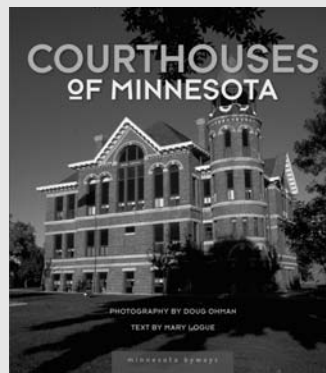
### Churches of Minnesota



Next in the series is "Churches of Minnesota," published in October 2005. From small frame chapels to grand stone cathedrals, these churches embody the spiritual history of their towns and neighborhoods. Paired with a treasury of Ohman's artful interior and exterior shots are remembrances by writer Jon Hassler of some of his favorite spiritual places.

**128 pages, 100 color photos,  
\$19.95 cloth  
ISBN 0-87351-547-1**

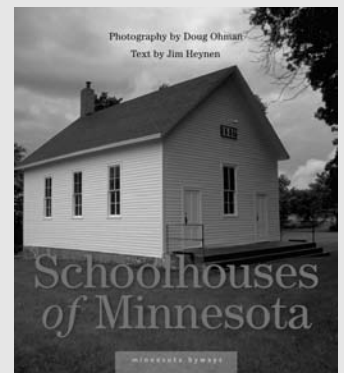
### Courthouses of Minnesota



The same range of forms, from unadorned to ornate, can be found in "Courthouses of Minnesota," published in May 2006. Here, Ohman's evocative photographic survey is paired with essays by mystery writer Mary Logue, who addresses the symbolism and history of these community landmarks and reveals a few secrets about them, too.

**128 page, 115 color photos,  
\$19.95 cloth  
ISBN 0-87351-550-1**

### Schoolhouses of Minnesota



Available this September is the newest addition to the series, "Schoolhouses of Minnesota." In his compendium of early schoolhouses – from abandoned rural structures to refurbished small-town gems – Ohman illuminates another vanishing architectural resource. Twenty-five tales by storyteller Jim Heynen recall his days as a student in a one-room schoolhouse.

**128 pages, 120 color photos,  
\$19.95 cloth  
ISBN 0-87351-548-X**

#### Still to come

There are more Minnesota Byways volumes to come. Watch for "Cabins of Minnesota," with text by Bill Holm, due out in spring 2007, and, further down the road, "Train Depots of Minnesota."

#### How to order

Order the Minnesota Byways series now to stock your museum shop for holiday gift-giving. To request a copy of the latest MHS Press catalog, call Leslie Rask, 651-297-3243, or e-mail [leslie.rask@mnhs.org](mailto:leslie.rask@mnhs.org). For sales information, call Rask or go to [shop.mnhs.org/orderinfomhspress.cfm](http://shop.mnhs.org/orderinfomhspress.cfm).

# Exhibit workshop back by popular demand

Oct. 4 program to be held at Edina Historical Society

Returning to Minnesota this fall with his popular exhibit planning workshop is Tom McKay, retired local history coordinator at the Wisconsin Historical Society.

Sponsored by the Minnesota Historical Society, this day-long workshop covers all aspects of exhibit production. In four lively sessions outlined below, McKay shares a wealth of ideas for creating engaging exhibits:

- **Planning exhibit content:** choosing topics, organizing by main concepts, selecting artifacts.
- **Elements of exhibit design:** uniting design and content; using color, space and texture.
- **Writing exhibit labels:** titles, key-word labels, detail labels.
- **Exhibit fabrication:** walls and panels, reproducing photographs and images, creating labels, mounting artifacts.

**When:**  
Wednesday, Oct. 4, 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**Where:**  
Edina Historical Society  
4711 W. 70th St.  
Edina

**Cost:**  
\$25 per person (includes lunch).

**Registration deadline:**  
Sept. 27

Space is limited so register now by photocopying and completing the form below. Or register online at [shop.mnhs.org/moreinfo.cfm?Product\\_ID=968](http://shop.mnhs.org/moreinfo.cfm?Product_ID=968). If you have questions, call Tim Glines, MHS manager of outreach services, 651-296-5460, or e-mail [timothy.glines@mnhs.org](mailto:timothy.glines@mnhs.org). ■



*Rande Hokanson, executive director of the Stevens County Historical Society, tries her hand at reverse lettering during an exhibit planning workshop.*

## Registration Form: Exhibit Planning Workshop, Oct. 4

Name:		Title:		E-mail:	
Organization:					
Address:			City:		State:
					Zip:
Number of persons registering:		at \$25 each. Total enclosed:			

Make check payable to **Minnesota Historical Society**. Mail payment and registration form to Minnesota Historical Society, Attn. David Grabitske, 345 Kellogg Blvd. W., St. Paul, MN 55102-1906.

# Log cabin restoration workshop open to all

Clearwater County society hosts free weekend session Sept. 8-12

For hands-on experience in log cabin repair and restoration, you can't beat this workshop hosted by the Clearwater County Historical Society in Shevlin.

Under the direction of historical architect Mark Beuchel of the Minnesota Historical Society, with help from Itasca State Park specialists, participants will work to restore the county's earliest school – a log building on the grounds of the Clearwater County History Center.

The weekend-long workshop will take you step by step through the process, from documenting existing conditions and jacking up the building to refacing

or replacing deteriorated logs to resetting the building on its foundation and repairing the chinking.

The workshop is free and open to people of all ages and skill levels. A continental breakfast and lunch are provided daily; participants must arrange their own lodging and evening meal. Most tools will be provided but if you have your own, bring them along. For information and to sign up, call CCHS director Tamara Edevold, 218-785-2000, or e-mail [cchshist@gvtel.com](mailto:cchshist@gvtel.com). ■



Participants in a hands-on workshop will tackle restoration of this log school on the grounds of the Clearwater County History Center in Shevlin.

## About this publication

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