

NEWS

Construction underway on new history museum

news 12 years ago Santa Monica Pier



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Museum President/CEO Louise Gabriel (right) taking measure of the new museum with associates Andrea Engstrom, director of development and project manager, image archives, and Ho Nguyen,

director of operations and exhibits designer. (photo by Santa Monica History Museum)

DOWNTOWN – Construction has begun on the new, permanent home of the Santa Monica History Museum, a project of the city’s historical society.

Louise Gabriel, president and CEO of the museum, made the announcement Monday and unveiled the museum’s new name and logo.

“We are thrilled that we will soon see the realization of our dreams to create a permanent home that will preserve Santa Monica’s history and culture for future generations to cherish,” Gabriel said. “It will be the crown jewel of Santa Monica.”

A name change had been in the works for several months and with a new home now under construction, board members felt the time was right to go from the Santa Monica Historical Society Museum to the much shorter Santa Monica Museum, Gabriel said.

The new facility, which is being built on the east side of the Main Library on Seventh Street, is expected to be completed by April, 2010.

When finished, the project will double the size of the museum's current facility on Euclid Street, and feature state-of-the-art technology that will bring "alive" Santa Monica's vibrant and unique past and present for thousands of tourists, residents, school groups and others who are expected to visit the museum.

Hands-on interactive displays will include a Douglas DC-3 aircraft, Whirlwind Dipper roller coaster (where with the touch of a button visitors can be transported back to the 1920s Santa Monica Pier), "Santa Monica: Then and Now," and "In the Headlines" featuring front-page newspaper stories about Santa Monica. Permanent exhibits will include the Santa Monica and Ocean Park piers, Muscle Beach, bathing beauties, Third and Main streets, the city's early film industry, artists and architecture, Palisades Park and Route 66.

Early road races, tennis, golf, surfing, skateboarding and other popular local activities also will be highlighted through feature story cases, while other displays will honor prominent Santa Monicans such as General Jimmy Doolittle, Shirley Temple, Lawrence Welk, June Lockhart and Barbara Billingsley.

One of the museum's most popular gathering places is expected to be its Morley Builders Santa Monica and California Research Library, which will feature an extensive collection of rare books and documents. It will provide a hands-on, discover-and-explore environment for teachers, students, history buffs and others seeking digital access to rare images and artifacts.

"The infrastructure of the new 5,200-square-foot facility is in place, and the build-out is continuing at a steady pace," said Iao Katagiri, construction committee chairman. "With steel stud framing of the walls in place, the current focus is on installation of electrical, plumbing and museum-quality climate control systems. Once that work has been completed, alarms, fire sprinklers and other security systems will be installed to ensure the safety of the museum's rare historical collections."

Katagiri noted that the framing already reveals the new museum's stunning architecture, which will be highlighted by a dramatic pyramid ceiling in the lobby. Other highlights will be an extensive soffit for the museum's library wall that was specifically designed to display Work Projects Administration-Era paintings of Santa Monica's past, and the permanent gallery's graceful, exquisitely curved ceiling.

"Following some delays due to the recession and general economic slowdown, I am happy to report that construction is now proceeding on schedule, and that we expect to have the

museum completed and ready for the public to enjoy by next spring," Katagiri said.

Glenn Ricard Construction is serving as the project's general contractor. The architect of the new museum is Kristina Andresen, Andresen Assocs. Architects.

Gabriel also acknowledged and thanked the hundreds of individual and corporate donors to the museum's capital campaign whose contributions helped make construction of the new facility a reality. Approximately \$1.5 million has been raised to date to offset construction costs estimated to be about \$2.3 million. Operating costs and maintenance are expected to run another \$3 million.

"Without the generous contributions from the City of Santa Monica, Dr. John Gilmore, Bob Gabriel Co- Insurance, Morley Builders, Macerich - Santa Monica Place, Ron and Ann Funk, Billie Leone, the widow of Baron Michele Leone, and the Employees Community Fund of Boeing California and others, this would never have been possible," Gabriel said. "We hope others will follow their lead and contribute as well so the new facility will be able to serve our community for many years to come."

As for the name change, Gabriel said it was a matter of simplification.

"It's shorter, easier to remember and sums up quite well

everything we're about."

The new logo was created by Bernardo Dagraca, who received \$600 as part of an online design competition that drew hundreds of entries.

The museum's board approved of the new name and logo at its last regular monthly meeting.

The Santa Monica History Museum is a non-profit organization whose mission is to collect, preserve and make accessible the rich history, art and culture of the Santa Monica Bay Area.

For more information about the museum and the capital campaign, go to www.santamonicahistory.org. Donations can be sent to Santa Monica History Museum, P.O. Box 3059, Santa Monica, Calif., 90408.

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