

Dear SEMC members, supporters and friends,

As our nation confronts this period of unprecedented change and uncertainty, we want to assure you that one thing will not change: our support for museums and cultural sites across the southeast. In response to the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic, Southeastern museums have taken immediate action to protect the health and well-being of their visitors, volunteers, and staff. Although museums throughout our region are shuttered, they continue to serve their communities. It is heartening to see SEMC member institutions facing this unparalleled emergency with swift reaction, creative thinking and unity.

Although public safety is the highest priority, the Southeastern Museums Conference is also deeply concerned about the financial recovery of museums in the aftermath of this viral outbreak. There are more than five million Americans who make their livelihoods in the broader arts and cultural sector across the country and are potentially at risk. Our southeastern museum community must work together over these coming weeks and months to support and bolster one another.

Museums are frequently sites for contemplation and healing in difficult times and can continue to provide comfort, resilience, wisdom, and the means for self-expression and connection through a virtual presence. We will continue to share information from multiple resources, including the American Alliance of Museums as it becomes available. We also want to help promote your online programs, events, tours and other means of digital connection through our social media channels. Please send us links to share on Facebook and Instagram and continue to engage with your peers (questions, frustrations, tips for working remotely) on the SEMC Facebook page or the EMP or Mid-Career group pages.

As you focus on the health and safety of yourself and your families, please know that we are in this together, and that you can continue to rely on SEMC for information and connection. We will be with you each day of this crisis.

With gratitude for all you do,

Zinnia Willits,
SEMC President