DATE: 30 April 2020

SUBJ: PATUXENT RIVER NAVAL AIR MUSEUM COVID-19 VIRUS RESPONSE PLAN

CURRENT MUSEUM STATUS

As a result of this unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic and in line with direction provided by health experts and government officials, the Patuxent River Naval Air Museum complex will remain closed until further notice.

CURRENT PRIORITIES

The Board of Directors shall take steps to ensure:

- the protection of the Association’s physical assets, artifact collections, and intellectual property.

- the financial and economic viability of the Association until such time as when the museum can reopen.

- continuity of operations and customer engagement in the near-term until the museum reopens.

- the development of strategic staff actions to prepare the museum to reopen at such time as authorized and safe to do so.

- the development of specific steps to be undertaken to maintain the safety and well-being of our Guests, Employees, and Volunteers upon and after reopening the museum to the public.

TIMEFRAME TO REOPEN

A reopening date for the museum shall be determined solely by applicable State and Local government, as well as by health considerations and guidelines put in place to limit and mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 virus. The Governor of the State of Maryland will make the final determination as to when it will be reasonably safe to reopen the complex. Interim guidelines for community-based organizations are being provided by the Centers for Disease Control which has also developed checklists to help prepare for virus mitigation and protection.

Our Governor, in concert with the recommendations of the Maryland Coronavirus Response Advisory Team, has released his plan for recovery of the State’s businesses and organizations. The plan delineates Four Building Blocks that are necessary for the State to move forward towards recovery.


Each of these building blocks must be satisfactorily addressed before the State can begin reopening in a phased approach. The Four Building Blocks are:

1. procuring sufficient personal protective equipment for frontline healthcare workers;
2. generating hospital surge capacity;
3. having adequate testing capacity; and,
4. a robust contact tracing program

As the State government works to achieve these four building block goals, our Governor has decreed that Marylanders should be prepared to continue teleworking; wearing masks or face coverings; and practicing physical distancing for the foreseeable future. At this point, there are few effective therapeutic treatments for COVID-19 and no vaccine or effective prophylactic treatments.4

At the Governor’s direction, the Maryland Department of Commerce formed 13 Industry Recovery Advisory Groups that will interface with the Commerce Department. The applicable groups associated with our museum include:

- Attractions
- Destinations
- Tourism
- Arts

These groups have the charter to consider the economic, medical, and societal factors surrounding reopening and create unified and detailed plans for recovery including recommendations and best practices to responsibly operate. All plans will be carefully reviewed by public health experts and the Governor’s Office prior to approval to proceed.5

Finally, the State’s Roadmap to Recovery strategy plans to slowly reopen its businesses in three distinct stages:

a. Low Risk
b. Medium Risk
c. High Risk

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These three risk mitigation strategy stages are planned to be multi-phased within each stage. The sub-phases will be announced when the Governor determines gating benchmarks for the safe rollout of additional openings exist. The detailed implementation of which specific businesses and organizations can reopen will be delegated to the local County Health Officers.

From the guidance presented, it probably should be assumed that our museum falls into the Medium Risk stage with a capacity sub-phase restriction. It should be expected that it may take several months to potentially reach the stage where our museum will be able to safely open.

Even with the blessing of the State and local St. Mary’s County Health Department, the final determination of the actual reopening date of our museum remains with the museum Board of Directors. They should consider our own unique operating issues and availability of staff and volunteers prior to voting on when to open back up to the general public.

BOARD AND STAFF PRIORITY ACTIONS PRIOR TO REOPENING

Protection of physical assets shall be accomplished by:

- key staff members remotely monitoring on-site security cameras on a regular basis;
- occasional short visits by designated staff members to physically inspect the facilities; and
- coordination with St. Mary’s County DPW&T maintenance personnel as appropriate.

Protection of financial posture shall be accomplished by:

- holding weekly VTC meetings of the Executive Committee members and key staff to address emerging actions and operational issues;
- applying for and tracking grants and other possible revenue sources to address unforeseen fiscal shortfalls and emergency expenditures;
- continuation of normal FY21 budget development and review actions with continual reassessment of funding resources and options; and
- maintaining regular communications with the full Board of Directors to solicit additional recommendations and guidance.

Continuity of Operations and Customer Engagement shall be accomplished by:

- coordination with St. Mary’s County government DPW&T to maintain and/or enhance the physical plant in a ready condition.
- support limited activities in the areas of exhibit development and aircraft flight line maintenance with appropriate health and safety provisions taken into consideration.
- continue to spool up on-line social media presence and member outreach as much as possible (led by museum Administrator and staff).

**Development of Strategic Staff Actions** to include:

- task the museum Administrator to contact the Maryland Department of Commerce to determine the key industry recovery group personnel and/or agencies associated with the four areas applicable to museums (Attractions, Destinations, Tourism, and Arts) and, ideally, follow and/or participate with them as they develop their recommendations to the Governor so as to be proactive in our destiny.

- task the museum Administrator to engage with, participate, and report back to the EXCOM leadership on all relevant discussions with any appropriate State agency, the American Alliance of Museums, Tri-County Council, Southern Maryland Heritage Areas Authority, Visit St. Mary’s, other local museums, and/or appropriate local St. Mary’s County government agencies regarding potential reopening plans or actions.

- contact and engage with the St. Mary’s County Health Department Communications Office at an appropriate time to stay ‘plugged in’ to current health status issues that may guide our decision-making process since they are the final authority on health compliance directives and when we will be allowed to reopen.

- conduct a safety review of all museum spaces related to health issues and mitigation of COVID-19 effects and report back to the EXCOM with a list of recommended actions going forward.

- talk to all staff and regular volunteers (exhibits, collections, simulators, docents, aircraft maintenance, etc.) and assess/document their specific concerns related to continued working or volunteering at the museum and/or when they would be comfortable re-engaging.

- after approval by the Board, communicate and disseminate this plan to every museum member, employee and volunteer to demonstrate that the museum leadership is focused on the effective operations of the museum for the long haul and is taking pro-active steps across the board to ensure that the health and safety of everyone is of paramount importance.

- conduct an ‘all hands’ Board, Staff and Volunteer ZOOM VTC, after the dissemination of this plan, to have frank discussions about our situation, solicit their input, and ensure that they are kept in the loop regarding all pertinent decisions going forth with regard to reopening the museum at some future date. The EXCOM leadership will host and moderate this on-line meeting.

- finally, develop a written policy and associated safety procedures for all museum Guests, Employees, and Volunteers prior to planned re-opening of the museum.

**Development of specific steps** to maintain the safety and well-being of our Guests, Employees, and Volunteers that should be considered include:
- enact capacity control limits for the indoor museum spaces to limit guest/staff congestion areas and reduce the potential for virus spread. Using the recommended spacing limits of approximately five (5) persons per 1,000 SF of indoor space with 6-foot social distancing maintained, we might consider limiting each of the below listed spaces to the following capacity limits:

1) T&E Hall (main display hall) – 15,000 SF – 75 people maximum  
2) T&E Hall (Gift shop) – 1,166 SF – 5 people maximum  
3) T&E Hall (Theater) – 1,000 SF – 5 people maximum  
4) FTH (low bay area) – 6,160 SF – 30 people maximum  
5) FTH (high bay area) – 8,000 SF – 40 people maximum  

- provisions for new signage (notifications on main entry doors; social distancing signs and/or customer restriction signs, e.g., social distance reminders at choke points such as doors, theater, bathrooms, gift shop, etc.); requirement for all guests to wear a mask while visiting the museum. NOTE: the exhibit team lead will coordinate fabrication/purchase and installation of all signage needs, as required.

- maintaining a stock of masks at Admissions counter for all staff members, docents, and volunteers (appropriate masks are now available on Amazon.com at very low prices). All museums and attractions in Asia are requiring this now and Disney/Universal theme parks are drafting plans to require guests wear masks while on premises.

- maintaining a stock of disposable gloves at Admissions counter for those who need them (see pictures of recommended disposable gloves on the Attachment page).

- purchasing a hand-held no-touch infrared thermal (temperature) reader for the Admissions personnel to check all staff and guests upon entry. Temperature testing in Asia is currently mandatory for all guests. It is another test that Disney/Universal have said they are planning to implement upon reopening to the public. The procedure only takes a few seconds to complete and anyone with an elevated temperature is refused entry.

- provision for alcohol-based hand sanitizer at Admissions counter and other locations in museum.

- purchase micro-thin computer keyboard and mouse protective skins for shared computer terminals used by multiple people (Admissions, Gift shop, simulators) – delegate one each to be used solely by each staff member.

- provision of electrically-powered automatic soap dispensers in the bathrooms (initiate retrofit action from County Building Services) for ‘hands free’ dispensing of soap

- provision of ‘Sneeze-Guards’ at the Admissions and Gift Shop counters to protect our staff. See examples at:

https://MergeWorks-Enclave-Sneeze-Guard-Panel-Product-Data-Sheet-1.pdf and  
https://www.hilltopsignsmd.com/shop

- blocking open the doors to the rest rooms in the T&E Hall, using commercially available, heavy duty adjustable spring-loaded commercial door stops, to permit ‘no-touch’ access/egress.
- encourage a policy of keeping all flat surfaced countertops and desks clear of as many objects as possible to make it easier to regularly clean them with disinfectant wipes (Admission counter, Gift shop counter, staff and volunteer desks, simulator desk, kitchen counter, etc.)

- developing a system where museum guests can call docents from their cell phones while on the property to get specific questions answered without the docents and guests having to be face-to-face. An appropriate museum desk phone can be installed at a docent station or in the T&E Hall docent room to facilitate this new capability.

- developing a facility cleaning plan for ‘high touch’ surfaces in the museum (all entry door handles, Admissions/Gift shop desk surfaces, visitor benches, bathroom door handles and flush buttons/handles, water fountain push-bars/buttons, etc.) above and beyond what the County currently does for general cleaning.

- Coordinate with the County building services manager on who does what with regard to general cleaning in the museum to protect everyone.

- consider putting a survey link on our museum web site and Facebook to solicit current public opinion about what health safety procedures they would like to see at the museum if they visited that would make them or their families ‘feel safe’. It is obvious that this could be a major concern for families and we should leverage the survey responses to help guide what our final opening procedures will be that we can publish in all our social media posts prior to opening. NOTE: Universal Orlando sent out a survey to all their annual passholders last week requesting their opinions on possible precautions that could be used when the parks reopen to make them safer. This survey gave passholders the option to respond with their level of comfort with different options. Answers range from ‘This would make me feel more comfortable’, ‘This is a basic requirement for me’ to ‘This would be a major problem for me’.6

- for all new kiosk-type appliances in the museum, begin the transition to touch-less, no contact audio visual displays (triggered by physical distance, RFID, or similar technology). Contactless solutions will help us to send the right message to visitors, at a time when building confidence is critical. Guests will be reassured by visible efforts to manage the situation and ensure their safety.

- since the social distancing requirement is the primary method of controlling the spread of viruses, eliminate group tours for the foreseeable future to help with capacity management.

- continue to monitor world-wide media and web sites to search for additional ideas and practices being implemented by other organizations in the world and consider them, as appropriate, for implementation in our museum. See example article just published by European museum experiences.7

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The High-Density Disposable Gloves shown above are made for the food service industry or any dirty job requiring hand protection. They come packaged 500 to a box and cost about $8 per box. They are one-size fits all and for either hand and are easy to slip on... to discard, just pinch them at the top and discard into a waste container. Available on Amazon.com