



## Autry National Center

September 2007

To: Councilmember José Huizar  
Fr: John Gray, President  
Re: The Autry's Vision for the Southwest Museum and Casa de Adobe

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On behalf of the Autry National Center I want to thank you for your leadership as we move forward in saving the Southwest Museum and its world class collection. The Autry has a strong vision for the future, and look forward to working with you and the Northeast Los Angeles community to realize our mutual goals.

In summary, we share the following commitments for the future of the Southwest Museum and the Casa de Adobe:

Expand and maintain the storage and public display of the Southwest Museum's collections in Mt. Washington

- Using Southwest collections, present the depth and breadth of the Southwest's collection with rotating exhibitions in the Sprague and Van Nuys Galleries. When possible, host traveling exhibitions relating to the multiple cultures of the Southwest.
- Refurbish the Plains and California Halls as public space. This will allow for more diverse educational, cultural, community and museum activities.
- Continue to store the portions of the collection that may be appropriately maintained at the Southwest Museum, such as archaeology and anthropology, and make them available to scholars, and by appointment, to the broader public.
- Beginning with the reopening of the Southwest Museum, establish regular public hours for the Museum's public spaces, consistent with museum standards for operations, by promoting the exhibitions and programs to a broad Los Angeles public.
- Maintain American Association of Museums accreditation for the Southwest Museum.
- Make available for public review at the Southwest Museum and on-line a photographic inventory of the Southwest collection.

### **Preserve and protect the Southwest Collection of priceless artifacts**

- Save the Southwest collections from substandard conditions and deterioration.
- Store the collection in museum-standard storage.
- Clean, repair and catalog, including barcoding, the more than 250,000 artifacts that comprise the Southwest Museum collection.
- Make collections accessible to Native communities and the general public and audiences throughout the world by putting artifact records and images on a Collections On-Line website.

### **Preserve, rehabilitate and maintain the original historic Southwest Museum building and the Casa de Adobe**

- Create a phased plan to systematically maintain and improve the Southwest Museum and Casa de Adobe over the next decade.

**NOTE:** The Autry has already invested more than \$5 million to save the collection and stabilize the Southwest Museum and Casa de Adobe, and is committed to the project's completion.

- As plans are finalized, publicly disseminate information about the rehabilitation.
- Conduct major repairs to the Southwest Museum and Casa de Adobe.
- Re-install the dioramas after the completion of the water proofing and the new delivery system of lighting to the tunnel.
- Stabilize the underlying structure that joins the Caracol Tower to the main building.
- Upgrade mechanical, plumbing and electrical systems.
- Conduct earthquake retrofitting, perform critical water mitigation work, and repair damages to Casa de Adobe kitchen and historic stove.
- Continue the water proofing and building improvements of the exterior of the building, such as the current Caracol Tower renovation that is taking place today.

- Create a campus that is handicapped accessible, by bringing the elevator to the second story of the Southwest Museum building, and upgrading the bathroom facilities.
- Improve the watering system, and stabilize the Hopi trail in the Ethno botanic gardens.

### **Expand the educational and programming activities of the Southwest Museum and Casa de Adobe**

- Continue the Arroyo Seco Museum Science Magnet program for junior docents at the Casa de Adobe and then expand it to the Southwest Museum once refurbished.
- Establish appropriate educational programs for elementary schools students, including fourth graders, with emphasis on early California History and Native American Cultures.

### **Keep community members and stakeholders well-informed on plans and programming at the Southwest Museum and Casa de Adobe**

- Provide monthly updates to the community on the rehabilitation of the Southwest Museum and Casa de Adobe through the SWMFuture.org site and corresponding email blasts.
- Continue attending community meetings and presenting new information about the rehabilitation of the Southwest building and preservation of the collection.
- Continue to include in the Autry's published materials all programming at the Southwest Museum and Casa de Adobe, such as *What's Next* and *Convergence Magazine*.

### **Autry National Center fundraising for Southwest Museum and Casa de Adobe**

The Autry's multi-million dollar fundraising to date includes:

- Raised over \$3 million from major foundations to support conservation and long-term care of collections.
- Raised over \$450,000 from the federal government for conservation of the collections through the Save America's Treasures grant. This was the highest grant amount given that year by this program.
- Raised over \$500,000 from the federal government for the Southwest's electronic catalogue, through grants from National Endowment for the Humanities and Institute of Museum and Library Services.

- Raised \$300,000 for the Southwest's electronic catalogue.
- Raised a grant of \$936,000 from the California Cultural and Historical Endowment to waterproof buildings.
- Raised over \$1 million in FEMA funds in 1994 for stabilization of the Southwest's buildings; funds were in peril of being lost as no work had been conducted prior to merger.
- Raised funds from the National Park Services to assist in creation of Historic Structures Report for Casa de Adobe.
- Raising \$160,000 from CCHE to create greater ADA accessibility through extension of the museum's only elevator. (Pending)

**THE SOUTHWEST SOCIETY**  
*Supporting the Southwest Museum and Casa de Adobe  
in Northeast Los Angeles*

**Mission Statement**

The Southwest Society is committed to restoring and revitalizing the Southwest Museum and Casa de Adobe in the vision of its founder, Charles Lummis. The Society will further a common vision—shared by the surrounding community and the Autry National Center—of transforming these preeminent historic resources into premiere cultural and educational destinations for Angelinos and visitors alike.

**Goals**

1. Rehabilitation of the Southwest building and preservation of the priceless collection
2. Expanded public uses at the Arroyo campus, including the Casa de Adobe
3. Storage and display of a portion of the Southwest collection at the Southwest Museum
4. Increased educational, cultural and other programmatic activities at the Southwest Museum
5. Expanded public understanding of the historic and contemporary lives of the Southwest.

**Activities**

- Society Members will lead fundraising activities to support the goals described above
- The Autry National Center will provide staff support for all Southwest Society activities
- Membership will entail:
  - Inclusion of name on Southwest Society Masthead
  - Inclusion of name on Annual Gala Dinner Committee
  - Other activities, as appropriate
- **NOTE: All funds raised by the Southwest Society will be exclusively used to benefit the Southwest Museum and the Casa de Adobe.**

**Honorary Charter Members**

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|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| ▪ Congressman Xavier Becerra        | ▪ Paula Starr       |
| ▪ Senator Gil Cedillo               | ▪ Colleen Colson    |
| ▪ Assembly Speaker Fabian Nuñez     | ▪ Duane Champagne   |
| ▪ Assemblymember Anthony Portantino | ▪ Pamela Villasenor |
| ▪ Supervisor Gloria Molina          | ▪ Anthony Morales   |
| ▪ Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa        | ▪ Cynthia Ruiz      |
| ▪ Council President Eric Garcetti   | ▪ Carol Jacques     |
| ▪ Councilmember José Huizar         | ▪ Tony Scudellari   |
| ▪ Michael Alexander                 | ▪ Bill Rumble       |
| ▪ Al Nodal                          | ▪ Grayson Cook      |
| ▪ Richard Montoya                   | ▪ Pat Griffith      |
| ▪ Herbert Siguenza                  | ▪ Natalie Seaman    |
| ▪ Ric Salinas                       | ▪ Eliot Sekuler     |
| ▪ Linda Dishman                     | ▪ Jenny Krusoe      |
| ▪ Suzanne Lummis                    | ▪ Jim Thompson      |



JOSE HUIZAR  
COUNCILMEMBER, 14TH DISTRICT

August 17, 2007

Dear Friends of the Southwest Museum Coalition Member:

I'd like to once again extend to you my deepest thanks for joining me recently to share your vision for the Southwest Museum. I greatly appreciate your dedication to the Museum, and I share your commitment to one of the cultural cornerstones of Northeast Los Angeles.

In our discussions, I heard your concerns loud and clear: the Museum must not be shuttered. Its buildings and precious collection must be protected and restored at the current Mt. Washington site. What's more, the Autry must reopen a revitalized Southwest Museum, at its current site, with expanded services, enhanced amenities, and a strong management team.

The Museum should exhibit a portion of its collection onsite, as well as provide educational and cultural experiences for people throughout the City of Los Angeles. Most importantly, it must be rededicated to the culture and heritage of the peoples of the Southwest in the vision of its founder, Charles Lummis.

As I committed to you at our gathering, I will be meeting shortly with leadership of the Autry Museum. At this meeting, I will share your concerns regarding the future of the Southwest Museum, and make the following specific requests of the Autry:

- Preserve and protect the Southwest Collection of priceless artifacts.
- Preserve, rehabilitate and maintain the original historic Southwest Museum building and the Casa de Adobe.
- Commit to keeping the Southwest Collection on view, on a rotating basis, at the Mt. Washington Campus.
- Dedicate more exhibition space to the collection.
- Offer the community much-needed meeting space at the Mt. Washington location.
- Present a funded and phased plan for the rehabilitation and re-opening of the Museum, including a) Benchmarks and timeline for the Museum's rehabilitation and b) Monthly updates communicated at [www.swmfuture.org](http://www.swmfuture.org)
- Establish and announce public weekday and weekend hours for the museum, beginning with its reopening.



Fund and plan public activities for weekend programming, beginning with the museum's reopening.

- Maintain the name "Southwest Museum."
- Reestablish school visits and educational trips to the Southwest Museum—in particular as part of the California State Curriculum Standards for the 4<sup>th</sup> Grade.
- Commit to storing a portion of the Southwest Collection at the Mt. Washington Campus.
- Make a clear commitment to maintain the American Association of Museums accreditation.
- Make available a photographic inventory of the collection at the Mt. Washington campus, preferably integrated into a learning station for public review.
- Commit to promoting the Southwest Museum Mt. Washington campus in materials distributed at the Autry National Center, ensuring proper respect to the Museum as the original and current home to the important Southwest Museum Collection.
- Agree to examine growth and expansion opportunities at the Museum to accommodate educational, cultural and other public uses.

I look forward to reporting back to you the results of this conversation, and to our continued partnership in making the Southwest Museum flourish. With your help, I believe that we can make the Museum a premiere public destination for visitors and Angelinos alike.

Sincerely,



JOSE HUIZAR

Councilmember, 14<sup>th</sup> District

## Preliminary Analysis of Future Use of the Southwest Museum

*(personal opinion, not expressing this as the representative of HP Heritage Trust)*

On August 17, the leaders of the Coalition received a letter from Councilmember Huizar, summarizing his perspective of the key points he heard from the Coalition leaders (you) at the June meeting in his Eagle Rock offices. The bulleted points, if looked at as a whole, should address the primary purpose and consistent position of the Coalition since our inception:

- a) to retain and create a world class Southwest Museum as the primary exhibition location of the Southwest Collection;
- b) through some enforceable agreement (or condition of approval for their plans in Griffith Park) to ensure that there is a future museum use for the next 100 years

On September 27, Councilmember sent an update as to the progress of this issue with a memo from Autry's John Gray to the Councilmember. Below are the bulleted requests from the 8/17/07 letter. Behind the bullet, in bold, is a quick recap after reading the new memo of agreement from Autry, as to whether or not this item is an improvement over what Autry has previously stated as their future plans for the Southwest Museum.

For those who may not recall exactly... Autry had previously said it would:

- change the primary use to an education and cultural center while retaining 2 room for a rotating display of the Southwest Museum collection. (That's 3,200 sq ft. out of a building that is close to 30,000 sq feet in size and a mere 25% (or 12,500 sq. ft) of what Brenda Levin outlined in Autry's professional study as viable and feasible for exhibition space in the future
- Changing the name so it's no longer simply the "Southwest Museum"
- Converting the rest of the historic museum to some vague uses generally described as cultural and educational, with no specifics
- Re-opening date of 2010 or 2011 depending upon the document
- The new primary location for the Southwest Museum will be in Griffith Park

### Bullets from memo of 8/17 (personal opinion):

-- Preserve and protect the Southwest Collection of priceless artifacts. **(we always assumed care of the Collection is a place of common agreement)**

-- Preserve, rehabilitate and maintain the original historic Southwest Museum building and the Casa de Adobe. **(UNCLEAR for what use, the work is still "Unfunded," don't how much money is needed and, when will it re-open... 'over the next decade' instead of 2010)**

--Commit to keeping the Southwest Collection on view, on a rotating basis, at the Mt. Washington Campus. **(SAME as Autry's previous commitment – 2 rooms or 3,200 square feet... instead of 12,500 sq. ft as shown viable in 2004 Brenda Levin Rehabilitation Study)**

--Dedicate more exhibition space to the collection **(UNCLEAR – where, how much?)**

--Offer the community much-needed meeting space at the Mt. Washington

location. **(probably true since the exhibition halls will no longer be used for showing the public the Collection)**

--Present a funded and phased plan for the rehabilitation and re-opening of the Museum, including a) Benchmarks and timeline for the Museum's rehabilitation and b) Monthly updates communicated at [www.swmfuture.org](http://www.swmfuture.org) **(NO SPECIFIC PLAN OR TIMEFRAME OR FUNDING Provided– Gray's memo simply says over the next decade, what happened to reopening in 2010?)**

--Establish and announce public weekday and weekend hours for the museum, beginning with its reopening. **(UNCLEAR – nothing in Gray's memo addresses this)**

-- Fund and plan public activities for weekend programming, beginning with the museum's reopening. **(UNCLEAR nothing in Gray's memo addresses this)**

--Maintain the historic name "Southwest Museum." **(NO – Autry will keep the “new name” as they announced last year when it becomes a cultural center)**

-- Reestablish school visits and educational trips to the Southwest Museum-in particular as part of the California State Curriculum Standards for the 4th Grade. **(UNCLEAR – this requires a minimum of 5,000 sq feet of exhibition space for the permanent Collection. It's unknown and vague as to if and where will this occur ...no specifics)**

--Commit to storing a portion of the Southwest Collection at the Mt. Washington Campus. **(YES, but vague as to what and why)**

--Make a clear commitment to maintain the American Association of Museums accreditation. **(YES, although is something simply assumed would be required in order for Autry to be a credible institution for their big new museum in Griffith Park)**

--Make available a photographic inventory of the collection at the Mt. Washington campus, preferably integrated into a learning station for public review. **(We have never made a cohesive request about the library function although the work Autry has done via taxpayer grant dollars is supporting this today)**

--Commit to promoting the Southwest Museum Mt. Washington campus in materials distributed at the Autry National Center, ensuring proper respect to the Museum as the original and current home to the important Southwest Museum Collection. **(YES, but this happens today in their marketing materials).**

--Agree to examine growth and expansion opportunities at the Museum to accommodate educational, cultural and other public uses. **(NO – they did not agree to this and no mention of this in the memo)**



JOSE HUIZAR  
COUNCILMEMBER OF THE FOURTEENTH DISTRICT

September 27, 2007

Dear Friends of the Southwest Museum Coalition Member:

I am excited to share an update on the future of the Southwest Museum and Casa de Adobe, two of the cultural cornerstones in our community.

As I wrote to you last month, I am committed to ensuring that the Museum's historic buildings and priceless collection are protected and restored at the current Mount Washington site. Further, the Museum must reopen at the Mount Washington site as a stronger, more vital institution than ever before, with expanded educational and cultural experiences for all Angelinos. In my previous letter, I also outlined a list of specific requests concerns I planned to communicate, on behalf of the community, to the Autry National Center.

I am delighted to report that my conversations with the Autry have been very fruitful. The Autry has made a number of written commitments to the community and to me as your elected representative. (Please see attached memorandum.)

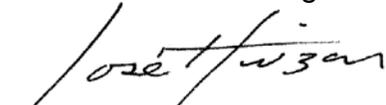
Among other commitments, the Autry has agreed to:

- Save the Southwest Collection by cleaning, repairing, and cataloging more than 250,000 artifacts and storing them in museum-standard conditions;
- Preserve, rehabilitate, and maintain the original historic Southwest Museum building and the Casa de Adobe, with more than \$5 million already allocated and a commitment to finish the job;
- Create and publicly disseminate a phased plan to systematically maintain and improve the Mt. Washington campus over the next decade;
- Commit to keeping the Southwest Collection on view, on a rotating basis, at the Mt. Washington Campus;

- Commit to reopening four out of five Museum galleries for public display of the collection, rotating art exhibits, and other educational, cultural, community, and museum activities;
- Commit to storing a portion of the Southwest Collection at the Mt. Washington Campus;
- Make available for public review at the Southwest Museum and on-line a photographic inventory of the Southwest collection;
- Continue public activities for weekend programming, beginning now and expanding with the reopening of the Museum;
- Beginning with the reopening of the Mt. Washington campus, establish regular public hours for the Museum's public spaces;
- Reestablish educational programs for elementary school students, including fourth graders;
- Maintain American association of Museums accreditation for the Southwest Museum;
- Include in the Autry's published materials—such as *What's Next* and *Convergence Magazine*—all programming at the Mt. Washington campus.
- Keep community members and stakeholders well-informed on plans and programming at the Mt. Washington site by attending community meetings and providing monthly email updates through the SWMFuture.org site.

I can't thank you enough for your continued dedication to these community treasures. This victory truly is your victory.

With thanks and congratulations,



JOSE HUIZAR

Councilmember, 14<sup>th</sup> District