



For Immediate Release | Media Contact: Deena Pyle | [pyle@utahhumanities.org](mailto:pyle@utahhumanities.org) | cell 801.201.4300

## Utah Humanities selected as a 2018 Leadership in History award winner for *The Way We Worked Utah Tour*

Salt Lake City, Utah, September 19, 2018 – Utah Humanities proudly announces that it has been selected as a 2018 Award of Merit winner by the Leadership in History awards committee for *The Way We Worked Tour of Utah*.

Spearheaded by Utah Humanities' Megan van Frank, the Utah tour of the Smithsonian Institution Museum on Main Street traveling exhibition *The Way We Worked* resided in six Utah communities in 2017. The national exhibition explored the role of work in American life, tracing the many changes that affected the workforce and work environments over the last 150 years. The Utah tour enriched *The Way We Worked* with new local exhibitions, complementary digital media, and events designed specifically to highlight Utah's unique work history. The project also gave host museums in-depth, hands-on experience with a range of exhibition skills and ultimately increased their curatorial expertise.

### Leadership in History Award: Our Nation's Most Prestigious Recognition for State and Local History

The award is presented by the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH). The AASLH Leadership in History Awards is the nation's most prestigious competition for recognition of achievement in state and local history. The AASLH awards program was initiated in 1945 to establish and encourage standards of excellence in the collection, preservation, and interpretation of state and local history throughout the United States. **Utah Humanities is Utah's only recipient for the 2018 award.**



Photo 1: Team for the Utah tour of the Smithsonian's *The Way We Worked* exhibition drew from organizations across the Beehive State.

### Utah Humanities Influences the Preservation of Utah's Heritage through Collaboration and Statewide Work

Utah Humanities has worked with Utah's museums throughout its 42-year history, and closely with small museums for the last 24 years through the Smithsonian Institution's Museum on Main Street program. *The Way We Worked* project furthers the mission to empower Utahns to improve their communities through the humanities. As Utah's NEH-mandated state humanities council and an independent nonprofit, Utah Humanities' work throughout the state is both broad and deep.

UH's heritage work specifically supports the capacity of Utah's small museums to serve their own communities. Specifically Utah Humanities provides museum staff and volunteers with skills and resources to help them tell the rich and

varied stories of their collections and communities. During the year-long Utah tour of *The Way We Worked*, exhibition hosts created interpretive exhibits and programming that informed their visitors and encouraged them to think, ask questions, and get involved. Thousands of museum visitors across the state enjoyed the national perspective of the Smithsonian exhibition, as well as these detailed, local stories.

Brad Westwood, Senior Public Historian at the Utah Department of Heritage & Arts underscores the impact of this project, remarking that “For Utah, *The Way We Worked* was not a self-contained exhibition with minimal impact; instead, it had strong rippling effect... This moveable feast of national and local history had a wide and sustainable local influence by bridging Utah’s rural and urban divide, sharing authority, and leveraging dozens of local and statewide partnerships.”

The project represented a multi-faceted collaboration among many organizations. Through partnerships with the Utah Museum of Fine Arts, Utah Public Radio, KCPW Radio, consulting historian Professor Matthew Basso, and the museums that served as exhibition hosts, *The Way We Worked Tour of Utah* showcased the strength of collective work. Ultimately, this award represents the influence Utah Humanities has on the preservation of Utah’s unique heritage through its statewide coordination and collaborative efforts.



**Photo 2:** Visitors to *The Way We Worked* at the Park City Museum enjoyed the museum's companion exhibition and public programming.

Megan van Frank, Director of the Center for Community Heritage at Utah Humanities remarks that, “This award represents the culmination of lengthy, deep, and effective collaboration among many partners. Receiving this level of national recognition underscores the value of such broad-based heritage work and how striving together to preserve, interpret, and share our collective history strengthens our local communities and cultural networks. Working locally to foster understanding of community history and spur discussion of community issues is essential to the health of our state and nation.”

Jennifer Ortiz, Museum Services Manager at the Utah Division of Arts & Museums, describes the overall influence of the tour by saying that “This project significantly benefitted Utahns through various touchpoints. First, the program served nearly 125,000 visitors through the exhibition and related programming across the state. Second, in partnership with the Utah Museum of Fine Arts, education outreach programming for *The Way We Worked* served nearly 3,000 students and teachers in 10 school districts. Last, more than 2 million listeners appreciated the content broadcast as part of the complementary *Beehive Archive* and *Utah Works* radio stories. While the public-facing statistics are notable, it was the far-reaching and perhaps less visible impact to the participating museums’ capacity that is remarkable. The community of participating small museums and their staff benefit from long-term, hands-on, project-based support as a way of learning how to improve their work. This program had the effect of building capacity in each site through professional development and ongoing mentorship through Utah Humanities.”

*The Way We Worked* was made possible in Utah by Utah Humanities. The exhibition, created by the National Archives, is part of Museum on Main Street, a collaboration between the Smithsonian Institution and State Humanities Councils nationwide. Support for Museum on Main Street has been provided by the United States Congress. The Utah tour of *The Way We Worked* was presented by Utah Humanities in partnership with the Utah Museum of Fine Arts and local exhibition hosts: Ogden Union Station Museums, Hyrum City Museum, Museum of the San Rafael, Territorial Statehouse State Park Museum with President Millard Fillmore Library, Silver Reef Museum, and Park City Museum.

**About Utah Humanities:** Utah Humanities empowers Utahns to improve their communities through active engagement in the humanities. UH is funded by the Salt Lake County Zoo, Arts, and Parks Fund, the State of Utah, and the National Endowment for the Humanities, and through gifts from individuals, foundations, and corporations. Each year, Utah Humanities supports hundreds of educational and cultural programs throughout Utah. For more information, visit [www.utahhumanities.org](http://www.utahhumanities.org).