

Connecting to Collections
Reducing Risks to Kansas Cultural Heritage Institutions



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Cover photos, left to right:

Boot Hill Museum Fire, Dodge City, 1992

Kiowa County Library, Greensburg, 2007. Photo by Larry Schwarm

Hale Library, Kansas State University, 2010

State Library of Kansas, 2010. Photo by Megan Schulz

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A. Purpose of the Project: Regional Collaboration for CHI Emergency Preparedness

Kansans inhabit a region with a reputation for tornadoes, averaging 2nd place in the nation for this form of natural disaster between 2000 and 2005. Our state is also home to two emblems of resilience to disasters – the town of Greensburg, famous for its “green” rebuilding program after the EF5 tornado of 2007, and the town of Hesston, birthplace of the internationally famous Mennonite Disaster Service and itself the site of an F5 tornado in 1990.

A 2005 study by the nonprofit organization Heritage Preservation made four recommendations to help institutions avoid serious conservation problems and the possible loss of the nation’s most valued treasures. With this study in mind, the Institute of Museum and Library Services launched *Connecting to Collections*, a national initiative to raise awareness of the importance of caring for our treasures. The recommendation that *every collecting institution must develop an emergency plan* was selected by an ad hoc committee as the recommendation to address that would catalyze collaboration across the state. Two purposes of the planning project were identified by the committee:

- 1) Address the emergency preparedness needs of cultural heritage institutions by means of *informative events and planning products*;
- 2) Cultivate a reliable *framework for inter-institutional collaboration*, in order to grow and sustain statewide participation on endeavors preserving cultural heritage collections.

The framework for inter-institutional collaboration required a de-centralized approach. The initial committee of respondents to the IMLS request-for-proposals included staff from the State Library of Kansas, the Kansas State Historical Society, University of Kansas Libraries, and K-State Libraries. From the outset however, these institutions did not presume that leadership for a regional coordinated response would be concentrated in university or state institutions. Moreover, previous initiatives to foster a statewide network among libraries and historical societies had not been sustainable, as individuals involved in the initial planning moved on to other positions, and neither responsibility nor state funding were assigned or allocated to a central management entity. Recent cuts in state agency budgets did not encourage a “top-down” approach to the project. Instead, the group formed a Connecting to Collections (C2C) Planning Board including representatives from statewide associations with a commitment to cultural heritage institutions (Kansas Arts Commission, Kansas Museums Association, Kansas Humanities Council, Kansas Library Association and Kansas City Area Archivists). Along with the original four institutions, it was believed that these partners would supply fresh membership and cross-associational collaboration beyond the life of the IMLS grant.

Informative events and products would be implemented by the C2C planning board as 1) *regional emergency preparedness workshops* and 2) an online *statewide resource guide (SRG)*, developed by the partners from feedback by workshop participants. The SRG would fulfill the following functions:

- Aggregate procedural knowledge and contact points already available but scattered across numerous agency and institutional websites;
- Provide a model or blueprint of what goes into emergency planning, to be customized at local institutions;
- Offer local examples, models and communication channels for further collaboration

Partners

The C2C Planning Board included the following partner organizations:

- [State Library of Kansas](#) Cindy Roupe (Director of Public Services and C2C Project Director); Megan Schulz (Reference Librarian)
- [Kansas State Historical Society](#) Patricia Michaelis (Archives Division Director); Darrell Garwood (Head of Preservation/Technical Services)
- [University of Kansas Libraries](#) Tyra Grant (Head, Preservation Department); Kyle Sederstrom (Preservation Systems Coordinator); Whitney Baker (Conservator)
- [K- State Libraries](#) Kathryn Talbot (Preservation Team Leader)
- [Kansas Library Association](#) Rosanne Siemens (President)
- [Kansas Museums Association](#) Joanie Soukup (Director)
- [Kansas Arts Commission](#) Llewellyn Crain (Executive Director)
- [Kansas Humanities Council](#) Julie Mulvihill (Executive Director); Dan Carey-Whalen (Director of Programs)
- [Kansas City Area Archivists](#) Heidi Hornaday (Senior Co-Chair)
- [Heritage League of Greater Kansas City](#) Kate Rogge (Program Committee Member)

By completing the planning grant, these partners would pass leadership to other individuals identified across the state, forming a *Cultural Heritage Emergency Coordinating Council* to maintain the SRG, support statewide efforts, and develop a consensus for implementation grant applications and plans for legislative action.

B. Activities Supported by the Planning Grant

1) Regional Workshops

Kansas has 531 libraries, over 1000 museums, 152 arts institutions and over 100 archives distributed across 105 counties, all characterized by significant population and revenue disparities. In approaching the theme of statewide emergency preparedness, the C2C Planning Board focused on *community-level awareness and regional coordination* as a strategy for activating museum and library staff. By offering face-to-face workshops to cultural heritage institutions in three regions of Kansas, the board hoped to catalyze diverse participants to partner with local-to-regional emergency response teams and other civic organizations – those most likely to be on-hand, helpful and affected by a local disaster.

The objectives of the regional workshops were to:

- 1) Offer baseline training in emergency planning;
- 2) Inventory more detailed training needs of cultural heritage institutions;
- 3) Bring local museums and libraries into collaborative response relationships; and
- 4) Learn from participants and preservation experts what information resources would be most useful for a website dedicated to the C2C effort in Kansas.



Three six-hour workshops were developed and presented at: 1) Eastern region at Kansas Museum of History in Topeka, 10/2/09; 2) Central region at Botanica, the Wichita Gardens, 10/15/09; 3) Western region at Dodge City Public Library with videoconference connection with Pioneer Memorial Public Library, Colby, 10/29/09). Julie Page, co-coordinator of both WESTPAS (Western States & Territories Preservation Assistance Service) and CalPreservation.org (California Preservation Program), was hired as project consultant to develop the training offered at the workshops. Her widely recognized expertise in preservation as well as emergency planning and response proved invaluable as she led the planning board to formulate workshops focused on two key elements: 1) “Ten Things To Know Before Disaster Strikes” as a framework for planning, and 2) the Pocket Response Plan, as a concise, achievable emergency planning template for cultural heritage institutions of any size. As founder of SILDRN (San Diego/Imperial County Libraries Disaster Response Network), she also offered the planning board numerous examples and models of cross-community collaboration. Page worked face-to-face with the board and by teleconference to develop a common script and handouts for all three workshops, and delivered in person the first program in Topeka. Two other preservation experts, Tom Clareson, Senior Consultant at LYRASIS, and Tyra Grant, Preservation Head at University of Kansas, Watson Library, presented the same program for the workshops in Wichita and Dodge City, respectively augmenting the script with their own wide-ranging experience and knowledge.

An emergency response tabletop exercise and moderated group breakout sessions reinforced the speakers’ emphasis on local communication and collaboration as the best means of preventing or

mitigating a disaster. Participants were offered as a template an emergency preparedness Pocket Response Plan to be completed by their institutions during the life of this project. IMLS Disaster Wheels were offered as incentives to the first 10 from each region who submitted plans to the Planning Board.

Afternoon breakout sessions facilitated by Donna Schenck-Hamlin (Library Associate, Institute for Civic Discourse and Democracy – ICDD) and recorded by Marie Steichen (Research Associate, ICDD) focused on regional networking, with participants grouped by institutional proximity. Group discussion addressed how to motivate or energize institutional boards, staffs, and community patrons to take emergency preparation more seriously on a timely basis. Acknowledging the limited time for detailed training, the workshop solicited participants’ feedback on local training needs pursuant to a statewide implementation grant application. Suggestions for information elements needed for the online SRG were solicited, based on a draft outline developed by the Planning Board. Participants were alerted to an upcoming beta version of the SRG for feedback based on their initial workshop comments. “May Day” was recommended as a deadline for planning community emergency response exercises focused on local collections. Given the limited participation that only three events could generate, additional names of individuals and cultural heritage institutions potentially needing additional outreach were solicited.

Invitations were sent to over 500 cultural heritage institutions through newsletter, email, and website announcements. In addition to cultural heritage institutions, county archivists and students enrolled in information and preservation coursework were included. Registration costs were covered by the IMLS grant, with lunches provided at cost. An emergency recovery vendor, BELFOR Property Restoration, attended all three workshops, providing information and refreshments. Several Individuals from small museums not part of the Kansas Museum Association were invited by C2C board members. Constraints to attendance were noted and a follow-up list was developed for further communication. Total participation in the workshops (excluding project staff, consultants, and vendors) reached 111, representing 83 institutions and 34 counties, with 3 out-of-state participants from Nebraska and Oklahoma.

Distribution of Workshop Participants from Kansas cultural heritage institutions



Workshop participants at the 3 events (by organization types)

Libraries	21	16	15
Archives	4	7	1
Historical Societies and Museums	17	18	6
Arts Institutions	2	2	2
Project Staff, Consultants, Vendors	14	9	8

2) Online Statewide Resource Guide (SRG)

A draft of content for a statewide emergency planning guide was developed by the Planning Board prior to the workshops, with a general outline of components presented for participant feedback, rather than a detailed website illustration. Workshop sessions generated many suggestions for Kansas-specific references to training, companies, experts, organizations, and volunteer groups. Calendar, directory, and e-mail communication functions were articulated, along with an orientation of information by specific hazards (e.g. water, fire) and illustrated with Kansas examples.

Since workshop registration represented only a modest sampling of the end-user population for an SRG, the website needed to offer more opportunities to receive the workshop training. Kyle Sederstrom filmed Julie Page’s first presentation, producing 250 workshop CD-ROMs offered free of charge across the state. Downloadable Pocket Response Plans and copies of the workshop handouts and Powerpoint slides were also to be included in the SRG.

The Planning Board approached naming the SRG with some concern, since the current grant focus on emergency preparedness might prove too narrow with subsequent implementation of a broader statewide preservation initiative. It was resolved to name the website Kansas Cultural Heritage Emergency Resources Network - KCHERN (<http://kansaschern.wordpress.com/>), to be dovetailed at a future date into a more comprehensive preservation resource.

Organization of the website for simplicity and functional divisions into “before-” and “after-disaster” were based on Planning Board examinations of other state and national preservation and emergency preparedness websites, many of which are cited within KCHERN. A priority in the layout, developed by Kyle Sederstrom, Kathryn Talbot, Tyra Grant, and Whitney Baker, was non-redundancy with other websites, such as the Disaster Mitigation Planning Assistance www.matrix.msu.edu/~disaster , and emphasis on Kansas resources and communications.

C. Outputs of the Project Activities

Tangible deliverables from the project that would not have materialized without IMLS support were workshop feedback (3-way knowledge shared among presenters, planners, and participants); the creation of local emergency Pocket Response Plans initiated by the workshops; a succession of local or regional meetings/exercises for organizing emergency coordination that followed; the organizational vehicles of website and listserv; and a new leadership group representing widely distributed cultural heritage institutions. The following details are taken from Planning Board meeting notes, intermittent email surveys, discussions from the Workshop Summary Report, and the website.



1) Workshop Feedback Workshop sessions not only delivered useable strategies and explanations of hazards to participants (for which they could receive continuing education credits¹), but provided the Planning Board with a more spontaneous means of soliciting feedback on further training needs of many of the state's diverse cultural heritage institutions. These needs were divided into recommendations as follows:

a. Categories of skill needed

- Communication skills
 - a. How to motivate people, and to raise awareness in the community
 - b. Ways to report and to communicate with oversight boards for funding support
 - c. How to communicate among peer agencies, institutions for ongoing help
 - d. How to communicate with the media in the event of an emergency
- Planning skills
 - a. Risk assessment and management
 - b. Making a basic plan
 - c. Knowing your building - heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning basics
 - d. Grant-writing and Fund-raising
 - e. Appraisal methods, assessing and valuing the collection
 - f. Negotiating with insurance providers
 - g. Evacuation planning and practice
- Emergency response skills
 - a. Safety training
 - b. How to manage water, draping shelves and collections with plastic, etc.
 - c. CPR (cardio-pulmonary resuscitation)

¹ The State Library of Kansas Certificate of Completion offered 5 credits of continuing education for those who chose to use it. 33 participants received the credits.

- d. Use of fire extinguishers
- e. Dealing with a hazardous environment
- f. Taking care of special-needs persons in an emergency
- Recovery skills
 - a. Collection management during recovery and restoration
 - b. Specific handling and restoring procedures for film, other materials
 - c. How to dry books and other materials after flooding
 - d. Site assessment, salvage decisions
 - e. How to handle artifacts from diverse collections
 - f. How to negotiate with insurance
 - g. Hands-on salvage practices
 - h. IT recovery – technology assistance

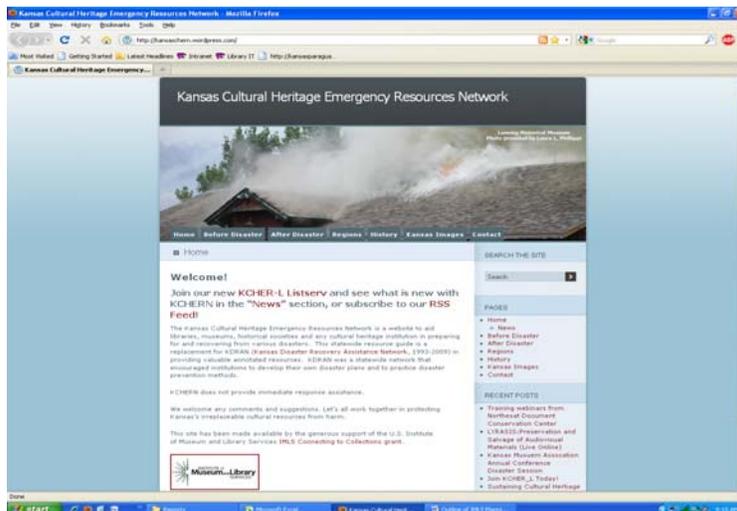
b. Recommended means of implementing training in Kansas

- Standardize: preparedness kits should follow a standard but with local customization by each institution (like the Pocket Response Plans)
- Virtual or online training: should offer different media for different learning styles
- Staff development: make it part of staff orientation and mentoring
- Repeatability: provide videos of the workshop and other “replayable” training
- Community-wide: coordinate with others to maintain a core of trainers and a community schedule of recurring training
- Train the trainer network: send a few to regional, state, and national training with the requirement that they disseminate their knowledge afterwards
- First responders: non-collection experts should develop training along with preservation experts

c. Targets for training

- Differentiate: between what volunteers and professionals can/should do (What can we ourselves do safely, and when is an expert needed?)
- Cross-train: volunteers with staff on responding to disaster
- Local officials: include them for buy-in
- Frontline staff: on-call, weekend, entry level must all be included
- Special needs populations: need training themselves, tailored to ability and needs

3) Website and Listserv



KCHERN – Online Collections-focused Emergency Resource Guide

3) Dissemination of Workshop Information

To expose more Kansas cultural heritage institutions to the activities and results of the planning grant, a condensed version of the regional workshops was repeated at statewide annual meetings of the Kansas Library Association April 8 and the Kansas Museums Association October 29, 2010. Attendees were provided with Pocket Response Plan templates, the “Ten Things To Know Before Disaster Strikes”, and an introduction to the website and listserv. DVDs of the first workshop were distributed to participants and others unable to attend the regional workshops.

4) New Leadership

The three workshops generated 30 volunteers for regional leadership, from which nine committed to work on the transitional KCHERN Coordinating Council. The Council held their first meeting in November and has agreed to oversight of the website, listserv, and collaborative efforts pursuant to additional grants and statewide support. Their distribution geographically and by type of institution validated the grassroots development approach taken by the Planning Board.

Leadership volunteers and council members by region and institution type

	Volunteers	Council
Libraries	17	6
Archives	1	
Historical Societies, Museums	7	2
Arts Institutions	4	1
South-west KS	7	1
South-central KS	9	3
South-east KS	2	2
North-central KS	6	2
North-east KS	5	1

D. Outcomes of the Project Activities

1) Short-term outcomes: knowledge, motivation

The following examples illustrate knowledge gained from the planning workshops applied to actual emergencies. Testimonials were provided on request to planning board members.

Incident 1: Dole Institute of Politics, University of Kansas, Lawrence – December – Water



A water leak in the Dole Institute exhibit area occurred the week after Christmas in 2009. Heavy snowfall had covered the roof and ice dams had formed preventing the run off of melted snow. Water trapped between the roof and the heavy layers of snow and seeped in, leaking into exhibit cases filled with political memorabilia. Due to the holiday there was limited staff, but they were able to act immediately, following the recommendations discussed at the Emergency Preparedness Workshop. Archivists activated the calling tree to alert university facilities, and had the

electricity turned off before attempting to remove items from the affected exhibit case. Staff then used

plastic sheeting from the emergency supply kit to divert the water from the exhibits and remove wet items. Due to the fast action of the staff there was minimal damage to the exhibit or memorabilia.

“The leak occurred while I was out of town, however, the archivists acted quickly and according to guidelines we set up in our “pocket plans” even though the plans have not yet been finalized. We also used the opportunity to restock our emergency supply cabinet.” (Morgan R. Davis, Dole Institute of Politics)

Incident 2: Hale Library, Kansas State University – November – Water



A fire alarm triggered by smoke from a microwave oven caused sprinklers to activate over book shelving on three floors of Hale Library. Staff re-entered the building within minutes to organize a rapid-response effort at removing and drying the affected materials. Between 20 and 30 personnel used book trucks and materials from emergency storage containers located on each floor to separate materials by

degree of damage and fan-dry books that were not considered beyond repair. Approximately 3,000 volumes were removed, evaluated, and set out to dry or prepared for re-shelving within 2.5 hours.

“The May Day exercises were an excellent way to remind staff of the procedures involved in responding to any emergency. The staff responded quickly to this emergency under the general guidelines and were able to adjust as the response progressed ... The planning and discussion with staff certainly had a very positive impact on our response, as evidenced by the return of 80% of the affected materials within 3 working days.” (Roberta Johnson, Director for Administration and IT Services)

Incident 3: State Library of Kansas, Topeka – July – Water



As Julie Page noted in our first workshop presentation, construction-related risks are high to library collections. Restoration of the historical State Capitol building has resulted in temporary housing of State Library staff and reference materials in 6 mobile units, 1 of which leaked during a high-winds rainstorm. The leak threatened several sets of bound legislative bills, a heavily-used legal reference in the library. Because it was a work-day, staff immediately alerted both the building facilities personnel and the state architect, activating construction workers to assist in applying

plastic sheeting and removing water. The bulk of the State Library collection temporarily housed in an annex was unaffected by storms, but later in the summer the collection was exposed to drips from an overhead air condition that iced over when the fan went out.

“With the rain that came into the temporary units a few weeks ago, and a frozen condenser, I really appreciate the knowledge I gained from the workshops on how to spot leaks, drape plastic, and which plastic to use.” (Cindy Roupe, Director of Public Services)

Incident 4: Kansas Heritage Center, Dodge City – July – Water

“We found the information in the workshop helpful when we had recent roof leaks on our library/archives ceiling. With the info from the workshop in mind on how quickly mold can develop and spread, we had our fans blowing before we even turned on the lights. As a Dodge City group we have developed and shared information (cell numbers) for support for emergency preparedness. As kind of an aside of that, last week a member of the group had an electrical/fire problem with his apartment building across the street from my office. I was able to give him a call from the number provided on our emergency pocket plan and make him aware of the emergency vehicles surrounding his building. ... the call gave him time to respond to the damage and take care of the needs of his tenants.” (Barb Vincent, Director)

2) Medium-term outcomes: decision-making, policy, and practice.

Regionally, collaboration initiatives were reported from Dodge City in Southwest Kansas and from Manhattan in North Central Kansas. Recognizing that solidifying and sustaining inter-institutional alliances is a major challenge, funds from the planning grant were made available to support participation by 14 cultural heritage institutions in the September 15 LYRASIS webinar, "Establishing Emergency Response Networks for Cultural Collections".

During May Preservation Month, emergency planning update sessions and tabletop exercises were held at K-State Libraries in Manhattan and the Kansas Heritage Center in Dodge City.

Assignment of responsibility for collections care is a recognized need. K-State Libraries added a new position of Preservation Coordinator to its staff. Fifteen workshop participants completed and submitted their pocket response plans to the planning board. Many others recorded their intention to review and update their emergency planning documents.

"We have met with campus staff, have reviewed the 'College Disaster Plan' and have begun the discussion on updates to that document in light of the October meeting. The pocket plan template was a big hit there as well, and will likely be expanded for "whole campus" utilization as well." (Colleen Peters, Central Christian College Archives, McPherson)

E. Additional Comments on future progress, planning and action:

"We had a brief training time on emergency preparedness during our last staff meeting (November 10, 2009) to check our flashlights, and discuss how different staff might respond to fire, tornado, and personal threat by someone in the library. I mentioned that we were going to make up a first aide kit and a tub for emergency supplies. Staff who either have had children in Boy Scouts or brothers said that our Boy Scouts could help make both. One even came to escort his sister home from our meeting. I mentioned it to him and he was ready to help. We will pay for the items they need, and the things we want also in our kits, but they will put it together." (Melany Wilks, Pioneer Memorial Library, Colby, KS)