The Smithsonian Institution Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, along with Michigan State University Museum and in partnership with Native American basketmakers’ organizations, will launch a multi-year, multi-faceted celebration of the rich, living Native basket traditions of North America and Hawaii. Through a festival, exhibition, and other related activities, Carriers of Culture: Living Native Basket Traditions will examine the ways in which Native baskets—and their makers—are literally and symbolically “carriers of culture.”

**About the Festival**
In the summer of 2006, over 80 Native basketmakers will be featured at the 40th annual Smithsonian Folklife Festival, which is held on the National Mall of the United States between the Washington Monument and the U.S. Capitol. Attracting more than one million visitors annually and reaching another 40 million through media, this free event takes place for ten days, overlapping the Fourth of July holiday.

Festival visitors will see master Native artists demonstrate outstanding weaving traditions of their respective communities. They will learn about the inter-relationship of basketry to other tribal cultural knowledge associated with ceremonies, language, stories, dance, song, and foodways. Through live demonstrations, dance performances, discussion sessions, and hands-on activities, Carriers of Culture will explore how Native basketmakers have acquired and sustained their extraordinary skills and knowledge.

**About the Exhibition**
In early 2007, a 2500-square-foot exhibition is scheduled to open at the Michigan State University Museum, and will feature 250–300 baskets representing five different themes. One theme area will include the work of those weavers who have been recipients of the prestigious National Endowment for the Arts’ National Heritage Fellowship.

The exhibition is being designed with a comprehensive use of first-person Native voices. Extensive media and interactive elements include videos of basketmaking, audio excerpts of interviews with artists, and opportunities to touch materials and try basic weaving techniques.

**Touring**
The exhibition will tour to a minimum of six venues in North America. A smaller version of the exhibition will be developed and circulated for smaller venues, particularly tribal museums.

**Project Components**
Additional components anticipated are an on-line virtual version of the exhibition; a series of public programs (including basketry demonstrations) at exhibition venues; curriculum materials; a publication; a youth cultural heritage engagement and leadership program; and a web-based, virtual resource center on Native weaving.

**Smithsonian Folklife Festival on the National Mall, Washington, D.C., Summer 2006. National Touring Exhibition, 2007–2009.**

*Carriers of Culture: Living Native Basket Traditions*
The *Carriers of Culture* project reflects an extraordinary effort on the part of multiple organizations to bring attention to Native culture and artistry. Joining the Smithsonian and Michigan State University Museum (MSUM) are the major U.S. Native basket organizations (California Indian Basketweavers Association, Maine Indian Basketmakers Alliance, Northwest Native American Basketweavers Association, Tohono O’odham Basketweavers Organization, Oklahoma Native American Basketweavers Association, Ho’oulu Ke Ola O Na Pua, Ka Ulu Lauhala O Kona) as well as many other Native individuals and organization stakeholders.

**Festival Budget**
The *Carriers of Culture* program will cost approximately $1 million. The Smithsonian will provide one-third for Festival infrastructure. The rest must be raised from sponsors and partnerships, in order to support research, interpretation, shipping, and the transportation, housing, and fees of participants.

**Exhibition**
The *Carriers of Culture* exhibition costs approximately $350,000. MSUM will provide one-third for exhibition infrastructure, and a variety of grants have already supported the planning phases. The remainder must be raised from sponsors and partnerships, in order to support the final research, fabrication, and installation phases.

**Related Components**
Additional *Carriers of Culture* components (website, publication, educational programming at exhibition venues, and underwriting of the tour) will cost approximately $300,000. These funds need to be raised entirely from sponsors and partnerships.

**Benefits of Sponsorship**
- Focused target marketing/public relations, governmental relations, and media opportunities
- Differentiate product/service from competition
- Expanded audience
- Credibility and customer support
- Increased market share/employee loyalty
- Tax-deductible eligibility as provided by law

**Sponsorship Opportunities**
Sponsorship packages range from $10,000 to $500,000.

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*Your Support is Needed!!*