

2000-2001 GRAND JURY REPORT

Edward-Dean Museum of Decorative Arts

Background

The Edward-Dean Museum of Decorative Arts (EDMDA) represents the cumulative efforts of two Los Angeles area antique dealers, Edward Eberle and Dean Stout, who established a residence and weekend retreat in the pastoral countryside of Cherry Valley, California, that would also serve as a showcase for their eclectic collection of 17th - 19th Century Asian and European furnishings and decorative arts.

Under specific terms and conditions of a Transfer Agreement executed August 28, 1964, ownership and operational responsibility for the museum, including the "... improved grounds, buildings, and museum personal property..." were transferred to the County of Riverside. All operational decisions subsequent to the transfer were made under the auspices of the County's General Administrative Office in conjunction with the County appointed Museum Board of Directors.

On July 1, 1999, operational and administrative responsibility for the museum was assigned to the Riverside County Economic Development Agency (EDA). An EDA staff member was appointed to fulfill all duties and responsibilities formerly carried out by the Museum Board and to serve as the Museum Director.

The remotely located sixteen-acre partially landscaped site includes the Edward-Dean Museum building, a storage facility, a gazebo with adjacent lawn area, a multipurpose community building with kitchen facilities, and a covered pavilion area with kitchen facilities. The gazebo, multipurpose building, and pavilion area are available for rental by the general public for special events. A gift shop is located within the museum building.

Museum docents and the Friends of the Edward-Dean Museum (Friends) are the two volunteer groups who provide the museum with operational and limited financial support. The Friends have been consistent in their loyal support by providing funding for artifact restoration, special projects, educational programs, and a steady supply of dedicated volunteer personnel to assist with various activities.

EDMDA is staffed by docents, Friends, and one paid employee who is funded through the Riverside County Office on Aging. The Edward-Dean Museum is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday through Sunday. The EDA Museum Director is on site every Friday as well as being available for special events requiring the director's presence.

Riverside County maintains and administers two trust accounts, with a combined total of just under \$100,000, on behalf of the museum: the “Ed Eberle Trust Fund” designated for the specific purpose of purchasing and restoring museum artifacts, and the “Dean W. Stout Memorial Fund” designated for (a) capital outlays for construction, (b) acquisition of personal property for the museum, (c) purposes expressly designated by the respective donor, and (d) promotion of interest in and development of the museum and its collection.

The county’s annual expenditures for EDMDA operations from 1990-1999 averaged \$312,000 yearly. During this same ten year period, the Edward-Dean Museum generated revenues from all sources that averaged approximately \$30,000 per year. Starting with Fiscal Year 1999-2000, the county established a limit on EDMDA funding and set the amount at a maximum of \$150,000 per annum.

Findings

1. The transfer of operational management of the EDMDA to the EDA appears to have been both prudent and timely. The EDA has been partially successful in its efforts to resurrect a declining county cultural asset. However, several longstanding operational deficiencies (some of which are noted below) have been noted in previous Grand Jury Reports without any substantive remedial action. These deficiencies continue to have a negative effect on the museum and jeopardize its future viability.
2. The EDA does not provide a competent and fully qualified curator for the museum. This is a direct violation of the specific terms and conditions contained in the August 28, 1964, Agreement.
3. A certified inventory of all items contained in the museum collection (those on display and those in storage) has never been completed. For several years, an inventory has allegedly been “in process.” Moreover, the authenticity and historical significance of items in the collection have never been reliably established.
4. A comprehensive appraisal of the EDMDA collection has not been accomplished. Current estimates place the value at approximately \$2.5 to \$5 million.
5. Current insurance coverage for the EDMDA collection appears to be inadequate in direct violation of the August 28, 1964, Agreement that specifically states: “The center and its contents shall be adequately insured at all times.”

6. The EDMDA collection appeals to a very small segment of the area population when compared with other museums within the county.
7. EDMDA lost its American Association of Museums (AAM) accreditation in 1997 due to non-compliance with reporting and operational requirements. Although such accreditation is not essential, it is of significant importance in procuring operational grants, special traveling exhibits, and prestige for the museum.
8. The EDA does not provide a qualified maintenance supervisor to oversee and direct the activities of grounds and building maintenance workers at the museum. Museum structures, although newly painted, show a distinct lack of consistent preventive maintenance.
9. The Facilities Master Plan 1998-2004, a report prepared by the County of Riverside Department of Building Services for the Fiscal Year 1998-1999, stated that EDMDA contains structural deficiencies requiring renovations and repairs in the amount of \$740,000.
10. The EDMDA Admission Recap Report for Fiscal year 1999-2000 states a total of 8005 museum admissions. As shown in the following table, however, the total number of actual museum admissions is more accurately stated as 3,487.

<i>INCIDENTAL ADMISSIONS*</i>	REGULAR ADMISSIONS	
<i>EVENT ATTENDEES</i>	PAID <small>(General & Group/Walk-thru)</small>	NON-PAID <small>(Schools/Special Programs)</small>
4518	1800	1687
*Represents individuals who were counted as museum "admissions" but were actually attendees at special events being held on the museum grounds.	TOTAL REGULAR ADMISSIONS = 3487	

11. The draft outline of EDMDA's Five Year Strategic Plan 2000-2005, as currently written, does not adequately address the development and promotion of new revenue-generating uses of the museum property.
12. The EDMDA Marketing Plan, although not yet fully implemented, appears to be inadequately funded at \$10,000 per year. In addition, two recent promotional brochures refer to the facility as the "Edward-Dean Museum & Gardens" rather than the "Edward-Dean museum of Decorative Arts" as specifically required by the August 28, 1964, Agreement.

Recommendations

Riverside County Board of Supervisors:

1. Instruct the EDA to expeditiously recruit a competent, qualified curator for the museum.
2. Direct the EDA to follow through with the necessary procedures to reinstate American Association of Museum accreditation for the EDMDA.
3. Instruct the EDA to complete, certify, and submit a comprehensive inventory of all artifacts in the collection without delay.
4. Direct the EDA to complete a certified appraisal of the artifacts to determine the true value of the collection.
5. Direct the EDA to provide an experienced maintenance supervisor to direct landscape and building maintenance activities.
6. Instruct the EDA to expand the draft of the EDMDA Five Year Strategic Plan Draft 2000-2005 to emphasize the revenue producing potential of the multi-purpose building, pavilion, and the adjacent areas for corporate, public, and private functions.
7. Direct County Counsel to review the August 28, 1964, Transfer Agreement and consider all available options relevant to the museum's future.