



*Exploring the Lone Star  
Military Experience*

Hill College | Texas Heritage Museum



**Strategic Plan  
2022-2025**



# Contents

<b>4</b>	<b>Introduction</b>
<b>6</b>	<b><i>Acknowledgments</i></b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Chapter One</b>
<b>8</b>	<b><i>Executive Summary</i></b>
<b>8</b>	<b><i>Yesterday's Milestones</i></b>
<b>10</b>	<b><i>Today's Milestones</i></b>
<b>12</b>	<b><i>Texas Heritage Museum Spotlight</i></b>
<b>19</b>	<b><i>Tomorrow's Milestones</i></b>
<b>20</b>	<b>Chapter Two</b>
<b>21</b>	<b><i>Strategic Plan Narrative</i></b>
<b>22</b>	<b><i>Strategic Plan Goals</i></b>





## A Letter from the President of Hill College

On behalf of the Hill College Board of Regents and administration, I am pleased to support Texas Heritage Museum's 2022-2025 Strategic Plan. This is a comprehensive, well-structured plan that allows for ease of implementation of the goals, objectives, and services afforded.

Texas Heritage Museum is an integral part of the culture of Hill College, and located in the center of our campus, emphasizes its educational mission while aligning with the college's mission, vision, and core values.

Dean Versluis serves on the administrative team at Hill College and plays an integral role to ensure that collaborations ensue to provide museum programming, services, and opportunities not only to college employees and students, but also to the communities we serve.

As president of the college, I am very proud of the work that has gone into the strategic plan, and I support the goals and objectives outlined within the document.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. Mills". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "T" and "M".

Thomas Mills, Ph.D.  
President  
Hill College



## A Letter from the Dean of Texas Heritage Museum

On behalf of our museum staff, I am pleased to introduce the Texas Heritage Museum (THM) 2022–2025 Strategic Plan. This plan outlines the mission, vision, values, strategic priorities, goals, objectives, strategies and evaluation measures that will guide THM's activities during the next four years.



The planning process for the 2022–2025 THM strategic plan included in-depth conversations with community leaders; Hill College administration, faculty, and staff; volunteers; and museum staff. In the following pages, you are invited to explore our vision for the museum's future. A dedicated team looked at the museum's challenges and opportunities and thoughtfully developed the plan.

As we created this four-year strategic plan in partnership with key stakeholders, we developed a plan to include specific goals and action steps focusing on the following five Moving Forward Goals (5MFG):

*Goal 1: Assure high quality museum collection care and exhibits*

*Goal 2: Advance archival management methods*

*Goal 3: Initiate excellent museum standards and practices*

*Goal 4: Provide a greater educational experience*

*Goal 5: Increase community engagement*

Furthermore, this strategic plan addresses Hill College's internal departmental collaborations with the college to provide more museum programming, as well as support to our faculty, staff, students, and museum members. It also addresses the museum's role as a gateway for Hill College to connect with residents in surrounding cities and towns.

Through this process, we recognize the tremendous work and growth accomplished by museum staff over the last 17 years to be ready to begin the process of applying for accreditation by the American Alliance of Museums.

I commend Sherry Davis, Director of Institutional Effectiveness at Hill College, for her dedication and insightful feedback and for making this plan possible. I present to you a plan that sets clear goals, objectives, and strategies for defining our museum's vision and for securing its future. In planning for its future, it will be an exciting time for THM at Hill College to embrace current challenges and expand upon opportunities for innovation and growth.

Sincerely,

John Versluis  
Dean of the Texas Heritage Museum

# Acknowledgments

*Special thanks to the following individuals for your commitment and invaluable contributions toward helping Texas Heritage Museum reach its full potential through this strategic plan!*

---

Dr. Pam Boehm \_\_\_\_\_ Former President of Hill College

Jessyca Brown \_\_\_\_\_ Vice President, External Affairs SACSCOC  
Liaison, Hill College

Mary Ann Schneider \_\_\_\_\_ Assistant Curator/Archivist,  
Texas Heritage Museum, Hill College

Rosa Santos \_\_\_\_\_ Receptionist/Collections Registrar,  
Texas Heritage Museum, Hill College

Deloris (Rica) Acevedo \_\_\_\_\_ Museum Collections Assistant,  
Texas Heritage Museum, Hill College

Frank Williams Jr. \_\_\_\_\_ Museum Lab and Exhibit Assistant,  
Texas Heritage Museum, Hill College

Camille Purvis \_\_\_\_\_ Volunteer, Texas Heritage Museum

Sherry Davis \_\_\_\_\_ Director of Institutional Effectiveness,  
Hill College

Ally Tello \_\_\_\_\_ Manager of Events and Community Relations,  
Hill College

Cami Steele \_\_\_\_\_ Director of Digital Communications,  
Hill College

Gabby Smith \_\_\_\_\_ Former Coordinator of Information &  
Compliance, Hill College

Dr. Joe Cheavens \_\_\_\_\_ Instructor, History, Hill College

Kathleen Miller \_\_\_\_\_ Instructor, History, Hill College

Jason Abbott \_\_\_\_\_ Instructor, Government & History,  
Hill College

Tom Sale \_\_\_\_\_ Instructor, Art, Hill College

Mary Ann Cunningham \_\_\_\_\_ Adjunct Instructor, Art, Hill College

Chris Moore \_\_\_\_\_ Main Street Manger, City of Hillsboro





# *Chapter One*





# Executive Summary

## Yesterday's Milestones

The modern Texas Heritage Museum and History Complex at Hill College had its beginning in 1963 when Colonel Harold B. Simpson arrived on campus and began to teach, publish books, and collect items related to the Civil War. In 1964, he published the first of what has come to be 49 books bearing the imprint "Hill College Press." In the same year, he donated his collection of Civil War books to form the nucleus of what the Board of Regents designated the "Confederate Research Center" in the library. The Confederate Research Center was dedicated on Sept. 25, 1964, with Texas Governor Preston Smith as principle speaker. In a speech at the dedication of the Research Center, Colonel Simpson said, "What you see here today, of course, is only the small beginning of the center, but as the old adage goes, 'large oaks from small acorns grow.'" The next year, Colonel Simpson secured a gun collection that began the "Gun Museum," which was also located in the library.

By 1975, the growing collection of books, research materials, and guns included items that belonged to World War II hero Audie Murphy. In his history of Hill College, Odie Faulk said, "The Gun Museum became a part of what the regents designated the History

Complex," which also included the Confederate Research Center and the Hill College Press. Subsequently, in 1989 just before Colonel Simpson died, the regents honored him by renaming the center the Harold B. Simpson Confederate Research Center.

The next major development in the history of what is now the Texas Heritage Museum occurred in 1996. Former Hill College President Emeritus, Dr. William Auvenshine, and Texas Lieutenant Governor Bob Bullock, a Hill College graduate, wanted to expand the museum and support operations that were beyond Hill College means by funding an academic museum, research center, and press on Texas military history that the whole state of Texas could be proud of. Still to this day, Lieutenant Governor Bullock's initiative to provide the museum with non-formula funding in state appropriations for permanent operational support allows Hill College, a rural community college, to offer courses in a first-class museum for students who might not have ever had the opportunity to tour a museum or take a college course featuring museum collections. In 1997, a special line item under Hill College appropriations by the Texas State Legislature was secured to renovate the old Hill College library building into what is currently known as the Texas Heritage Museum. Lieutenant Governor Bullock said, "The Texas Heritage Museum at Hill College being so successful was the prelude to creating the Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum in Austin."







In 2009, the Texas State Legislature designated the "Official Texas State Medal of Honor memorial to Native-Born Texans," which is located on the front grounds of the Texas Heritage Museum. This memorial honors 62 native-born Texans who received the Medal of Honor and enhances the Texas Heritage Museum's Medal of Honor collections. The museum has an extensive collection of Medal of Honor Recipient Audie Murphy's personal artifacts along with James Harris' Medal of Honor from WWII. The memorial also compliments the Historical Research Center's extensive Medal of Honor archive collection.

In 2014, Hill College administration and the museum commemorated 50 years of the museum's existence, which was one of the largest events in the college's history. Celebrating "50 Years in the Making" was a four-day celebration with music, exhibits, lectures and events honoring the Texas Heritage Museum's past. During the main event, Texas Governor Rick Perry sent a congratulatory video watched by over 200 people in attendance. The following dignitaries were present and recognized: Texas State Representative Byron Cook; Texas State Senator Brian Birdwell; Major General Kendell P. Cox, III Army Corps Deputy Commanding General-Maneuver, Fort Hood; Major General Juan G Ayala; Marine Corps installations; and Major General Yates, Texas Army National Guard.





## Today's Milestones

### Hill College and Texas Heritage Museum Missions, Visions and Core Values

#### Hill College's Mission

**“Hill College provides high quality, comprehensive educational programs and services. The college enhances the educational, cultural, and economic development of its service area and prepares individuals for a more productive life.”**

#### Texas Heritage Museum's Mission Statement

**“Texas Heritage Museum's mission is to explore Texas and Texans during wartime and how those experiences affect us today.”**

Texas Heritage Museum's mission is “To explore Texas and Texans during wartime and how those experiences affect us today.” This mission statement is divided into two parts. Part one of the mission states, “To explore Texas and Texans during wartime...,” and Texas Heritage Museum showcases Texans in war. The second part of the mission states “...how those experiences affect us today,” and the museum works to concisely capture visitor experiences and interactions with its exhibits and programs. One example are the quotes and stories museum visitors have added to our Vietnam exhibit journal located in the Vietnam War and Texans' Involvement Exhibit Gallery. Here is one entry from the journal:

*“South of the Parrots Beak, in the plain of reeds in the Mekong Delta, I captured a wounded North Vietnamese soldier. In his leather pouch, he had a picture of his mother, father and girlfriend or wife. Also, a drawing of a rocket and the moon. It was July 1969, our first landing on the moon. I thought, here we are - 2 lieutenants, he fighting for Ho Chi Minh and me fighting for LBJ, with mothers and fathers and wives with a similar interest, the moon landing. He died. I cried.” ~1st Lieutenant Larry Bulaich, Fort Worth Texas*

As this Vietnam Veteran went through this gallery, he

felt and relived his own pain. He went right back to this very moment during the Vietnam War while as he was writing his entry into the exhibit journal.

For others, it brings the war to such a different personal level. During 7th grade school tours, I usually pick one student out of the tour group to read this quote out loud to their classmates. Every time while this quote is being read, the gallery becomes really quiet. This is because today's 7th graders' grandparents, as well as their teachers' parents, were the generation who fought and gave sacrifices during the Vietnam War. The school group's thinking starts to deepen, and I hear comments such as, “my dad or grandfather died in this war,” and “how painful for our human race to be at such odds and yet also be so similar.” These experiences are real, and this is what makes visiting Texas Heritage Museum so unique.



#### Hill College's Vision

- Grow Hill College to be the “College of Choice”
- Showcase Hill College as a unique and innovative institution of teaching and learning
- Promote student success

#### Texas Heritage Museum is integrated into all elements of Hill College's Mission

Today, Hill College's fulfillment of its educational mission to be “The College of Choice;” strives to offer innovative programs and instruction in its degree and technical programs; and promotes a high level of



success in the achievements of students. The museum has amplified Hill College's vision to become "The College of Choice," by serving as a learning environment for students, community members, and general public from all over the world to enjoy. From 2015-2020, the museum hosted 52 school district tours, totaling 3,869 students who utilized the museum to learn about Texas history. The museum also has a membership of approximately 75 members annually and offers exhibit openings and programs to its members. Serving Hill College and the greater community continues to be a compelling and motivating factor as the museum moves forward in the fulfillment of its mission.

Texas Heritage Museum "showcases Hill College



as a unique and innovative institution of teaching and learning" by hosting Hill College faculty to teach courses in the museum theater. The theater, which houses a high definition system with a widescreen and seating for up to 54 individuals, is used daily for a variety of purposes that include but are not limited to: regularly scheduled Hill College academic classes; meetings of administrative officials; museum event programs; and faculty use of the lecture hall. Faculty members have indicated that their experience at the museum has permanently changed their teaching methodologies, and that partnering with the museum has caused a permanent shift in their curriculum development. Hill College currently offers many different courses that take place in the museum, including Art Appreciation, U.S.

History, and Government. From 2015-2020, 17,177 Hill College students used the museum for their courses.

All the divisions of the museum work to enrich and "promote student success" and educational experiences for Hill College and K-12 students. Currently, the Museum has three divisions: Galleries & Collection, Historical Research Center, and Hill College Press. These three divisions provide cultural and educational opportunities for individuals and groups, and space is available for multi-purpose uses by college faculty, staff, and students. Overall, the museum has matured through the years to provide resources for "student success" that embody diverse exhibits, distinctive publications, and recognizable qualities of in-depth research.

## Texas Heritage Museum Three Division Vision Statements

### Vision Statement of the Galleries and Collection Division

Texas Heritage Museum seeks and will consider additions to the permanent collection that further Texas Heritage Museum's mission and promote a greater understanding and appreciation of Texas military history and the experiences of Texans during wartime, both at the front and at home.

### Vision Statement of the Historical Research Center Division

The Historical Research Center's vision is to provide researchers of Texas and U.S. military history with access to valuable primary resources. The center's staff responds to the scholarly needs of the Hill College community and researching public by assisting and instructing users in locating relevant information. The staff strives to acquire, organize, preserve, and provide access to the archives and keeps current in technological advances of archival presentation and retrieval.

### Vision Statement of the Hill College Press Division

The current focus of the press is on historical subjects that relate to the mission of Texas Heritage Museum, namely to explore Texas and Texans during wartime and how those experiences affect us today. Specifically, the range of topics extends to all wars in which the state and its citizens have been involved, as well as to selected regional topics that have potential for enhancing understandings of the culture and history of north and central Texas in unique and important ways.

## Hill College Core Values

- Accountability
- Dedication
- Integrity
- Positivity
- Respect

## Texas Heritage Museum's commitment to the Hill College Core Values

**Accountability:** Texas Heritage Museum values the support we receive from the taxpayers of the Hill College service area and the State of Texas, as well as our donors. We uphold the highest ideals and concepts of ethical and professional practices.

**Dedication:** Texas Heritage Museum stewards a collection built by generations of donors, public and private resources that support and sustain the museum, and public trust. Our collections are the defining aspect of the museum and are at the center of everything the museum does.

**Integrity:** Texas Heritage Museum galleries and holdings are a unique experience that cannot be replicated and requires us to be honest, accurate, rigorous, rich in approach, and fearless.

**Positivity:** The staff and volunteers of Texas Heritage Museum are available to promptly and courteously assist visitors. Our facilities are clean, accessible, and properly illuminated.

**Respect:** The staff and volunteers of Texas Heritage Museum reflect respect for the rich diversity in the communities we serve, the necessary equity born of that respect, and the inclusion of and engagement with all members of those communities.



## Texas Heritage Museum Spotlight

### Galleries and Collection Division

The historical artifacts within Texas Heritage Museum's galleries and collections serve as tangible evidence of historical events, while the accompanying text provides context to Texas history. Whether the exhibits are in conjunction with classes or standing alone, students and visitors are able to learn about Texas history from touring the facilities. Texas Heritage Museum currently has five major exhibits: Texas Revolution and Republic; a Civil War gallery entitled "The Blue and Gray Gallery;" a WWII gallery entitled "Texans at War 1939-1945;" "The Vietnam War and Texans' Involvement" gallery; and a gallery displaying weapons from all wars that have affected Texas. The museum houses more than 22,000 artifacts from the 1830s to the present. On the front grounds of the museum is the "Official State of Texas Medal of Honor Memorial to Native-Born Texans," which honors the 62 native-born Texans who have received the Medal of Honor. The memorial's center features two WWII Texan Medal of Honor recipients: Audie Murphy, the most decorated soldier; and Samuel Dealey, the most decorated sailor. The memorial enhances Texas Heritage Museum's Medal of Honor collections. The memorial also complements an extensive archive collection of photographs and documents of other Texan Medal of Honor recipients in the Historical Research Center.



### Historical Research Center Division

The Historical Research Center (HRC) aspires to be widely acknowledged—by the college community, Texans, scholars world-wide, and professional peers—as one of the nation's finest Civil War collections repositories, bringing international distinction to



Hill College by advancing scholarly research and education at the college and beyond. On a daily basis, college students, school groups, and visitors are able to explore and learn about their ancestors' history. The HRC includes over 15,000 books in the special library collection and an extensive collection of over 256 file cabinet drawers containing maps, photographic collections, and microfilm files. An archival depository from every war Texas was involved in is also included and contains soldiers' letters, diaries, and unpublished manuscripts. The HRC is the only archive in the nation that contains Civil War capsule unit histories, which includes reference maps and over 30,000 other documents regarding every Confederate and Union unit's whereabouts. Original art works, art prints, and sculptures depicting the War Between the States, as well as personal items belonging to Hill College graduate Bob Bullock during his term as Lieutenant Governor of Texas, are also featured in the HRC. The HRC works closely with the Hill College Library to list all its books in the Hill College Library card catalog.



## Hill College Press Division

The Hill College Press, established in 1964, publishes works of original and interpretative history that complement both the mission of the museum and the geographical setting of central and north Texas. To date, the press has published 49 books, several of which have won literary and historical awards. The press publishes books on the following subjects: Texas and Texans in conflict and war; social, multicultural, and historical subjects of importance to north and central Texas; biographies of prominent Texans; and anthologies and documentary collections from the HRC. It also provides support to exhibits and programming development

through tracts and/or pamphlets.

## Recent Facility Improvements

Since 2014, there have been several facility improvements in the museum's 15,164 square-foot building.

The total replacement of the museum roof was approved by the Hill College Board of Regents in September 2015 and completed in October 2015.

The Hill College Press and the HRC HVAC systems were worked on to make sure all drainage and pans were working properly. A water sensor has been installed in the Hill College Press area to alert staff if the overflow drain clogs up and seeps into the offices. Since the upgrades, no problems have occurred. When the roof was replaced in 2015, all other HVAC systems on the roof were inspected and all drains were at the correct elevation.

In 2015, collection storage and the curatorial lab were integrated. During phase one, retractable shelving was installed in the collections storage room, and new counters and cabinets were installed in both collections storage room and the curatorial lab. During phase two, new track lighting was added to both the collections storage room and the curatorial lab. In 2016, phase three began, and a new steel doorway was added through the brick wall to connect the collections storage room to the curatorial lab. The curatorial lab also received new vinyl flooring and fresh wall paint. This allowed a more professional layout to accession collections and preservation of artifacts.

In February 2016, Texas Heritage Museum replaced all fluorescent lights with more energy-efficient fluorescent lights. Ultraviolet ray shields were installed on all fluorescent light bulbs throughout the entire museum. All track lighting bulbs and display lights were replaced with LEDs which gives the museum a much crisper look. All LED lights are within the recommendation limits of best standards and practices in museum gallery lighting.

In past years, the museum curatorial lab and collection storage room would collect water seeping through the brick walls. The water was coming from the Performing Arts Center parking lot and pooling behind the museum. A new Dutch drainage system was installed in the spring of 2016. This new system is working very well and pooling of water is no longer occurring.

In the summer of 2016, the museum renovated the



temporary gallery, WWII gallery, and kitchen area with laminate wood flooring to allow more of a reception-style atmosphere.

In the winter of 2016, the “Official State of Texas Medal of Honor Memorial to Native-Born Texans” flagpoles were damaged in a straight-line wind storm and were replaced.

In January 2017, a new 14-ton air conditioner that cools the museum’s administration offices, kitchen area, temporary gallery, and part of the World War II gallery was replaced.

In the summer of 2018, all carpets were replaced in the galleries and museum theater with carpet squares. This allows the carpet to be easily replaced if there is any damage to one area.

In the summer of 2020, the museum lobby pillars were caulked and repainted a dark brown. This gives the museum’s lobby entrance a richer look and highlights the architecture styles.

In the summer of 2020, the “Official State of Texas Medal of Honor Memorial to Native-Born Texans” electrical components including all wiring, boxes, and fixtures (except for the front triangle fixtures) were replaced.

In the spring of 2021, the faculty who teach courses in the museum theater asked if we could look into seating and lap desks that could be more easily cleaned and disinfected for their students to help prevent the spread

of infections such as COVID-19. The museum applied and received Hill College Cares Act funds to replace the museum theater seating with materials that are more easily disinfected between classes. The theater seating installation was completed in August 2021.

In the summer of 2021, the museum removed fixtures and shelving from the old Hill College bookstore and installed them in the museum gift shop, museum theater, and HRC to house rare books and other archive collections.

From October 2021 to January 2022, the museum had five HVAC systems replaced on the museum roof, and the two units in the Civil War gallery were converted to natural gas. The last HVAC unit was replaced in the HRC reading room’s ceiling.

## Technology Upgrades

Several technology improvements in the museum have occurred since 2014. Each year, IT upgrades are made to computers, scanners, printers, and copiers.

In the spring of 2014, the museum added its own dedicated computer server to host all museum files including PastPerfect software. In 2020, the museum’s computer server was upgraded to hold more memory.

In the summer of 2014, the museum theater was upgraded with new high-definition components to enhance faculty teaching. Lobby speakers were also installed and integrated into the museum theater system to play music.



In 2018 and 2019, the museum's security system was upgraded. New dome, high- definition cameras were installed around the outside perimeter of the museum and in the museum lobby. The DVRs were also upgraded to handle HD components.

In 2019, the HRC's microfilm readers were upgraded to a "ST Imaging ViewScan II" microfilm reader scanner.

In the summer of 2021, to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, the research center installed monitors at two of the visitor desks, which allowed staff to be able to safely socially distance from visitors while assisting them with their research needs.

## **Marketing Plan**

In the summer of 2020, Jessyca Brown, Hill College's Vice President of External Affairs and SACSCOC Liaison, submitted an RFP for a marketing plan for Hill College and the Texas Heritage Museum. Hill College selected World Design Marketing (WDM) to create a new marketing plan for Hill College and the museum. In October 2020, the marketing plan was presented, which identified the museum's target audience, as well as museum branding recommendations using paid and unpaid media. John Versluis, Dean of the museum, works closely with Vice President Brown on initiating the marketing plan recommendations.

## **Museum Staff Professional Development and Leadership**

The Texas Heritage Museum strives to be a model of excellence for professional development and leadership, primarily led by the museum's Dean, John Versluis. The museum staff participates in Hill College workshops, All Staff Day, annual online workforce best practices training and certification, and technology security and college policies training, as well as serves on various Hill College committees. This keeps the Texas Heritage Museum from being an island and allows museum staff to consistently engage with Hill College and the communities we serve.

## **Hill College Committees**

Currently, John Versluis, the museum's Dean, serves as co-chair of the Hill College Institutional Effectiveness Committee/SACS Compliance Certification Team. Versluis has been a member of this committee from 2009-2014 and 2017-2021. From 2012-2015, he also served as the committee manager of the Hill College Strategic Initiative, Accountability, Strategic Component: Efficiency in Administrative Processes. Lastly, from

2014-2017, Versluis served as chair of the Hill College Executive Council for the entire Hill College district. This was a 28-member committee to which nine other committees reported to.

Rosa Santos, Receptionist and Collection Registrar, was appointed to the Hill College Think Tank Group from 2014-2015.

Mary Ann Schneider, Assistant Curator/Archivist, was appointed to the Hill College Student Engagement Committee from 2015-2016.

Deloris Rica Acevedo, Collections Assistant, was appointed to the Hill College Strategic Plan Committee from 2020-2021.

## **Hill College Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**

John Versluis served as a member of the Hill College Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Taskforce (DEI) from spring 2020 through summer 2021. In the summer of 2021, the taskforce recommendations were approved by the President's Council, and a new college DEI committee was formed. Currently, the entire museum staff is certified in a voluntary course entitled "Implicit Bias and Micro Aggression Awareness." The museum staff will continue to participate in DEI training and initiatives offered by Hill College.

## **Local/State Contributions**

John Versluis is the co-founder (2010) and board chair of Leadership Greater Hillsboro, Inc., which is a non-profit foundation for Hillsboro community members designed to develop community leaders for today and tomorrow. The curriculum is designed to educate participants on a wide array of critical issues affecting Hillsboro and to help them develop the leadership skills necessary to be successful in professional and civic life.

The museum's Receptionist and Collection Registrar, Rosa Santos, was a graduate of Leadership Greater Hillsboro, Class Two, 2011-2012.

From 2015-2020, Versluis served on the Hillsboro ISD Education Foundation 501(c)3 Board of Directors, including as board president from 2019-2020. This non-profit foundation partners with the community to provide resources that enrich teaching, inspire learning, and maximize innovative opportunities for all students in Hillsboro ISD.

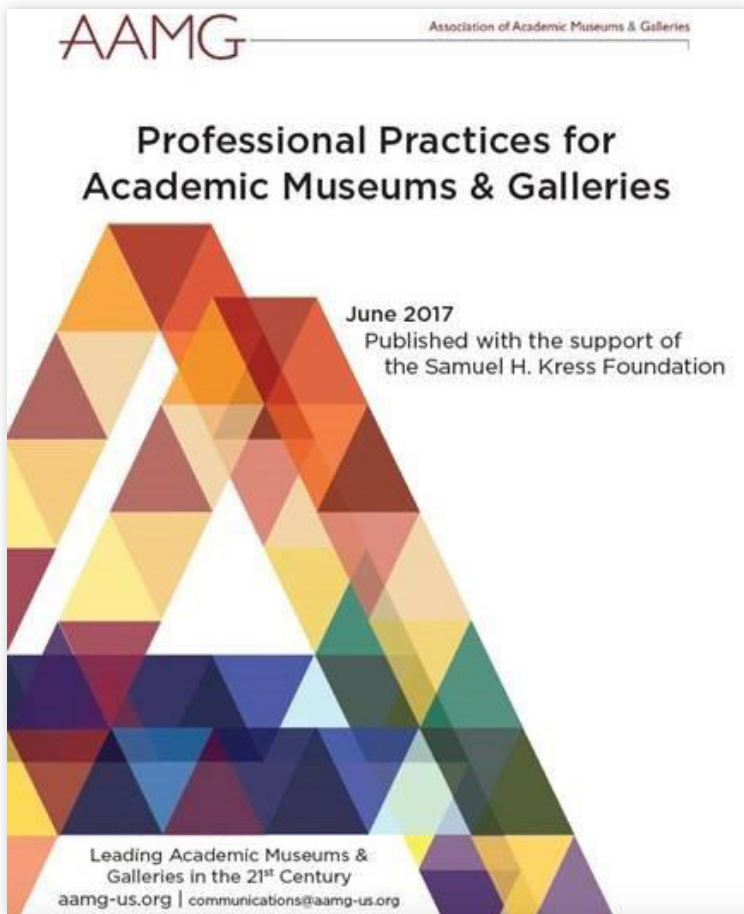
From 2007-2017, Versluis served as an elected City

Councilmember for District 5 in Hillsboro and as Mayor Pro-Tem from 2009-2011. The City of Hillsboro was founded in 1853 and incorporated in 1881. It is a Home Rule City and the County Seat of Hill County, with a population of approximately 9,000 inhabitants located between Waco and Dallas/Fort Worth. The City Council is comprised of a mayor and six councilmembers.

## National Contributions

In 2017, John Versluis, the museum's Dean, was elected to serve as the national president of the Association of Academic Museums and Galleries (AAMG) during the annual conference held at the University of Oregon. Versluis is the first history museum director (non-art

700 attendees. Versluis' leadership also contributed to significant membership growth within the organization, increasing by 234 institutional memberships during his term. He worked with the board to assess and update membership rates and benefits and targeted new membership audiences. As a result of these efforts, AAMG also experienced financial growth, and the all-volunteer board saw this as an opportunity to hire an administrative firm to manage AAMG's operations. Versluis oversaw the hiring of the firm and was then able to re-evaluate roles and responsibilities within the organization. Additionally, with Samuel H. Kress Foundation grant funds, Versluis aided in reprinting and distributing the AAMG Professional Practices for Academic Museums & Galleries manual to members and their supervisors. Versluis assisted Jill Hartz and the board in the development of the manual the year before, which is crucial to training future generations of museum professionals by providing best practices and standards specific to academic museums and galleries. Versluis now serves as the AAMG Immediate Past President. His leadership has helped professionalize Texas Heritage Museum to serve at the national level and brings national awareness to Hill College and Texas Heritage Museum and all it has to offer.



museum director) to become president of AAMG, which is a voluntary position with a three-year term. During his term as AAMG president, Versluis was instrumental in solidifying a sustainable, standalone annual conference (established the year before under Jill Hartz's presidency) that was no longer held in conjunction with the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) annual conference in May. Versluis also successfully coordinated AAMG's first-ever virtual conference after the pandemic hit in March 2020. Within 90 days, Versluis and the AAMG conference committee turned the originally planned four-day conference at the University of Kansas into a 10-day virtual event on Zoom, which ended up hosting more than



In June 2021, most of the museum staff attended the AAMG virtual national conference. The staff was engaged and participated online in many breakout sessions.

## Financial Stability

### State of Texas Funding

The primary funding for Texas Heritage Museum derives from a line item in the Texas state budget



that forms part of Hill College's general budget. That funding has been allocated on a biannual request for appropriations basis to the Texas State Legislature. The line item appropriation dates back to 1996 when the new museum complex was renovated. Prior to that, funding for the museum came from directed state funds from the Hill College Library and history department, as well as private donations and grants. Spending is controlled through the college's purchase order system. Those purchase orders involving the museum require the Dean's approval, as well as that of the college president, before going to the college's business office for processing. The museum finances are part of the annual Hill College audit.

### **Hill College Fiscal Budgeting**

The museum's budgeting process is effectively linked to the goals and planning of the museum and Hill College. The fiscal year for each runs from September 1 through August 31. Museum staff discussions regarding budget issues begin each March, and a proposed museum budget is presented to the Hill College budget committee. Each line item in the budget request must be keyed to the appropriate section of Hill College's strategic plan. Once approved by the budget committee, the request is passed on to the Hill College Board of Regents for approval every August.

### **Texas Heritage Museum Membership & Memorial Brick Fundraiser**

Currently, Texas Heritage Museum is part of the "We Believe Campaign," where Hill College employees can become a member of the museum through payroll deduction. The second campaign is our "Friends of the Museum" community membership drive with annual renewals in January. The museum membership fluctuates, but each year we average about 70 members. Members receive a newsletter twice a year, invitations to exhibit and gallery openings, and a discount in the museum gift shop. Members also receive a discount if they want to purchase a memorial brick to be placed in the "Official State of Texas Medal of Honor Memorial to Native-Born Texans" walkway. The memorial bricks are a good fundraiser for the museum to support the upkeep of the memorial.

### **Texas Heritage Museum Gift Shop Sales and Donations**

The Receptionist and Collections Registrar manages the gift shop. Updates about the previous week's sales are given during our weekly staff meetings. An annual gift shop sale is conducted in December and January.

The Hill College Press' most recent book titles are available for purchase through Amazon or directly from the museum gift shop.

The Texas Heritage Museum does not charge admission for visitors to view the galleries or for research requests conducted in person in the HRC. Only donations are solicited for both the museum galleries and HRC, which makes gift shop sales profitable. Over the past 10 years, the gift shop has more than tripled in size.

In the summer of 2021, museum staff partnered with Hill College administration to offer apparel and merchandise in the museum's gift shop since Hill College's new bookstore vendor shifted to online sales only. This has worked out well since the museum is centrally located on Hill College's main campus.



### **Texas Heritage Museum Pathway towards American Alliance Museums Accreditation**

Since 2005, Texas Heritage Museum has been professionally preparing all aspects of the museum's operations to qualify to apply for American Alliance Museums (AAM) accreditation. This process can take 10 to 20 years, depending on the size of the museum's collections and staff. The museum strives to be a model of excellence in standards and practices. Currently, the museum follows Continuum of Excellence, a pathway of standards-based programs from AAM and other organizations that nurtures a culture of excellence. It supports, motivates, and recognizes a museum's ongoing commitment to professionalism, standards, and best practices.

### **AAM Membership**

Texas Heritage Museum became an AAM institutional

member in 2005 to begin the long process of professionalizing the museum.

### The Museum Assessment Program (MAP)

Texas Heritage Museum went through two different AAM Museum Assessment Programs, both which required self-assessment, institutional activities, and consultative peer review. The museum emerged with an analysis of its strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities, as well as a roadmap for improving operations and meeting standards.

#### MAP 1: Organizational

The museum completed all of MAP1 – Institutional Assessment recommendations, 2007-2009.

#### MAP 2: Collections Stewardship

The museum completed all of MAP2 – Collections Management Assessment recommendations, 2009-2012.

### Pledge of Excellence

In May 2013, Texas Heritage Museum took the AAM Pledge of Excellence to fulfill the museum's educational mission and to strive to operate according to core standards to the best of its abilities and in accordance with its resources.

### Core Documents Verification Program

In February 2017, Texas Heritage Museum received notification that it successfully completed the Core Documents Verification Program, a key milestone in the Continuum of Excellence and a prerequisite to apply for AAM accreditation. As part of the verification program, the museum was required to revise five core documents related to the operation of the museum including a long-range strategic plan, a mission statement, a collections-management policy, a code of ethics policy, and a disaster-preparedness/emergency response plan. This reassures the community that the museum has in place the policies and plans essential to museum management and provides the staff and governing authority the structure necessary for ethical grounding and accountability needed to make informed, consistent decisions in support of the museum's mission and sustainability.

### Application for Accreditation

Texas Heritage Museum will be ready to submit the AAM accreditation application and go through the formal process to become accredited over the next few years as illustrated in this strategic plan. Becoming accredited will confirm national recognition of Texas Heritage Museum's commitment to excellence and the highest professional standards of museum operation and public service.







### **Tomorrow's Milestones**

Texas Heritage Museum has already earned a national reputation as an important place to research Civil War history and historical aspects of other wars in which Texas has been involved. Therefore, the museum's potential for continued progress and enhancement of educational, research, and public programming goals at Hill College are dependent on building on the successes of the past while daring to envision even greater potential for the future. The 2022-2025 Strategic Plan is the roadmap for achieving various milestones including AAM Accreditation; enhancing and strengthening Hill College's mission and vision through increased research, teaching, educational programming, and exhibits; and celebrating the 100-year anniversary of Hill College.

# Audie Murphy

Most Highly Decorated American Soldier  
During World War II



Audie Murphy in uniform, standing in front of a large animal, possibly a bear or a dog.



Audie Murphy in uniform, standing next to another soldier.



Audie Murphy in uniform, wearing a helmet.

While in Europe, Murphy  
saw in eight campaigns in Sicily,  
in France, and Germany. Back in  
United States, he was  
charged at Fort Sill, Oklahoma,  
Tex., on August 17, 1945.

On January 24, 1945, Murphy was  
wounded in an action for which he  
received the Medal of Honor. On  
the occasion he was only killed  
about 10 German soldiers, but he  
also escaped an attack by enemy  
battles the last received military  
awards from the French and  
Belgian governments.



## Chapter Two



# Texas Heritage Museum Strategic Plan

## Narrative

From May through October 2021, the Hill College Institute Effectiveness Department facilitated an extended dialogues with museum staff, Hill College administration, faculty, staff, student museum volunteers, and community members for a compression planning session to chart the museum's future. This communal, extended dialogue was enjoyable, exhausting, challenging, and informative. The museum staff and faculty pondered priorities together, shared their experiences and their hopes to continue to cultivate the museum that they love so much. Community leaders expressed admiration for the museum's success and hope that the museum might be able to partner with more local and regional organizations.

Furthermore, the Institute Effectiveness Department and museum staff analyzed over 10 years of museum data including visitation reports, exhibit surveys, visitor exhibit journals entries, annual mission statement reviews, prior strategic plans, articles written on the museum, prior MAP reviews, annual administration unit goals reviews, and exhibit tour reviews. The museum's 2007-2012 and 2015-2020 strategic plans were reviewed and analyzed to determine achievements.

Moving from broad brainstorming in group sessions to more refined ideas and a crisp focus, the final editing of the strategic plan was undertaken by the Hill College Office of Institutional Effectiveness Director and the Dean of the Texas Heritage Museum with input from the entire museum staff who had the challenge of honoring the stakeholders' input while prioritizing and refining ideas. This strategic plan supports Hill College's areas of distinction including its mission, vision, core values, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools standards, and a set of specific action items for AAM accreditation.



The five moving forward strategic goals (5MFG) will serve both as a catalyst for the museum's broad planning and as a guide for developing unit-specific plans. 5MFG will drive the strategic direction for the Texas Heritage Museum over the next four years.

**Goal 1: Assure high quality museum collection care and exhibits**

**Goal 2: Advance archival management methods**

**Goal 3: Initiate excellent museum standards and practices**

**Goal 4: Provide a greater educational experience**

**Goal 5: Increase community engagement**



**Texas Heritage Museum**  
***2022-2025 Strategic Plan Goals***



# Goal One

## Museum & Collections

### Goal 1: Assure high quality museum collection care and exhibits

**1.1 To 100% process the accessioning backlog and process new donations within 90 days.**

**1.1.a.** Texas Heritage Museum collection records before September 2005 are incomplete or do not exist. All artifacts the museum received prior to September 2005 are being accessioned to the best knowledge of the museum staff through reconstruction of existing records or notes. A backlog of records and accession ledgers are being re-created and collections are being processed accordingly. There are approximately 500 artifacts to be processed from the backlog, which is 4% of the permanent collections accessioning.

Responsible Person	Deadline	Resources	Expected Results
Assistant Curator/Archivist Receptionist/Collections Registrar Museum Lab and Exhibit Assistant Dean of the THM	3/1/2023	Staff time Archival boxes and supplies	Starting in January 2022, process three artifacts a week by three staff members, equaling 36 artifacts a month. Museum's Dean will help supervise.

**1.1.b.** Texas Heritage Museum will go through the Texas museums abandonment property process on all Found in Collections (F.I.C.) artifacts in the permanent and educational collections so the museum will become the legal owner of the F.I.C. artifacts in question.

Responsible Person	Deadline	Resources	Expected Results
Dean of the THM Hill College Attorneys	6/1/2023	Staff time Attorney fees	To obtain a clear title to the collections in question.

**1.1.c.** The Texas Heritage Museum Deed of Gifts will be scanned electronically and stored on the museum server in the IT building.

Responsible Person	Deadline	Resources	Expected Results
Assistant Curator/Archivist Museum Collections Assistant	6/1/2022	Staff time Office supplies	To have 100% of all THM and HRC deed of gifts scanned.

**1.2 To complete exhibit planning for each new year by August annually.**

**1.2.a.** The museum exhibit schedule for the main galleries and temporary gallery will be planned annually.

Responsible Person	Deadline	Resources	Expected Results
Assistant Curator/Archivist Museum Lab and Exhibit Assistant Dean of the THM Facility Members	8/1/2022	Staff time Exhibit budget Exhibit opening budget	By August 1, 2022, an exhibit plan for will be finalized.

**1.2.b.** The museum exhibit schedule for the spring/summer 2022 will be planned by end of January 2022.

Responsible Person	Deadline	Resources	Expected Results
Assistant Curator/Archivist Museum Lab and Exhibit Assistant Dean of the THM Facility Members	1/30/2022	Staff time Exhibit budget Exhibit opening budget	By January 30, 2022, an exhibit plan for spring/summer 2022 will be finalized.





# Goal Two

## Historical Research Center

### Goal 2: Advance archival management methods

#### 2.1 To process 60% of the backlog and reorganize the research collections by August 2025.

**2.1.a.** The Historical Research Center collection records before September 2005 are incomplete or do not exist. All artifacts the museum received prior to September 2005 are being accessioned to the best knowledge of the museum staff through reconstruction of existing records or notes. A backlog of records and accession ledgers are being re-created and collections are being processed accordingly. There are approximately 7,000 F.I.C. special collections books to be processed from the backlog, which is 50% of the special collections books to be accessioned.

Responsible Person	Deadline	Resources	Expected Results
Museum Collections Assistant	5/1/2025	Staff time Archival supplies	60% F.I.C. accessioned by processing 250 F.I.C. books quarterly through 2025.

#### 2.1.b. Reorganize, update, and create new finding aids for the HRC vertical files.

Responsible Person	Deadline	Resources	Expected Results
Assistant Curator/Archivist Museum Collections Assistant Dean of the THM	7/1/2023	Staff time Archival supplies	In February 2022, we will start to reorganize the files, which will take a few months, and then we will create new finding aids for each file cabinet drawer. One file cabinet per week will take 14 months.

#### 2.2 To meet HRC funding goal by August 2025.

**2.2.a.** Write grants to obtain movable shelving in the HRC to increase book space by 60%.

Responsible Person	Deadline	Resources	Expected Results
Dean of the THM	5/1/2025	Grant writing Raise \$120,000	Obtain funding for new shelving.





# Goal Three

## AAM Accreditation

### Goal 3: Initiate excellent museum standards and practices

#### 3.1 To complete the AAM Application process by June 1, 2022.

- 3.1.a.** Update and revise the AAM Core Documents and the following museum policies: Mission Statement, Institutional Code of Ethics, Strategic Institutional Plan, Disaster Preparedness/Emergency Response Plan, Collections Management Policies, Exhibit Schedule Plan, Collecting Plans, Housekeeping/Maintenance Plan.

Responsible Person	Deadline	Resources	Expected Results
Dean of the THM Assistant Curator/ Archivist	2/1/2022	The Dean of the Texas Heritage Museum will meet with the museum staff. The Assistant Curator/Archivist Will help edit and review the policies.	Signed off approval from Dean of the Texas Heritage Museum the President of Hill College.

- 3.1.b.** Fill out the AAM Application to apply for accreditation.

Responsible Person	Deadline	Resources	Expected Results
Dean of the THM Assistant Curator/ Archivist	6/1/2022	The Dean of the THM will work closely with the staff and the President of Hill College to have the museum ready to submit the AAM Accreditation Application.	AAM's decision on approval of the application with prior approval of the 5 core documents.



**3.2 To complete the self-study process by January 15, 2023.**

- 3.2.a.** Start the AAM Accreditation Self-Study and form a task force for the Texas Heritage Museum in July 2022.

Responsible Person	Deadline	Resources	Expected Results
The Dean of the THM will work closely with the staff and other college employees to form a task force to start the AAM Self-Study.	1/15/2023	Staff time	To have the task force meet and complete the AAM Self-Study by January 15, 2023.

**3.3 To complete the site visit process by November 2023.**

- 3.3.a.** The Dean of the Texas Heritage Museum will work closely with the staff and the President of Hill College to plan the AAM Accreditation site visit.

Responsible Person	Deadline	Resources	Expected Results
Dean of the THM  Assistant Curator/ Archivist	8/30/2023	Staff time  Budget to fund two day visit	To have a successful site visit and have the site reviewers submit the report to the AAM Commission.

- 3.3.b.** AAM Accreditation Commission will review Texas Heritage Museum's accreditation application and recommendations.

Responsible Person	Deadline	Resources	Expected Results
AAM Staff and Commission	10/1/2023	AAM Application budgeted fees	Texas Heritage Museum receives accreditation through AAM.





# Goal Four

## Museum Experience

### Goal 4: Provide a greater educational experience

#### 4.1 To increase faculty participation by 5%.

4.1.a. Develop an email/flyer to send to all faculty to encourage interest and collaboration with the museum.

Responsible Person	Deadline	Resources	Expected Results
Dean of the THM	8/1/2022	Staff time	Interest from faculty members to collaborate with the museum.

4.1.b. Encourage all faculty to consider collaborating with the Museum (ex: have a presentation during Hill College All Staff Day, present during the Hill College Faculty Poker Run).

Responsible Person	Deadline	Resources	Expected Results
Dean of the THM	8/1/2022	Staff time	Interest from faculty members to collaborate with the museum.

#### 4.2 To increase participation in programming by 5%.

4.2.a. Meet with the Hill College recruiter to discuss ISD and individual tours.

Responsible Person	Deadline	Resources	Expected Results
Dean of the THM	3/31/2022	Staff time	Educate new recruiter on museum programs and needs for tours.

**4.2.b.** Discuss new program ideas with staff and administration to narrow down ideas and priorities.

Responsible Person	Deadline	Resources	Expected Results
Dean of the THM Receptionist/ Collections Registrar	12/1/2022	Staff time	Prioritized plans for future programming.

**4.2.c.** Develop a plan/outline for future museum programs (consider targeting different groups, main exhibits, temporary exhibits, etc.).

Responsible Person	Deadline	Resources	Expected Results
Dean of the THM Receptionist/ Collections Registrar	12/1/2023	Staff time	Plans for museum programs that target ISDs, adults, and other groups.

**4.2.d.** Research and create a new job description for a museum educator.

Responsible Person	Deadline	Resources	Expected Results
Dean of the THM	9/1/2022	Staff time	Add to LAR Request for 2023/2024.





**4.3 To complete facility and grounds projects by August 2023.**

**4.3.a.** Assess the outside grounds and exterior museum building.

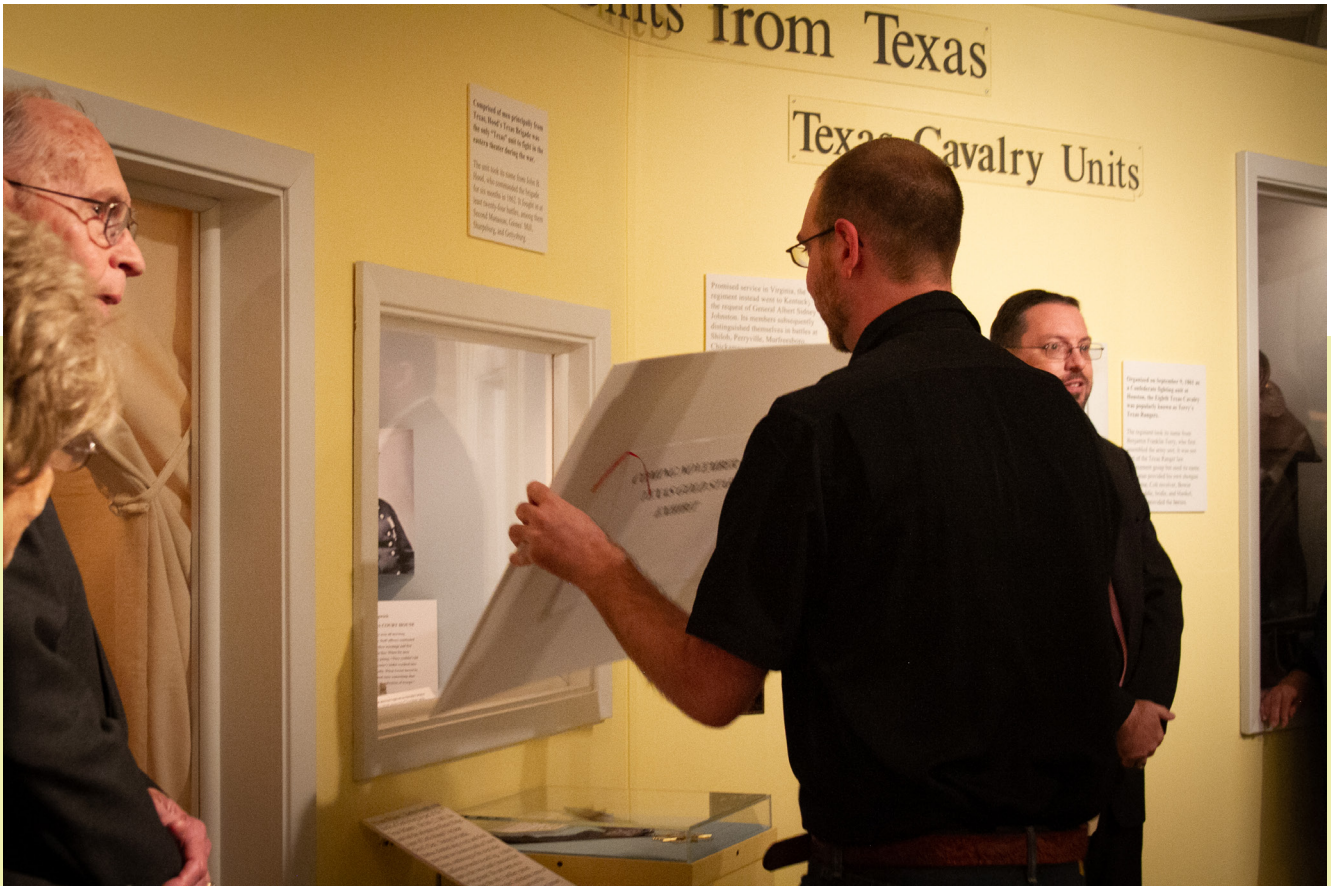
Responsible Person	Deadline	Resources	Expected Results
Dean of the THM Museum Lab and Exhibit Assistant	3/15/2022	Staff time	List of things to address with Director Physical Plant and VP of Administrative Services.

**4.3.b.** Meet to develop a plan to improve the outside and exterior of the museum building.

Responsible Person	Deadline	Resources	Expected Results
Dean of the THM Museum Lab and Exhibit Assistant Director Physical Plant VP of Administrative Services	3/30/2022	Staff time	Plan with Director Physical Plant and VP of Administrative Services with timeline tied to budget planning for 2022/2023 fiscal year.

**4.3.c.** On a monthly basis, the PEM 2 monitoring systems will be downloaded into the integrated software system. This information will be used to monitor the relative humidity and temperature in the museum. Six new air/heating units were installed in December 2021. Will need to monitor the museum and make adjustments with new systems once all are online.

Responsible Person	Deadline	Resources	Expected Results
Museum Lab and Exhibit Assistant Receptionist/ Collections Registrar	9/1/2022	Staff time PEM Software renewal	To be able to maintain a proper temperature/humidity within the museum based on best practices and guidelines.





# Goal Five

## Community Outreach

### Goal 5: Increase community engagement

#### 5.1 To increase total visitation to the museum by 3%.

- 5.1.a. Review existing marketing plan and begin discussions with President about switching to e-newsletter.

Responsible Person	Deadline	Resources	Expected Results
Dean of the THM	10/1/2022	Staff time	Plan to phase out paper newsletters and switch to a digital platform.

- 5.1.b. Meet with Hill College Dual Credit Director to discuss sending museum marketing material to ISDs.

Responsible Person	Deadline	Resources	Expected Results
Dean of the THM Director of Dual Credit	7/1/2022	Staff time	Marketing material sent to service area ISDs.

#### 5.2 To construct and execute a plan to encourage professional connections and collaborations for the museum and staff by August 2025.

- 5.2.a. Plan an event to encourage local businesses to visit the museum and improve relationships and/or business memberships.

Responsible Person	Deadline	Resources	Expected Results
Texas Heritage Museum staff	10/1/2022	Staff time	Plans to collaborate with local businesses / organizations.

- 5.2.b. The museum will be an active supporter of the Hill College Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) Living Action Plan administered by a Hill College DE&I Committee.

Responsible Person	Deadline	Resources	Expected Results
Texas Heritage Museum staff	3/1/2022	Staff time	The museum will be an active participant in all DE&I Hill College initiatives.

**5.2.c.** Incorporate the Hill College strategic plan, mission, and core values into the museum operations and budget process.

Responsible Person	Deadline	Resources	Expected Results
Texas Heritage Museum staff	8/1/2022	Staff time	To illustrate how the museum is incorporated with Hill College.

**5.2.d.** Museum staff will be active members on Hill College committees.

Responsible Person	Deadline	Resources	Expected Results
Texas Heritage Museum staff	8/1/2022	Staff time	To illustrate how the museum is incorporated with Hill College.

**5.2.e.** Dean of THM will be an active partner within local, regional, and state organizations through engagement, local and regional tourism, civic organizations, and non-profits.

Responsible Person	Deadline	Resources	Expected Results
Dean of the THM	8/1/2022	Staff time	To illustrate how the Dean of THM is partnering with local, regional, and state organizations.

**5.2.f.** The Dean of THM will be an active member at the national level with museum professional organizations.

Responsible Person	Deadline	Resources	Expected Results
Dean of the THM	8/1/2022	Staff time	To illustrate how the Dean of THM is partnering with national museum organizations.

**5.2.g.** Outline museum staff development with partners.

Responsible Person	Deadline	Resources	Expected Results
Texas Heritage Museum staff	5/1/2022	Staff time	List of activities to increase staff development.



**5.3 To design and execute a plan to educate legislative partners on the museum's mission and impacts to student learning by August 2025.**

**5.3.a.** Meet with President to discuss best way to meet with Texas State Legislators (ex: invite legislators to a tour of the museum, host a legislative day at Hill College).

Responsible Person	Deadline	Resources	Expected Results
Dean of the THM President of Hill College	6/1/2022	Staff time	A plan to meet with legislators.

**5.3.b .** Submit a request to the Texas State House of Representatives and the Texas State Senate for Texas Heritage Museum state appropriations budget cuts to be restored and an increase in funding for a new FTP for a museum educator and equipment.

Responsible Person	Deadline	Resources	Expected Results
Dean of the THM VP of Administrative Services President of Hill College	9/1/2022	Staff time	Submission of LAR and education of state legislators.

**5.4 To increase attendance of museum events by 10%.**

**5.4.a.** The THM dean will plan events that can be executed with current museum staff capabilities.

Responsible Person	Deadline	Resources	Expected Results
Texas Heritage Museum staff	12/1/2022	Staff time	A list of future events to host/cohost.

**5.4.b.** Texas Heritage Museum staff will collaborate with Hill College to celebrate the college's 100-year anniversary.

Responsible Person	Deadline	Resources	Expected Results
Dean of the THM Hill College 100th Celebration Year Task Force	6/1/2022	Staff time	General knowledge of what Hill College plans are for the celebration and how the museum collaborates.

