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PRESIDENT & CEO

ORGANIZATION

The \$45 million Mississippi Arts and Entertainment Experience (MAEEX) will be a world-class facility highlighting Mississippi artists and celebrating the contributions of arts and entertainment entrepreneurs in every artistic discipline. Slated to open in late 2017/early 2018 during Mississippi's bicentennial celebration in the heart of downtown Meridian, the MAEEX will be a statewide asset with a mission to recognize and honor legendary artists through hands-on exhibits that visually, auditorily, and kinesthetically educate, inform, and entertain every visitor.

The MAEEX will be housed in an iconic, two-level structure consisting of over 58,000 square feet with 22,000 square feet devoted to visitor experiences. It is being planned and designed by local architect LPK with exhibits by nationally recognized Gallagher & Associates. The unique and informative exhibit design planned for the facility will educate and inspire visitors, having a tremendous impact on Mississippi's economy. Exhibits are organized around five themes — the land, the home, the community, the church, and the people. Audio and video stories are planned to tell who, what, where, when, why, and how Mississippians have influenced the arts and the creative economy all over the world. The MAEEX is expected to draw over 150,000 people annually and it will encourage visitors to enhance their Mississippi experience and rich cultural history by exploring other new and existing museums, historic homes, and cultural activities throughout the state.

A Hollywood-style Walk of Fame, unveiled in 2009, will make its way from the nearby Mississippi State University Riley Center to the MAEEX site. New Walk of Fame stars will accompany the earlier state legends, including Elvis Presley, Jimmie Rodgers, B.B. King, William Faulkner, Morgan Freeman, Walter Anderson, Hartley Peavey, and others. Other elements will include a Mississippi Arts and Entertainment Hall of Fame, gift shop, broadcast studio, art studio, multi-purpose room, outdoor stage, and courtyard that can be used by schools, civic clubs, churches, and individuals for special programs and events.

COMMUNITY

The MAEEX is being constructed on one of the most prominent sites in downtown Meridian, the first city in Mississippi with a Designated Entertainment District. The city boasts several architecturally significant historic buildings, including the 1890 Grand Opera House, now fully restored and a part of the MSU Riley Center; the Threefoot Building, an art deco masterpiece that became Meridian's tallest skyscraper; and Meridian's Carnegie Library, which now houses the Museum of Art. The Meridian Little Theater and the Dentzel Carousel, which dates from 1896, are other mainstays in the city. The city also has nine recognized historic districts and neighborhoods, including the largest collection of historic buildings in a downtown district in the state.

Meridian is known as "The Strategic Center of the South" and boasts a significant military presence which includes Naval Air Station Meridian and Key Field. Manufacturing, including Peavey Electronics, and health care are also major contributors to the local economy. A dynamic multi-cultural community with a population just over forty thousand, Meridian has a broad reach to larger populations in Jackson,

Birmingham, New Orleans, and Memphis. The community also offers a relatively low cost of living with the median home price in Meridian at \$85,300.

A Mississippi State University (MSU) campus and the Meridian Community College add to the vibrancy of the city and workforce development. The MSU Riley Center, a strategic partner with the MAEEX, opened its doors in September 2006 to offer cultural, artistic, and educational experiences like no other in the region. The multifaceted center attracts more than 60,000 visitors to downtown Meridian annually for conferences, meetings, and performances. The center includes the fully restored grand opera house theater that seats approximately 950, a 200-seat studio theater, and 30,000 square feet of meeting space, including a large exhibit hall, breakout rooms, and boardrooms, all equipped with teleconferencing capabilities and built-in technical features to create the optimal meeting environment.

POSITION SUMMARY

Reporting to the board of directors, the President & CEO will oversee the development of a strategic plan for the MAEEX and will be the primary MAEEX spokesperson throughout the state to build and foster key partnerships with other cultural organizations, attractions, civic entities, educational institutions, and government agencies. This individual will also work closely with the board to execute the vision, cultivate new statewide board development opportunities, culminate significant fundraising efforts, and garner community support for the MAEEX. Responsible for overseeing the completion of construction with the architectural and exhibit planning team through the grand opening and beyond, the President & CEO will identify, recruit, and manage the MAEEX team as a true leader and mentor to professional staff and volunteers. This individual will develop an organizational structure, hire staff, and develop policies, procedures, and best practices for the organization. Equally comfortable negotiating contracts, managing budgets and schedules, and projecting income and expenses, the President & CEO will set the tone for the organization. Providing leadership will include creating a harmonious and effective workplace culture in which the contributions of board, staff, and other volunteers are recognized and valued. In reaching organizational objectives, the President & CEO will extend this tone and culture throughout the Meridian community and beyond, engaging a wide range of supporters, members, visitors, and stakeholders.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Strategic Leadership and Governance

Partner with the board of directors and its committees to develop policies that support the strategic mission, vision, and goals of the organization.

- Create a strategic operating plan and assume joint responsibility with the board for its implementation, reporting progress towards goals regularly.
- Provide guidance to best utilize the talents and resources of the board, stimulate involvement, assist in the identification, cultivation, and recruitment of new members, and refine a focused strategic direction to support the fiscal health of the organization.
- Orient, educate, and engage board members to maximize their effectiveness.
- Celebrate the successes of the board and its members by recognizing their contribution of time and resources as community ambassadors.
- Develop a strategy to effectively mobilize and utilize volunteers in support of the MAEEX and its programs.

External Affairs and Revenue Enhancement

Identify stakeholders, develop strategies, and define how key messages will be delivered to various individual and institutional stakeholders in order to increase participation in and brand visibility for the MAEEX.

- Serve as the principal spokesperson for the organization.
- Foster strong relationships and cooperative arrangements with elected officials, industry groups, and community, cultural, and educational leaders throughout the state in order to garner financial, programmatic, and robust community support.
- Oversee all marketing and communication efforts, including devising an extensive opening strategy and continuing plans to meet visitation and engagement goals.
- Determine systems needed to capture and track members and donors, ticketing, retail service, and other earned income channels.
- Seek out alternative revenue streams and strategic alliances to supplement fundraising and paid admissions.
- Guide a comprehensive fundraising, development, and advancement plan that supports new programs and ongoing growth of exhibit, education, and other initiatives.
- Ensure that all programs and exhibitions continue to be characterized by innovation and quality and are branded to raise community visibility, attendance, and associated revenues.
- Embrace the highest levels of customer service, effective audience interaction, and community engagement.
- Develop partnership agreements with arts and community organizations to advance outreach activities and collaborative partnerships throughout the region.

Financial and Managerial Oversight

Maintain fiscal responsibility for overall budget and ensure the most effective use of human, financial, and technological resources to support the overall visitor experience and sustainability of the MAEEX.

- Lead the board, staff, and architectural and exhibit team to reach on-time and on-budget completion of the facility.
- As part of the organizational strategic plan, develop a three to five-year financial plan with specific and measurable goals and objectives.
- Determine priorities for building the staff team, including timing, compensation, and coordination with the exhibit planning team.
- Establish clear job specifications, expectations, and accountability measures.
- Coach, mentor, and advance successful employees.
- Build a culture and reputation in the community as a desirable workplace.
- Oversee the budget to meet the schedule and financial expectations for opening and beyond.
- Establish a culture of proactive transparency in financial reporting with staff, board members, and other stakeholders.

TRAITS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The President & CEO will be a results-oriented relationship builder who maintains a high professional profile and is able to cultivate community and financial resources in conjunction with the board of directors. A true leader who can inspire the development of a long-term vision, this individual will set, pursue, and reach achievable goals with a strategy that embraces many stakeholders. This will require an individual with superior interpersonal, team-building, and diplomacy skills. The President & CEO must have the capacity to guide the organization through a crucial intersection where best business practices meet the quality of a new organization and the high aesthetic expectations of first-time visitors to the MAEEX and ongoing community participation. The President & CEO should value the social impact the institution has on the region, as well as possess the ability to communicate the cultural, educational, and economic impact messages of the MAEEX throughout the area. Motivated by knowledge and the

promotion of continuing education and intellectual growth with an underlying foundation based in traditional principles, the President & CEO will also demonstrate the following competencies:

- **Leadership** – Achieve extraordinary business results through people.
- **Goal Achievement and Problem Solving** – Identify and prioritize activities that relate to specific, measurable, attainable, reviewable, and time-sensitive goals with the capacity to anticipate, analyze, diagnose, and resolve problems.
- **Customer Focus and People-Oriented Disposition** – Commit to customer satisfaction which extends to visitors, sponsors, donors, and artists. Possess a positive and constructive view of working with others and be able to listen to, understand, and successfully work with a wide range of people from diverse backgrounds.
- **Teamwork and Diplomacy** – Collaborate effectively and productively with others to identify and prioritize activities and treat others fairly, regardless of personal biases or beliefs.
- **Personal Accountability** – Have the capacity to be answerable for personal actions and the resiliency to overcome challenges.

QUALIFICATIONS

The President & CEO must have demonstrated success in a leadership position in a cultural institution, financial and organizational management, fundraising, and public advocacy. Possessing a passion for collaboration and community outreach, the successful candidate will be people-oriented, versatile, and tenacious. Candidates must have knowledge of and/or management experience in the arts and culture industries or equivalent experience in a for-profit or nonprofit sector that is arts-related. Candidates should be familiar with the visitor attraction industry and have experience with a new, emerging institution. The ability to develop and operate a new visitor attraction is highly desired. Experience cultivating relationships with governmental entities and representatives is important to the success of the MAEEX. Candidates should also have knowledge of and experience leading marketing and branding staff. A master's degree in cultural studies, history, museum administration, or equivalent professional industry experience is required.

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

A competitive compensation package commensurate with experience includes health and dental insurance, retirement plan, two weeks of paid vacation, and official paid holidays.

APPLICATIONS AND INQUIRIES

Please submit a letter and resume (electronic submissions preferred) including related roles and demonstrable accomplishments to:

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