



Stronger Together: Building Meaningful Communities of Practice for Museum Teams

Welcome!

The webinar will begin at 2 p.m. CT.

While you wait:

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LEAD – Leadership, Engagement, and Development

Stronger Together:
BUILDING MEANINGFUL
COMMUNITIES OF
PRACTICE FOR MUSEUM
TEAMS



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THE
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TEXAS
HISTORICAL
COMMISSION
REAL PLACES TELLING REAL STORIES



This project is supported by the [Summerlee Foundation](#). Founded in 1988, The Summerlee Foundation is a mission-driven, proactive organization dedicated to the support of animal protection and the preservation of Texas history.

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Texas Association of Museums



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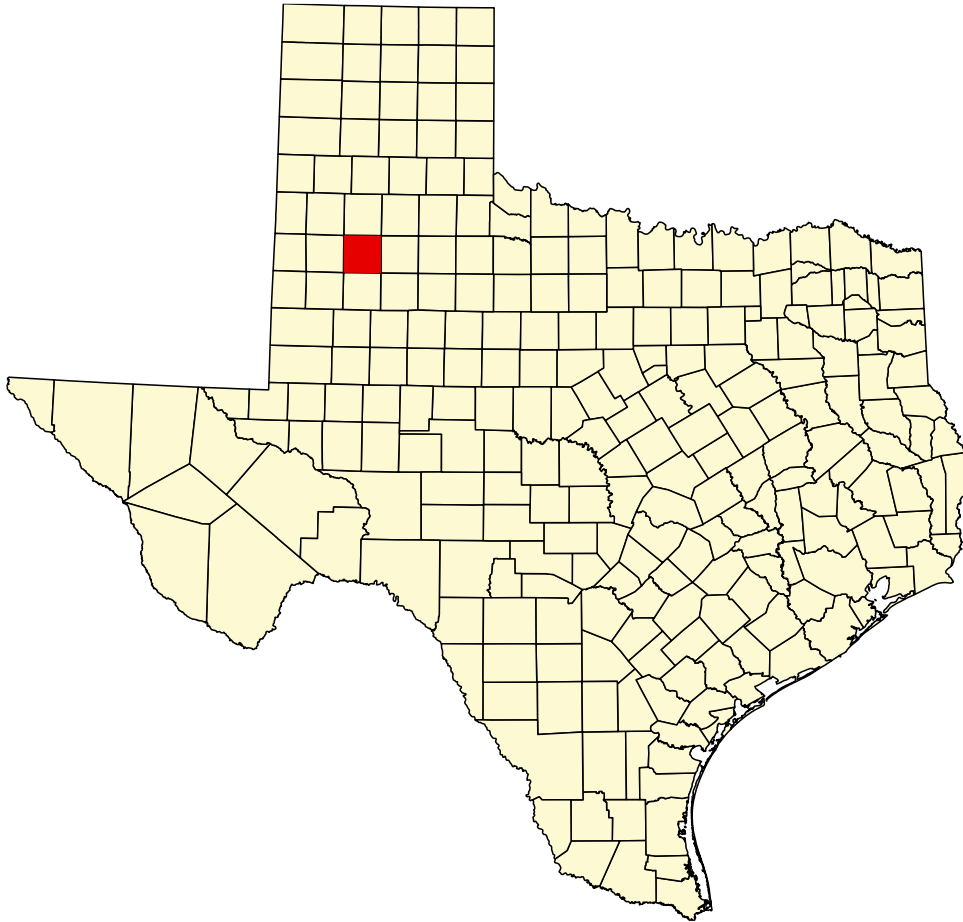


Stacy Keith
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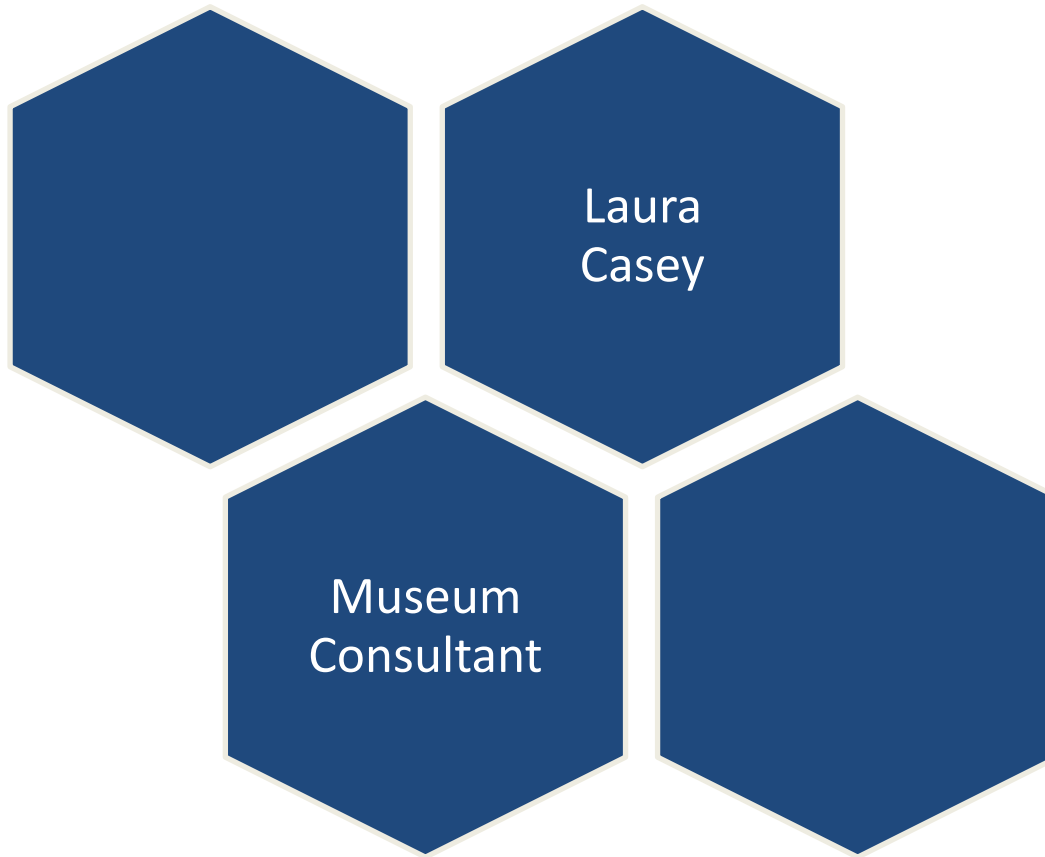
Laura Casey
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Lubbock Metro Area



- **City Population (2024):** 363,240 people (Metropolitan Statistical Area)
- **Major Industries:** Education, Healthcare, Retail Trade, Tech, Energy, Agriculture.
- **Job Growth:** Strong, with expected high growth in tech, manufacturing, and energy sectors.
- **Weather:** Known for abundant sunshine (265+ days/year).
- **Commute:** Short average commute time (around 16 minutes)

Developing Communities of Practice



Framing the Conversation

Share a pathway for creating a Community of Practice.



Flexible: can be structured or free-flowing.



Provide actionable steps.



Inspire collaboration and discussion.

Setting the Stage

Lubbock is an inspiring model.

Many ways to form a Community of Practice—no single formula.

Providing a suggested roadmap.

What Is a Community of Practice?

Definition: A group of practitioners sharing a common interest, building relationships, and improving practice.

Ask yourself:

What does this mean to you?

What do you want your community of practice to accomplish?

Other Definitions

- The American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) defines a community of practice as a group of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.
- Texas Association of Museums uses their Affinity Groups as communities of practice.

Other Definitions

- National Council on Public History (NCPH) defines a Community of Practice as a network of public history practitioners—such as museum professionals, archivists, consultants, and government historians—who connect to share their passion and expertise. Through interaction and shared experience, they learn to do their work better by developing professional skills, fostering critical reflection, and building a community around the practice of history beyond the traditional classroom.

Why It Matters

Builds networks
for resource
sharing.

Encourages
peer support
and growth.

Strengthens
community
relationships.

Step 1 – Identify Participants



Who is this Community
of Practice for?



Include many voices:
museums, genealogists,
garden clubs, civic
groups, local businesses.



Cast a wide net.

Step 2 – Define Goals and Purpose



Clarify mission: Why form this group?



Who benefits?



Set goals and assign responsibilities.

Step 3 – Establish a Timeline



Identify milestones
and due dates.



Break work into
phases.



Celebrate progress
along the way.

Step 4 – Plan a Budget

Consider volunteer time, in-kind support, real expenses.

Determine if fundraising or sponsorship is needed.

Clear vision attracts support.

Step 5 – Define What Success Looks Like

Go beyond
checklists—measure
relationships and
impact.

Indicators:
partnerships, visitors,
memberships,
stronger ties.

Step 6 – Plan for Sustainability



Maintain momentum with consistent communication.



Ideas: quarterly lunches or monthly virtual chats.

Examples from the Field

Austin Museum Partnership
(Museum Day).

North Central Museum
Networking Group

Panhandle Museum Group.

Plains Trail Networking
Group

Southeast Texas Museum
Group

Examples
from the
Field

Museum Madness

START

Beaumont America
250

TAM Affinity Groups

Key Takeaways

A Community of Practice builds relationships, not just projects.

Adapt to your local needs.

Clear goals, timelines, and communication are key.

Celebrate collaboration and shared learning.

Discussion & Next Steps

- What opportunities exist for a Community of Practice in your area?
- Who could you invite to the table?
- What small step can you take this month?



Thank You



Questions?
Comments? Ideas?



Contact:
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Let's stay connected!