

# Edward-Dean Museum

## Background

The Edward-Dean Museum of Decorative Arts was founded by J. Edward Eberle and Dean Stout. Eberle donated his collection of artifacts, and Stout designed the interior space. The museum was built in 1957 in Cherry Valley on 16.5 acres of land. It was deeded to the County of Riverside in 1964, with no endowment.

In 1980, the appraised value of the eight-room collection was \$19 million, including European decorative art objects, many Oriental pieces, other artifacts, and exhibits donated to the county.

The grounds of the facility include an office, a covered pavilion area that includes kitchen facilities, a rose garden, a lily pond, outdoor sculptures, orchards, roadways and parking lots. A fully-equipped cultural center was completed in 1998 and can accommodate 160 guests in a banquet setting or 245 guests in an auditorium/theater arrangement.

Three active groups of volunteers support the museum: The Edward-Dean Museum Foundation, a nonprofit organization, Friends of the Edward-Dean Museum and the Docents.

The museum has recently undergone some management changes and has been placed under the Economic Development Agency (EDA) for management and operation.

## Findings

1. The collection of exhibits and artifacts housed in the museum has not been inventoried for several years. There are additional items in the basement of the museum that have never been inventoried and have an unknown value. Estimates for these items vary from one to three million dollars.

2. As a result of inadequate funding and an inability to properly support the financial needs of the museum, the grounds and structures are in need of ongoing maintenance and repair. County funding levels established for fiscal year 1999-00 have been set at \$150,000 by the Board of Supervisors.

3. While the three organizations that have been responsible for operation and care of the museum have a common goal to keep the museum operating, there does not seem to be a cohesive approach to how this will be accomplished.

4. Current planning calls for an all volunteer group to oversee the museum's activities except for a permanent person who would oversee maintenance and groundskeeping.

# Recommendations

Economic Development Agency:

1. Do a complete inventory of all exhibits encompassing display items and those items in storage in the museum.
2. Initiate a program to upgrade the grounds and structures associated with the museum. Supplement the funding levels for fiscal year 1999-00 through active recruiting of donations and fund raising activities that could take place on the museum grounds.
3. Develop a plan that assigns individual responsibilities to each group currently associated with the museum to utilize their expertise under the auspices of EDA.
4. Assign one person to the museum site who would be specifically responsible for the display of exhibits and operation of the museum.