Missoula --

The Montana Museum of Art & Culture at The University of Montana has received a national award to participate in the 2011 Conservation Assessment Program.

CAP is supported through a cooperative agreement between Heritage Preservation, a nonprofit dedicated to preserving the cultural heritage of the United States, and the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services. Heritage Preservation President Lawrence L. Reger praised MMAC for “making the vital work of caring for collections a priority of their institution, even in these challenging financial times, and helping ensure that they are available to present and future generations.”

CAP assists museums by providing funds for professional conservation specialists to identify needs and improvements to permanent collections and historic buildings through a site assessment. Program assessors spend two days surveying the site and then prepare comprehensive reports that identify conservation priorities.

MMAC will host two assessors: a professional conservator and an architect who specializes in historic preservation. They will make recommendations to improve collection and building conditions. Assessors will visit the UM campus this summer.

“I anticipate the CAP findings will make plain our need for a museum building,” said MMAC Director Barbara Koostra. “While we adhere to high level professional practices, our staff currently work in seven disparate locations on and off the UM campus, none of which permit public access to the Permanent Collection or easily accommodate art movement. A new facility that allows us to uphold the best possible museum practices and collections care is vital to our future success. Despite ambitious exhibitions and collection programming, MMAC cannot live up to its full potential, hampered as it is by physical realities, and we welcome the CAP recommendations.”

By participating in CAP, MMAC expects to strategically assess its Permanent Collection of nearly 11,000 objects. CAP timing also coincides with MMAC’s implementation of a new collections database, PastPerfect, funded in part by a Public Value Partnership technology grant through the Montana Arts Council.

The core holdings of MMAC’s Permanent Collection include works of art that denote the aesthetic development of the Rocky Mountain West, historic European works, Southeast Asian collections, American Impressionist works, important ceramic works and public art sited across the campus. Permanent Collection holdings also are on loan to other Montana institutions, including the Charles W. Clark Chateau in Butte, the Daly Mansion in Hamilton, the Conrad Mansion in Kalispell and the Federal Reserve Bank in Helena.

The Heritage Preservation program assists museums, libraries, archives, historic institutions and individuals in caring for our endangered heritage. To learn more about the program, visit http://www.heritagepreservation.org.

IMLS is the primary source of federal support for the nation’s 123,000 libraries and 17,500 museums. Its mission is to create strong libraries and museums that connect people to information and ideas. To learn more about IMLS, visit http://www.imls.gov.
MMAC's gallery hours are noon to 3 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday and noon to 6 p.m. Thursday and Friday. Guided tours are available. For more information visit the MMAC website at http://www.umt.edu/montanamuseum or call 406-243-2019.

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NOTE TO MEDIA: Digital images of select museum installations are available by calling 406-243-2019.

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Western Montana

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