Overview

Welcome to the team! This Handbook has been designed to give you an overview of the Carter County Museum Virtual Intern Program, the scope of the museum’s exhibitions, collections, and programming. It introduces you to the history of the Museum, its organization and facilities, and the professional responsibilities and benefits of serving the institution. We suggest you use this manual as you begin your work and continue to use it as a reference during your time here.

The Trustees and Museum staff members look forward to working with you as you help us further our mission of serving the community. We hope that the personal satisfaction and enrichment you gain from your work as part of our team will encourage you to continue with us for years to come.

Getting Started

Even though your supervisor/mentor reviewed your resume and statement of interest, it might be worthwhile to talk to your mentors and find out more about them, as well as share some more personal information about yourself, before beginning work on your project. For example, you could ask:

- How did you choose your career?
- What did you major in during college/grad school?
- What are your career goals?

Who knows - you might have more in common than you know!

Expectations

As you get started, make sure to share expectations about what you hope to achieve through your experience with your supervisors. They will have expectations for you, too. Being open, honest, and clear from the get-go establishes a good rapport.

Here are a few things you may want to discuss:
- Class schedule, midterm and final dates, breaks
- How and when you’ll check-in with each other (by phone, email, Skype, Google Hangout, GoToMeeting, etc. and weekly/bi-weekly).
- Your available resources (personal laptop, computer programs, camera, library, tools, etc.) and anything else you might need
- How you’ll communicate apart from regular check-ins - email, phone, etc.
Working Remotely

Communication is key
Communication is vital to the success of an eInternship. Because remote teams lack daily face to face contact, it is important that you remain in regular virtual contact with your supervisors/mentors. Work with them to set up weekly check-in calls. Try your best to respond to emails/communication within 24 hours.

Don’t be afraid to ask for feedback from your supervisor/mentor both on the work you submit and in your performance overall. As an eIntern, you are here to learn as much as you are here to work.

After you submit a project or complete a task, ask questions such as: Was that what you were looking for? Is the format correct? How can this be improved? If there are revisions, offer to make them yourself or, if your supervisor/mentor makes them, ask to see what was changed to give you an opportunity to learn and develop a better sense of what to do moving forward. Remember, sometimes government and academic terms and lingo can mean something different to each group. Double check with your supervisor/mentor if you’re not sure!

Be sure to consider time differences. To avoid any confusion when scheduling calls, use a time zone converter such as http://timeanddate.com/worldclock and be sure to indicate the time zone associated with the time of scheduled communication.

Establishing Your Work Schedule
An eInternship gives you a lot of flexibility in setting your own schedule, but that means that it can be easy to get distracted from completing things on time. To ensure that the team is making the most of your experience and your time, consider these recommendations:

- **Keep a Schedule** – Because you are working virtually, it is especially important for you to complete tasks and projects on time. Keeping to a schedule will help you stay organized and keep you on track. Chunk out times each week when you can focus on your VSFS work.

- **Have a Dedicated Work Space** – Having a workspace that is free of distractions and clutter will help you stay focused on the task at hand. This may be a clean desk in your room or a table at the library or coffee shop - either way, a dedicated work space will help you.

- **Constant Communication** – working from a distance means that communication is particularly important. Stay in constant communication with your supervisor/mentor with updates about your progress and to stay connected with other things going on in your office. There may be times when you or your supervisor/mentor are not able to be in touch and alerting each other ahead of time to reschedule will help ensure that you get the most out of your experience.
For more suggestions on making the most of your eInternship, check out these articles:

- The Rise of Micro Internships: How Students can Take Advantage (and Avoid Being Taken Advantage of), Fast Company, October 2015
- How to Rock your Virtual Internship
- “Make Your Virtual Internship Super Successful”
- “An Insider’s Guide to Virtual Internships”
- “Top 5 Characteristics of a Successful Virtual Intern”

Making the Most of Your Experience

I. Keeping track of your experience

Consider keeping a journal that documents the tasks you’ve completed and the projects you’ve worked on each week. If you want to request a letter of recommendation from your supervisor/mentor at a later date, a short summary of your work to refresh their memory will be helpful. Connecting with your supervisor/mentor on LinkedIn is a great way to stay in touch and is another way your supervisor can vouch for your abilities.

In addition, your journal of your experience will be helpful when you are putting your eInternship on your resume, in order to remind you of specific accomplishments to highlight. Your school may also require documentation of your work to earn internship credit.

II. Academic Credit

Many colleges and universities allow students to pursue academic credit for internships, including virtual internships! To find out more about this process, speak with your academic advisor to find out what forms and requirements are needed.
Introduction

The Carter County Museum is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization located centrally on the Main Street of Ekalaka, Montana, a ranching community with a population of 331. Founded in 1936 by amateur archeologists and paleontologists of the Carter County Geological Society, the museum’s original mission was related to the collection and study of dinosaur fossils found on local ranches. The museum has the proud distinction of being Montana’s first county museum as well as the state’s first dinosaur museum. The CCM is one of fourteen museums on the Montana Dinosaur Trail, a passport-style tour of Montana’s dinosaur-bearing institutions.

The CCM is a member of the Kumamoto Montana Natural Science Museums Association, Museum Association of Montana, Mountain Plains Museum Association and the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology. We are a sister museum to the Museum of the Rockies in Bozeman Montana, and a non-federal repository for Bureau of Land Management (BLM) fossils.

Our Mission

The Carter County Museum is dedicated to inspiring, educating and enriching the life of the public by deepening the understanding and appreciation of history, art and science through the collection, research, preservation and exhibition of fossils, archaeological and cultural material, and the acquisition of a reference library with a focus on southeastern Montana and the surrounding region.

Dual Authority: Carter County and the Carter County Geological Society

The museum is responsible for the display and safety of the collections, which are themselves owned by the Carter County Geological Society (CCGS), CCM’s governing board. The CCGS is registered as a 501c3 private foundation and 509(a)2 public charity with the IRS. Carter County owns the land and buildings and provides payroll, utilities, building maintenance, insurance and capital improvements for the CCM. For the purposes of this document, the Carter County Geological Society is recognized as doing business as the Carter County Museum and terms are used interchangeably.
Our Vision

The Carter County Museum envisions an engaged community that works in concert with the museum to promote the incredible fossil, archaeological and cultural resources of the area, their stewardship, and increased knowledge through scientific inquiry and research.

Our Values

We demonstrate **Integrity**. We align our actions with our words and encourage open debate.

We value **Curiosity**. We create an integrated environment where all people can explore, experiment, and share what is learned. We honor diverse learning styles and promote constructive dialogue among ourselves and with visitors.

We encourage **Creativity**, innovation, and resourcefulness.

We practice ethical and fiscal accountability and strive for transparency and careful **Stewardship** of resources, including collections, staff, facilities and donations.

We develop and encourage mutually beneficial **Collaboration** that helps further the museum’s mission.

We ensure the museum’s future **Sustainability** with robust financial management of income and expenses; and strong, effective philanthropy and endowment development.
Organizational Chart

* : Seasonal Position
** : Adjunct Position (as of 2014)

Note: Only the Executive Director and seasonal positions are full time
Introduction to the Carter County Museum

The Carter County Museum is scientifically significant for its proximity to the surrounding Hell Creek Formation, a geological area known for bearing some of the nation’s most notable dinosaur specimens, including the Field Museum’s T. rex Sue and Thomas the T. rex at Los Angeles County Natural History Museum. The unique thing about this area is a thin layer of ash that preserves the Cretaceous extinction event. Sixty-six million years ago, an asteroid slammed into the Gulf of Mexico, creating a crater larger than Carter County, and was responsible for the world-wide disappearance of approximately 75 percent of all animal species, including the dinosaurs. Scientists from around the world make the trek to Ekalaka to study this extinction event, and the recovery period after it.

In 2013, the museum began hosting the Annual Dino Shindig, an event that invites these scientists to speak to the local community about their work in the area. The dinosaur festivities culminate with a street dance and expedition into the Hell Creek in which families and amateur fossil enthusiasts can gain real-world experience in field paleontology. The Dino Shindig was named Montana’s Event of the Year by the Office of Tourism and Business Development in 2017. It is the primary driver of tourism to the area in July and an economic boon to businesses in the community.

The museum boasts a large collection of Paleo-Indian artifacts, including pottery and points, and an extensive array of cultural objects. One of Montana’s oldest archaeological sites, The Mill Iron Site, is located in the area. Excavated in the 1980s, Mill Iron was a bison processing site that contains Goshen points and a mammoth bone piece that was used as a foreshaft on an atlatl dart. It dates back to 10,500 years ago. Historically, there were 18 tribes present in Carter County, including the Assiniboin, Sioux, Fort Belknap, Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nations. Ekalaka itself is named for Ijakalaka, an Oglala Sioux woman who was niece to Chief Red Cloud.

Many current Ekalaka residents are direct descendants of original homesteading families of the late 1800’s. These families see the museum as the primary steward of the community’s cultural history and donated relics of town life for generations, making for a robust cultural collection that includes everything from a taxidermied two-headed calf to a doll made of barbed wire to military uniforms from different American wars.
Since 2010, the museum has undergone a revitalization effort, which quintupled attendance from 1,000 to 5,144 visitors in 2018. In 2019, the Dino Shindig served an audience of approximately 900 people and raised over $18,000. We are engaged in a number of collaborative partnerships, collections stewardship projects, educational programming and outreach. Our success is due to extensive donor, staff, volunteer and community support.

This is not your standard sleepy town museum; the staff, board, and community members are actively working together to promote museum growth through scientific collection and research, donations, and unique programming. A current capital fundraising campaign is seeking $4.2 million for a building expansion. The new space will accommodate new fossil acquisitions, the Medicine Rocks visitor center, and exhibitions on the Western Interior Seaway, Hell Creek Cretaceous period, Tooke Bucking Horse legacy, Paleoindian and modern American Indian history, the settlement of Carter County, art, and military history.