TO: Cultural Education Committee

FROM: Jeffrey Cannell

SUBJECT: The State Museum's World Trade Center Exhibitions:
                        Ten Years After

DATE: May 24, 2011

AUTHORIZATION(S):

SUMMARY

Issue for Discussion

The State Museum's World Trade Center (WTC) Gallery, its use by teachers and students and the newest traveling exhibitions based on the gallery and the most comprehensive collections documenting the WTC and the events of 9/11.

Proposed Handling

The Cultural Education Committee will receive an update on the national and international importance of the State Museum WTC collections and efforts to bring those collections to statewide and national venues through traveling exhibits.

Background Information

The events of September 11, 2001 are a defining moment in modern history. The Museum worked with other cultural agencies and numerous city, state and federal agencies to build a comprehensive collection documenting these tragic events. The collection ranges from entire vehicles to Trade Center building components to nearly all that is left of the two airliners to hundreds of thousands of sympathy items sent to respite centers and firehouses. The Museum is acknowledging the tenth anniversary of these events through a number of exhibition upgrades and new traveling exhibitions that allow us to expand the narrative at the Museum and to place this narrative around the state and nation.

Within two months of the attack the Museum dedicated a memorial to the World Trade Center and those who lost their lives in the attack. In September 2002 the Museum inaugurated the first gallery in the world devoted to the World Trade Center. The gallery quickly became an icon of the Museum. Our teachers guide to the gallery has been the most downloaded guide on our webpage and the gallery has hosted more than 250,000 students since its opening. A recently posted synopsis of our new traveling "Recovery" exhibition has already become the most downloaded exhibition file in the past decade.

The Museum has organized three 9/11 related exhibitions that will begin touring the United States this fall. The exhibitions continue the important education of the public about the events of 9/11 and their aftermath.

September 11: A Global Moment opens on September 11, 2011 and travels to three museums across the United States. It is the largest and most comprehensive exhibition about 9/11 traveling in the United States. Included in this major traveling exhibition are 75 artifacts from the World Trade Center, Shankesville, and the Pentagon,interpretive panels, 50 photographs, images, personal objects and a timeline tracing the events of the day, personal stories, educational material and audio-visual components. The exhibition travels through 2011-12.

Recovery: The World Trade Center Operation documents the recovery operations at the Fresh Kills landfill from September 2001 to July 2002. The purpose of this effort was to recover human remains, personal objects, and material evidence from the collapse of the World Trade Center. Through interpretive text panels, 50 photographs and 60 artifacts, the exhibition offers the viewer an overview of the events of 9/11, and a rare glimpse of the hidden history of the recovery efforts that followed. An education guide is developed for this exhibition. The exhibition travels to the Staten Island Museum and other locations through 2012.

September 11, 2001: A Timeline is a panel exhibit designed for historical societies, libraries, and community centers that can accommodate smaller exhibitions with low security. The timeline is a summary of world events associated with the terrorist attacks on 9/11/01. Starting with the construction of the Pentagon and World Trade Center, the timeline focuses on Al Qaeda's history, the events of September 11, and the recovery and clean-up efforts. Several small artifacts are available to travel with this exhibit. The timeline travels across New York State sites and beyond through 2012.