



# PRESERVING RURAL STORIES:

Resources and Grants for Historical and Cultural Organizations in the Texas Panhandle

Amarillo Area Foundation  
March 11-12, 2026



# CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

*All events will take place at the Amarillo Area Foundation*

**Wednesday, March 11, 2026**

**5:30 PM**

## **INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME**

**Keralee Clay,**

Amarillo Area Foundation

**Eric Lupfer and Marco Buentello,**

Humanities Texas

**Andy Mink,**

Smithsonian Rural Initiative

**6:30 PM**

**DINNER**

**Thursday, March 12, 2026**

**8:00 AM**

## **WELCOME & BREAKFAST**

**8:30 AM**

## **BETWEEN HOPE AND HISTORY: CURATING AMERICA AT 250**

**Abeer Saha,**

National Museum of  
American History

**9:15 AM**

Break

**9:30 AM**

## **COMMUNITY CURATION: THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION TRAVELING EXHIBITION SERVICE**

**Aaron Glavas,**

Smithsonian Affiliations

**10:15 AM**

## **ROOTED IN COMMUNITY: STORYTELLING, EXCHANGE, AND CULTURAL VITALITY**

**Halle Butvin,**

Smithsonian Center for  
Folklife and Cultural Heritage

**11:00 AM**

Break

**11:15 AM**

## **COMMUNITY VALUES AND THE PRESERVATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE**

**Brian Lione,**

Smithsonian Museum  
Conservation Institute

**12:00 PM**

**LUNCH**

**1:00 PM**

## **TEXAS RURAL FUNDERS**

**Kelty Garbee and**

**Evan Wolstencroft**

**1:45 PM**

## **TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

**Bradford Patterson and**

**Ashley Salie**

**2:30 PM**

Break

**2:45 PM**

## **TEXAS HISTORICAL FOUNDATION**

**David Preziosi**

**3:30 PM**

## **BREAKOUT SESSIONS**

### **Curation**

How can your organization  
curate community programs?

### **Conversation**

How can your organization  
tell a community story?

### **Preservation**

How can your organization  
preserve local history?

### **Development**

How can your organization  
grow its capacity?

**4:30 PM**

**NEXT STEPS**

**5:00 PM**

**CLOSING REMARKS**



# Smithsonian



**Andy Mink** has served as the founding director of the Smithsonian Rural Initiative since 2023. He provides leadership in shaping and growing the initiative to establish the programmatic and operational infrastructure necessary to execute pan-institutional collaborations that expand the reach of the Smithsonian's resources, expertise, and programming. He joined the Office of the Undersecretary for Education after successful years as vice president of education at the National Humanities Center. Mink began his career in higher education with leadership positions at the University of Virginia and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. A native of rural eastern Virginia, his background and wide-ranging professional experience inform his deep commitment to community-based partnerships.



**Abeer Saha** received his PhD in history and BS in mechanical engineering from the University of Virginia. His primary fields of research include science and technology studies, global environmental history, and twentieth-century agriculture. His engineering background continues to inform his scholarship and curatorial work in public history. In July 2023, he curated the exhibition *Reconstructing Weatherbreak: Geodesic Domes in an Age of Extreme Weather*, which was featured on CBS, The Weather Channel, and The New York Times, among other media outlets. During his time at the Smithsonian, Saha has sought to make the historic engineering collections of drawings and artifacts at the National Museum of American History more accessible to the public. He has added more than one thousand engineering photographs to the Smithsonian collections database, responded to hundreds of public queries, and highlighted the museum's vast technology collections at academic symposia and conferences around the world. He is currently working on a book provisionally titled *Animal Factory: Industrial Feedlots in the Twentieth-Century U.S.* His research has also been featured on the PBS docuseries *Human Footprint*, the Smithsonian Institution's podcast *Sidedoor*, and Fox Weather.



# Smithsonian



**Halle Butvin** is director of special projects at the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, where she leads national and international initiatives that support community-based storytelling, cultural sustainability, and public engagement. Her work focuses on helping communities document, interpret, and share their own stories in ways that strengthen local identity, economic vitality, and civic well-being. At the Smithsonian, Butvin has overseen collaborative programs that connect local cultural organizations with national platforms, including rural and regional America250 initiatives. She works closely with community partners to translate lived experience into public programs—festivals, exhibitions, media projects, and educational resources—that are grounded in local priorities while resonating with broader audiences. At this convening, Butvin will lead a community conversation on storytelling as both an economic and health driver, drawing on Smithsonian practice to explore how rural communities can elevate their stories, build partnerships, and develop strong, fundable humanities programs rooted in place.



**Aaron Glavas** has worked as national outreach manager for Smithsonian Affiliations since 2001. He educates affiliate institutions and Smithsonian museums and offices on the Affiliations program's policies and procedures. He works in the planning, production, and promotion of Smithsonian Affiliations initiatives. He provides affiliate institutions with information on Smithsonian Institution initiatives and resources relevant to each affiliate's mission and goals to facilitate and initiate outreach, project development, and new programmatic opportunities. Prior to joining the Smithsonian, Aaron worked in media relations, designing and implementing strategies for competitive analysis, media analysis, prospective client presentations, and market trend monitoring. He organized media tours, press interviews, and weekly conference calls and wrote press releases.



**Brian Michael Lione** manages the cultural heritage protection program at the Smithsonian's Museum Conservation Institute, applying the high-stakes lessons of international conflict recovery to the preservation of America's cultural legacy. In support of both the Smithsonian Rural Initiative and its Regional Collaboratives program, Lione draws on his years of experience rebuilding Iraq's heritage sector to translate complex logistical and community-based strategies into sustainable programs for U.S. communities. His leadership in post-ISIS recovery efforts at the Mosul Cultural Museum and the archaeological site of Nimrud provides a unique blueprint for the Smithsonian's domestic work, demonstrating how heritage can serve as a cornerstone for resilience and identity even in the most resource-strained environments. At this convening, he will lead a community conversation on strategies for building local capacity to identify and address heritage preservation needs.



**Kelty Garbee** serves as executive director of Texas Rural Funders. Garbee has twenty years of experience in nonprofits, state government, and philanthropy. She previously served as director of postsecondary programs at Educate Texas, an initiative of Communities Foundation of Texas, and director of early college high schools at the Texas Education Agency. In both roles, she developed and led large-scale statewide networks with budgets exceeding \$7 million and fostered collaboration among K–12, higher education, and workforce partners. She also worked in the development office at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC. Garbee holds a bachelor’s degree from the University of Virginia, a master’s degree from the LBJ School of Public Affairs at The University of Texas at Austin, and a doctorate in higher education, also from UT Austin. Her passion for ensuring equity and access in rural Texas is informed by her upbringing in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Lynchburg, Virginia, and her work in communities across Texas.



**Evan Wolstencroft** is program manager for Texas Rural Funders (TRF). He has over a decade of experience in philanthropy and the nonprofit sector. Prior to joining TRF, he was deputy director of development for Educate Texas at Communities Foundation of Texas. Evan holds a bachelor’s degree from Stonehill College and a master’s degree from the LBJ School of Public Affairs at The University of Texas at Austin. He was a 2023 CONNECT Data Consulting Fellow with the RGK Center for Philanthropy and Community Service and currently serves on the City of Austin Water and Wastewater Commission. After living throughout the U.S., he is proud to call Texas his adopted home.



**Keralee Clay** is president and CEO of the Amarillo Area Foundation. Since joining AAF in 2016, she has held progressive leadership roles, including director of operations, vice president of operations (2019), and senior vice president (2021). She went on to serve as interim president and CEO for eleven months before being appointed president and CEO, leading the organization’s strategy, team, and community impact across the Texas Panhandle. A lifelong Amarilloan and proud Amarillo High Sandie, Keralee holds a BA in vocal performance from Arizona State University and spent a decade in New York City pursuing a performing career while also running Red Clay Consulting. She later returned to Amarillo, working at the Amarillo Civic Center/Globe-News Center prior to joining AAF. She and her husband have two children, and she occasionally appears onstage with her cabaret act.



**Bradford Patterson** is chief preservation officer of the Texas Historical Commission, serving as chief deputy state historic preservation officer for the administration of the National Historic Preservation Act. His responsibilities include oversight of three agency divisions: Architecture, History Programs, and Community Heritage Development. From 2009 to 2023, Patterson was director of the Community Heritage Development Division, dedicated to helping communities create and sustain their historic preservation infrastructure through downtown revitalization, local preservation ordinances, and heritage tourism. With the agency since 1996, he previously worked in the Architecture Division, coordinating architectural review and compliance and overseeing the restoration of numerous historic county courthouses. He holds degrees in architecture from The University of Texas at Austin and Miami University. By appointment of the city council, he serves on the board of Rally Austin, the city's nonprofit real estate partner.



**Ashley Salie** is the Texas Historical Commission's program coordinator for both the Texas Preservation Trust Fund Grant and Easement programs, where she assists applicants in securing funding for projects affecting endangered historic resources across the state. She holds a bachelor's degree in interior design from Marymount University in Arlington, Virginia, and a master's degree in historic preservation from the University of Georgia.



**David Preziosi** became the President & CEO of the Texas Historical Foundation in 2022 after working for ten years as the Executive Director for Preservation Dallas. He oversees the daily operations of the Texas Historical Foundation, which works to preserve the history of Texas. This is accomplished by awarding grants to nonprofits for building preservation, archaeological investigation, document and artifact conservation, as well as providing funding for publications, exhibits, and films that promote Texas history.



**Eric Lupfer** became executive director of Humanities Texas in August 2019. He previously served as the organization's director of grants and education from 2004 to 2019. A former high school English teacher, Lupfer holds a PhD in English and an MS in information studies from The University of Texas at Austin, and a BA with high honors in English from Bowdoin College.



**Marco Buentello** is director of grants at Humanities Texas. He has worked in grant administration since 2015, with particular emphasis on federal grants and guidelines. He received his MA in history and political thought and his BA in history from Texas A&M International University in his hometown of Laredo.



**Andrew Ross** is director of exhibitions at Humanities Texas. Originally from Jackson, Mississippi, he holds an MFA in creative writing and a graduate certificate in museum studies from the University of Memphis. He received his BA in mass communication from Winthrop University. Prior to joining Humanities Texas, he served as projects director for the Davies Manor Historic Site near Memphis and as museum director for The Blues Foundation's Blues Hall of Fame Museum.



**Bethany Offer-Moscoco** is senior grants program officer at Humanities Texas. She has worked in various capacities with several Austin-area nonprofits, including United Way for Greater Austin, I Live Here I Give Here, and Dress for Success. She holds a master's degree in public affairs and a BA in English and government from The University of Texas at Austin.



**Jade Trent** is a grants program officer at Humanities Texas. She previously worked for the Texas Commission on the Arts, where she supported various grant programs and collaborated with nonprofit organizations across Texas. She holds a BA in arts management from the University of North Texas and is pursuing a master's in museum studies at Harvard University.

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