

AVP 2-2-12 Lancaster's pro tem curator looks eagerly to future

LANCASTER - A woman with 20 years of experience as a curator and arts administrator has been hired as the newest curator of the city's Museum of Art and History.

Andi Campognone replaces Nicholas West, who left the museum after a little less than three years on the job to study in England, where he has received a scholarship to the University of Oxford to work

toward a doctoral degree in archaeology.

"It is exciting to work for a city that is so forward thinking that its leadership understands the power of the arts in redeveloping its community," said Campognone, who is filling the post on a temporary basis until a full-time curator is hired. "(The museum's) staff is passionate and enthusiastic and has big plans in the coming year for both the local art community and the greater Antelope Valley."

Campognone's primary responsibilities include managing the grand opening of the museum; assisting the Lancaster Museum and Public Art Foundation in its fundraising efforts; and garnering community involvement in the emergence of what city officials say will be one of the most progressive cultural elements in the Antelope Valley region.

Campognone, who also is the cultural arts commissioner for Pomona, said she is committed to administering the preparation, opening and launch of the museum. Her experience in co-authoring Pomona's Cultural Arts Master Plan, as well as contributing to the city's Public Arts Ordinance, gives her a well-rounded and -versed background in arts management, which is sure to be an asset to the museum's development, city officials said.

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Campognone is the owner of Pomona-based AC Projects, a gallery specializing in curatorial projects of the highest museum quality with emphasis on California's post-war contributions to the arts.

Her previous experience includes serving as the exhibitions curator and associate director of the Riverside Art Museum, where she developed and implemented community-based programming and was instrumental in infrastructure improvements.

Prior to joining the Riverside museum, Campognone spent 12 years as coordinator of the annual New Photography Exhibition at the Millard Sheets Center for the Arts in Pomona.

A member of ArTTable, described as the leading national organization for professional women in the arts, as well as an advisory board member of the Los Angeles Art Association and Art Ltd. magazine, Campognone brings a wealth of professional knowledge and personal passion to her new role at the Lancaster museum, city officials say.

She has spent the past two months getting up to speed on all aspects of the new museum's development and anticipates the grand opening will take place in May. She referred to the pending unveiling as a one-of-a-kind experience that will exalt key attributes in the origin and evolution of the Antelope Valley.

"We are very pleased to have someone with so much experience leading (the museum) through this exciting phase of its transformation," said Ronda Perez, director of the city's Parks, Recreation and Arts Department.