

Public History / Histoire appliquée
National Council on Public History
Creating an International Federation for Public History

This spring, historians from the U.S., Canada, and several other countries will gather in Pensacola, Florida, to create a governing structure for the new International Federation for Public History (IFPH). Why Florida? Besides the obvious draw of warmth and sunshine, it's the site of this year's annual conference of the National Council on Public History (NCPH), which, since 1980, has been the primary professional association in the United States for public historians. During the past few months NCPH has also been serving as the point of contact for this fledgling federation.

When the IFPH meets in Pensacola on Friday, April 8, at 9:00 a.m., its goal will be to elect a steering committee. All who are interested are invited to participate. If you cannot attend in person we hope you will let us know (ncph@iupui.edu) of your interest in this promising new initiative.

The federation was established in August 2010, as an Internal Commission by the General Assembly of the International Committee of Historical Sciences/Comité International des Sciences Historiques (ICHS/CISH). Arnita A. Jones, the then-executive director of the American Historical Association, attended the CISH meeting in Amsterdam and presented the official proposal to the General Assembly, which approved the federation and its framework to bring together public historians from around the world.



CISH itself was launched shortly after the First World War to encourage international cooperation among scholars; its secretariat is located at the University of Paris. It is basically a federation of 53 national committees, 29 affiliated international organizations, and 12 internal commissions. Every five years it convenes an international meeting of 1,500 to 2,500 historians who present and discuss scholarship and professional issues. (For more information on CISH see <http://www.cish.org/>.) One of the goals of the new federation will be to plan for the inclusion of federation members in the next CISH meeting, in Jinan, Shandong, China, in 2015.

The federation's other purposes, so far, are to create an international network of public history programs and schools; facilitate



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the international exchange of information on teaching and research in public history; foster participation of public historians and their organizations in international congresses and other meetings of scholars in the field; and, encourage the formation of national committees of historians working in the field of public history.

In Pensacola we plan to establish a formal steering committee and elect an initial set of officers. The group's intent is to embrace the widest possible range of public history practice, including museums, historical sites, academic programs, government historical offices and other venues where historians are engaged in public history. In the weeks before the meeting we will continue to gather names of individuals, institutions, committees, organizations, and national groups wishing to be involved.

Please let us know (ncph@iupui.edu) if you would like to nominate someone to serve on the steering committee or if you would like to be added to the IFPH's growing email listserv.

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