CWAM Greeley 2025

By Hannah Griffin

My favorite session I attended at the Colorado Wyoming Association of Museums 2025 was Centering Community Voices. This session is also relevant to the series of temporary exhibits we are creating over the next few years. These exhibits will center around the various departments of Technical Services in the Denver Fire Department. A large part of the information we are using for these exhibits comes from interviews with current and past employees. While we are not in a place for true co-creation for an exhibit, as the panel suggested, building stronger relationships with the department and hearing their voices is not only useful for the exhibit but it is important for our museum. This session gave valuable insight into how to better conduct these interviews in the future and present the sub-culture that is firefighting in both this exhibit and those to come. During my time at the Denver Firefighters Museum, I have learned that firefighters have their own culture. How we approach them and how we tell stories about them must be informed by that culture.

The major themes of focusing on whose narrative matters, going in without a concrete plan and focusing on the voices of the community were very helpful. My coworker and I had already gone into these interviews with an open mind and came out with a very different project than what we had originally intended. Attending the session after these interviews were conducted gave us perspective on how to frame the stories side of the exhibit. We are prioritizing the lived experience and those individuals' perspectives in that section.

This session affects secondary responsibilities in my current position, but my goal is to work in exhibit design primarily. I found the process that was used to create the Chinatown exhibit at History Colorado to be very impactful. I am looking forward to applying those lessons both in my current position and as part of an exhibit design team in the future. Especially if my role is in the research phase.