



**Feb. 28, 2008/For Immediate Release**  
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## **New Steering Committee Members Elected to the 10<sup>th</sup> year of AHA! Project**

The city's AHA! (Art History Architecture) project hosted its first Annual Meeting at the New Bedford Art Museum on February 4, electing new officers and welcoming six new members to its Steering Committee.

The new officers elected were Karie C. Vincent, Executive Director of the New Bedford Art Museum (NBAM), Chair; and Nelson Hockert-Lotz, owner of Domino's Pizza, Vice-Chair.

New Steering Committee members include Karen Allen, Director of Programs & Operations for the New Bedford Whaling Museum; Lee Blake, Director of SouthCoast Educational Compact, UMASS Dartmouth; Kathy Dehner, Centre Street Realty; John Magnan, an artist residing in New Bedford; Claudia Ostiguy a community volunteer and Past Chair of First Night; and Dana Ribeiro, a community organizer and independent film-maker. Lee Heald is the AHA! Program Director.

The annual meeting represents 10 years of growth for AHA!, marked by the development of Operating Principles that allowed for the election of officers and steering committee members.

“As a collaborative project, AHA! has always depended upon volunteers from the partner organizations and businesses to set the direction,” Ms. Vincent said. “As we reach the end of our first decade, formalizing our governance structure has been an important growth step. We still operate as a collective of partners, but with clear definition and procedures.”

Continuing members of the Steering Committee include Lasse Antonsen, UMASS Dartmouth CVPA Gallery Director; Irene Buck, Executive Director, ArtWorks! Partners for the Arts and Community; Craig Dutra, President, Community Foundation of Southeastern Mass.; Nilsa Garcia-Rey, Executive Director, Gallery X; Katherine Knowles, Executive Director, Zeiterion Performing Arts Center; Anne Marie Lopes, Director, Office of Tourism & Marketing; and Anne Louro, Community Historic Preservation Planner, City of New Bedford.

AHA! is a project of the Community Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts, and is located with the Foundation in the Sundial Building at 63 Union Street, New Bedford.

### **About the AHA! Project**

**AHA!** was formed in July 1999 as a cooperative venture dedicated to establishing downtown New Bedford as the regional hub for arts and culture. Drawing on the city's diverse cultural resources, AHA! provides free monthly Second Thursday Night downtown celebrations, and pilots cultural economic development initiatives through private and public partnerships. The

project operates with a volunteer Steering Committee and a wealth of in-kind programming provided by its partner venues.

AHA! presented its 104<sup>th</sup> evening this February, marking a significant track record of continuity and growth. The AHA! concept and the project's ongoing ability to present the city's diverse range of cultural venues and downtown businesses in a fresh and compelling way has made it a leading model for cultural economic projects across the state.

Find out more about AHA! at [www.ahanewbedford.org](http://www.ahanewbedford.org)

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