

## MUSEUM

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we get lots and lots of in-house work done.

"There are lots of opportunities to explore new directions," he said.

One of those directions will be toward increased fundraising.

"The museum is preparing to move into a capital campaign phase because we have an expansion planned for the museum," Johnson said. "That's going to entail a lot of fundraising, a lot of cultivation of membership and potential donors, and so my work is transitioning toward more of that kind of thing, and away from day-to-day management, although I still have to do that."

The campaign has required a lot of traveling, he said.

"I've probably been gone a total of one full month if you add it together," he said. "I've been on the road, either to the west coast or the east coast, meeting with trustees, potential donors, making new contacts, trying to build connections. It's a big undertaking for an institution like ours to go out and make something like this happen."

Johnson sees one of his other major responsibilities as getting the word out about the museum's

collection, both close to home and farther out.

"It's a constant process that never goes away," he said. "That's my mission, I think. That's my assignment almost. Particularly with the capital campaign ahead of us. We can't raise the kind of money we need to raise if we're unknown. I'm not convinced we could even raise it within our region."

While the NMM is internationally-known on a scholarly level, it is not known on a broader level by ordinary people.

Johnson himself admits that even he had not visited the museum prior to gaining a position there.

"I am the perfect example of the challenges that this place has, because I had every reason in the world to come here," he said. "My background, my work, my profession would suggest that I would have made a trek here sooner or later."

However, the distance – a good 600 miles – played a major factor Johnson's not visiting.

"That's for someone who had a real reason to come here, so you can imagine your casual tourist. It's an even harder sell," he said. "Why should I come to Vermillion to see the

National Music Museum? That's our constant battle, convincing people even to get off the Interstate."

That promises to change with the new campaign, coupled with the increased visibility the museum is receiving through a series of billboards placed along the Interstate.

Johnson said the NMM is presently working with Lawrence & Schiller on new materials and a new Web site, as well.

"We're pedaling as fast as we can," he said.

Of all his responsibilities, Johnson said the one he enjoys most is discussing with staff, trustees and friends of the museum the direction it will take in the near- and long-term.

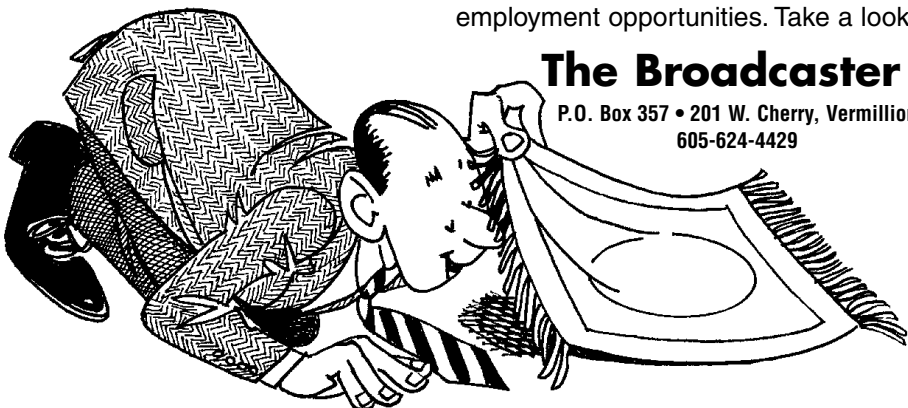
"It has a world-class collection," he said. "It is without compare around the world. But, its reputation does not rise to the quality of its collection. So the big challenge is ... how do you share this collection, as phenomenal as it is, with the world?"

"There are huge challenges there, but also huge opportunities," Johnson said. "So far, it's just been really, really fun envisioning how we can (continue) that process."



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