

Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan
Executive Director Report for Board of Trustees Meeting
October 2022

NEW HISTORY EXHIBIT:

The total estimated cost for the new exhibit project is \$1.5 million.

Phase 1 is estimated at: \$370,500

Phase 2 is estimated at \$1,129,500.

Total Funding raised to date: \$918,650

Funding For Phase 1 totals \$333,900

CFNEM FUNDS

Granum Funds Committed by Board for Phase 1	\$ 50,000
Kent Fund held at CFNEM	\$ 50,000
Cook Fund held at CFNEM	\$ 13,000

GRANTS AWARDED

Besser Foundation	\$ 80,250
MACC Grant	\$ 51,150
Youth and Rec Grant	\$ 75,000
Older Person Grant	\$ 12,500
CFNEM Impact Grant	\$ 2,000

We are waiting to hear from First Federal Legacy Foundation. They are deciding on our \$100,000 grant request in December.

Funding For Phase 2 totals \$584,750

Fundraising Efforts to date:

800 Campaign Brochure were mailed out the week of October 10th. Donors can contribute to the Besser Museum or a special fund at CFNEM.

Information is available on the Museum website.

Alpena News article was published October 13th.

WBKS news report aired October 13th.

Michigan History Magazine is doing a small article on the exhibit project.

We are working on promotional pieces for the Giving Tuesday campaign on November 29th

Exhibit Development: Exhibit Committee members are continuing to work on research and development and preparing documents that will be submitted to the exhibit design firm that is hired for the project.

Project Timeline: January 2023 museum staff will start dismantling the Native American artifacts currently on display. We will vet proposals from exhibit designers and award the contract sometime in January – early February. We will also hire a construction company to demo/renovate the gallery.

BUILDING PROJECTS:

MUSEUM EXTERIOR:

The Capital Improvement projects funded by the Besser Foundation approved \$194,000 Capital Improvement grant are ongoing.

The exterior painting has been completed.

The west side of the new front approach is complete, and the sidewalk is open for visitors. The masonry crew is working on the east side of the front approach. The new flowerbed has been built. Waterproof sealing needs to be applied. Sand will be brought in to form the second half of the circled ramp sidewalk. The block work in fire escape on the east side of the building needs to be completed. Once sidewalk and flowerbeds are complete, topsoil will be brought in and spread. Seeding will most likely not take place until next year. The concrete sill plates for the new flowerbeds will be made throughout the winter months and added as soon as the weather permits.

Most of the new blocks in the artifact storage rooms have been painted the shelving is being put back. storage rooms. Matt and Nate will work on transferring the furniture storage area into the new storage area and prepare what was the furniture storage to store the Christmas exhibit items.

HVAC/Chiller Project:

The Chiller is still experiencing some issues that is believed to be associated with the control system. The museum has to replace a control for one of the values which cost \$3,000. The control has been ordered and the job should be completed shortly.

GREAT LAKES FISHERIES HERITAGE EXHIBIT:

1. **Chinook:** We were awarded **\$386,500** from the DNR Invasive Species Grant to build the Greats Lakes Fisheries Heritage Exhibit.
 - a. **Phase 1:**
 - Huron Engineering has been hired to prepare the site and construction bids:
 - Task Lump Sum Fee
 - Topographic Survey \$1,700
 - Site Design Services \$3,900
 - Geotechnical Services \$6,275**
 - Foundation Design \$4,900
 - Bidding Services \$1,500**
 - Total Lump Sum Fee \$18,275*
2. Huron Engineering expects to have the bids ready by October. They will handle putting out the bids and vetting the proposals.
3. The construction to put up the pole building over the Chinook is undetermined at this time.
4. Lauren from Hammond Bay Biological Station assisted the museum in writing temporary exhibit signage which was put up for Fall Harvest Fossil Fest. We will continue to work on the exhibit narrative.
5. Besser Museum was approved for a Huron Pines AmeriCorp worker in 2023 to work on the Great Lakes Fisheries Exhibit project. We received one application to date and conducted one interview.
6. Tuffy and his volunteers finished building the new hip roof on the Katherine V pole barn.

Planetarium:

1. **Projector Issues:** Johnathan Winckowski has been communicating with planetarium vendors and has compiled a report with several options to consider for addressing the issue.
2. **Funding for new projector:** Johnathan is working with Board members, Jim Johnson, and Mike Beaulac to identify possible grants and submit grant applications.
3. **Beyond the Stars:** Johnathan has developed an educational outreach program for the planetarium that will teach visitors how to navigate the night sky at one of the three dark sky parks in our area. The first class will be held October 21st.

Misc.

- **Fall Harvest Fossil Fest** was successful. We had beautiful weather, approximately 280 people, and \$1,700 in revenue for the day.
- **Season of Light:**
 - Members Only Reception is scheduled for Sunday, November 20th at 6pm – 8pm.
 - We will kick off our membership drive October 20th through November 20th, when we have our raffle drawing for the Season of Light Gala prizes.
 - The application for the raffle license has been submitted, we are just waiting for the license so we can print the tickets.
 - To date we have seven donated raffle items.

Proposed Staff Changes: The Besser Museum has always had to be creative and flexible when it comes to staffing needs. Over the course of my tenure, there has been staff shortages from time to time in every department. This has resulted in staff covering several positions, such as myself working as the Executive Director, Education Coordinator, running the planetarium, and working the front desk all at the same time. I have also covered the Collections Manager position and did the necessary work in that department when that position was empty. Matt has also expanded his job tasks and responsibilities as needed, taking on the role of gift store manager, Guest Services manager, IT support, and running planetarium shows.

The museum budget, in the foreseeable future, will not support another full-time staff member. Inasmuch, we will not be able to fill the empty Education Coordinator position. Considering the ebb and flow of the museum's educational outreach calendar along with museum visitations based on tourism season, the workload of both the Education Coordinator position and the Planetarium Coordinator position could be part-time positions. With that reality in mind, the museum needs to rethink the job duties of a full time Educator and bring all museum education outreach programs and responsibilities under one position. To achieve this transition, we must also rethink the schedule for field trips and planetarium shows based on consumer demand. The busiest times for school fieldtrips are April, May, and June. We have a spike in December for Season of Light, and we have a few scheduled in October through March. For museum tours and planetarium shows, our busiest times are summer tourist season, June through September. Are busiest days being on the weekends, Saturdays, with some spikes during the week.

Moving forward, Planetarium Coordinator, Johnathan Winckowski will be trained to step into the role of Education Coordinator. His duties will include learning all the aspects of educational outreach and museum field trips pertaining to art, history, and science. Johnathan will work in the educational model that has been established and used for the past 13 years. Johnathan will work with the museum's volunteers who served in the educational outreach programs and provided training and guidance. The museum will continue to expand the Education Coordinator job description and expectations of duties as needed. Compensation for increased responsibilities will follow in due time.