

Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan
Executive Director Report for Board of Trustees Meeting
June - July 2020 End of the Year Overview

COVID-19 REOPENING:

- The Museum reopened June 19th and the Planetarium opened July 8th. Although we have visitors coming in, attendance is at limited capacity and extremely light due to COVID.
- Cleaning procedures are being followed and face mask and social distancing signage is posted.

ONGOING PROJECTS

FACILITY:

- **HVAC:** We experienced problems with the HVAC system. On June 18th, the humidity inside the building was of great concern. On June 23rd the humidity inside the museum rose to alarming levels and Lakeshore Plumbing was contacted. They reported that the system had shut off and the Chiller need recharging. It is leaking freon someplace in the system. Air-N-Energy was contacted to check the HVAC computerized control system. Air-N-Energy identified that the water was not cold enough to dehumidify the building. He also found that a sensor was out and some of the dampers are not working correctly.
- **A meeting with R.S. Scott (Susan Edwards) and Apollo Engineering (John Richards) and Air-N-Energy (Mike Bobrowski) was held to assess the problem.** Jim Conboy and Matt Klimczak joined me for this meeting with the abovementioned.
- **Currently**, one of the chiller units is dead, and the other chiller unit has 3 of the 4 components working. R.S. Scott has submitted a proposal to manage the HVAC project keeping within the larger Facility Report - Renovation Plan submitted in December.
- **R.S. Scott Facility Study**
 - In 2018, the Besser Museum contracted with R.S. Scott to conduct a facility study. The study evolved into looking at both the exterior and interior needs and provide recommendation to maintain and/or improve the museums structure and storage capacity. This was in response to the AAM Accreditation Report.
 - December 2019, R.S. Scott submitted their Facility Report to the Board of Trustees. The plan presents 7 priorities that total approximately 1.5 million. Each priority hinges on each other to accomplish the overall goal.
 - Decisions on how best to proceed with the facility renovation plan, along with a funding plan, needs to be developed.

HISTORIC VILLAGE:

- **Log Cabin**

- We are currently reaching out to local contractors to secure bids for the log cabin renovation project.
- May 21, 2020, architect, Richard Neumann (recommended by John Porter from the Mackinac State Parks) conducted a study of the McKay Log Cabin and provided a Physical Condition Assessment and recommendations for renovations.
- A \$25,000 grant application was submitted to Alpena County Youth and Rec.
- A \$10,000 grant application was submitted to Alpena County Older Persons
- A \$5,000 grant application was submitted to CFNEM.
- A \$10,000 cash match (funds from Giving Tuesday) was committed in the grants.
- Alpena County Grants will not be award until December 2020 to be used in 2021.
- Signage for the outside of all the buildings is being developed.

GREAT LAKES FISHERIES HERITAGE EXHIBIT:

- **Chinook**

- We are still waiting to hear from Besser Company if, or when they can build the cradles. We are not sure what they will charge, or if they will build the cradles as an in-kind donation.

- **Katherine V**

- Tuffy continues to work on the exhibit adding props and interpretation.
- Retaining walls were installed around the Katherine V shed so the walls don't cave in.
- Zach Irving recorded the LeBlance fishing family, however, due to the COVID shutdown, the production of the short video has not been completed yet.

ANISHINAABE EXHIBIT REVITALIZATION PROJECT (Native American Gallery)

- Consultants, Charlee Brissette and Calvin Hartwig, members of the Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians, continue work on the thematic outline and narrative for the exhibit renovation. A meeting with Charlee at Besser Museum is scheduled for July 19th.
- Anne Belanger, who will continue to serve as chair of the ad-hoc committee.

FINE ART

- **Modular Walls**

- Besser Foundation approved using money from their \$25,000 Anniversary gift to purchase modular walls for the Wilson Gallery.
- The modular walls from EmagiSpace were order and will arrive in October.
- New gallery lighting will be added in the Wilson art gallery also.

ARTIFACT COLLECTIONS:

- **PastPerfect Data Software**
 - Volunteers continue to upload the handwritten accession logs into the new PastPerfect database. Great progress is being made in this area.
- **Temporary Custody donations**
 - Volunteers have returned to the museum one to two days a week to work in the Temporary Custody collection room.
 - The paperwork for the Temporary Custody donations that were backlogged from 2010/11 have been processed.
 - The Collection Committee was meeting once a week making determinations on whether to accept or reject the donated object. Decisions on over 100 TC donations were made. Many of the items were either returned to donor or disposed of with donor permission. The objects that were kept will be formally accessioned into the museum's collections.
 - Museum professional, Laura Quackenbush will visit July 31st to instruct volunteers in next steps for accessioning the TC donations.
- **Inventory**
 - Soon, the Collections Committee and Volunteers will be devising a plan to inventory and do condition reports on the objects in the collections.
 - Laura Quackenbush will provide consultation for this project also.
 - We hope to have an intern or possibly hire a new Collections Technicians that will work with Volunteers to accomplish this task.

MISCELLENOUS:

- Matt has been working on the museum yard: keeping the grass cut and weeds sprayed.
- Matt got the fountain going for the summer.
- Garden Club volunteers come several times a week to work on the flowers in the front.
- Matt is working with Tuffy on the foundation of the Kat V exhibit. Sand/gravel fill is needed to fill in at the base of the pole barn to prevent rain washing dirt under the boat.
- Amanda is working on the design layout for the signs for the Historic Village
- Amanda continues to create Facebook posts.
- Johnathan continues to create posts for Facebook and shows for his live planetarium presentations.
- Katrina continues to create museum brochures, keep the website updated, service museum memberships, and manage front desk activities, which includes the gift store.