

Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan
Executive Director Report for Board of Trustees Meeting
March 2017

1. Reaccreditation:

Creating Action Plan to Submit to AAM Reaccreditation Board.

- a. Our deadline to submit a plan was extended to May 25th.
- b. Phil Deloria has provided a draft of the work plan and will be submitting the draft for the AAM progress report soon.
- c. Ron Bloomfield, CMU Museums Collections Manager and Museum Studies Instructor, is planning on using the Besser Museum's AAM reaccreditation process as a case study for his college course this Fall/Spring semesters. He is also working on possible internship partnership with the museum. Ron is also helping review the AAM progress report and Collections Manager resumes.
- d. After Ron Bloomfield stated that the rooms our collections are being stored in are mechanical rooms and that our collections are at risk being stored under waterpipes and heat ducts, I have been working on plans to create safer storage areas.
 - i. Don Gilmet walked through the museum to access the possibility of having the suppressed water fire system turned off in what could possibly be the new storage areas.
 - ii. I spoke with the director of Cranbrook about the possibility of gifting, selling, or off-sight displaying the wildlife animal collection we received from them approximately six years ago.

2. Staffing:

- a. **Three new part-time employees started as our Guest Services Specialists.** Katrina Brooks, Grace Reimer, and Jamie Heussner are off to a great start and are adding value to the team.
- b. **Education Outreach Coordinator:** The Education Outreach Coordinator job description is posted on the Michigan Museum Association website, the Besser Museum website, and the AAM website. We have received several resumes for this position. The ad-hoc personnel committee (Chris Witulski, Tad LaCoursiere, Steve Lappan, Anne Belanger, and John Caplis) will be reviewing resumes and scheduling interviews for the week of April 9th – 13th.
- c. **Collections Manager:** The Collections Manager job description is posted on the Michigan Museum Association website, the Besser Museum website, and the AAM website. We are receiving some very promising resumes for this position. The ad-hoc personnel committee for the Collections Manager position (Chris Witulski, Steve Lappan, Anne Belanger, Phil Deloria and Ron Bloomfield) will be reviewing resumes. Interviews will be schedule sometime in April.
- d. **It cost \$500 to post the Education and Collections Manager positions on the AAM website.**

3. Facilities:

- a. Elevator repairs are ongoing. Matt Klimczak, Steve Lappan and Michael Ableidinger have been working on this project. The insurance inspector was here on Monday, March 12th. We are waiting to hear.
- b. Researching the possibilities of retrofitting areas in the lower level to serve as collections storage areas.
- c. See Facility Report submitted by Matt Klimczak

4. Native American Exhibit Project:

- a. An advisory committee was formed and have held two meetings to date.
 - i. Monday, February 26th at 6pm.
 - ii. Monday, March 12th at 6pm
- b. Subcommittees have been formed and tasks have been assigned for research and development of content.
- c. Good Design Group is working closely with the committee to provide conceptual exhibit plans for the Native American exhibit based on committee input.

5. Fisheries Exhibit: The committee is meeting and work is ongoing.

- a. Grant Payments were due April 1st; however, a no-cost extension was grant for May 15th.
- b. Good Design will help craft the Final Report, which is due 60 days after.
- c. We need to come up with a plan to get the Kahlenberg Engine back to the museum.

6. Art:

- a. **NEMAG: Whatever the Weather art exhibit opens April 14th**

7. Education:

- a. We are booking school groups for Spring Field Trips
- b. I have been working on developing the lesson plans for this year's school groups with help from staff and museum volunteers.
- c. I will be recruiting and training volunteers.
- d. I will be sending out letters to area teachers to promote this year's educational programs.
- e. Sent a sponsorship request to DTE Foundation for June's Log Cabin Day event.

8. Planetarium:

- a. Attendance in the planetarium has been very good. Please refer to Tad's monthly report for full details.
- b. We are waiting to hear the status of the grant submitted to CFNEM for \$3,500 to purchase a digital presentation for our Littlest Learners planetarium program. This program is geared to families of preK-2nd grade students. It will run on Saturdays at 12:00 p.m. Each seat will be \$3. Tad has already been building programs for

Littlest Learners and marketing has been slowly rolling out as the programs are being built.

9. Exhibits: exhibits are set until April.

10. Marketing:

- a. During the audit, it was discovered that there is \$5,297 in the temporary restricted fund for the past two or three years. That account has not been utilized and they auditor suggest we make a plan to spend down that inactive accountant. **I propose we use those funds to increase this year's marketing budget to promote the museum and the new planetarium into a wider market.**
- b. **Ongoing Website/Facebook/Email marketing: Kat is working part-time (approximately 10 hours a month) to maintain our website.**

11. Gift Store:

- a. **The Town That Would Die:**
 - i. We have 73 books left in inventory. We ordered 1500 books in 2002
 - ii. We have sold on average approximately 40 books annually for the past few years
 - iii. In the past, we have donated books to local organizations for fundraiser and have used them as incentives for memberships
 - iv. We sell the books for \$15.95. The most profitable bid from Allegra is to order 1500 for \$12,000. This order could last the museum for the next 20 years or so, or not. The Besser Museum is the only organization that prints this book.
- b. New store products are always being researched.
- c. The new Guest Services employees are keeping the Gift Shop Facebook page updated and current.

12. Miscellaneous:

- a. **Employee Handbook:** Still working on updating employee handbook. Should have a finalized copy ready for Board review this month.
- b. **Governor's Conference on Tourism:** I will be traveling to Grand Rapids on March 27th and 28th for the Governor's Conference on Tourism with three other members of the Lake Huron Discovery Tour. We will be giving a presentation on Innovated Tourism.
- c. **STATE Theater letters.** In May of 2017, AMC Theater contacted the Besser Museum about removing the letters from the marque and donating them to the Besser Museum so that they would stay in the community. AMC Theater did sign a Temporary Custody Donation form on May 15, 2017. We also have emails explaining their intentions to donate the letters to the Besser Museum if removed. At the time, I spoke with Mike Phillips to see if we could store them at the Centennial Building if they were donated. Since then, a community campaign has started to try to keep the marque intact. Other ideas have been discussed by the

Public Art Sculpture committee to maybe add them artistically to the bi-path.

There has been no further discussion as to when or if the letters will be removed.

- d. Vacation:** The first week of April I will be on vacation
- e. Interviews:** The personnel committee will begin scheduling interviews for the second week of April