

Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan
Executive Director Report for Board of Trustees Meeting
January 2023

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: \$1,210,650.

Funding For Phase 1 to date:	\$349,888
Cash available Exhibit Fund at Nicolet Bank:	\$41,518
Cash available in Exhibit Fund at CFNEM:	\$67,470
Besser Foundation Phase 1:	\$80,250
MACA Grant available for Phase 1:	\$51,150
Youth and Rec Grant for Phase 1:	\$75,000
Older Persons for Phase 1:	\$12,500
Park Family Fund at CFNEM:	\$20,000
CFNEM Grant for Phase 1:	\$2,000

Funding For Phase 2 to date:	\$1,215,382
Besser Foundation	\$319,750
Kent Fund at CFNEM:	\$50,000
Private Donor Pledges at CFNEM:	\$65,632
Private Donor Pending	\$200,000
Park Family Foundation	\$80,000
Granum Fund Line of Credit	\$500,000

A \$10,000 grant was submitted to PIE&G in January. Still waiting to hear.

A \$40,000 request to sponsor the Industrial Revolution exhibit was sent to Besser Company.

A request for funding was sent to Jim Park and Family in January. The Park Family will be contributing \$100,000 to the project. \$20,000 is coming from the Park Museum Fund held at CFNEM. The other \$80,000 is coming from the Park Foundation. They will be sponsoring the Thunder Bay River exhibit.

The Grant Committee (me, Judy Suszek, and Janet Young) is working on a grant proposal through the MEDC. We are also working on a Michigan Humanities: Great Stories \$25,000 grant due May 5. If awarded, these funds will be used to develop the research Janet Young has been conducting for the Anishinaabe of Northeast Michigan story.

Exhibit Development: Mike Beaulac, Matt Klimczak and I meet with James from Split Rock Studios to discuss details of their proposal. The Split Rock Studios rep said our budget looks good, our time looks good, and the work our committee is doing is good. Mike will make a

recommendation to the Board to award the exhibit design and fabrication contract to Split Rock. Once the contract is signed, Split Rock visit the Besser Museum and meet with the Exhibit Committee members to discuss next steps. Research is ongoing in all eleven areas of the History Exhibit.

Project Timeline: January 2023 Museum staff started dismantling the Native American exhibit. Matt and Nate built a wall across the entry of the gallery and installed a door with a lock for the safety of the artifacts. The wall was painted black and displays Cornerstone's schematic drawings of the new Discover Northeast Michigan History Exhibit. Inside the gallery, walls, paneling, and cement blocks have been removed.

Sarah, Matt, and I discussed the process of dismantling the artifact cases. Matt was able to get Sarah set up with a computer with access to the Past Perfect program so that the artifacts can be photographed, inventoried, and cataloged as each case is dismantled. The artifacts that will go back into the new exhibit will be stored separately from those going into storage. Sarah and her volunteers will start working on packing away the artifacts starting February 14th.

Matt plans on doing most of the demo of the old display cases once emptied.

A temporary Native American exhibit has been set up in the Wilson Gallery with several of the artifacts too large to get downstairs and a few of the stone tools and baskets.

Once Split Rock Studios develops the detailed exhibit build plans, local contractors will be hired to do more demolition, removal of ceiling, installation of drywall, electrical and lightening and whatever else is needed as directed by Split Rock Studios and Cornerstone Architects.

BUILDING PROJECTS:

ADA Automatic Door Openers: Frank's Key and Lock Shop installed the hardware on February 6th. Omega Electric wired the hardware on February 7th. Alpena Glass needs to adjust the door, so it doesn't hit the floor and opens smoothly. That will be accomplished in the next few days. Besser Museum will finally be ADA accessible.

MUSEUM EXTERIOR:

The \$194,000 Exterior Capital Improvement projects funded by the Besser Foundation is almost complete. Meridian will return in the spring to finish putting the sills on the flowerbeds and check on the grass seed. We are working with the volunteer gardeners for a new landscape design for the front entry. I reached out to the City Manager about possibly getting the old Culligan Plaza fountain sculpture donated to the museum. This would make a great addition in our front approach area. I am also working with a potential donor to sponsor the development of this new garden area.

HVAC/Chiller Project:

Johnson and Woods and Control Solutions will return when the weather changes to finalize the chiller installation project.

GREAT LAKES FISHERIES HERITAGE EXHIBIT:

Chinook: \$386,500 DNR Invasive Species Grant.

We are waiting on Huron Engineering to get our drawings done to specifications. Once done, the drawings will be submitted to the DNR for approval. Once approved, they job will be put out for bid.

Planetarium:

We have been in discussion with a potential major donor for the planetarium. This donor has also contacted several board members to discuss the stability of the museum, the make of the Board, and his interest in donating to the planetarium.

Planetarium Other:

1. **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. These classes have been going well.
2. **Radio Program:** Recently Johnathan did a radio interview with Deb Michaels from HitsFM. Deb expressed an interest in doing a daily “star talk” with Johnathan that would air twice a day and help promote the planetarium. Deb will start working with Johnathan in February.

Misc.

- New Exhibit in the Wilson Gallery: Around the 80s will be up through August 2023.
- The non-juried art exhibit will be on display through April 15.
- Carol Lund’s art will be displayed on the Center Gallery walls in January 21 through July 29.
- Accounting Policy. Marie Williams has been researching museum accounting practices and will propose a new policy that capitalize exhibits and be amortized over their lifetime. She hopes to present the new policy to the Board for approval at the March meeting. This change better on our balance sheet because there will be more assets. Right now, it is being counted as a cost. An asset is that it has future value.