

Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan
Executive Director Report for Board of Trustees Meeting
June/July/August 2019

The museum has experienced an increase in visitors this summer.

Museum attendance for July 2019 was 1771 visitors – compared to July 2018 which was 1276 visitors

Museum attendance for August 2019 is already at 647 visitors as of 8/12/2019 – compared to August 2018 which was 441 visitors as of 8/12/2018.

1. Human Resources:

- a. This past July, I had staff members complete an organizational and self-evaluation. I also conducted the annual staff performance reviews. Four staff members received budget approved pay raises.
 - i. The organizational and self-evaluation asks each employee to submit to me in writing what they see as their professional strengths and weakness and if available, what professional opportunities do they feel would be beneficial to their professional growth. They are asked to evaluate the museum staff and the museum as well. This information will be used in staff meetings to help improve on all levels.
 - ii. The staff performance reviews contain goals set by the Executive Director for each department. These goals are areas of focus for each employee as part of their regular job duties. The staff have been asked to submit their strategic plan to achieve these goals. The CONFIDENTIAL Staff performance reviews will be emailed to Board of Trustee members separately from this report.
- b. The Board HR Committee has been reviewing **Employee Handbook**: The committee will present a proposal for sick days and personal days to be added to the handbook.

2. Governance Committee: Working through the Vision/Mission/Governance portion of the StEPs program. The committee will submit a report to the Board at the August meeting. The Governance Committee will start reviewing the museum's 2002 Code of Ethic document.

3. Facilities:

- a. Susan Edwards from R.S. Scott Associates brought a mechanical engineer to discuss temperature and humidity controls (HAVC systems) in different zones. R.S. Scott will have a plan submitted to the museum by December 2019.

4. Native American Exhibit Project: ONGOING

- a. I meet with Roger Cook in July. He is happy with the environmental theme the museum will focus on as part on the new interpretation for the Native American exhibit.
- b. Genealogical research is ongoing.
- c. Had meetings with a Saginaw Chippewa historian at the Ziiibiwing Center on July 22nd, a Ottawa historian in Manistee August 9th, will meet with a Sault Chippewa historian on August 21st.
- d. Developing a new introduction for the Native American gallery with the focus on the Thunder Bay River and the 1819 Treat of Saginaw and the 1836 Treat of Washington.

5. Fisheries Exhibit:

- a. August 6th and 7th: MacArthur Construction Excavated the area for the Chinook concrete pad and around the Katherine V pole barn.
- b. August 7th: Zann Construction put in the concrete pad for the Chinook.

- c. August 9th: Specification Stone Products donated a truckload of gravel to prepare the site for the concrete retaining wall.
- d. August 9th: Bedrock Construction hauled over the donated gravel to the museum.
- e. August 9th: Don's Tractor donated the use of a tractor for Matt to move the gravel.
- f. August 9th: Received email from Mark Straley (R.S. Scott) letting me know he is in communication with Besser Company. Besser Company does have scrap metal that can be used for the cradles. The cost to design and build the cradles has yet to be estimated.
- g. L & S has discounted the concrete retaining blocks and may donate more to the project.
- h. DeRocher Masonry (Thunder Bay Concrete Products) will donate most of the cost to transport the blocks from L&S and place the retaining walls in place at the museum
- i. Tuffy is continuing to work on the Katherine V and historic fish village. He and Matt repaired the walls to the pole barn.
- j. An interview with Albert LaBlance and his brothers is being arranged for June 12th. Proposal for this project was presented to the Board. Funding will come from the restricted Katherine V exhibit fund.
- k. Jim would like to hold a meeting to discuss the next steps in funding the Chinook exhibit.

6. Art

- a. **NEMAG** exhibit is opened and will run through September. They are holding their Really Big Art Sale. A portion of sales will be donated to the museum.
- b. **June Perry** is last year's Juried Art winner and will be opening her solo exhibit on Saturday, August 24th with a free open house reception from 2pm to 4pm. The Founders will host this event.
- c. **Shirley Ritzler Art Exhibit and Fundraiser Proposal:** The prints for the Shirley Ritzler exhibit will be funded by the Candance Smith Fund. The cost will be approximately \$1,000.
- d. **Juried Art Exhibit:** Noel Skiba will be this year's Juried Art judge. We will be accepting juried art work October 6th through October 12th. The exhibit will open Saturday, October 26th. We will also host an exhibit by Noel Skiba in the Wilson Gallery in January 2020 through September 2020.

7. Collections:

- a. The new storage area shelving is in place. Some shelf lining needs to be ordered.
- b. Volunteers continue to work on data input into Past Perfect.
- c. Working with CMU to develop an internship program and secure future Collections Manager.

8. Education:

- a. There are several new programs Amanda Kucharek is working on. Please refer to the Education Coordinator report for more details.
- b. The High School students exhibit, We Fought Back will be on exhibit until October 31st.

9. Planetarium Highlights:

- a. Attendance at the planetarium has been up this summer. It is nice to see lots of newspaper ad coupons from around Northern Michigan being brought in.
- b. The Apollo 11th exhibit and programs
 - i. July 13 a moon gazing/telescope event at Rockport was well attended
 - ii. July 20 a free family fun day to celebrate the first man on the moon was well attended
 - iii. John Heath participated in the August 2nd Rockport Meteors and Smores event
 - iv. John Heath and Johnathan Winckowski participated in the August 7th Negwegon Dark Sky event.

10. Other:

- a.** Accounting:
 - i. I am continuing to work with Marie Williams making changes to the accounting system.
 - ii. We will be starting our annual audit soon.
 - iii. Working on completing the Cultural Data Project application.
- b.** Fall Harvest Fossil Fest will be held Saturday, October 5, 2019.
 - i. The Besser Museum will not be receiving financial support for the program this year. Lafarge will participate in the quarry tours; however, Specification Stone Products are unable to participate in the quarry tours this year.
 - ii. This year we wanted to add a new twist to Fall Harvest Fossil Fest. The new twist will be Fudge. We will look at having fudge making demonstrations. The Founders Society will be serving fudge brownies and hot fudge sundaes.
- c.** Season of Light: November, Saturday 16th – plans are underway.