

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

COVID-19 REOPENING:

- The Besser Museum is opened for self-guided tours from 10 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. Visitor capacity continues to be limited to 25 people in the building at a time. Planetarium capacity is limited to a maximum of 14 people in the planetarium at a time.
- CDC guidelines are still in place: masks, social distancing, disinfecting.
- Museum admissions and store sales are picking up some.

ONGOING PROJECTS

FACILITY:

- **HVAC:** Besser Museum received a contract from **R.S. Scott**, which included Apollo Engineering (John Richards) as the subcontractor, for the work needing to be done on the HVAC system. This contract was reviewed by attorney, Dan Florip and the recommended changes to the contract were sent back to R.S. Scott for review and approval. We are waiting to hear back from R.S. Scott.

HISTORIC VILLAGE:

- **Log Cabin**
 - Robert Kenel is a professional contractor specializing in log cabin restoration. He visited the Besser Museum in July and will be preparing a bid for the work that needs to be done the cabin. His website is <https://grizzlybobcabinfever.com/>
 - Kenel has worked on a project with architect, Rick Neumann. Neumann prepared the physical assessment of the log home for the grant applications.
 - 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. Donor, Bob Smith would like his Candance Smith Endowment funds, held at CFNEM, to be used to purchase the signage for the village.
 - Matt prepared the construction site around the log cabin by cleaning up the shrubs and overgrowth around the log cabin and removing a rotten tree.
 - Kenel advised that the log cabin be blocked off to the public for safety. Matt roped off the cabin with caution tape.

GREAT LAKES FISHERIES HERITAGE EXHIBIT:

- **Chinook**
 - Tom Moran, Moran Iron Works and Dave Dombrowski, Director at the Industrial Arts Institute in Onaway have agreed to take on the project of building the cradles for the Chinook. The Besser Museum will make a reasonable donation to IAI for the design, build, and delivery of the cradles. We hope to have the cradles shortly.
 - Matt finished the landscaping around the retaining walls for the Chinook exhibit.
- **Katherine V**
 - Tuffy continues to work on the exhibit adding props and interpretation.
 - Matt and Tuffy continue to landscape and improve a walkway to the exhibit.
 - I need to contact Zach Irving about the LeBlance fishing family video.

ANISHINAABE EXHIBIT REVITALIZATION PROJECT (Native American Gallery)

- Work continues.
- Anne Belanger, who will continue to serve as chair of the ad-hoc committee.

ART

- Wilson Art Gallery Renovation: Besser Foundation \$25,000 Anniversary Gift
 - The modular walls from EmagiSpace were order and will arrive in October. The total cost was \$9,438.54.
 - New gallery lighting in the Wilson Gallery was purchased. The total cost was approximately \$4,000.
- 2020 Juried Art Exhibit:
 - Brochures were mailed out
 - Justin Cooper from the Art in the Loft will be our judge
 - We did state we will have an opening reception in the brochure, however that might be canceled, and no food will be served if it is held. The opening is scheduled for Sunday, November 1st.

ARTIFACT COLLECTIONS:

- **Reorganizing of Space for Collection Storage**
 - What was Richard Clute's office space is being prepared for artifact storage
 - The wood carvers/workspace area is being prepared for artifact storage
 - The Library area is being reorganized for better storage area
 - Working with professional museum storage unit sales representatives to maximum storage space and purchase new shelving units to help mitigate damage to artifacts. Looking to allocate funds from the Besser Foundation Anniversary gift to purchase shelving units.
- **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.
 - Museum professional, Laura Quackenbush visited the museum and worked with volunteers on July 31st.
- **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:

- **Education Outreach:** Museum staff is working on restructuring the educational outreach programs to meet the needs of parents and students due to the changes in the school systems caused by COVID. The plan is to create thematic units that will host up to 10 students at a time in a 45 minutes session. These sessions would be designed to build on each session and run for a five-week course.
- **October 3, 2020 Fall Harvest Fossil Fest:** Due to COVID and the uncertainty of where we will be in the 8 weeks, the decision was made to cancel Fall Harvest Fossil Fest.
- **Season of Light Exhibit planning underway.** We are uncertain of what the opening reception might look like. The opening reception usually is held the 3rd Saturday of November.