

Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan
Executive Director Report for Board of Trustees Meeting
October - November 2020

COVID-19: Plan for another Shut Down:

- Governor Whitmer may be issuing another shutdown/work from home order due to COVID-19. This shutdown may last for up to 3 weeks.
- STAFF PLAN: Depending on the State mandated guidelines for a November Stay at Home Order, I propose the Board maintain full time staff and allow the:
 - Facility Manager and Executive Director continue to work at the museum following safety guidelines.
 - Education Coordinator and Planetarium Coordinator continue work from home continuing to develop educational outreach content and utilize the social media platforms and allow access to the museum/planetarium when they can do so following safety guidelines.
 - Guests Services/Admin Assistance can continue to work both from home and safely at the museum on the Giving Tuesday Campaign, the store inventory, assisting with the annual audit (scheduled for November 23rd if we don't postponed it), membership renewal letters, updating messages on the front sign, and general messages on social media platforms, and other general tasks conducted in this capacity.

When permitted to reopen, the Besser Museum will follow all the CDC health guidelines we already have in place:

- The Besser Museum will be 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 15 people in the planetarium at a time.
- CDC guidelines are still in place: masks, social distancing, disinfecting.

ONGOING PROJECTS

FACILITY:

- **HVAC:** Matt has provided Apollo Engineering (John Richards) as the subcontractor, with the blueprints of the current HVAC system and ductwork. We are waiting to hear from Richards.

HISTORIC VILLAGE:

- **Log Cabin project is estimated at \$85,000: \$62,000 Phase 1 - \$23,000 Phase 2**
 - **Funding Plan:**
 - We received a **\$25,000** grant from Alpena County Youth and Rec.
 - We received word that we may be awarded **\$8,750** from the Alpena County Older Persons grant

- No word yet on the **\$2,500** Youth Council grant submitted for the October cycle.
- We will submit a **\$5,000** grant request to CFNEM for the January 2021 cycle.
- Besser Museum will use **\$10,000** towards the Log Cabin from 2019 Giving Tuesday. (Last year's Giving Tuesday campaign raised \$15,000)
- The GIVING TUESDAY brochures seeking support for the Log Cabin restoration project will go out on Monday. Giving Tuesday is December 1st this year.

- Robert Kenel, professional contractor specializing in log cabin restoration submitted a bid for approximately \$85,000.
- Mike Kendziorski and local log cabin contractor Dave Cook, and son John will be providing the museum with a bid. John is researching materials and will get back with us.
- Amanda is still working on the rough designs for the 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.

GREAT LAKES FISHERIES HERITAGE EXHIBIT:

- **Chinook**
 - Jim Johnson, Tuffy, and volunteers built a protection shelter around the Chinook.
- **Katherine V**
 - Tuffy and volunteers closed up the Katherine V for the season.
 - Janet Young will be working with Tuffy and Jim to capture their stories of working aboard the Chinook. This information will go into the interpretation of the exhibit.

ANISHINAABE EXHIBIT REVITALIZATION PROJECT (Native American Gallery)

- Consultant, Charlee Brissette submitted her October 31st report.
- She will present to the Board at the November 17th meeting.
- Anne Belanger and I meet with Sandra Clark, Director of Michigan History Center to discuss our exhibit renovation project and glean from MHC's experience in renovating their exhibit.

ART: Work is ongoing

- Wilson Art Gallery Renovation:
 - The modular walls from EmagiSpace will be installed by Panel Processing in January.
 - We will work with volunteer Vicki Wright to set exhibits from our own collection for 2021 in the new spaces.

- 2020 Juried Art Exhibit: The exhibit is open
 - Justin Cooper from the Art in the Loft judged the exhibit.
 - The exhibit will be open Nov. 1st through Dec. 31st.

ARTIFACT COLLECTIONS: Major work has been ongoing in the collection storage areas for months. Both Matt has spent countless hours of physical labor moving furniture, shelving, and artifacts. We have been working to get these spaces organized and set up for our volunteers who are also putting in a tremendous amount of work to help get our collections organized.

- **Reorganizing of Space for Collection Storage**
- **PastPerfect Data Software**
 - PastPerfect database. Volunteers have been continuing to enter the handwritten accession logs. This project is almost completed.
 - The Collection Volunteers and Committee continue to work on the backlog of artifacts that came during 2010 and 2019. This includes all the Temporary Custody items. Progress continues to be made in this area.
 - Sarah Honeycutt started working part time at the front desk and is also working with the collection volunteers. Sarah is doing an outstanding job with the collections. Currently, the plan is to groom Sarah into the Collection Management position.
- **Temporary Custody donations**
 - Museum professional, Laura Quackenbush collections training workshop has been postponed at this time due to COVID-19.
- **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.
 - Before inventory starts, Facility Manager, Matt Klimczak will need to complete setting up the new collection storage areas.

MISCELLENOUS:

- **Education Outreach:**
 - Several teachers are utilizing the free extra credit **Independent Field Trip** program. The Besser Museum has redeemed several of the assignments.
 - The museum purchased some new equipment that can enhance Johnathan's virtual outreach on social media. A 360-video camera and some equipment that allows Johnathan to take pictures and video through a telescope. Johnathan will be hosting a ZOOM presentation in the planetarium with an elementary school in

Alaska. This small island school started a ZOOM Around the World program recently. It is a unique opportunity for the museum that could potentially turn into more national and global outreach.

- Johnathan and Amanda (Education Coordinator) will use the new 360 video camera to make virtual tours of the museum. Amanda has also been working on the Season of Light exhibit helping to decorate. Amanda and Katrina decorated the Avenue of Shops. Amanda also worked with volunteers to decorate the Trees of Nations exhibit. Amanda updated all the education outreach materials for the Trees of Nations.

- **Season of Light Exhibit set to open November 21st/22nd.**
 - The staff have been extremely busy preparing for our Season of Light exhibit.
 - DeLynn Medina and her mother Marilyn have been working alongside museum staff to create a beautiful exhibit for the main entrance.
 - The exhibit opening festivities have been planned for Saturday, November 21st, and Sunday November 22nd. Information was sent out in the last newsletter and marketing went out throughout northern Michigan.
 - **HOWEVER:** due to the possible 3-week shutdown in November, the Besser Museum will postpone the opening of Season of Light until the State reopens. The exhibit may run from Dec ? through the end of January. We will follow the planned format for the Season of Light exhibit opening event which limits capacity inside the museum to only 25 visitors.