

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

COVID-19: We have not changed our capacity or mode of operation since 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 15 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 signed 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. I am waiting for a response from an email asking Susan Edwards about the progress on this project.

HISTORIC VILLAGE:

- **Log Cabin: STILL WAITING TO HEAR ON GRANTS**
 - 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.
 - We received a \$25,000 grant from Alpena County Youth and Rec.
 - We are waiting to hear about the \$10,000 grant application submitted to Alpena County Older Persons
 - A \$2,500 Youth Council grant was submitted for the October cycle.
 - A \$5,000 CFNEM grant request will be submitted for the January 2021 cycle.
 - 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.
 - 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**
 - The Chinook was move into place September 23rd
 - MIW charged \$1,500
 - Kel Mills from Able Crane has not sent an invoice for his services yet.
- **Katherine V**
 - Tuffy continues to work on the exhibit adding props and interpretation.
 - I am waiting on Zack Irving to continue work on LeBlance fishing family video.
 - Janet Young will be working with Tuffy and Jim to

ANISHINAABE EXHIBIT REVITALIZATION PROJECT (Native American Gallery)

- Consultant, Charlee Brissette will submit her next report Oct. 31st.
- Anne Belanger, who will continue to serve as chair of the ad-hoc committee.
- We are reaching out to 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:**
 - Justin Cooper from the Art in the Loft will be our judge
 - To date, we have approximately 80 entries, with 3 more days left to enter.
 - We will not hold a large gathering for this year's opening. 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**
 - Professional museum storage sales rep from The Casper Corporation visited the museum and provided a design layout to maximum storage space in the new storage rooms. Just the large room would cost \$78,000 or \$98,000 for powered shelving units. We decided to purchase shelving from Niemann's for \$1,000. Matt has been working to set up the shelving in the big room.

- **PastPerfect Data Software**
 - Volunteers continue to upload the handwritten accession logs into the new PastPerfect database. Great progress is being made in this area. We are more than way half done.
 - Sarah Honeycutt started working part time at the front desk and is also working with the collection volunteers.
- **Temporary Custody donations**
 - We are making plans to invite museum professional, Laura Quackenbush back to the museum to hold a training workshop for volunteers to learn about accession and labeling artifacts. This is an important step in the process.
- **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.

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.
 - We launched the free extra credit Independent Field Trip program offer to teachers. Teachers will have the option to assign extra credit for students visiting a planetarium program through the 2020/21 school year. We will not charge students and one adult chaperone if they are given an extra credit assignment.
 - Johnathan reported that we are already getting reservation for the planetarium shows. Also, Johnathan has been talking to John Caplis about possibly connecting with some of his high school students to volunteer in the planetarium and possibly learn how to create shows.
 - Amanda, Education Coordinator continues to work on creating self-directed activities for parents and students in each gallery. I also started working with Amanda to create a Museum Minute video tours. Sarah Honeycutt will also start working with Amanda on this project.
- **Season of Light Exhibit planning underway.**
 - DeLynn Medina and her mother Marilyn are working on exhibit props
 - The exhibit opening festivities will be held Saturday, November 21st and Sunday November 22nd. Information on this event is in the newsletter. More marketing will be done to promote the Season of Light exhibit and opening festivities.

Season of Hope - Peace on Earth

of Light reception will look different this year. Due to COVID we must get CREATIVE for CHRISTMAS. Season Festivities include: Exhibit Opening, planetarium show, Santa, door prizes, crafts, cookies, and punch.

Tickets: \$15 adult / \$10 child / \$10 member

Tickets must be purchased before event – no tickets available at door

Limited number of tickets available (Half for Planetarium A/B – make sure to group properly)

Guest Gift: With ticket: Choice of Ornament / Judy Dawley book / Mystery gift bag for kids

Dates/Time: Saturday (11/21)

Sunday (11/22)

(Time slots) 11 – 12:30

12 – 1:30

1 – 2:30

2 – 3:30

3 – 4:30

Planetarium Shows + tour times – 45 min each with 30 minutes to clear out/clean for next tour

(Star of Bethlehem)

Door Prizes: We will seek donations from local businesses as we've done in the past. All guests will have a chance for a door prize drawing.

Crafts: Education Coordinator, Amanda will provide craft activities/stations

Refreshments:

Cookies – The museum has lots of cookies in the freezer donated from John Benson
Punch

Founders Society may help host the cookie and punch table

Theme: DeLynn Medina and Marilyn Thom are helping with exhibit decorations

Blue / White / Silver

Snowflakes / Musical

Katrina is contacting organizations for the Community Tree Exhibit

Trees of Nations Exhibit