

MUSEUM COALITION START-UP MEETING

March 10, 2014 at Marilla Museum & Pioneer Place

The following is a summarization of the initial start-up meeting for exploring the forming an area wide museum coalition:

Present:

- Janet Stroup and Sonny Miller (Brethren Heritage Society)
- Mark Fedder (Manistee County Museum)
- Mary Reed (Onekama start-up)
- Bev Johnson and Doreen Yonkman (Kaleva Historical Society)
- Judy Bullock and Sandra Spencer (Mesick Historical Society)
- Jan Thomas, Bob Thomas, and Phyllis Cholette (Marilla Historical Society)
- Carol Voights (Arts & Culture Alliance of Manistee Co.)

Time was offered for guests to tour the museum spaces and view the special display “Our Children Through the Years” prepared by Betty Buda, Jan Thomas, and Bob Thomas .

I heard from representatives from both the Bear Lake and Copemish historical groups regarding their strong interest in initiating a museum alliance. There has been a lot of positive feedback about beginning the alliance.

Carol Voights as representative from the ACA explained the mission of the group, its role in initiating an area wide museum alliance, how the ACA can assist groups with its non-profit status and be of support to the various museum groups.

After discussion about ways that the museum groups could benefit by forming a coalition, it was determined that we would proceed. These were some of the ideas that were put forth about how the museum groups can support each other:

- Sharing items for interpretive displays
- Developing a common resource list of people with specialized skills to help interpret history through areas of music, historical interpretation, dance, and drama for programming and special events.

- We recognize that each group has persons who are skilled in various ways that are helpful in administering museums and their historical boards. Some of these persons could act in a consulting capacity as needed.
- We share common history across the geographical boundaries that separate us. Each museum could benefit by the sharing of that history with each other.
- Cooperating to offer special area wide lecture series that would be hosted by different groups.
- Developing a museum trail map
- Visitation to each museum area so that we can learn from each other how to better utilize space, solve storage issues, improve display techniques, and develop better ways to care for archival items
- Informing groups about upcoming opportunities for workshops relating to operating museums
- The camaraderie that we offer to each other could result in a wonderful support system.

It was determined that we would meet 3 times a year in the spring, summer, and fall seasons of the year. Kaleva Historical Museum is considering hosting the next meeting probably sometime in July. We were asked to consider bringing the suggestion of a project that we could work on to the next meeting. The group offered several suggestions for what to name the coalition group. Here are the suggestions:

- Northwest River & Valley Museum Collective
- Manistee River Museum Coalition
- Museum Collective of Manistee County & Surrounding Areas
- Michigan West Shore Tri-County Museum Coalition

We're looking for a name that is inclusive so that no group will seem just "tagged on". Please be thinking about possible names and either e-mail your suggestions or bring them to the next meeting.

We look forward to meeting in the summer. Thank you for your interest in this endeavor.

Jan Thomas, director of Marilla Museum & Pioneer Place