



March 13, 2015

Mayor Donald D. Lyons
City Council Members

Dear Mayor Lyons and City Council Members:

Upcoming Meetings: CAUA meeting 3/16/15 7:00 pm

The following report has been prepared to provide you with an update on current issues or projects in progress:

Good News on Grants

Sunshine was not the only good thing received this week in Dowagiac. Exciting updates on two grant applications have arrived.

Personal Protective Equipment

Director of Public Safety, Steve Grinnwald, reports on the status of an application submitted in June of 2014. Notice arrived from the USDA on grant request for firefighting Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as well as an Extractor Washer which to clean the PPE. The current PPE in use is at the end of its useful life and needs to be replaced. The Extractor Washer allows the PPE to be washed/cleaned properly which will keep the PPE in the best condition possible and possibly extend the life of the new PPE. This grant award will allow all members of the Dowagiac Fire Department to have new PPE. The new PPE consists of pants, coat, helmet, boots, gloves and Nomex hoods. Each set of PPE is approximately \$1,850.

Even though the USDA has experienced federal cuts in funding, the amount awarded was \$14,275, which is approximately 55% of the total project cost. The city will invest in the balance of the cost.

Dowagiac Area History Museum

Steve Arseneau, Director and Curator, is pleased to announce that the Museum has received a \$2,500 grant from the Pokagon Fund for the second floor renovation project. While the museum has received enough funds to begin construction in February, they are still accepting funds for exhibit production and potential additional costs to the renovation. This grant puts the amount raised from the community for the project at \$61,000.



Renovations have been progressing well over the past month. Framing, rough electric and ductwork have been completed. Contractors are in the process of hanging plywood on the walls and inside cabinets in preparation for drywall, which will begin in the near future.

Eater Eggstravaganza – Saturday, March 28

Visit with the Easter Bunny at Beckwith Park at 10:30 am, “Be a Bunny” Costume Contest at 11:45 am, and Easter-Egg Hunt at Noon. Bring the family and your camera and enjoy the day.

Airport Terminal Building Design

The first meeting with architects took place this week. Since that meeting we have been reviewing options for design that focus on having a modest size building that will be easy to maintain, utility efficient and with an interesting and appropriate façade. The next meeting with the architects will take place next week.

Annual Retreat Workshop Reports (excerpts of annual reports will publish each week)

Steve Arseneau, Curator of the Dowagiac Area History Museum shared accomplishments from 2014 and goals for 2015.

Second Floor Project

Fundraising began, in 2014, for a multi-year fundraising plan for the upstairs project and a proposed expansion project.

As of today (which was February 6, 2015), we have over \$51,000 donated and deposited with another \$5,000 pledged to be donated throughout 2015. Many of the donations came from longtime supporter’s member’s support.

Attendance and Public Programs

Attendance at the museum has been steady and attendance for 2014 was 5,500 total visitors. While walk-in visitation has been solid, the museum serves half of its visitors through events, school tours and collaborations with other institutions

The Dowagiac Area History Museum’s evening programs became increasingly popular in 2014. The Spring Lecture Series averaged 62 attendees per program. The Fall Lecture Series averaged 96 attendees with standing room only at several events.

While the museum did not serve many school tours in 2013, it rebounded in spring 2014. By the end of the school year, the museum had served over 1,000 area students on school tours, including middle school and high school history students.

The Dowagiac Area History Museum strives to be a community resource and collaborated with several institutions. The museum hosted an evening event for Dogwood Fine Arts Festival and opened its parking lot to serve as the site of the Dowagiac Farm and Artisan Market from May through October. This collaboration was a benefit to the market and the museum: the location proved to be visible along Division Street and the museum’s amenities were useful for market vendors and customers; the museum had increased visibility and foot traffic as a result of the activity from the market.

The museum is one of the participating organizations in the Pokagon Band-led “One Story” Read (Ngot Yajmowen) project. This is a community-wide project that involved several

institutions (Dogwood, SMC, libraries) hosting events loosely related to the book *The Round House*, an American Indian book that touches on a wide variety of native themes.

Membership

The museum's membership has increased over 10%.

Volunteers

The museum currently utilizes a core group of approximately 30 volunteers have contributed over 2,000 hours in 2014

Exhibits

The Museum collaborated with representatives of the Miss Dowagiac Scholarship Pageant for the exhibit *Diamond Jubilee: 75 Years of Pageants*, on January 22, 2014 and ran through July 2014. The exhibit opening brought over 200 community members to the museum.

Collections

The museum took in 40 donations of artifacts, documents and photographs of historical significance to Dowagiac and Cass County. These 40 donations included 300 individual items, including a photographic collection from the estate of "Cardinal" Charlie Gill and many unique local artifacts.

Future Planning

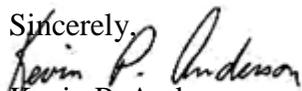
The Museum Director has been working with an ad-hoc sub-committee of the Museum Advisory Committee in developing a five-year strategic plan. The final plan will examine all aspects of the museum operation and help chart a path forward to being a community asset and resource.

Long term, the museum recognizes the need to raise funds for a permanent endowment to help with funding. One part of the strategic plan will address the best ways to develop an endowment, including planned giving.

Conclusion

In conclusion, 2014 was a quality year for the Dowagiac Area History Museum. The museum is increasing its visibility in the community, fundraising efforts and commitment from the city will complete the facility, area schools are utilizing the museum as an educational resource and the museum served very well as the site of the Farm and Artisan Market. The Museum Director, Museum Advisory Committee and volunteers look forward to many years as the best local history museum in the region.

Sincerely,



Kevin P. Anderson

City Manager