SUSTAINING STRUCTURES FOR ARTS AND CULTURE

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE IOWA WEST FOUNDATION

August 2013
SUSTAINING STRUCTURES FOR ARTS AND CULTURE

Executive Summary

This document outlines key recommendations to the Iowa West Foundation for strengthening and stabilizing the cultural arts sector in Council Bluffs.

Nearly every cultural and arts organization operating within Council Bluffs participated in this study. Organizations met the consultant individually, usually bringing a number of board members and, if applicable, staff members to the table. In addition, the consultant reviewed each organization’s financials as obtained from the Form 990s posted on GuideStar.org and/or Charity Navigator.

The consultant reviewed information about each organization’s programs and services in the context of information from communities of similar population size and demographics, including many Midwest cities. The specific initiative recommendations below were further researched based on excellent case study examples from elsewhere in the US and Canada. Case study examples, as well as questions asked of each group and the study participants are attached as addenda to this report.

Findings and Recommendations Summary

Council Bluff’s cultural and arts sector includes history, heritage, and arts organizations. Nearly all of these are small and weak, with some organizations nearly unable to continue. Compared to cities of similar size and demographics, Council Bluffs is significantly lacking in arts and cultural entities that can provide the level of community service and visitor attractions one would expect.

Absent significant efforts to restructure and sustain the sector, it is likely that a number of organizations will go out of operations within the next three to five years. Even if the organizations survive based on status quo conditions, they will not be able to provide needed programs and services, nor will they be able to conserve and protect valuable artifacts and collections at a level of basic professionalism. In short, the sector is in danger of disintegration, and it certainly is unable to grow.

For the community to benefit from cultural resources and for the resources to have a meaningful level of positive economic benefit, several changes should be made as detailed in this executive summary.

1. Establish an Iowa West Foundation initiative or program funding area for arts, culture, and heritage focused on developing a vibrant cultural life that benefits residents and attracts visitors. Strong cultural organizations and offerings are key to creating communities where families seek to live and visitors seek to come. If it requires crossing the river for arts and cultural resources, there is less incentive to move into or visit Council Bluffs.

Families choose to live in communities where there are arts resources available for their children – in and especially out of school. They seek to live in communities where there are festivals and community programs that are arts rich, where there are resources such as quality community theater, visual art learning programs for all ages, from pre-school to seniors, and opportunity for
performing arts instruction for gifted and talented teens, as these programs are proven ways to strengthen overall student achievement.

Residents and visitors alike seek communities where there are quality museums. Residents want museums that are able to offer educational programs for their children, outreach partnerships with schools, and changing exhibits so that when they take out-of-town visitors to the museums, there is something new and interesting to learn and experience.

Visitors plan trips to communities often specifically for museums. Cultural tourists – who are among the highest spending and most valued tourists for their economic impact – know what to expect in a quality museum. Some come to history museums for the opportunity to study family genealogy: in fact, in Iowa, such tourists are known to stay in a community for a week or longer at a time to research in archives. International tourists come to Mid-American cities such as Council Bluffs because they are entranced by the story of western expansion, the railroads, Lincoln, and transportation. Families driving 180 stop at museums as ways to explain regional and American history to their children.

Cultural tourists, as well as families seeking great communities in which to live, are culturally savvy and aware. They seek out quality. They have gone to other museums and have a point of comparison. They want good programs for their children.

Within this context, Council Bluffs and Pottawattamie County arts, cultural and heritage organizations are weak. They need to change and grow. One organization has not even filed the required Form 990 since 2006. Many have boards that are burned out, or divided in their aspirations for the organizations. Few have enough reserves to sustain them, and at least one is wondering if it can remain functional for more than one more year.

Meanwhile, there are organizations in Omaha that are seeking to establish or expand operations and programming in Council Bluffs because they seek to serve the Council Bluffs and Pottawattamie County residents. These organizations could fill major gaps, especially in arts education offerings.

At the same time, their residence in Council Bluffs – particularly in older buildings and neighborhoods that need revitalization – can stimulate economic development.

**Critical Issues**

a) The vast majority of historical and heritage-focused organizations throughout the US are in trouble. After the huge interest in American history focused around the Bicentennial, interest in history has waned and faded.

Thus, the condition of Council Bluffs and Pottawattamie County historical and heritage groups is not unusual. Boards are aging and tired and with few new members. There are limited and generally under-trained staff attempting to accomplish tasks requiring high levels of expertise, and there isn’t even enough energy to apply for grants from the State Department of Cultural Affairs. State officials interviewed for this study describe pleading with Council Bluffs organizations to please apply for help – but the groups never even apply.
b) Council Bluffs has extremely limited arts resources. While the Bluffs Arts Council has recently expanded its summer camp program, there is very little year round arts education to offer. There is one community theater company – Chanticleer - that is floundering and cutting back on programs. There are no adult arts learning or adult arts participation programs that would typically be evident in a community like Council Bluffs. Festivals such as First Night are contemplating going out of business because of volunteer fatigue. There are no local amateur or professional music or dance offerings for youth or adults. Thus, while Council Bluffs blooms with world class public art, it offers practically nothing in creative opportunity for its residents.

**Key Opportunities**

a) Council Bluffs undervalues and underestimates the importance of its history. It is the epicenter of the rail story, the story of transcontinental transportation, and of how cities are created around transportation corridors.

The UP Museum, Dodge House, Rails West, Squirrel Cage – all are pieces of a unified story that could be told so well if brought contextually together. Recently, the UP Museum – and Rails West – benefitted from the 2012 150th Anniversary celebrating the 1862 signing of the Pacific Railroad Act creating Union Pacific Railroad. This is a harbinger for more enthusiasm that will come.

Even more important as an opportunity for Council Bluffs, the next half decade will continue as a celebration of 150 years commemorating the building of the first transcontinental railroad. The first tracks for the transcontinental railroad were laid, in Omaha, in July 1865. The rail line was completed at Promontory Summit on May 10, 1869. Thus, the 2015-2019 years will bring increased and sustained national and international attention to UP Railroad, and the entire Council Bluffs story.

b) Western Trails Heritage Center, operated by the State, is opening its doors to local cultural partners, specifically to the Bluffs Arts Council – and perhaps, by extension, to Chanticleer. This is a short term (and possibly long term) opportunity for a headquarters, for expanded arts education programming, and for an artist and artisan oriented retail store. And, if the recommendations outlined below can be fully implemented, a larger long term space solution for a community arts and cultural center can be created in downtown Council Bluffs.

**Recommendations**

1) Foster development of a “Museums of Council Bluffs” structure that consolidates all the current Council Bluffs museum operations under a single governance and management; with three representatives from the boards of each museum elected to the unified board. Locate it in the Harvester II building, as the means to stabilize, strengthen, and grow the heritage and historical entities in Council Bluffs. All the current museums need additional space for archives, visitor services, and education programs, and all would benefit from a consolidated professional staffing capacity that allows for greater depth in areas now not addressed, including fund development and marketing, education and visitor services, and accounting. The 55,000 square foot Harvester II (McCormick Harvesting Machine Company) building will likely be just enough space.
Use it as the umbrella “structure” to consolidate the museums through management that provides high level professionalism. Create a single, professional staff capacity. Bring together the story of the railroads, the Dodies, and Council Bluffs.

2) Within Harvester II, create a dynamic, exciting museum that will be a tourism draw. Move the rail cars to the Harvester grounds. This museum could attract upwards of 40,000 visitors a year if done correctly, possibly as many as 70,000.

   a. Invite UP to join with the Iowa West Foundation in shaping a first class museum within the Harvester II Building, focused on the UP transcontinental railroad as well as the Council Bluffs story that includes General Dodge and the Dodge House, and regional history, and targeted to open as celebration for the 2019 anniversary.

   b. Invite the participation of all the county historical societies in a centralized archives and collections management “floor” within the Harvester II building in which all collections are digitized, cared for, and managed to museum standards.

   c. Develop a shared staff and volunteer program that brings a depth of professionalism to all the Museum in Council Bluffs. This will enable expansion of staff into much needed areas including fund development and marketing, education and outreach, exhibitions and collections management, finance and overall administration.

   d. Create a detailed area plan in which the Harvester I and II buildings anchor a fully detailed cultural district, working with the Iowa Architectural Foundation or the University of Iowa - School of Architecture.
Recognize lots/other buildings which could make it possible for the district to grow out from/flow around those two buildings.

3) To stabilize and strengthen the capacity of Bluffs Arts Council and Chanticleer, encourage them to move to and program from the Western Trails Center - for the time being. To the strongest degree possible, encourage Bluffs Arts Council to detail and implement plans not only to operate an artists’ co-op type of gift store, but to focus on expanding educational programs including summer camps and afterschool programs, in both visual and performing arts, possibly in culinary arts as well. Encourage Chanticleer to join with Bluff Arts in offering theater camps for kids and year-round youth programs, and to use the (upgraded) theater there to offer small theater performances. Possibly encourage Bluffs Arts Council to end its civic programs, handing these to the City to implement.

4) Assuming that UP works with the Iowa West Foundation toward a new museum complex at the Harvester II building, the Carnegie Library will need a new tenant. (It is owned and maintained by the City.) If this happens, Re-purpose the Carnegie Library as a community cultural center, including a theater space for Chanticleer, flexible education and gallery spaces, and other performance spaces. Move both Chanticleer and the Bluffs Arts Council from their temporary space at Western Trails to the Carnegie Library, as the anchor providers of arts services to the community. In addition, use this as a facility to recruit Omaha based groups looking to present to and grow Council Bluffs audiences.

5) Work with the City to find a way for the new Public Arts Commission to be balanced with an “Arts and Civic Programming Commission” that oversees summer concerts and outdoor festivals including First Night and outdoor/park events previously managed by Bluffs Arts Council. If Parks and Rec had one staff person it would be all that is needed for the City to operate festivals and outdoor concert programming year round.

   a. Support the development of a “Friends of Art and Civic Programming” to receive proceeds from the various existing celebrations such as First Night, and use this along with grants to support a contracted position within Parks and Rec to handle the management of civic events, concerts, films, and festivals. This will be the most cost effective way to further all the celebrations.

6) Encourage the Chamber of Commerce and its Community Economic Betterment Account Program to actively work to attract artist-entrepreneurs and non-profit arts groups from Omaha and elsewhere. Use models from Paducah and from Millville, NJ as to how such programs can really attract artist entrepreneurs to the benefit of the City. This would be the best way to attract both for-profit entities such as Clayworks, and non-profits such as Bemis and Ballet Nebraska as well as other groups seeking the chance to establish strong-holds in Council Bluffs.

7) Modify the operating model of the Harvester Artists’ Lofts, potentially to include some units as Limited Liability Share ownership, so that artists who are interested in equity ownership become invested in the building. Strengthen requirements for artists to open their studios. Purchase or set-aside some units to be used to house visiting artists invited to Council Bluffs for community and school residencies.
The Canadian National Rail Museum in Cranbrook, B.C., offers a good example of what could be designed within the brick Harvester II building. A section of the facility serves as archives (window area), and the lobby tells the social history associated with the railroad, with exhibits that introduce visitors to other local house museums. A restored dining car parked at the Cranbrook Museum operates as a gourmet restaurant. A similar dynamic would fill the Harvester II building.

Many Carnegie Libraries throughout the US have become community arts centers with education, local artists’ exhibits and sales galleries, with space for community events and performances.
Sustaining Structures for Arts and Culture

Part 1. Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Working Assets</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bluffs Arts Foundation</td>
<td>$ 17,593.00</td>
<td>Working Assets do not include buildings, furnishings/equipment, exhibits or collections that are shown as depreciating.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bluffs Arts Council</td>
<td>$ 44,787.00</td>
<td>Does not comply with requirement to realize depreciation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends of the UP Museum</td>
<td>$ 256,759.00</td>
<td>Last filed form 990 was 2006.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dodge House</td>
<td>$ 66,504.00</td>
<td>Estimate based on Form 990 reserves, only.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chanticleer</td>
<td>$ 4,503.00</td>
<td>Does not show depreciation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic Preservation Alliance</td>
<td>$ 6,071.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Society of Pottawattamie County</td>
<td>$ 350,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Working Assets</strong></td>
<td><strong>$746,217.00</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Total Operating Budgets Combined/Known</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friends of UP Museum</td>
<td>$ 168,000.00</td>
<td>Funds go toward staffing and exhibits/operations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UP Museum</td>
<td>$ 175,000.00</td>
<td>Est. of UP support per year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chanticleer</td>
<td>$ 101,164.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dodge House</td>
<td>$ 146,158.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bluffs Arts Council</td>
<td>$ 97,111.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic Preservation Alliance</td>
<td>$ 41,597.00</td>
<td>2006 Form 990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Society of P.C.</td>
<td>$ 97,000.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$826,030.00</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Est. Staff Salaries</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chanticleer</td>
<td>$ 10,800.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dodge House</td>
<td>$ 37,000.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bluffs Arts Council</td>
<td>$ 35,000.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Society</td>
<td>$ 45,000.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Historic Trails</td>
<td>$ 32,000.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UP Museum</td>
<td>$ 85,000.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$244,800.00</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At first glance, the financials above suggest a relatively strong arts and cultural community. Deeper inspection shows otherwise. The two Council Bluffs organizations with buildings and especially collections and archives to care for – the Dodge House and the Historical Society – do not show depreciation as an expense, nor do they show reserves to meet depreciation expenses. They are more vulnerable than they appear. It is likely they do not show depreciation because their buildings are owned by others – the City, the County – which care for the structures. But lack of dedicated facility reserves mean that neither organization can undertake major improvements that would make it possible to better meet their mission and serve a greater audience. (i.e. ADA upgrades, new exhibition spaces elsewhere on their properties or within the existing structures, etc.) Both operate in the black, but the Historical Society, especially, is nearly completely reliant on earned income to meet its annual operating expenses. Lack of grant funding for special projects and initiatives means that it cannot do extra or new programming. Neither organization can expand staffing, nor can they meet goals such as providing health insurance or additional programming. They are stuck – unable to do more, unable to be greater assets to Council Bluffs. History based organizations in this position, and especially those in which archives and collections have not received the level of professional care they need, tend to gradually sink under the weight of responsibility, and often gradually lose their impact.

The financials for Chanticleer and the Arts Council show very small organizations that have long done more than their financial capacity suggests possible. Chanticleer will face new challenges in meeting pay requirements for a new artistic director now that its long-serving director has retired. It has negligible reserves, and board members worry that it will not be able to last more than one more season. The Bluffs Arts Council has a modest reserve/endowment fund but needs this – and likely more – if it is to undertake some of the new expansion of education programs it seeks, and especially if it is to open the gift store it is contemplating as a revenue stream: there will be a need to invest in merchandise and sales capacity.

Both Chanticleer and the Arts Council are desperately seeking new ways to replace the special funding they received from Iowa West Foundation when those grants are completed. At present, their ability to do so is questionable. Without a home space, the Arts Council cannot expand year round programming. Even with a home space, Chanticleer has such a small annual audience which has dwindled over the years that increased earnings are not likely. It is already cutting its annual season, and may have to make further cuts.

There are other Council Bluffs organizations not listed above, such as First Night, which has a cash reserve for future programming but which is best described as exhausted and seeking to shut down as a nonprofit while giving its reserves to another group that has energy to continue forward.

As for the UP Museum, which thrives thanks to the investment in it made each year by the Union Pacific Railroad corporation, it is “maxed out” in the current Carnegie Library space, unable to expand its programs, unable to do more special exhibits to better interpret its collections, and it is unable to fully care for its massive archives, said to include thousands of historic photographs needing to be digitized and catalogued as well as thousands of other valuable historical items.
Meanwhile, due to State cuts in staffing, the Trails West Center lacks the ability to do extensive outreach or education programming to better position it as a valued community resource. With tourism less of a viable market now that interest in Lewis and Clark has waned, it too needs a new source of revenue and a new audience.

The CB Historic Preservation Alliance has no current financials available to view (last listed Form 990, on Guidestar.org, is from 2006.) But it holds on due to the efforts of a very small core group of leaders, who bluntly state their fatigue. It is questionable how long it can continue.

The City of Council Bluffs also is stuck, unable to grow its cultural arts programming because of lack of staff capacity. Now that there is new summer programming at the Riverfront – and an expectation from residents of future annual programming – it is questionable how this challenge will be met. Organizations such as Main Street Council Bluffs do not see taking on festivals such as the Riverfront or First Night.

In sum, this is not a profile of growth capacity. Each of the primary Council Bluffs organizations are stuck in an undesirable status quo, unable to do more, hanging on, unable to meet the requirements of fully engaged, professionally directed, and above all fully responsive and engaged community leader institutions.

In addition, there are gaps. Council Bluffs has long relied on Omaha cultural organizations to meet its residents’ needs for programming and for educational opportunities for their children. There is no provider of performing arts instruction for children and teens. There is no local community school of the arts for youth and adults alike to turn to for classes in painting or pottery. There is no quality source for dance instruction save taking children over to Ballet Nebraska.

There are two paths for culture and the arts in Council Bluffs: maintain the status quo and watch as organizations continue to lose capacity and as valued historical assets lose viability, as festivals die off and programs become more limited; or create a new platform for the kind of cultural growth and service to the community that will attract new residents and build value for the community.

There are opportunities, as well, that could be responded to with new thinking and leveraged with funds to recapitalize the sector.

1) Every museum and collecting organization in Council Bluffs – and the County – needs quality archival and collections management assistance. Every museum and collecting organization needs a depth of staff to meet critical operating requirements – such as financial management, fund development, education, marketing, and more. There are examples throughout the US of organizations coming together to invest in shared archives, shared collections management, and shared services to meet the needs of all museums within a community.

2) The coming anniversary of the completion of the transcontinental railroad (2018-9) will freshly attract national and international attention to Council Bluffs unique position in the story of America’s railroads and transportation. International visitors will join national visitors in seeking a museum destination that fully tells the story.
3) The City-owned Carnegie Library was repurposed for the UP Museum. But now that the UP Museum needs additional space, the Carnegie could be repurposed again – if the right new facility for the UP Museum was developed. Many cities throughout the US have repurposed their Carnegie Libraries as visual and performing arts spaces. Council Bluffs’ Carnegie Library could comfortably house entities such as Bluffs Arts Council and Chanticleer (a totally flexible theatre space could be created within its walls) and it could also house satellite operations for numerous Omaha organizations as well as start-ups of Council Bluffs groups such as the Knudson Foundation.

4) There already exists a Friends of the Parks nonprofit that could receive funds from groups such as First Night to seed a staff position dedicated to festivals programming.

5) The Trails West Heritage Center is seeking groups to use its space to better align the Center with meeting community as well as visitor needs.

All these opportunities point to a way of reconfiguring the arts and culture sector, and of providing structures that are virtual as well as financial for supporting growth and meeting community needs. Two things are required: new thinking and a willingness to embrace new operational structures and models in order to grow to meet 21st Century opportunities and needs; and a fresh capitalization of the sector that can reposition it for success and capacity.

Some might say that the recommendations listed below are too linear, too simplistic in suggesting that all the pieces can fit neatly together in a new way. Certainly, there are fall back positions to these recommendations, and alternate pathways. But the moment of opportunity exists and the chance to undertake repositioning of the sector suggests that each of these steps, individually and especially collectively, could have a powerful positive impact on Council Bluffs as a quality city that people seek to move to and stay in.

**Goals in Detail**

**Goal 1:** Foster development of a “Museums of Council Bluffs” facility that consolidates all the current Council Bluffs museum operations under a single management. Locate it in the Harvester II/McCormick Harvesting Machine Company Building, as the means to stabilize, strengthen, and grow the heritage and historical entities in Council Bluffs. All the current museums need additional space for archives, visitor services, and education programs, and all would benefit from a consolidated professional staffing capacity that allows for greater depth in areas now not addressed, including fund development and marketing, education and visitor services, and accounting.

*Estimated Total Capital Cost: $5-7 Million*

*Estimated Total Operating Cost: $1 - $1.1 Million at full operations. Net increase of approximately $150,000 - $250,000.*

**Action Steps:**

- Invite the partnership of the Union Pacific Railroad corporation to evaluate how to best showcase the UP Museum in a larger facility that includes a rail spur for equipment, and how to meet the need for professional archival and collections care in a cooperative approach to cost sharing that invites in the other Council Bluffs and County historical organizations. Several important tax credits and
financing opportunities to rehab the Harvester II building would be available to the Corporation and not to the City of Council Bluffs, or would be available to a nonprofit such as the Friends of the UP Museum or a consortium of the museums, making this dialogue and potential joint venture favorable.

✔ Further a planning process inclusive of the Council Bluffs Museums and others TBD (other historical museums within the County) for shared archives, shared point of entry for visitors, and consolidated operations. In this model (and possible variations) the physical museums such as the Dodge House and Squirrel Cage Museum and Rails West could remain open to visitors and offer interpretation of their buildings and collections. The Harvester II building at a minimum would be used for archives and shared administration, plus as many point of entry visitor services as possible. (i.e. orientation video, retail store, food service, education, docent training and central operations, etc.) Ideally, the UP Museum would also be located in this building and would be able to provide the management services (shared management contracts or other structure) to lead the collective growth of all the museums.

McCormick Harvesting Machine

Company building and vacant land that could be used for parking and visitor greeting area, with rail line on left where historic rail cars could be located.
Vacant lots that could enhance the overall

Harvester II Center.

Canadian Museum of Rail Travel and Cranbrook Heritage & Archives, Cranbrook B.C. includes historic train cars on track behind the building.
Southeastern Colorado Heritage Center, Archives, and Museum, Pueblo, CO, which brought together five heritage and historical organizations to share archival operations.

The Heinz History Center, Pittsburgh, operates off-site historical museums as well as serves as a consolidated museum of regional history. Beginning in 1993, the History Center provided operations for Meadowcroft Village, which merged into the Museum Center in 2000. In 2007, the Westinghouse Museum merged into the Museum Center.

The Cincinnati Museum Center, located in the former Union Terminal, consists of four separate on-site museums plus an off-site museum. The on-site museums are the Museum of History, the Museum of Natural History, the Children’s Museum, and the Geier Museum Collections and Research Center. Less than a year ago, the (offsite) National Underground Railroad Freedom Center voted to
become operated by the Museum Center, saving over $1 million a year in redundant operating costs. All of the Museums share a single operating staff, and operate legally as separate 501 (c) 3 nonprofits for the purpose of fundraising, while the sole member of each museum is the Museum Center, thus establishing them as wholly owned subsidiaries of the Museum Center.

Consolidation among museums is increasingly common: there are at least a dozen major US museums, at present, that are involved in various approaches to sharing, consolidating, or merging. The issues being faced throughout the field in the US and around the world are similar to the issues faced in Council Bluffs: redundancy in some staff positions; limited capacity, if any, to afford depth of staff positions; lack of space for the key visitor amenities or to offer ADA access throughout the facilities; education space; permanent/changing exhibit space; and especially critical behind-the-scenes space including climate controlled archives and collections storage space, collections management space, and office space.

- The valuable assets of all three museums are in jeopardy without appropriate archival facilities. The Dodge House’s important textile collection, in particular, is in danger of serious deterioration as long as it is not stored in a climate controlled facility.

- Currently, it is estimated that the museums are paying between $175,000 and $200,000 for staff and contracted services. It is likely that this same amount could begin to operate all the museums as a consolidated unit, providing more depth: a fully developed Museums Staff (3-5 years out) would likely require a payroll of about $350,000. (See below.)

- At least one and possibly two additional organizations are in their infancy and could become extra free standing museums. These include the Greer Collection and the West Coast of Iowa group: while elements of each would be outstanding additions to a central museum, new competing museums without resources would be a challenge to develop.

Repurposing the Harvester II building for a consolidated Museum that weaves together the story of Council Bluffs – the Railroad, General Dodge, Lincoln, and Western Expansion – would create a strong destination with a positive economic impact.

It would make it possible for the three nonprofit entities¹ to come together in one building for centralized archives/collections management, overall administration, overall visitor and education ‘point of entry’ as well as visitor retail and food service. The individual sites, such as the Dodge House, Squirrel Cage, and Rails West would continue to operate, staffed by a central staff. If it is possible to move rail cars to the Harvester building site, this could enhance the overall destination and ensure appropriate museum conservation.

A short term effective way to approach the operations of a consolidated “Museums of Council Bluffs” is through a management agreement or contract in which one of the entities agrees to provide services operating the Center and the balance of the museums. In this case, the strongest

¹ While the UP Museum is a part of the UP Railroad Corporation, the Friends of the UP Museum is a nonprofit that serves as the fundraising partner, providing contributions to offset operating costs.
entity, the Friends of the UP Museum, could serve as the conduit for such a management contract agreement.

The smartest way, however, is to create a new entity. (The Cincinnati Museum Center was created as a new entity when the museums it houses faced a similar need for central organizational structure.) This can be done through appointing three members of each organizations’ boards to a unified steering committee to drive the Harvester II venture forward. This group could eventually – if appropriate – become the new board for a unified Museums of Council Bluffs. Such a model worked in St. Joseph, MO.

a. Within Harvester II, create a dynamic, exciting museum that will be a tourism draw. If possible, move the rail cars to the Harvester grounds. Create a detailed plan for the Harvester I and II buildings to anchor the cultural district. Identify lots或其他 buildings which could make it possible for the district to grow out from/flow around those two buildings. Done right, this museum could attract upwards of 40,000 visitors a year if done correctly, possibly as many as 70,000. The operating budget would be approximately $1 million, as compared to the approximate $600,000 combined operating budgets of the individual organizations at this point.

Within the Harvester II building, include the following elements:

Main Floor:
- Visitor Welcome, payment and orientation to the Museums of Council Bluffs
- Small exhibition area bringing the stories together
- Retail space: Focus on food products from the area plus items related to museums
- Food service: Farm to Table

Second Floor:

- UP Museum

Third Floor:

- UP Museum

Fourth Floor

- Archives for all the Museums, offices for Consolidated Museums

**Alternative Plan**

If the UP Museum didn’t move into the building, use the 2nd floor for archives and offices. Third and 4th floor could be used for offices, or condos.

✔ The vacant land surrounding the Harvester II is key to the success of the Museums complex, in that the land (and other vacant buildings) afford(s) the opportunity to establish elements unique to Council Bluffs, making the Museums a prime choice destination over the Durham Museum’s similar content in Omaha. Great care should be taken to develop a winning
approach to content and theme/stories and to developing the building and grounds to this end. Working with the Iowa Chapter of the Iowa Architectural Foundation, or with the Architecture School of the University of Iowa, Council Bluffs could create a design plan for the district that would pull all the elements – and the stories of Council Bluffs – together into a dynamic whole.

✓ The Harvester Artist Lofts should be integrated into the complex, with open studio tours regularly offered. Work studios (separate from live/work studios) should be an integral part of the immediate Haymarket neighborhood, with incentives offered to lure artist entrepreneurs and nonprofit cultural organizations to Council Bluffs from Omaha and elsewhere. (See goal 5, below.)

A typical operating staff structure for a consolidated Museums of Council Bluffs entity would look like this when fully developed. Some of these positions are part time, volunteer, or contracted.
b. Develop a consolidated volunteer force for all the museums of Council Bluffs.

Action Step: Bring all Council Bluffs museums together to design a shared volunteer database, volunteer management/recruitment system, and training program.

Increasingly, volunteer programs work across multiple museums, especially smaller facilities as in Council Bluffs. Even the massive Cincinnati Museum Center, which also provides management for the local Heritage Association, has a unified volunteer force. St. Joseph, MO’s museums share a unified volunteer force as do others. Volunteers can continue to be assigned where they wish, but are offered more professional training, are scheduled and assigned through a central database, and gain understanding of the full story of the community compared to a single museum’s slice of history.

Goal 2: To stabilize and strengthen the capacity of Bluffs Arts Council and Chanticleer, encourage them to move to and program from the Western Trails Center as a temporary solution, so that if/when the UP Museum moves to the Harvester II site, both organizations could become anchors in the repurposing of the Carnegie Library as Council Bluffs’ cultural center.

Estimated Total Capital Cost: $25,000 - $250,000.

Estimated Total Operating Cost: BAC $175,000 including co-op gift store; $30,000 Chanticleer with a focus on youth theatre.

Action Step: Develop a programming and operations plan and budget for Bluffs Arts Council and Chanticleer to offer year round educational classes and community programs at the Trails Center and to operate the gift store.

✓ To stabilize and strengthen the capacity of Bluffs Arts Council and Chanticleer, encourage them to move to and program from the Western Trails Center as a short term solution. To the strongest degree possible, encourage Bluffs Arts Council to detail and implement plans not only to operate an artists’ co-op type of gift store, but to focus on continuing to expanding educational programs including summer camps and afterschool programs, in visual and performing arts. Encourage Chanticleer to join with Bluff Arts in offering theater camps for kids and year-round youth programs, and to use the (albeit limited) theater there to offer small youth theater and even some adult theatrical review/staged reading performances. Possibly encourage Bluffs Arts Council to end its civic programs, handing these to the City to implement.

a. Encourage Bluffs Arts Council to detail and implement plans not only to operate an artists’ co-op type of gift store, but to focus on expanding educational programs including more summer camps and especially year round afterschool programs, in visual and performing arts. Encourage Chanticleer to join with Bluff Arts in offering theater camps for kids and year-round youth programs, and to use the theater there to offer the theater performances. To the extent possible, modify the theatre space to serve limited theatrical needs, with additional lighting, masking, and a small stage area.
b. Encourage Bluffs Arts Council to establish the gift store as a co-op, offering art and fine crafts work by Council Bluffs and County artists and artisans. Also offer heritage related items and visitor information items.

c. Encourage Bluffs Arts Council to end its free downtown outdoor civic programs, handing these to the City to implement. The Bluffs Arts Council has been actively seeking a new home where it has visibility and can operate classes and programs. As a group, it has approached the YMCA, has expressed interest in the Harvester II building and has put forward a proposal to the State of Iowa to provide services out of the Western Trails Heritage Center, including operations of a gift store and provision of classes.

• For the State of Iowa, this residency could be a satisfactory solution: The Trails Center needs more traffic, and would welcome regular community use. For the Bluffs Arts Council, rental here - where there is ample room for classes and operating summer programs and outdoor events - would be the wisest option.

• According to its most recent Form 990 filing, the Council has a Foundation that holds approximately $17,500 in liquid assets, and the organization itself has an operating budget of just under $100,000 which has until now had no occupancy expenses. If it were to take on a project such as re-purposing the Y at an estimated $4 million, or to serve as a lead entity in a project such as the Harvester, the Council would have to move rapidly to take on major revenue-producing programs such as First Night or WinterFest, which it is not willing to do. A far more workable solution would be modest rent and long term growth potential at the Trails Center.

• According to the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs, such a move combined with increased focus on arts education would position it to be better able to win grant funding.

• At present, Bluffs Arts Council realizes limited revenue from its arts education camps/classes. At the Center, it could offer a summer of arts camps, after school and weekend programs, and could provide enrichment programming for field trips when students come to visit the Center, and could realize up to $200,000 annual revenue from such work based on comparables from other arts councils.

Typical student arts program, summer arts camp.

---

2 In discussion with the consultant, the Arts Council did not express specific plans to operate classes, only the gift store, which it plans to largely staff with volunteers. However, according to the State of Iowa, classes will be offered.
d. Urge the Bluffs Arts Council to be rigorous in its business planning for operating the proposed gifts store/artisan co-op store at the Center. Oriented the store toward sale of work by area artists and artisans, including artisanal foods.

• According to the State of Iowa, the Center’s former gift store was subsidized at an annual amount of $20,000 - $25,000 a year, even though the years in which the store operated were at the peak of the Lewis and Clark tourism boom. It is unlikely that Bluffs Arts can realize the net revenue of $28,000 - $30,000 that it currently envisions.

Chanticleer has joined forces with Bluffs Arts in seeking a new home, due to the many facility issues it faces with the building that has served as its home from the organization’s creation in the 1950s.

• However, it is in extremely weak financial condition, and without sale of the current building and land would even be unable to pay rent for a small store-front type of “pop-up” theater space. Its current working assets (not land or building) is under $5000, and it has previously only paid $10,000 a year in salary to a director: changing from a volunteer to paid operation, and attempting fairly rapid growth, would be impossible.

• The organization is also going through a generational shift: younger board members seek to do more contemporary and cutting edge programming while long-loyal board members and volunteers want to stick to the formula that has worked in the past. The audience, like audiences for community theater everywhere, has dwindled and there are currently fewer than 250 “member” households that come to performances. According to board members interviewed for this study, the organization’s leaders recognize they have, at best, another year before they will have such a small revenue base that they will have to close their doors.

Bluffs Arts Council could contract Chanticleer to provide services such as theater summer camps and afterschool programs as a bridge to assist it, gain earned income and possibly increase its capacity to re-emerge as having capacity to offer a year round roster of programs.

![Auditorium space, Trails West Center](image)

**Auditorium space, Trails West Center**

**Suitable space for outdoor performances and events, Trails West Center**

• While the theater space at Trails West was not designed for staged theater, it could accommodate staged readings, small review-type events, one or two person shows, and
comedy. It could also include minimally staged youth programs and camp performances. All this would give Chanticleer a chance to rebound, develop a new programming format, and a new audience. Youth theater is something of interest to key board members, so this could be a very good fit.

- Concerts could also be a part of the mix in the Trails auditorium. Folk music performances have been regularly held there to date. A piano as well as better lighting and a small sound system could expand the capacity of this hall to house numerous events.

*Simple modular stage unit of the style that would work at the Trails Center, suitable for children’s theatre or other performances.*

*Use of a small auditorium space for film series.*

*Small lecture auditorium used for classical music performance.*

Additions that would make the facility more usable include:
Goal 3: Create an “Arts and Civic Programming Commission,” a parallel to the Public Arts Commission, that oversees summer concerts and outdoor festivals including First Night and events previously managed by Bluffs Arts Council. If Parks and Rec had one staff person it would be all that is needed for the City to operate festivals and outdoor concert programming year round.

Estimated Total Capital Cost: Not Applicable

Estimated Total Operating Cost, including programming River Fest, First Night, WinterFest, and staff position: $230,000 - $350,000.

Action Step: Bring together all existing festivals and presenting organizations to consolidate budgets and operating requirements and develop plan for unified operations by City staff.

a. Support the development of a “Friends of Art and Civic Programming” to receive proceeds from the various existing celebrations such as First Night, and use this along with grants to support a contracted position within Parks and Rec to handle the management of civic events, concerts, films, and festivals. Or, encourage the existing Friends of the Parks Foundation to take this on. This will be the most cost effective way to further all the celebrations.

What happens to festivals and outdoor programming if Bluffs Arts Council is busy operating educational programs at the Center?

Many cities have in similar fashion sought nonprofits to undertake outdoor programs, and have realized that few, if any, nonprofits are suited for the job. Independent nonprofit groups have difficulty working within and between the many city departments that are involved in outdoor programming, and lack the knowledge of how to quickly and efficiently marshal municipal resources for traffic management, refuse disposal, and other basics. Most nonprofits also lack the ability to self-insure to the level required for major events.

Rather than encouraging nonprofits such as Bluffs Arts Council to hold onto outdoor programs, it would be better to encourage the City to add a FT contract/staff position within Parks and Recreation to manage festivals and civic events. The creation of the new Public Art Commission opens the door for a twin commission, overseeing and recommending programming for outdoor events and community celebrations. A “friends of” organization could receive funds from groups seeking to close down, such as First Night, and use this revenue to fund a contract position. A friends of organization could also seek and receive grant funds to defray costs to the City.
An existing organization such as First Night could become or could serve as fiscal agent to launch the Friends group.

**Example:** The Friends of Overland Park Arts are part of the Arts and Recreation Foundation of Overland Park, a 501(c) 3 not-for-profit corporation. The Foundation was incorporated in 1995 and became active in 1996. The Friends sponsor the Music in the Park concerts and selected the art for the new Matt Ross Community Center. In addition to sponsoring Friends of Overland Park Arts, the Foundation sponsors Friends of the Arboretum and Friends of the Farmstead. The Friends of Overland Park Arts also assist the City with the art collection at the Overland Park Convention Center, and the Art at the Center exhibits in the Tomahawk Ridge Community Center.

**Example:** The Friends of the Arts Commission is the non-profit arm of Sacramento’s municipal local arts agency, committed to supporting the arts through arts education and outreach programs, fund development, fiscal sponsorship for emerging arts organizations, and arts advocacy. They receive grants, workplace giving, bequests, gifts, and other donations to further municipal arts programming.

**Example:** Friends of the Arts, Inc. is a not-for-profit organization whose purpose is to promote and encourage a greater understanding of the arts in Dubois County, Indiana. The board is comprised of community volunteers who have demonstrated their commitment to the arts over the years. The primary functions of the organization are fundraising and grant making to support the City of Jasper’s arts programming and arts programming in Dubois County. Funds raised by this committee are also used to make grants that support performing, literary and visual artists or organizations dedicated to the promotion of the arts in the county. Friends of the Arts, Inc. provides a way for persons and businesses to give money or other property to the arts for specified purposes and provides a way to make a bequest to the arts. The organization also manages a modest endowment to ensure long-term financial stability.
**Goal 4:** Encourage the City to undertake re-purposing of the Carnegie Library as a community cultural center, including a small theater space that could be used by local groups, potentially including Chanticleer for adult theatre performances. This could also be a space that could attract other Omaha based groups looking to present to and grow Council Bluffs audiences. It is also possible that repurposing the Carnegie Library might help City Hall with some of its own space expansion needs.

*Estimated Total Capital Cost:* $750,000 to $1.2 million.

*Estimated Total Operating Cost: TBD based on programming offered*

Action Step: Evaluate programming that could be offered to the community through a community arts center, including summer programs, afterschool, and lifelong learning and events.

As this banner indicates, it is not unusual for Carnegie library buildings to become repurposed as community arts centers. The layout of rooms lend themselves to classrooms for visual arts instruction, spaces for dance classes, for making film, and many other hands on activities.

Cities are increasingly offering this type of hands on arts experiences as a part of Parks and Recreation programming, and cities are also operating community arts centers as a part of their parks departments. The center below, in Indianapolis operates programs year round:
A center such as could be created within the Carnegie building could offer spaces for programs including:

- Winter Farmer’s Market/Area Artisanal Foods
- Community film and concert series
- Yoga, movement, and dance instruction
- Quilting, woodworking, and other crafts
- Community gallery

Indoor farmer’s market offered in a community arts center building.

Mom’s and Tot’s movement class, Randolph

Community Arts Center, Elkins, WV

Community quilting class, Sugarland, TX
A center such as this could contract local and regional artists and arts groups to provide classes and programming. Another option is that groups and individual artists could be encouraged to rent space within the building and offer classes. Here’s the roster of individual artists and groups that rent space and provide classes in the Emerson Center for the Arts – a community arts center - in Bozeman, MT:

- The Dance Center: Ballet
- Strings and Things: Musical Instruction
- ArtSplot Visual Arts Instruction
- Rhythms Drums, Instruction
- Yoga Motion
- Community Theater
- Bridger Strings Conservatory
- Health Works

In similar fashion, the Carnegie Cultural Center in Council Bluffs could house the following:

- Bluffs Arts Council
- Chanticleer
- Clayworks (Omaha group moves to Council Bluffs)
- Knudson Foundation (music education instruction)
- Other Omaha organizations such as Ballet Nebraska that could provide additional performing arts instruction and programs
- Bemis (Bemis is already offering community outreach programming in Council Bluffs)

**Goal 5:** Encourage the Chamber of Commerce and its Community Economic Betterment Account Program to actively work to attract artist-entrepreneurs and non-profit arts groups from Omaha and elsewhere. Use models from Paducah and from Millville, NJ as to how such programs can really attract artist entrepreneurs to the benefit of the City. This would be the best way to attract both for-profit entities such as Clayworks, and non-profits such as Bemis and Ballet Nebraska as well as other groups seeking the chance to establish strong-holds in Council Bluffs.
Estimated Capitol Cost: NA

Estimated Operating Cost: ?

Action Step: Evaluate success models and determine the mix of elements appropriate for Council Bluffs. Actively use this to recruit arts organizations and individual artist entrepreneurs from Omaha and beyond.

Several outstanding programs throughout the US point to the type of opportunities that could be realized in Council Bluffs with the creation of an effective artist-recruitment program. Such a program could grow from the success already realized along the 100 Block, and could lead to the relocation of artist-entrepreneurs who are seeking larger space than they can afford in Omaha.

The elements of these programs are as follows:

- Creation of an arts/culture overlay district.
- For qualified individuals and nonprofit cultural enterprises, moving, rehab, and purchase assistance to encourage location within the overlay district.
- Marketing assistance.

Paducah Artist Relocation District Before and After

Example: Paducah Artist Relocation Program

The Artist Relocation Program began in March 2000 and has become a national model for using the arts for economic development. At a time when funding for the arts is being cut, Paducah fosters an environment where artists and the arts can flourish.
While the financial incentives offered by the city were limited to dilapidated housing at little cost (often as low as $1) and professional design fee assistance of up to $2,500, the intrigue of becoming a part of a true art enclave proved irresistible. To date, LowerTown artists/residents, primarily through a generous and innovative financing arrangement offered by community partner Paducah Bank, have invested over $30 million in restoring this model community to its previous glory.

**Artist Relocation Incentives**

- Zoned for live/work spaces. This enables residents to have gallery/studio, restaurant/café, living, and other mixed uses.
- Properties available for as little as $1 to qualifying proposals. Included is a $2500 reimbursement for architectural or other professional services. (Paducah Renaissance Alliance -owned properties only)
- Marketing and promotional materials for the Arts District
- Matching Funds Program. PRA will match marketing and promotional expenditures dollar for dollar up to the amount designated for individuals and groups of PRA member businesses and artists. Businesses must be located within the Renaissance Area to qualify for matching funds.
- For qualifying artists and businesses:
  - Moving assistance up to $2500
  - Start Up Business Assistance up to $2500
  - Make Ready/ Rehab Costs up to $5000
  - Acquisition Assistance up to $15,000
  - Restaurant Incentive up to $25,000

*Qualifying* emphasizes sustainability. PRA seeks artists that have achieved some notoriety in the art world. Qualified candidates are identified as persons in the field of art using a successful art business model. The artist must be able to demonstrate that their business produces sufficient sales and clients to support the artist while living/working in Paducah, KY. Special consideration will be granted to galleries and businesses that are "open to the public" and maintain a minimum number of "open" hours. Considerations may be given to artists that commit to making substantial contributions to the community through workshops or other highly desirable projects.

**Example:** Glasstown Arts District: Millville, N.J. (Narrative drawn from a report produced by the National Trust for Historic Preservation)

Situated 35 miles from Philadelphia, Millville was one of the places where the early American glassmaking tradition got its start. Rich in silica sand and trees (for fuel), this area of southern New Jersey was a great location to set up factories and furnaces. Not only would glassmaking become an important industry for communities like Millville, it would also lead to a burgeoning art tradition. Glassblowers made art glass during their breaks and free time, thus steeping southern New Jersey in a rich artisan heritage.

This heritage is a critical element of Millville’s revitalization strategy. Just two miles from downtown, the Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center annually attracts nearly 80,000 visitors who come to learn about the history and craft of American glassmaking.
The Millville Development Corporation (MDC), a nonprofit organization that began focusing on a revitalization plan in 1994, worked with the WheatonArts and Cultural Center to explore the idea of turning Millville into an arts destination. MDC had already hired consulting firms to investigate the feasibility of attracting people who live within a 90-minute drive area from the highway. In the late 1990s, MDC determined that if Millville could capture 1 percent of drive-by traffic, then it could be a successful downtown.

The idea of using the Cultural Center's existing arts attraction grew into developing the downtown into the Glasstown Arts District. Millville set to work developing the Glasstown Arts District. The Riverfront Renaissance Center for the Arts opened in April 2001. It is run by a nonprofit organization and features state-of-the-art facilities, including gallery space, a community center, classrooms, and a reception area. Community groups use the Center throughout the year for meetings and events and it offers many arts educational programs for the public.

Starting in 2000, MDC launched a small marketing campaign to attract regional artists and was holding tours to show off the district. "We would take them through the downtown, point out available properties and say with conviction 'there will be this here, there will be that here,'" recalls program director Loïs. "There was no question that buildings would become new homes for artists, galleries, boutiques, or restaurants. It was just a matter of when."

The Glasstown vision was contagious as private developers started their own rehabilitation projects to get commercial space ready for the transformation. At the start of this initiative, the first-floor vacancy rate downtown was 50 percent. The city had already invested in physical improvements and street-scaping projects a few years earlier, but there was still work to be done.

Today, there is an 8 percent first-floor vacancy rate in the six-block Main Street zone.

Millville Main Street has expanded its marketing efforts by growing its annual campaign to $380,000. Glasstown is advertised as an arts district destination, and the design of the campaign changes each year. For the arts and culture tourists in the nearby Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New Jersey regions, the district is touted as a great place to shop in distinctive boutiques, see great original art, and dine. Local businesses share zip code data about their customers with Main Street Millville, and glastownartsdistrict.com’s software can track the websites that led people to visit its site so the organization can measure the effectiveness of its marketing efforts. During the spring and summer, the website gets 400,000-500,000 hits each month.

Millville passed a local ordinance which defines an arts district overlay zone — a designated area in the downtown that encourages artist live-work space and cuts out the red tape and extra permitting expenses so that arts-related businesses can be located on the ground floor with residential units above.

The city also has a low-interest loan program to help business and property owners put together financing for building improvements. For small projects, MDC offers a 50-50 matching grant up to $5,000, and for larger projects, it offers a 40 percent matching grant and zero interest loans with a cap of $10,000.

Before its Pioneer Artists loan fund program recently closed, it had attracted 15 artists to Millville. MDC is currently looking for another sponsor so it can get a new influx of artists to keep the district fresh. In
exchange for zero percent loans of up to $5,000 (with a five-year pay-back period), artists must agree to
sell or create original works of art, move to or live in the Millville district during the life of the loan,
participate in district events, and be open to the public.

Goal 6: Modify the operating model of the Harvester Artists’ Lofts, potentially to include some units as
Limited Equity Share condo or co-op ownership, so that artists who are interested in equity ownership
become invested in the building. Strengthen requirements for artists to open their studios. Purchase or
set-aside some units to be used to house visiting artists invited to Council Bluffs for community and
school residencies.

The impact of the Harvester Artist Lofts has been less than desired, in part because there has not been
enough call for rental space for artists in Council Bluffs and in part because the artists at Harvester have
not done as much in terms of open studio tours, exhibits and programs as desired.

Limited equity ownership may be an option for a few units in the building; or, it may be possible to
move the entire building toward limited equity co-op ownership. ‘Limited equity’ refers to the
mechanism used to keep a project affordable by placing a ceiling on the resale price of the studios.
Typically, the resale price is limited to a 10% per year return on one’s cash (equity) down payment and
capital improvements. While this prevents early "windfalls", long-time owners find that the 10%
allowable increase eventually brings them close to the unrestricted market.

Movement toward some owned condominiums may also be attractive to organizations that would like
to own units in which visiting artists can stay for weeks or months. For example, the Knudson
Foundation or other area non-profits may be interested in bringing professional performers and visual
artists into Council Bluffs to work in the schools for a number of months. Having a dedicated
condominium or co-op space would be attractive as visiting artist housing.
Addendum

The following are examples of museums and buildings that are useful in considering options for Council Bluffs.

Recently completed train shed, Northwest Railroad Museum, Snoqualmie, WA makes it possible for visitors to view rail cars year round and for visitor tours to be conducted in any weather. The shed also provides protection to the rail cars that are cared for as artifacts.
Combined Canadian Museum of Rail Travel and Heritage Cranbrook Museum, Cranbrook, B.C.

The Cranbrook History Gallery is on the main floor of the building to the rear, along with a retail area and café. The Museum operates the Cranbrook heritage program. Upper floor is devoted to archives. There is a restoration interpretive area on the main floor of the front building, providing visitors the opportunity to see restoration of train cars in process. The Museum is operated by the Cranbrook Archives, Museum, and Landmark Foundation, a Canadian nonprofit.

From the Bylaws:

The objects and purposes of the society will be dedicated to the study and research, the preservation and restoration, the acquisition, classification, storage and exhibition of the City of Cranbrook's heritage and to develop an awareness and appreciation in the community of the heritage from which the City of Cranbrook had its beginnings, and more particularly:

- To encourage the study of Cranbrook's heritage in the public school system;
- To encourage research into various aspects of Cranbrook's heritage;
- To acquire various documents, photographs and artifacts, etc., representative of Cranbrook's heritage;
- To secure a museum facility sufficient for the proper storage of such exhibition of Cranbrook’s heritage;
- To establish a sound program to ensure that the important landmarks of the City are protected and continue to be viable with the changing times;
- To establish an annual “Heritage Award” program to recognize outstanding contribution involving heritage improvement of a physical nature in the City of Cranbrook.

The purposes of the society will also be dedicated to the study and research, the preservation and restoration, acquisition, classification, storage and exhibition of the Railway – with specific reference to the “Crowsnest and Kettle - alley route of the Canadian Pacific Railway” and to develop a national awareness and appreciation of this Heritage.
Entrance to the Cranbrook museum designed to showcase and introduce visitors to local history.

Rail Car preservation building currently under construction, Cranbrook.
ADDENDUM

Informational Materials, Council Bluffs Cultural Development Plan Steering Committee

These pages contain various examples of coordinated, consolidated, joint ventured, and centralized cultural facilities, services, and programs. They are intended to provide a range of different approaches that communities such as Council Bluffs have taken to sustain and strengthen their cultural organizations.

Each has elements that could be viable in Council Bluffs – and probably each has elements that wouldn’t be right for Council Bluffs. Take a moment to look through them and consider the elements you like – and don’t like. It is possible we will find other applicable models to review, after our meeting.


Museums Inc. represents the recent (2004-2009) coming together of independent museums. The St. Joseph Museum is the oldest of all the institutions, originally founded in 1927 as a children’s museum. The Wythe Tootle Mansion had at one time been owned by the St. Joseph Museum, but in 1947 had been deeded to the City. The Gløre Museum was given to the St. Joseph Museum (collection and building) by the State of Missouri, which operated it until 2004. The Black History Archives had been an independent nonprofit until it joined the St. Joseph Museum as a division.

The St. Joseph Museum, the Gløre, and the Archives are now housed in the modern building shown below. The Mansion is not on the same property. All are operated by a single administrative staff. Each museum has a different focus and collection. The house museum represents St. Joseph history, with primary focus on Civil War and Jesse James. The modern building’s museums include a Black History archive; the St. Joseph Museum which contains Native American, Lewis and Clark and natural history collections, and the Gløre Psychiatric Museum.
Eight individuals operate all of these museums. The positions are as follows:

- Executive Director
- Curator of Collections
- Archives Manager
- Security and Maintenance
- Bookkeeper
- Marketing and PR
- Museum store manager/Volunteer manager
- Receptionist/house museum front desk
- Pt. Time cleaning crew
- University interns

During 2012, staff gave 34 programs to community groups and schools, 162 tour groups received guided tours, and 110 research requests were fielded by staff. In addition, 21 special events and programs were held within the museums.

There is an 18 member board of directors, plus two non-voting representatives from the City who otherwise have full board involvement. The board meets six times each year, and is structured with six standing committees.

About 80 volunteers assist in everything from grounds maintenance to docent tours and database upkeep.

Individuals who support the museum join as members with a single membership offering them admissions and discounts across all the museums.

There is a combined gift shop for all the museums. It is a net positive revenue source for the museum, whereas previously the gift shops each ran at a loss.

Similarly, rentals are offered for events and meetings, and rentals now provide a net positive revenue stream.

The St. Joseph History Museum had previously been operated by the City of St. Joseph, and the other three museums had annually come to the City for funding.
The City owns the historic house museum and thus contracts its management to the Museums Inc.

The annual City funding for all four museums (now including the house museum) is about $325,000. This includes maintenance funding for the house museum as well as general operating support for all the museums. The general operating support is a dedicated line of funding derived from a museum tax St. Joseph as follows:

The current City ad valorem tax rate is: $1.1240 per $1000 of assessed valuation.

General Fund (includes Public Safety Tax): 67.00 cents
Parks & Recreation Fund: 19.52 cents
Health Fund: 20.99 cents
Museum Fund: 4.89 cents
Total: $1.1240

Membership brings in about $21,000 annually.

Total operating expense is just over $700,000 including $100,000 in depreciation. Museums, Inc. has unrestricted net assets of approximately $4 million, plus additional facilities/collections assets nearing $4 million. Staff costs are approximately $190,000 a year.

2. Midland Center for the Arts, Midland, MI

The Midland Center for the Arts has a larger footprint than what may be envisioned in Council Bluffs, but it offers an interesting lesson in how a number of organizations worked over a number of years to join forces with a single management and board.

The Midland Center was established as the home for the Dow Music (natural history and science), the Midland Symphony, a children’s theatre company and a community theatre, a local amateur chorus and as a site for youth arts programs.

In 1996-97, it became clear to the resident groups and to the board of the Center itself that the organizations were redundantly staffed, and that their overall cost of operations was too high, causing financial deficits for many of the groups. There was also growing concern that the Midland Historical Society, the only cultural organization not under the same roof, would require additional funding as soon as its new building (above, right photo) was opened.
At the same time, each organization was devoted to its own management structure and to maintaining governance independence. There was concern that a unified governance structure would potentially lead to some organizations losing their desired audience share and funding.

Through a challenging process, the Center’s board worked over a two year timeframe with the boards of each resident organization, eventually restructuring all into a single board with advisory committees dedicated to each organization. Each organization maintained its own volunteer pool. Staff was consolidated, realizing savings especially in supporting staff roles. For example, the museum and the symphony retain administrative leaders of their own, but use the overall marketing and financial management staff of the Center; and smaller entities such as the choirs and youth programs were able to be managed by a single FTE rather than by multiple managers.

The restructuring also addressed the needs of the historical society, which couldn’t maintain a multi-person staff of the size required by its large new facility. As with the other groups, it joined into the Center and works within the unified structure.

The Center operates the box office for all the resident groups, and provides all marketing, financial management and fundraising. The groups work together to shape the annual programming calendar. The Center then develops its own additional program calendar of guest artists, lecturers, and entertainers. The Center works with the groups to set ticket prices/admission prices, and to raise additional funds for special exhibits, visiting artists, etc. Individual volunteer “friends” groups also continue to raise funds for each group.
3. Carson City, NV Brewery Center for the Arts

The Brewery Center for the Arts began with a plan to adaptively reuse a historic building in Carson City. The old Brewery Building had become home to the Carson City News, and when the paper put the building up for sale in 1974, the community’s Bicentennial Commission decided to purchase and restore it as the community Bicentennial Project. Carson City had numerous small groups that needed space, including visual arts teaching and exhibition space and community theatre space, and the Center was envisioned as a facility for their use. Historic Tax Credit financing was used for the restoration project. The main floor was all that was initially restored.

Gradually, the Center grew to shelter more organizations and to take on more services for the community. It became the de-facto arts council for Carson City. It currently houses an artists’ association gallery, the community theatre (Proscenium Players), a youth arts training program (Nevada Performance Academy) a children’s theatre (Wild Horse Children’s Theatre), as well as the Carson City Music Club and High Sierra Swing Dance. As the Center’s own work as an arts council grew, it developed
additional programming that was of a scale larger than could be accommodated in the Center. When a parish church was closed/consolidated, it purchased the church and transformed it into a larger performance hall. The Center took on the operation of the local access TV station, which it housed. Over time, the formerly independent children’s theatre and Community Theater joined the Center, which maintains the independent names of the groups but now operates them.

And, to better serve theatre patrons, it leased out part of the Brewery Building to a restaurant, and refinshed the second floor of the Brewery into a 19th Century-inspired Ball Room that is catered by the restaurant and that is a major source of revenue as a popular rental facility.

Ballroom and theater within the Brewery Building.

The theater is equipped with a fully functional sound and light booth, flexible lighting grid, front of house speakers, monitor system, dressing rooms, and is capable of seating 128 people on a multilevel riser system. The addition of the Church facility allows the Center to accommodate concerts: it seats 300.

Today, the Center operates a significant educational program for all ages, ranging from adult swing dance and photography classes to youth outreach programs in the Carson City Schools. Summer youth arts programs are taught in the ballroom space. The annual roster of classes ranges from jewelry making to bluegrass guitar.

While the Center tenants remain independent organizations, the Center provides marketing, box office, and maintenance services.

Currently, a husband and wife team serve as executive and program director. The local access TV manager is on staff, as is a facilities/rental manager, a tech director, and a receptionist.

The Center’s mission statement is:

TO COORDINATE, PROMOTE AND ASSIST IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND ADVANCEMENT OF ARTS, EDUCATION AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN CARSON CITY AND SURROUNDING AREAS THROUGH THE COOPERATIVE EFFORTS OF CITIZENS AND ORGANIZATIONS ACTING IN CONCERT TOGETHER.

The annual operating budget is $580,000 including operations of both facilities, program presenting, and educational programs. This includes three community theatre productions, 14 concerts, six youth theatre performances, operations of the store (consignment based), and year-round classes. The organization realized significant shortfalls in the recession, in part due to its pre-recession purchase of
the Church facility and related program expansion, and a campaign is underway to close the deficit gap. That said, revenues are nearly 50%/50% earned and contributed. Over 75 volunteers make it possible for the Center to keep production and operating costs modest.

4. Kalamazoo Epic Center

The Kalamazoo Epic Center is operated by the Arts Council of Kalamazoo. It is a former department store complex. Similar to the Brewery Center, it houses community access TV and a restaurant and retail store that pay at market rent. It also provides the community box office – both on-line and a physical space within the building. The organizations that rent space in the Center control their own spaces, though they do share central services and facilities including a shared conference room, shared gallery space, shared mail room/photocopy/fax. There is also shared Wi-Fi, a single IT team for the building, and a single maintenance and tech crew.

Inside, the Epic Center is headquarters for the following Partners: Arts Council of Greater Kalamazoo, Black Arts & Cultural Center, Crescendo Academy of Music, and Education for the Arts, Epic Bistro/Central City Tap House, Epic Box Office, Epic Theatre, Fontana Chamber Arts, Irving S. Gilmore International Keyboard Festival, Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra, Nature Connection, Public Media Network, Stulberg String Competition and Wellspring/ Cori Terry & Dancers.

Epic Center was among the first of its kind in the United States. At the time of the renovation and collaboration among the different arts organizations, the few other shared arts spaces were typically live/work spaces for individual artists, combining residences with studios. Arts facilities have again and again proved to be economic generators and catalysts for the cities they inspire. Epic Center fills that role in Kalamazoo and throughout Southwest Michigan.

Support and funding for the renovation of the building came from many generous local individual supporters and foundations in the Kalamazoo community. Artwork displayed around the building was permanently donated by members of the arts community here in the Greater Kalamazoo area.

The Epic Theatre is a black box theatre space with a max capacity of 150 people. It accommodates events ranging from theatre performances, musical performances, corporate meetings, weddings and/or receptions and more. The Epic Theatre is equipped with its own lighting and sound system.
Tech Specs

Epic Theatre: 3,653 sq. ft. of space with stage and house lighting that light up the house for any event from a wedding reception to a dramatic play. With its own sound system also, the theatre comes equipped to handle most any needs as is.

Green Room: A 230 sq. ft. space that features seating, a working sink, and a refrigerator for use.

Dressing Rooms: There are Men’s and Women’s dressing rooms each with ten lockers, vanity mirrors, clothes hanging space, and a shower. The Women’s Dressing Room is 380 sq. ft. and the Men’s Dressing Room is 320 sq. ft.

Thorne Atrium: Features an open space of 1,096 sq. ft. There is a 32” flat screen monitor in the atrium area that has the capability to hook into to show a presentation or slideshow during or after the event.

The Arts Council provides marketing for all the events in Kalamazoo as well as for the events in the Epic Center. The primary marketing vehicle is the on-line calendar, which is powered by the much-used Artsopolis Network software. The following page shows a screen shot of current listings. Artsopolis requires that individual groups enter their own data and keep their listings current. It is not inexpensive,
but it represents the state-of-the-art calendar system for cultural users. There are nearly 50 Artsopolis members across the country, including several communities that are small-midsized, such as Grand Forks, ND, and St. Cloud, MN.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Title</th>
<th>Location and Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wellspring Summer Dance Camp</td>
<td>Presented by Wellspring/Cori Terry &amp; Dancers at Wellspring Theatre 07/08/13 - 07/12/13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Could Be a Dream</td>
<td>Presented by Farmers Alley Theatre at Farmers Alley Theatre 07/19/13 - 08/11/13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crescendo Fiddlers in Concert</td>
<td>Presented by Crescendo Academy of Music at Bronson Park 06/07/13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June Jubilee at the Kalamazoo Public Library</td>
<td>Presented by Kalamazoo Public Library at Kalamazoo Public Library - Central Library 06/08/13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerts in the Park - The Kalamazoo Singers</td>
<td>Presented by Concerts in the Park and Arts Council of Greater Kalamazoo at Bronson Park 06/09/13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dave Elhart at Water Street Coffee Joint</td>
<td>Presented by Dave Elhart Painting at Water Street Coffee Roaster 04/01/13 - 05/31/13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art Hop: June 2013</td>
<td>Presented by Arts Council of Greater Kalamazoo and Art Hop at Downtown Kalamazoo 06/07/13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55th Annual Summer Art Fair</td>
<td>Presented by South Haven Center for the Arts 07/07/13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formed/Fired: Ceramics Invitational</td>
<td>Presented by South Haven Center for the Arts 06/21/13 - 08/04/13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer Art Camp</td>
<td>Presented by Kalamazoo Institute of Arts at Kalamazoo Institute of Arts 06/17/13 - 06/09/13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center Studio</td>
<td>Presented by South Haven Center for the Arts 06/18/13 - 06/16/13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative Kids Arts Academy</td>
<td>Presented by South Haven Center for the Arts 10/07/13 - 11/07/13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. The DAHL Arts Center, Rapid City, SD

The Dahl Arts Center is a municipal facility which receives support from the Rapid City Arts Council, City of Rapid City, Allied Arts Fund, the South Dakota Arts Council through the Department of Tourism & State Development, the National Endowment for the Arts and from generous foundation, corporation donors and individual members.

The Dahl Arts Center has served as the premier western South Dakota arts center for contemporary visual arts, arts education and performing arts since it opened in 1974. It is a public facility owned by the City of Rapid City. The “new Dahl” re-opened in January of 2009 after a $7.8 million dollar renovation. Of this, $3.25 million dollars of the project was funded through the Vision 2012 program of the City of Rapid City, with remaining funds raised through generous community and foundation donors. In its inaugural year, the Dahl hosted events from 90 different groups including arts & community groups as well as commercial rentals which help offset building operations costs.

The Dahl houses a flexible use 280-seat event center (which can also seat 200 at a sit-down dinner when it is not set up in theater setting), three visual arts galleries, an interactive kid's hands-on gallery, the Bernard P. Thomas Cyclorama Mural of American History, and adult and children's art classrooms. It is also the home of the Rapid City Arts Council, which operates the facility. The Arts Council has a staff of 11, inclusive of staff for all its programs, building operations, box office, and maintenance. The Arts Council annual budget, inclusive of building operations, is about $560,000.
Using the facility, the arts council presents a summer Americana Music Festival, a regional emerging artists series, Holiday noon concerts, and a winter concert series.

Most of the Rapid City cultural organizations are housed in the Center. Office spaces are also rented by other nonprofit organizations.

6. **Friends of the Museums, Fort Walton Beach, FL**

This model is very similar to a municipal friends of the Library organization. These three museums, each incorporated at different times, are currently operated by the City of Ft. Walton Beach. (The City provides maintenance and basic operations for the Museums.) As the various museums came together in a single municipal department, their individual volunteer groups were joined into a single 501c3 Friends organization that provides fundraising and volunteer assistance for all three organizations. The Friends of the Museums was founded in July 1995, with the goal to
foster and advance educational and scientific research to preserve, protect, and promote the rich cultural heritage of this area. The organization is dedicated to supporting the Indian Temple Mound and Museum, the Camp Walton Schoolhouse Museum, the Garnier Post Office Museum and the Civil War Exhibit Building.

The Friends sponsor fundraising events throughout the year, and provide volunteers to serve as docents and facility support staff in all three museums. In addition, they fund and sponsor an annual speakers series and occasional concerts.
Discussion Questions Distributed to Council Bluffs Cultural Organizations

These questions build upon the discussion from the Arts and Culture Forum. As a drill down guide, these will help us work toward even more detailed focus on priorities, needs and capacity for individual organizations. I understand that not every question applies to every organization participating in this process, but encourage you to bring dynamic ideas to the table even if the specific questions are not applicable to your group.

If you are a part of a group that is meeting with me, please discuss your shared board and staff responses to these questions in advance of our meeting, so that we use our time together to maximum benefit.

1. Working from the Forum outcomes and looking ahead to five years from now, what would you like to see as distinguishing characteristics of the arts and cultural community in Council Bluffs? How would the residents of Council Bluffs be better served? What would be more exciting, or more dynamic, within the community? Specifically, what changes would you want to see from the present? Be as precise as possible. What kind of impact (positive, negative, neutral) would these changes have on your organization or the organizations in which you are most interested? What hurdles must be overcome to make these conditions happen? Again, be precise.

2. Confidentially, what are your organizational goals for the next five years, and what is your assessment of your overall organizational capacity to meet these goals? What is the current financial capacity of your organization to meet these goals, and how/if do you anticipate being able to grow financial capacity if/as required? What is the differential between your current operating revenue and the level of revenue you envision needing to meet your goals in five years – i.e. 5% more revenue to balance a budget and meet goals, or 20%?

Or, consider your organization’s financial ‘gap analysis’ in a different way: perhaps your organization has held back because revenue has been static. What haven’t you done because you haven’t been able to grow the budget? How much would you need to grow your budget to realize your organizational goals on behalf of the community, and what benefit would that difference make to the community?

3. What are the financial worries you see for your organization or the sector over the next five years? Please be as precise as possible.

4. During the Forum, the participants spoke a great deal about new approaches to collaboration, including elements such as shared marketing or box office, even some other shared ‘back office’ services. Specifically, evaluate the pros and cons of the ideas put forward, and of the ideas that have been discussed within your own organization(s). New collaborative models in the field are abundant, including collaboration that is closer to ‘shared operations.’ Think about what would best make it possible to lower overall costs and enhance core missions as well as better serve the community of Council Bluffs. What would this potentially mean for your organization?
5. How important is a hub-type facility or facilities to achieving the vision for arts and culture in Council Bluffs, and for your organization’s continuing or expanded role? If your organization was to be involved in any new facility, what specific needs would have to be addressed? What tangible and value-positive change would a facility or facilities make for your organization?

6. Leadership and governance are cross cutting issues impacting many – if not all – arts and cultural organizations in Council Bluffs. What kind of leadership structure do you individually – and as an organization – envision would need to be established to provide any increase in collaborative services and sustained support for the sector? Please be as detailed and precise as possible.

7. What is missing in Council Bluffs that may need to be imported from elsewhere? Is there a type of cultural nonprofit programming or service missing that would be important to serve the community? Please give this some serious thought. And/or, do you envision existing individual organizations or a collaboration of existing organizations could grow their mission(s) to fill voids that currently exist, to serve the community?

8. Evaluate your organization’s ability to adapt to change. Think about the impacts of new collaborative models, or of shared ways of accomplishing goals. Think about rising to new challenges and reaching new goals. Think of new ways of getting things done. How change-adaptable is your organization? Are you willing to jump in with both feet, or more likely to wait and see how things go? Does your organization want to stay pretty much off to the side, or be involved in new ways of doing things? Does your organization need help with change? Can you articulate what you see as barriers to change within your group? This is confidential, and very important to each of our discussions.

9. What one action to improve the quality and sustainability of Council Bluff’s arts and cultural sector – and make a real difference to residents - would most galvanize and energize your organization and supporters?