



The Local Network

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Threshing Machine
Dakota Buttes Historical Society
Hettinger, North Dakota

Strategic Planning for Small Museums (Continued from Vol 20 # 1) (Icebreaker exercise)

2. Begin with an icebreaker exercise. If you choose the right icebreaker, you can learn something about the participants. Go around the room and ask what was the last museum they visited (it cannot be yours) and why. You'll learn something about what drives them to go to a museum, what kinds of museums they like, or how far they'll travel to visit a museum. Or you'll find out that some of them have no relationship to

museums other than the one they serve. Both types of responses can be very enlightening.

3. Present ground rules. Adults need ground rules as much as children do. To keep the group charged with positive energy and encouragement, cover ground rules and post them on a wall in the meeting room. Refer to the rules throughout the process to help control behavior issues. At no point do you want anyone to feel alienated, threatened, or discouraged. The brainstorming process works best when everyone is firing off ideas and working in a respectful manner.

SAMPLE GROUND RULES

1. There are NO bad ideas!
2. One person speaks at a time.
3. Listen when another participant speaks. Allow him or her the floor.
4. Think about small, medium, and large ideas. No idea is too small.
5. Allow yourself to be inspired by another participant's idea.
6. When thinking of ideas, visualize yourself as a board member, a staff member, a volunteer, a museum visitor, and a donor.

4. Work in pairs. Before you start the open brainstorming segment, divide the group into pairs. Be sure to select pairs of people who may not know each other very well or rarely have the opportunity to work together. Send them to various locations with the "Before the Storm" worksheet. This worksheet is designed to build confidence among participants and begin the visioning process.

BEFORE THE STORM WORKSHEET

For the purposes of this strategic plan, we are using five pre-determined categories of museum management and operation; Administration, Collection Management, Education, Building/Grounds Preservation, and Development.

1. Working with partner, consider these categories and create a vision for the museum. What kind of museum will it be in 5, 10, 15 years? When the vision is realized, what will the museum be like for the visitor? This should be one sentence that imagines “a day in the life of the visitor” and makes a promise.
2. Use the vision and quickly brainstorm ideas that can make the vision a reality. These will be your notes for the group brainstorming session, which will ultimately reveal the main components of the strategic plan.
3. Finally, turn the sheet over and drill your brainstorm ideas down into five main strategic goals.

Take thirty minutes to complete this activity.

5. Brainstorm as a group. The purpose of the group brainstorm is to gather as many ideas as possible, capture them on paper, and keep everyone engaged and excited about the ideas. Very simple facilitation is about helping a group of people reach their goals. During the course of the brainstorming session, the facilitator will;

- Control the meeting
- Set rules and enforce them
- Ensure participation
- Allow for flow of thought
- Keep the meeting on topic
- Act generally as a non-participant
- Be a subject matter expert
- Accurately sum up discussion
- Smile as much as humanly possible

Brainstorming sessions are fast, exciting, and creative. To warm up the group to the challenge, you may start the session with mock brainstorm. Ask them to share ideas about what are the great moments in American history, or the best movies of all time. This will also help you keep the conversation balanced and watch for domineering personality types.

Once the ball is rolling, these steps will take you through the process and help you gather the most salient points.

- ✓ The facilitator will jot ideas onto flip charts while keeping ideas flowing.
- ✓ Once momentum has slowed, review ideas for clarification.
- ✓ During a break, categorize the brainstorm list into separate flip chart sheets.
- ✓ Once everyone has had a break, reconvene the group to consider the categories and how you assigned them? Look for gaps. Did they have a million programming ideas, but never mentioned collections care? You can take time at this point to restart the brainstorm if there are obvious holes.

6. Initial visioning session. Once the brainstorm period has slowed down, it is time to start developing a vision statement. A vision statement is focused on the future and considers what the museum will look like down the road (What will the visitor experience be like? How will the museum function?) The vision statement incorporates the needs and desires of the board and staff and crystallizes them into a picture of the future.

7. Plan a follow-up session. Before the participants leave the first session, establish the date and time of the follow-up session. Get a sense of how many people will attend the second session.

During the follow-up, the facilitator presents the plan’s initial draft and walks the group through the format. This will include ideas from the first brainstorm session and formalized strategic goals. It may also include proposed timelines and anticipated resources. This is another opportunity for idea clarification and consideration of priorities and timeline.

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Education Theme Part Two
**GOVERNOR’S CONFERENCE ON
NORTH DAKOTA HISTORY
October 29-30**

Many changes have impacted education in North Dakota in the last six decades. School consolidations continue, educational technology is constantly changing, federal laws are greatly influencing how public schools operate, and

alternative methods of educating North Dakota's young people are growing more widespread. Issues such as these, and more, will be addressed at the 22nd Annual Governor's Conference on North Dakota History, to be held October 29 and 30 at the North Dakota Heritage Center in Bismarck.

Sponsored by the State Historical Society of North Dakota (SHSND), this year's conference is entitled *The 3Rs in North Dakota: Education from 1951-2010*. This is the second in a two-part theme for the annual history conference. Last year's conference concentrated on how education was provided to North Dakota's youth from 1870-1950. For more information, contact Curator of Education Erik Holland, eholland@nd.gov.



Lieutenant Governor Jack Dalrymple (right) and Commerce Department Commissioner Shane Goettle present the 2010 Governor's Travel and Tourism award as Attraction of the Year to Mark Sundlov, site supervisor for the Ronald Reagan Minuteman Missile Site near Cooperstown. The site opened to much anticipation in July 2009, and has drawn thousands of visitors from several states and foreign countries. The award was presented at the annual state tourism conference April 27 in Minot.

The State Historical Society (SHSND) is seeking nominations in four categories of awards that recognize outstanding achievements in the field of history in North Dakota.

The deadline for nominations has changed to September 17, for presentation at the 22nd Annual Governor's Conference on North Dakota History in October 2010. Nominations will then be reviewed by a SHSND committee. Presentation of the awards will be made during the conference's awards banquet held at the North Dakota Heritage Center in Bismarck Friday, October 29.

Four Categories of Award Nominations:

- ✓ **Excellence in Local History** - This award is given to recognize and honor the many citizens who dedicate their time, talent, and efforts to local and state history.
- ✓ **Association for Excellence in Local History** - This award is given to the association or organization whose activity in local and regional history serves as a role model of excellence to others.
- ✓ **Heritage Profile Honor** - This award is given in recognition of those individuals who have made a lasting or significant contribution in preserving, interpreting, promoting, researching, and/or otherwise extending the knowledge and understanding of the history of North Dakota.
- ✓ **North Dakota Person of History** - This award is given in recognition of those individuals who have had a prominent role in the history of North Dakota. The award shall posthumously honor those individuals who have made a lasting or significant contribution to the growth, development and progress of the state, or the social well-being of its citizens. To be eligible, a nominee for this honor must have been deceased at least ten years.

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FUR TRADE BOOK BY STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY RECEIVES NATIONAL AWARD

A recent book about the mid-19th century fur trade of the Upper Missouri River, published by the State Historical Society of North Dakota, has received national honors from the American Library Association (ALA).

Twilight of the Upper Missouri River Fur Trade: The Journals of Henry A. Boller, edited by W. Raymond Wood, has been named to the ALA's Notable Government Documents List of the best state publications for 2009. It is one of only 12 state publications throughout the United States nationally recognized by the ALA.

Wood is a renowned northern plains scholar, the author or editor of several books about prehistory and early history along the Missouri River.

Henry Boller (1836-99) lived as a fur trader on the Upper Missouri River from 1858 to 1861 and paints vivid portraits of the region's native peoples and those who dealt with and lived among them. An eyewitness to the rapidly changing world of the Upper Missouri River, young Boller's journals and letters bring to life the declining days of the fur trade on the northern plains, and brought his sympathetic view of the plight of American Indians to a wide audience.

Twilight of the Upper Missouri River Fur Trade is available for \$21.95, plus tax, from the North Dakota Heritage Center Museum Store in Bismarck or by contacting Museum Stores Manager Rhonda Brown at (701) 328-2822, email rhbrown@nd.gov or order online at www.history.nd.gov/museumstore.

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