

5/7/19

- Founded in 1877 on Luether College
- They offer Norwegian Folk Art Classes
 - o 90 classes offered
- 34,000 objects in collection
- Full time and part time staff
 - o Development
 - o Communication and marketing - Magazine put out 2 times a year
 - o 2 tours to Norway this summer – Art and History based tours.
- New Tattoo exhibit starting June 1st
- New process now to 2025 (200 year anniversary of immigration).
 - o Looking at “how are we different”
 - o Looking at “what things are we good at/doing well”
- Architecture firm from New York to develop site master plan.
 - o Looking at “what are key plans” and getting a “clear picture”
- Looking into hiring a consultant for infrastructure, funds, policies and procedures, and speak with the top candidates.
 - o Sent out RFP deadline May 1
- Tim requested for them to send us what was written/sent out as RFP
- Museum was founded on the Norwegian immigration story.
- Audience changes, therefore needs change.
 - o Improve audience engagement and tailor to needs of audience yet staying true to story/self.
- Interest in working with hands and connect with new/younger groups due to changing interest – helped create the art folk school.
- Dr. Sigmund Gundersen asked what percent of operations are traditional museum vs Folk Art classes?
 - o 10-20% is folk art classes.
 - o Museum audience stayed flat rate for many years.
 - o Museum looked the same as when the President of the museum came in his 4th grade class
 - o If you don’t offer something new or changing, you will hit a peak and the folk art classes helped.
- Buildings were brought to the site.
 - o Dozen buildings on site, used in summer months, traditional approach more park like setting is the goal.
 - o Working on plans to get wheelchair accessibility
 - o Create amphitheater, for personal or public use to become more communal
 - o When able to partner with other groups, do it, as it opens up ability to get grants and highly recommend community collaborations.
- How did the city feel about taking property off the tax base?

- This was not an issue, it was viewed positively and viewed as part of down town. The city feels the museum is an important attraction.
- A study was conducted 10 years ago that showed the effects of the museum on Decorah, done by Iowa State University students. La Crosse could do similar study with UWL or Viterbo University.
- Does the museum do school group tours? What do you do with the tours?
 - The museum works with school district and created the pioneer emerging program. Local schools learn about Norwegian immigration, then students complete a project about immigration and the projects are displayed at museum.
 - This is an area they would like to push further and could do more work with the program.
 - Trustee from the school district fashioned this program specific for 4th graders.
 - Youth educator on staff collaborated with the school district.
 - Kid's folk art classes after school and monthly kids program, free for anyone in community, lessons on arts and crafts, and good for engaging younger groups.
- Since opening, what have been some sustainability goals and financial support?
 - A question we asked ourselves was how can we engage our audience?
 - Big financial contributions have come from connection to college, Nordic studies help develop relations and stronger connection now to provide support later.
 - Conscious about not adding staff quickly
 - Adding programs that offer income revenue (i.e. tours to Norway)
- Can you break down revenue streams into percentages?
 - Contributions
 - 4 general appeals (plans to do more), currently have done 3 in the last 7 months.
 - Matching gifts from trustees.
 - 24 trustees, expected to financially contribute.
 - Grants
 - American alliance accredited
 - National Trustees (due to being a national Museum)
 - Looking to add more trustees from Minneapolis area
 - Not membered governed
 - Tours
 - Bring in revenue (not cheap)
 - People who take the tours may become financial donators.
 - Museum store
 - Not only a gift shop but has products for Folk Art courses.
 - Generally the store will stay open later with the Folk Art courses.
 - Discounts for members.
- Strong endowment 20% of operating cost. Endowment created by major gifts.
 - Two times of endowments (restricted and unrestricted).

- Cash reserve designed to help with ups and downs of economy and requires a more strict investment.
- Created the endowment was very intentional and there was/is an endowment component in past and future campaigns.
- How are you keeping up with social trends and technology?
 - We aren't afraid of technology use. Have both technology uses (i.e. website) and options to opt out of technology (i.e. folk art courses). The core of the folk art courses are to keep the community feel and interact with others. The museum has the ability to be willing to try new things balance between technology and community.
- One challenge is messaging why should I care or what difference does it make if the museum fails.
- Diane mentioned the following at top things to work on:
 - Fundraising.
 - Feasibility study.
 - Campaign consultant to steer through the program (becoming an extension of staff).
 - Knowing what members are looking for.
 - Knowing mission and vision.
- Any push back on change?
 - Not really. You have to be knowledgeable of what you are doing and how you are doing it. Sometimes it is the older members that are interested in longevity and growth.
- Advice
 - Listen to community perception of you, listen to the "booing" fans because they will tell you what to work on.
 - Use resources to reach out to get feedback.
 - Gather and advisory team, many of the advisors became teachers for the folk art courses.
 - Don't take critics too much to heart
- Has the museum been in contact with the county?
 - Yes the county has been a key component; however, the museum does not get City or County money. They did receive one grant through the county.
 - Not a line item on budget, we benefit from Hotel/Motel tax.
 - They have to apply for room tax money every year if they want to receive it.
 - Can apply locally for community grants (depot grants)
 - More often have to go to private funding
 - Steve Johnson (previous executive director) stated his goal was to get the first 1 million dollar donor. He ended getting the first 1 million and 2 million donors.
 - 1 million and 2 million donors were both trustees
 - 1 from Norway and 1 from Connecticut.
 - He got these donors by building a relationship with each, it takes a lot of work to create and keep up with relationships. Steve suggested writing letters and noted 1 on 1 conversation were the best. Strive to find out as much as you can.

- The museum owned several private properties and they had to “trim the fat” and get rid of what they couldn’t handle.
- The church they brought in they paid \$1, then hauled over 600 miles. This will be available to rent for weddings and other events.
- How did you start getting interest nationally?
 - o 1925 – NAHA develops and made the decision from day 1 to be a national museum. Getting donors to recruit others and started building current relationships before you create new ones.
 - o Do incredible amounts of research on donors, do your homework and document as much as you can.
- Steven suggested having a 1, 3, and 5 year goals start for vision; then continue to grow for longer times. Strategic plan is your short term road map.