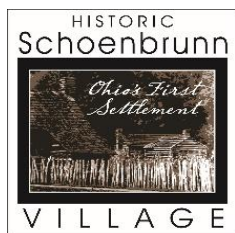




## Strategic Plan 2018-2022



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It is a very exciting time at our historical sites. The Dennison Railroad Depot Museum has just completed Phase VIII (Restoration of Chesapeake & Ohio Steam Engine #2700) and is heading into Phase IX (Completion of the Pullman Bed & Breakfast). Both projects are part of the Transportation Enhancement local projects oversee by the Ohio Department of Transportation. Polar Express is on track and growing, with large investments made into our passenger car fleet and our North Pole. With the increased costs in shipping cars, the transition to owning our own cars and storing them on site became imperative. We are also a part of a strong Rail Task Force, exploring the concept of a Dennison to New Philadelphia to Dover Rail Line that could have the potential to be a game-changer for tourism in Tuscarawas County.

Happily, the restaurant space is filled with a new operator, Over the Rail Diner, which enables the Museum staff to focus on museum operations. As our museum campus has grown, so has the upkeep with not only our 145 year old National Historic Landmark and most valuable artifact – the Depot, but also an historical collection of approximately 10,000 artifacts, a large collection of static exhibit cars and fleet of operating railroad cars that require constant care.

In addition to Landmark Status, the museum has been recognized as the Ohio Museum Association Institute of the Year, with the Ohio Museum Association's Emerging Professional Award, the Tourism Ambassador of the Year and multiple educational and economic development awards of recognizing that we are headed on the right direction. Our staff is very active overseeing the operation of three museums with a full calendar of events coupled with a long-term exhibit plan, while also providing strong community leadership. We have created multiple leadership programs, including the T-County Patriot Rally, the Museum Leadership Exchange, the Women's Success Series and the Millennial Leadership Exchange providing leadership to young ladies which has since been turned over to Kent State Tuscarawas's care.

As we move forward into the next five years, our sights are strongly focused upon becoming accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, confirming we are operating at the highest standards of museums in the country. To that end, we have just completed all sections of the American Association of State and Local History StEPS program, preparing for the accreditation process. The undertaking is monumental, and we are chipping away at all the requirements. This process includes tremendous attention needed to greatly improve our biggest challenge – collections storage. In collaboration with the Museum of Clay Industry and Folk Art in Uhrichsville, we continue to move forward with rigorous collections management and implementation of new collections storage space.

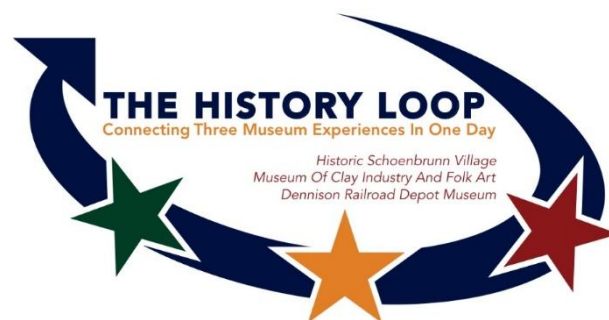
Historic Schoenbrunn Village and the Clay Museum are also moving forward with their visionary long-term plans. Schoenbrunn's Strategic Five Year Plan will lead the site to where it wants to be for the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Schoenbrunn's Settlement, (1772-2022.) Goals focus on tasks

supporting legacy, educational, commemorative, celebratory and outreach components of development. Excitement surrounds the archeology and construction of two Native Sites: Reconstruction of Native Cabin 17 that was so badly damaged it was torn down when the Depot took over the site, and the rebuilding of Shebosh, which was the very first cabin built during Schoenbrunn's reconstruction. Great efforts are in motion to bring the Native voice to the Village, through a new Native American Interpretation Plan Led by the Ohio History Connection that will bring new tours, new exhibits in the museum, new signage and complimentary new programming into the Village. A new Native American Guidelines for operations will ensure that there is a balance between Colonial, Moravian and Native voices in the Village. Lastly, the successful hiring of a new Site Manager and Volunteer Coordinator have moved the Village forward at an exponential rate.

Planning for the Clay Museum has greatly intensified, as the new downtown department store building has undergone interior demolition work in preparation for construction. Through a State Capital Budget grant, all HVAC equipment has been purchased. Two teams have been working diligently to keep up: The Fundraising Team and the Exhibit Team. The Fundraising Team will continue to seek grants and corporate donations, while the second wing of individual and civic organizational fundraising begins. A grant writer has been hired to assist, and Fundraising Co-Chairs Blair and Brad Hillyer have worked hard to spearhead the creation of sponsorship levels, naming writes and fundraising literature to meet the 1.5 million restoration goal. The Exhibit Team has been busy gathering exhibit ideas, visiting clay locations and creating the design for the exhibits. Working the Museum Acrylics, exhibit designs and models are in motion.

It is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees and Staff to keep momentum moving forward on all these initiatives and capital projects, as we continue to develop our staff, improve and protect our valuable historic sites, and fulfil our missions/visions. This Strategic Plan will kick off with new branding for the Depot and a new History Loop branding/marketing program that will increase visibility and accessibility to all three historic sites.

As always, we welcome feedback, suggestions and concerns. Please feel free to contact Executive Director Wendy Zucal at 740.922.6776 or [director@dennisondepot.org](mailto:director@dennisondepot.org).





## **Dennison Railroad Depot Museum**

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

To collect, preserve, exhibit, interpret and educate visitors on the history of southern Tuscarawas County, including Dennison's rich Railroad and WWII heritage.

### **VISION STATEMENT**

To offer a welcoming place in the community that creates a specific railroad experience at our Depot for families and visitors of all ages through enriching, entertaining, engaging, and educational activities, programs and exhibits. In doing so, the Depot will provide a positive environment that cultivates knowledge and offers a repository of information from which to draw upon. The Depot will be a place where older generations can capture the nostalgia of days gone by, and the younger generations can be encouraged to meet the challenges of the future.

### **EXPERIENCE STATEMENT**

The Dennison Depot Experience will immerse the guest in a simpler time in American History where you can see trains, touch trains, smell trains, ride trains, and hear trains through the use of sensory props, architecture, actual artifacts, specifically intended actions by cast members, programs, exhibits and activities. Coupled with the camaraderie and nostalgia of the middle American Homefront Spirit of the WWII Canteen Era, guests will be transformed from the 21st Century to the 1940s and leave with memories that linger from that transformation.

## **Clay Museum of Industry and Folk Art in Uhrichsville**

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

To collect, preserve, exhibit, interpret and educate visitors about the local history of Uhrichsville, and the clay history of Uhrichsville and the surrounding region.

## **Historic Schoenbrunn Village**

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

Schoenbrunn Village shall promote, interpret and celebrate the heritage of the cultural diversity and religious legacy of the 18th Century frontier Mission settlement through educational “hands-on” experiences, interactive programs, events and authentic interpretation. Through this dynamic immersion into the 18th century, Schoenbrunn Village shall cultivate the new stewards

## **Law-Reed-Huss Farm Foundation**

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

To promote agricultural education and historic preservation of a 19<sup>th</sup> century farm owned for over 150 years by members of the Law, Reed, and Huss Families.

## **CORE VALUES**

**Respect for History**

**Commitment to Community**

**Encourage people all ages to Engage**

**Responsibility as caretakers to Preserve and Tell our story**

**Provide Leadership and Constant Attention to Raising the Bar**

# Five Year Goals for our Sites

## Dennison Railroad Depot Museum

### #1. Polar Express: Protect the future and well-being of Polar Express and control our railroad destiny. (Wendy Zucal/Scott Robinson)

1. Focus on the variables that we have the power to affect in order to make Polar Express more profitable:
  - a. Reduce shipping costs by having all 11 cars on site by either purchasing cars or long-term lease.
  - b. Create our own Power Car.
  - c. Train Staff to maintain cars.
  - d. Create our own work space outside of Laurel Grocers with electric and water.
  - e. Improve security of current car storage area with cameras and light.
2. Establish new contract with Warner Brothers/Rail Events, while making sure to measure the ROI compared to creating our own Holiday Story.
3. Determine if we should continue with Polar Express in the future or create our own Holiday Theme Rides. Develop backup story/printed book that could eventually replace The Polar Express.
4. Establish a new 3 year contract with G&W Railroad.
5. Implement upgrades to the Polar Rides and the North Pole, per Rail Events requirements.
6. Increase Corporate Sponsors to assist in underwriting cost of Polar, i.e. Hot Chocolate – Nestles.
7. Create and maintain a passenger database for active marketing and networking.
8. Explore new rail corridor options

### #2. Finance/Fundraising: Create new and stronger streams of income to build capacity through expanded fundraising and grants. (Wendy Zucal/Board Finance Committee.)

1. Establish naming rights program for new railroad cars.
2. Gain approval from G&W for 4 additional days of train rides.
3. Explore leasing our railroad cars out to other excursion operators.
4. Revisit plan to build and operate our own track and implement recommendation, by working with partners in a joint effort to contact CSX real estate officials at Headquarters in Jacksonville, Florida.
5. Continue to focus on a restaurant for the restaurant space. Determine best use of space to strengthen cluster of local eateries and attract local market. Contract with

- best potential operator and negotiate a two year lease that includes utilities. Make success of the restaurant a top priority for staff and board.
6. Complete and market all opportunities through a three museum Opportunity Brochure.
  7. Increase and expand consulting and workshop opportunities conducted by our staff. (grant writing, storytelling, museum creation, make your museum remarkable, etc.)
  8. Work with the Ohio History Connection, the Ohio Local History Alliance, other railroad organizations and small to mid-size museums to be a go-to consultant/mentor for potential strategic planning and needs assessment.
  9. Create on-line sales program for memberships, tickets, merchandise.
  10. Increase our on on-line fundraising platform to add a new stream of income to the fundraising budget to equal \$5,000 within 5 years. (AmazonSmile, Go Fund Me, etc.)
  11. Complete Phase IX ODOT Enhancement Project funding stack and required matching funding to complete construction of the Pullman Bed & Breakfast Car in order to open for business and to support the restaurant.
  12. Implement the new tiered membership program.
  13. Sell the railroad house.
  14. Facilitate a request to the State Capital Biennial Budget on behalf of multiple partners, the Depot, Clay Museum, Downtown Dreamsville, City of Uhrichsville and Village of Dennison for a \$250,000 request for Dreamsville Corridor Improvements.

**#3. Marketing: Develop and execute an innovative marketing strategy/campaign that supports a strong brand.** (Tiffany Gerber/Molly Miller Kopp/Blane Warrene)

1. Rebrand the Depot from Dennison Railroad Depot Museum to Dennison Railroad Depot: America's Homefront with new logo. Important to keep the word/theme of railroad in place.
2. Rebrand the three museums with a creative group logo. Put this logo into action with new signage, new joint brochure and new Triple Tickets. Train staff to use the new History Loop concept.
3. Develop strategy to expand presence on social media including:
  - a. Outsourcing website updates.
  - b. Silent branding background tools such as Blogs.
  - c. More visual/video share.
  - d. Create a Mobile Site.
4. Create Museum Underdog Blog with creative Bing Cartoon Logo, focusing on the theme "How Small to Mid-Size Museums can Change Your Community." To be executed by staff and guest bloggers.
5. Leverage National Historic Landmark status, focusing on the building and canteen in branding.



6. Fix the National Historic Landmark Official Name Listing from Pennsylvania Baggage Room to the Dennison Depot.
7. Create stronger partnerships with important partners including but not limited to the Pro Football Hall of Fame, Smithsonian Affiliates, National WWII Museum, MAPS Museum, Altoona Railroaders Memorial Museum, PRR Technical Historical Society, American Association of State and Local History and the American Alliance Museum.
8. Brand the Depot as a regional museum hub, using the Depot's new group MLX (Museum Leadership Exchange) as a resource tool.

**#4. Operations: Operate at the highest level of museums at the state and national level.** (Wendy Zucal/Jacob Masters)

1. Move forward toward American Association of Museums accreditation by:
  - a. Completing the precursor, American Association of State and Local History StEPS certification program.
  - b. Complete AASLH StEPS requirements online.
2. A top priority of this initiative is to Improve Collections Care and Management.
  - a. Vastly improve current collections storage space while simultaneously working toward new storage space at the New Clay Museum.
  - b. Include temperature/humidity/light controls in the new Museum storage.
  - c. Develop a new Shared Curator plan with another local museum to have a part-time curator by 2018.
  - d. Consider commitment with the City of Uhrichsville to keep current Clay Museum site to house archives and create a new archival/research location.
  - e. Improve all Collections Management systems to highest possible level.
    1. Catch-up on all artifact accessioning records, keeping it current and not allowing a backlog to develop.
    2. Enter 25% more of the collection into Past Perfect.
    3. Improve Storage of 35% of collections.
  - f. Develop and have board approval for all missing required policies and collections documents that address how we systematically add, detract and manage collections:
    1. Collections Emergency Disaster Response and Recovery Plans,
    2. Collections Housekeeping Plan and Schedule
    3. Written Inventory Plan
    4. Written Collections Procedures
    5. Written Collections Deaccessioning and Disposing
    6. Written Hands-On (for use) Educational Collections Procedure
    7. A decision will be made on this disposition of collections in the event the Museum should ever disband.

8. An Inventory will be completed so that we know how many artifacts we have on hand.
9. Specific collections will be better preserved, such as all books and paper material currently on exhibit.
3. Increase Academic Sharing Programs such as internship program, mentoring, Teachers Advisory Committee, etc.
4. Seek Collections partnerships such as Dennison, Uhrichsville, Claymont and St. Mary's School Alumni that have collections that need safe storage, and partners who may contribute toward their care.
5. Update employee and volunteer handbooks.
6. Have Board Review all policies in preparation for StEPS and then continue to review all policies every three years.
7. Any missing Policies – required in StEPS, needs to be created.
8. The lease between the Village of Dennison and the Museum, Inc will be updated.

## **#5. Facilities: Maintain and grow museum campus (Grounds and Facilities)**

**(Tim Still/Mike Clark/John Mako – Security)**

1. Prioritize these three Capital Projects at all three Museums:
 

Depot:	Phase IX – Pullman Car Bed & Breakfast
Clay:	New Museum Site
Schoenbrunn:	New Cabin Reconstruction/Interpretive Plan
2. Complete a Comprehensive Site Use plan that includes an ongoing inventory of deferred maintenance needs.
3. Complete entire deferred maintenance list within five years, working with the Village to create plan and find funding for the top priority: the need for stone restoration.
4. Implement Campus expansion/enhancement campaign, extending the museum outside: (“Bumping spaces” – parklets, Bing Statue, WWII Posters, phone booth, Historical artifacts outside, Jeep, Victory Garden, Platform, etc.)
5. Maintain current static museum railroad cars and exhibit cars in good condition.
6. Fix pigeon problem.
7. Explore and implement the creation of a Bing Statue.

## **#6. Education: Create and implement strong educational programs that tells our story. (Jacob Masters)**

1. Create Five Year Exhibit Calendar, prepare and promote in advance.
2. Renovate platform into Experiential Canteen Space where you are immersed into 1940s wartime upon arrival.

3. Renovate Green Room into new Waiting Room Exhibit and new Railroad Movie, complimentary to the existing NHL Canteen Movie.
4. Renovate Baseball Room into Good Side/Bad Side of the Tracks to focus on theater, circus, sports, music, fashion on the good side, and gambling, bars and prostitution on the bad side of the track
5. Document/Exhibit the Depot Restoration Story.
6. Record veterans and ethnic stories.
7. Create our own traveling exhibit, and develop partnerships that support use of traveling displays.
8. Place new cameras and TV in Model Train Exhibit and develop model train video/app.
9. Double the number of educational programs in order to reach accreditation standards.
10. Increase the number of educational programs, with emphasis on exhibit programs.

**#7. Management: Create a sustainable, dedicated, and talented management team and board. (Scott Robinson)**

1. Develop succession plan.
2. Enhance staff development through various programs such as Disney Institute, Women's Success Series, Leadership Tusc., State and National conferences, etc.
3. Recruit and support board members with expertise in railroads, marketing, fundraising, and social media who have extensive local connections and/or financial means.
4. Review and confirm mission, vision and experience statements for all three museums. (i.e. Do we continue three separate missions operated under one umbrella?)
5. Improve system for measuring museum performance (e.g. financial, consistency with mission, etc.)
6. Improve transparency and joint meetings between museum steering committees.
7. Improve procedures, policies, systems and communication from museum to museum.
8. Implement a stronger events policy and approval process.
9. Continue to focus on relationship curation by building strong partnership with elected officials and state organizations, (i.e. Ohio Rail Development Commission, Appalachian organizations, OMEGA, etc.)
10. Put a stronger focus on Endowment creation, making information available to local attorneys, accountants and lifetime members, and doubling the amount within five years.
11. Explore and implement Key Person Insurance.

# Summary of Strategic Plans for our Partner Museums

## **Historic Schoenbrunn Village**

To conduct an aggressive five year planning and improvement process that will lead up to the 250<sup>th</sup> Celebration of the settlement of Schoenbrunn 2022. Results of this strategic plan will include a new interpretation plan, new exhibits, new videos, and new signage and labels. A parallel effort will implement the state's new Native American Guidelines, resulting in approved programs, interpretation, gift shop merchandise and relationships with those that settled at Schoenbrunn and our Moravian ancestors. Great focus will be on buildings, continuing their improvement with the repairs of the large pavilion, the rebuilding of Native American Cabin 17 and Shebosh, with corresponding out buildings, chinking of all buildings and required archeology. (Strategic Plan Attached.)

## **Museum of Clay Industry and Folk Art In Uhrichsville**

To fully plan and implement the new downtown museum site complete with exhibits, collections storage, community space, museum gift shop and a food operation in additional rental space to support the museum. The new museum may open in phases. To keep the current temporary museum site open and active throughout the entire transition, including a calendar of events and fundraisers. To continue to grow the foundation of support by building capacity, growing membership, volunteers and community support. New branding will be implemented as the Museum transition for the Uhrichsville Clay Museum to the Museum of Clay Industry and Folk Art.

## **Law-Reed-Huss Farm Foundation**

The goals of the Farm are to have over \$3 million in non-farm assets by 2050 through planned giving and/or revenues from oil and gas, in the absence of major gifts or royalties, to be financially stable with rent, investment and other income, to preserve the farm artifacts, to repair and preserve the farm buildings, keep interior spaces clean, maintain a strong relationship with the renters to provide market based rents to exceed \$15,000 per year, to expand the board to 7 members, to serve the public with a display of farm artifacts in an area where they can be viewed primarily, but not exclusively in the Clay Museum by 2020, and when adequate funds are available, hire a part time curator. (Strategic Plan Attached.)

## **Board of Trustees, 2018**

### Officers:

April Berni, Berni's Italian Deli	President
John Mako, Waveguard Systems	First Vice President
Randy Seiber, Realtor	Second Vice President
Scott Robinson, Tuscarawas County Chamber	Treasurer
Wendy Zucal, Museum Director	Secretary

### Trustees:

Charlene Kehl, WTUZ Radio	Polar Express
Tiffany Gerber, Ohio Star Theater	Marketing
Molly Miller, Molly Miller Design	Marketing
Blane Warrene, Mobile at Smarsh	Social Media
Mike Clark, Village of Dennison	Village Liaison, Facilities
Marge Jentes, Animal Crackers	Personnel
Bill Huss, Professor	Law-Reed-Huss Farm
Michael Connor, Retired Railroader	Railroad
Tim Still, retired Dennison Mayor	Facilities
Kathy Spring, Retired Chamber Executive	Schoenbrunn, Clay
Paul Stratton, Retired*	Model Railroaders

\*We were greatly saddened to lose longtime Board Member Paul Stratton in June, 2018 but he was part of this Strategic Planning Process and his legacy continues through the plan.

## **Community Partners who participated in our Strategic Plan Process**

Blair Hillyer, First National Bank of Dennison

Jason Johnson, Gemini Industrial

Greg DiDonato, Dennison Councilmen

Connie Finton, Carlene Farms

Dean Brad Bielski, Kent State Tuscarawas

Ian Wamboldt, House of Stones

Bev Antonelli, Zimmer

George Laurence, Museum Acrylics

John Wallace, Dover First Moravian Church

Rick Dorland, Uhrichsville Mayor

Jeff Dryden, Dennison Mayor



### **Staff Participants:**

Jacob Masters, Director of Museum

Alicia Miller, Membership

Chealsey Cunningham, Office Manager

Heath Manbeck, Special Event Coordinator

Curtis Moreland, Clay Museum