



MUSEUM OF ASHE COUNTY HISTORY

www.ashehistory.org

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Critical Needs in 2011

- **Funding**

The Museum is operating hand-to-mouth right now. We are just keeping the doors open. There is no money for renovating the second floor, for repairing last winter's water damage (not counting what may happen this winter), for significant maintenance expenses, for display building and adding to collections, or for inevitable unexpected expenses.

If we wish to advance in these hard times, the Board, through its committees and member volunteers or outside volunteers, will need to pursue every available source for funding.

- **Director**

The Museum of Ashe County History presently does not have a Director. We need one. In a typical museum organization, the Director is comparable to a CEO in the corporate world or the president of a college, and is the most prestigious position within a museum.

The Director is the key liaison between the museum's Board and staff. He or she must communicate goals, policies and strategies of the Board while protecting the interests of the museum's collections, programming and staff. The Director of a museum provides leadership to help the staff carry out the goals of the organization.

Hired or appointed by the Board, the Director oversees the finances, administration, staff and operation of the museum. This is a full-time managerial and administrative job, and is not the same as a Curator, whose job is the care of the collections. In addition to understanding the standards and practices of museum operation, the Director should be comfortable in the world of business management and public relations. **A Director spends a great deal of time fund raising by completing grant applications, courting donors and prioritizing fund-raising goals.**

A Director also represents the museum at meetings with other museums, business and civic communities, and the Board. Finally, the director ensures that the Museum adheres to state and federal guidelines for safety in the workplace and hiring practices, as well as accepted curatorial standards concerning the acquisitions and care of objects within the museum.

A volunteer would be welcome, if qualified. Average salary for a Director is about \$50,000 nationally. This is a small museum, and could not be expected to go that high.

- **Grant Writer(s)**

We should be applying to every grant source for which we can qualify. Grant writing is a specialized skill. The Director may sign off on a grant application, but the actual preparation of the application falls, ideally, to someone who understands the expectations and requirements of the grantors and knows how to present the Museum's programs in ways that match those needs. This could be a position for a volunteer or volunteers, but should be filled by people with plenty of time, energy and enthusiasm. Our present Grants Search Committee has been reduced by attrition over the past year, and needs re-enforcement.

- **Registrar**

A Registrar is responsible for the intake, identification and tracking of items in the Museum's collections. This job involves a large, and increasing, amount of bookkeeping, research and inventory control. It also requires computer skills to use the museum management software that handles all the data. While presently it could be performed on a part-time basis, it requires consistency and continuity. If done by a volunteer, it would require someone who is willing to commit to learning the software and being available on a regular basis.

- **Events Coordinator**

We have the house. Now we need a "Booking Agent," someone who will see to it that our venue is filled all the time with events that bring in revenue. Our grounds, parking lot, hallway, conference room, and soon (we hope) our Courtroom are places for things to happen. We need to make sure that they do.

Musicians, performers, ham radio operators, antique car buffs, steam engine fanatics, wedding planners, modelers, funnel cake vendors, and all manner of interest groups are out there looking for places to do their thing. We need to be one of those places. The Events Coordinator does not have to do the event; just make sure it happens here and we get paid for it.

This job is like a corporate show planner. It requires scheduling events, coordinating with the event personnel and the Museum staff, lining up any necessary support staff, equipment, utilities and accommodations, and ensuring that the plans come together at the appointed times. This is a big and important job. It is connected directly with our financial survival.

- **PayPal Monitor(s)**

PayPal is an internet payment system for on-line transactions. When we set up a PayPal account for our Gift Shop, a buyer with his own PayPal account anywhere in the world will be able to transfer funds to the Gift Shop account, from whence the Gift Shop can deposit the money in our bank. This will open up sales opportunities on an international scale to people who may never visit us in Jefferson, but can buy things they see on our Web site.

In order to make internet sales work, someone has to monitor the account to make sure that orders are processed and goods are shipped. Volunteers can do this, but it must be done reliably. It will be best to have at least two monitors, in case one is sick or absent for some reason.

- **Social Media Monitor(s)**

We have a facebook page on-line now, providing a new level of public awareness and potential interaction. Presently, it is administered by Barbara Long and contributors include members of Andrea Burns' Public History class at ASU. We have a token following, but in order to grow our "friends" list we need more Museum personnel involved in providing interesting content and comments.

- **Roof Repair**

Last winter, we suffered water damage from roof leaks over the front staircase, the Gift Shop ceiling and in the upstairs restrooms. We think the leaks were caused by water backed up behind ice dams at the gutters and roof edges. Damage to our plaster, paint and ceilings was significant, and has not been repaired.

If nothing is done, these leaks may recur this winter, and the overall cost of repair and restoration will increase. There is also the possibility of damage to our displays and collections. We have already suffered water damage to an exhibit in the Industry Room because of heavy rain entering an inadequately-shielded ventilator.

Rough Estimated Cost:

Ventilator Shield	50.00
Repair Gift Shop Ceiling	525.00
Repair Front Stairwell Ceiling & Wall	275.00
Repair 2 nd Floor Restroom Ceilings	150.00
Repair Roof over Front Stairwells	1000.00
Repair Rear Roof & Gutter	<u>500.00</u>
Total	\$2500.00

- **Computer Network**

Fragmentation of information makes it difficult to coordinate the different parts of our organization. Correspondence is here-and-there depending on who wrote it; financial information is in one person's home files; membership roles are in another's; personnel data in another location, etc., etc.....

The Museum's records and information should be centralized and readily available to the appropriate people. Right now, only one work station at the Museum can be used to access the PastPerfect management software that could handle most of this information.

We have three computers up and running, but they are not connected. A relatively inexpensive wireless network would enable several people to use the PastPerfect system at once. They could also write letters or create other documents and file them to a server that would make them available to any authorized person on the system. Addresses and mailing lists that are presently kept redundantly by several different users and not synchronized could be combined and kept current. Remote access software would enable people to use the Museum network from home, without having to come to the Museum to log on.

Rough Estimated cost:

Server	2000.00
Wireless Router	90.00
Wireless Card for Workstation	<u>75.00</u>
Total	\$2165.00

- **Software Upgrade**

Our PastPerfect museum software is overdue for upgrade to the latest version, which includes improvements and new features.

Cost for upgrade would be:

PastPerfect 5.0 Upgrade	296.00	Basic program, 1 user
Network 2-5 Users	396.00	Allows additional concurrent users
Multi-Media Upgrade	296.00	Allows entry of images, sound, video
Virtual Exhibit	336.00	Allows online access to exhibit info and pictures
User's Guide	16.00	Instruction Manual
1 Year Support	<u>276.00</u>	Telephone and online support
TOTAL	\$1556.00	