

SOCIETY MUSEUM STRATEGIC PLAN

This strategic plan addresses plans for the Society museum.

CURRENT STATUS

The society museum is currently located in the Arcade building on Main St. in Madison. The location is one of the best possible. The building is owned by the County and is leased long term to the Society. It is a no cost lease and the county contributes to utility payments for the building. The museum is run under the auspices of the society and is controlled by the society. The following are issues with the current space:

- This building has two floors. The second floor is not handicap accessible.
- The bathroom is not handicap accessible and there is no hot water in the building (and no place to put a hot water heater).
- There is very limited display space.
- Although there is an office available in the building to process and track the museum holdings, storage space in the building is very limited. Many museum holdings cannot be displayed because of limited space. Most non-displayed holdings are in the basement of the Kemper house.
- Additions to the collection must be very carefully screened because of the limited display and storage space severely limiting the growth of the collection.
- Parking is difficult to find at times.

The museum is open a few days a week and manned entirely by volunteers. There is no paid staff.

STRATEGIC PLAN

The following are the strategic plan for the maintenance and growth of the museum.

- The museum needs a larger facility in order to display, store, and process its holdings
- The facility should be handicap accessible throughout
- The facility needs to be conditioned (temperature and humidity) to protect its holdings
- The facility must be secure (required by insurance)
- The facility should be in a location with good visibility, adequate parking, well marked, and preferably in a downtown location within walking distance of other Town of Madison facilities and shops
- The facility should either be owned by the society or have a long term lease (in the order of 99 years) so that there will be an adequate return on investment for museum facility improvements
- Management of the museum needs to be structured with a museum director and a sufficient staff of volunteers. When possible, paid staff should be considered supported by volunteers.
- A management system for the museum holdings needs to be identified or expanded and the data secured

- Adequate insurance for museum holdings needs to be created including items on loan
- Financial support for the museum needs to be developed. Support would be expected to include public and private grants, annual contributions from the county and town, private donations, admission charges, fund raising events, and support from the society. This support would best be provided by some type of financial committee able to track all income and expenses in addition to the capability of generating grant requests
- Volunteers need to be identified for several types of activities including museum staffing, documentation of the collection, preparation and maintenance of exhibits, identification and solicitation of items for display, and tours of Madison historical points of interest (although this aspect might be assumed by the society) . Recognition programs should be established for these volunteers.
- The museum may remain under the auspices of the society or at some point become an independent function
- Create and maintain tracking of museum income and expenses so that a clear picture of the real cost of supporting a museum is available
- A museum webpage should be created (or expanded) to adequately describe the museum and attract visitors.
- Working relationships with nearby museums should be created and maintained, possibly with occasional exchange of exhibits
- Should funds become available, professionally prepared exhibits should be considered
- Treatment of paper and photographic collections needs to be documented and duplication and storage of these items needs to be addressed
- An annual review of museum activities should be performed by some group of individuals and include financial, acquisition, storage, and display considerations.
- Ways of encouraging more community contributions and support need to be identified. Community support is key to a successful long term local museum.
- Means need to be established for recruiting more volunteers.