

The County of Prince Edward's Strategic Plan for Museums

Vision without action is called dreaming.
Action without vision is called passing time.
Vision with action is making a positive difference.

Joel Barker, from the video: Power of Vision

Introduction:

In 2006 the County of Prince Edward adopted the Strategic Plan for Museums 2006 to 2010. This plan was the result of a number of years of work by a small working group of Gerald Rayner, Theresa Durning, Janice Gibbins and Elizabeth Hunter. The strategic plan provided a foundation for the importance of the museums within Prince Edward County. Many actions were completed as a result of the Strategic Plan including the development and implementation of a 3 year Marketing Plan; New exhibits such as the completion of the Dutch Heritage Project; the Apples and Hops; the Quaker Exhibit. The plan has also resulted in an increase in visitors and volunteerism over the past 4 years.

In 2007, the County of Prince Edward developed a Strategic Plan for all municipal activities which reflects the priority of culture and heritage within this region. One of the top priority actions was to "Make a commitment to preserve and support heritage buildings (museums), cemeteries and heritage sites owned by the County."

With the priority for 2010 of adopting an updated Strategic Plan for the next four years from 2011 to 2014, the Museum Advisory Committee has reviewed, renewed and expanded upon the original Strategic Plan. In addition, part of the development of the new plan has been to include public and stakeholder input by hosting two Museum Forums, as well as a review of the results from Visitor Customer Service questionnaires completed in the summer of 2008. Key stakeholders include the Quinte Educational Museum and Archives, the Prince Edward County Arts Council, representatives from the Heritage Advisory Committee and Settler's Dream sub-committee, the Festival Players, the Women's Institute as well as the Friends of the Museums and volunteers.

The Strategic Plan for Museums for 2011 to 2014 reflects the community interest in museums, the strong support of volunteers and the need for ongoing local support and commitment to the community in reflecting culture and heritage.

Mission:

The Corporation of the County of Prince Edward as the steward of the heritage of the County is committed to preserving and promoting the Museums of Prince Edward County and to communicating stories unique to the County in an inclusive, engaging, and professional manner.

Vision:

That the County of Prince Edward Museums will be increasingly regarded as an integrated system promoting historical, social, cultural, and economic assets contributing to making the County a recognized heritage destination in Ontario by collaborating to:

- Build a higher profile in the County and in the Provincial heritage community;
- Enhance their level of performance excellence;
- Undertake new areas of programming and exhibit development;
- Strengthen & enrich the contributions of volunteers.

Values:

The following set of principles and core values provide the guidance for the development of the strategic plan. These are:

Stewardship – to preserve, conserve, restore, interpret, exhibit and manage built heritage, cultural assets and properties.

Innovation – to encourage creative thinking and find ways to work cooperatively within the wider County heritage and cultural communities.

Accountability – to the taxpayers, public at large, donors, granting agencies, and the municipality through good stewardship and prudent use of physical and financial resources and assets.

Communication & Education – to reach out to the public to generate interest in the museums and the stories they have to tell.

Strategic Objectives:

1. To preserve and protect the built heritage and natural landscapes of the museums.

This will be accomplished by:

- a. Continuing to monitor and evaluate the condition of each site and develop and implement five and ten year maintenance and restoration programs;
- b. Encouraging partnerships with Friends groups and others to participate in the ongoing maintenance and restoration projects;

- c. Recognizing the importance of the impression of the appearance of all Museums to the visitor experience, ensure that all museum structures and grounds are well maintained and cared for by the municipality.

2. To generate interest by developing timely, interactive and responsive collections, services and programs making museums more welcoming and accessible.

This will be accomplished by:

- a. Exploring new ways to be more interactive, hands on, and in tune with the interests and feedback from our audiences;
- b. Developing thematic displays at each Museum showing that the five sites are integrated within a system;
- c. Developing a signature welcome used by all staff and volunteers to make visitors comfortable upon entry and orient them to the property and exhibits;
- d. Enhancing the visitor experience through the visual and tangible presentations at Museum Gift Shops;
- e. Ensuring that all staff and volunteers have sufficient information about all Museum Sites that they can be good 'County Ambassadors';
- f. Using the resources and knowledge of local citizens, artisans and demonstrators;
- g. Reviewing the Themes/Exhibits at each County Museum to insure that they meet the mission of the Museum System and the goals of the individual sites;
- h. Revitalizing, retiring, relocating, replacing and revamping exhibits with an eye to adding new and/or additional information; making changes that update presentations and/or make presentations more interactive and/or encouraging further exploration of a theme at another museum;
- i. Acquiring a central storage facility to address care, storage, and maintenance needs for the conservation and preservation of all Museum collections;
- j. Reviewing and assessing all collections in storage and developing an implementation plan for continued use and/or plans for de-accessioning;
- k. Being more proactive in promoting the resources that are available within the Museums of Prince Edward County including creating an index of research possibilities;

- I. Encouraging and providing training for staff and volunteers using outside resources or in house seminars.
- 3. To increase the profile of museums within the community and the region by contributing to the visitor experience through proactive outreach and engagement with community partners resulting in an increase in visitors.**
- This will be accomplished by:
- a. Improving the marketing of the museums to residents and to tourists;
 - b. Partnering with the local cultural network including using the resources and knowledge of local citizens, artisans and demonstrators;
 - c. Applying advanced information technology into all aspects of museum work, including how we serve and communicate with our community;
 - d. Developing outreach programs and special events for schools, youth, seniors, and special interest groups;
 - e. Developing pride of place and keeping the Museums alive in people's minds;
 - f. Taking advantage of opportunities to work with area Museums to plan and implement special events, which will bring visitors to our area;
 - g. Taking advantage of opportunities to use the support of area Museums to advocate for issues important to the preservation and presentation of local history;
 - h. Encouraging training using outside resources or in house seminars for staff and volunteers;
 - i. Revising the manner of keeping visitor statistics and revising the current visitor survey including expanding its access to the public and publicly reporting the results.
- 4. To improve the sustainability and capacity of the Museums of Prince Edward County.**
- This will be accomplished by:
- a. Maintaining the ongoing commitment of The Corporation of the County of Prince Edward to the preservation of the County's heritage, history, cultural and historical properties, and redevelopment of historic sites;
 - b. Developing and growing collaborative relationships with the larger heritage community, County departments, and committees especially

when there are plans for restoration, preservation or change in use at any of the museum properties;

- c. Continuing to enhance the level of excellence of each Museum site using the *Standards for Community Museums in Ontario* and best practices from Museum networks;
- d. Maintaining the memberships and interrelationships with museum and heritage associations for current resource information and opportunities for broadening the knowledge of staff and volunteers;
- e. Developing and implementing diverse revenue generation opportunities.

Implementation Plan

Detailed Action Plans:

Detailed action plans will be prepared to identify who will ensure completion of each objective, with what resources and within which time frame.

Communication:

The intentions and accomplishments of the Strategic Plan will be communicated through a series of public documentation, presentations, public forums and Museums Annual Report.

Review and Update of the Action Plan

The action plan will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis to reflect the progress and priorities of the County of Prince Edward and the museums.

Notes

Built Heritage

For the purposes of this Strategic Plan the definition of the term 'built heritage' is adopted from the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property:

The built heritage takes many forms. Typically, the term 'built heritage' was mostly applied to small selected groups of monuments or sites agreed by experts as being of exceptional value. In the past 30 to 40 years, however, our definition of the built heritage has been considerably expanded both in terms of typology and in terms of those who determine value. Currently a list of the built heritage could include among others:

- monuments;
- buildings;

- archaeological and other sites;
- urban areas;
- cultural landscapes.

The list may further be broken down into such categories as:

- religious or other spiritual buildings or places;
- vernacular architecture;
- historic towns, cities, or settlements;
- parks and gardens;
- cultural routes.

Demonstrator

For the purposes of this Strategic Plan the term 'demonstrator' refers to:

Showing or presenting a skill, trade, craft or art that reflects historic events or activities, usually for learning or to interpret for a display or exhibit.

Signature

For the purposes of this Strategic Plan the term 'signature' has been used to define a specialized or distinctive activity or mark that will identify each of the Museums as a member of the Museums of Prince Edward County.