**Essley-Noble Museum & Mercer County Historical Society**

**Strategic Plan 2022 – 2025**

**Mission Statement**

The purpose of the Mercer County Historical Society shall be to manage the facilities, preserve artifacts, and provide educational opportunities concerning articles and information of historical value and significance to the history and life of the residents of Mercer County, Illinois.

**Strategic Goals:**

1. Collection & Ethical Stewardship of Objects
2. Education & Programming
3. Community Engagement
4. Operational Sustainability & Excellence

**Strategic Plan 2022 - 2025**

1. Collection & Ethical Stewardship of Objects
   1. Accessions
      1. Revise accession policy, scope, and alignment with the mission.
      2. Revisit the accessions process.
   2. Deaccessions
      1. Revise deaccessions policy, scope, and alignment with the mission.
      2. Revisit the deaccession process and ethical guidelines of deaccessioning.
   3. Collection inventory
      1. Conduct a comprehensive inventory of museum collections.
      2. Procure/update collection inventory software.
      3. Revisit storage policies & procure new storage supplies as necessary.
   4. Digitization
      1. Author a digitization policy, scope, and plan.
      2. Procure digitization equipment/software.
      3. Digitize selected collections/objects to expand museum audience and service capabilities.
2. Education & Programming
   1. School tours
      1. Conduct school tours annually and as requested by school district partners.
      2. Ensure equitable access to museum collections and education programs for school children in the county.
      3. Engage county school children in educational events and programs, including annual Abraham Lincoln Poster Contest and Prairie Plot tours.
   2. Genealogy
      1. Provide public access to a robust genealogy collection.
      2. Expand public access to genealogy collections via digitization.
   3. Temporary exhibits
      1. Update in-house temporary exhibits quarterly in alignment with newsletter and object spotlights.
      2. Design temporary exhibits that work in tandem with educational programs, seasonal highlights, and community events.
   4. Newsletter
      1. Engage members and expand membership via a quarterly newsletter.
      2. Educate the public by highlighting objects and showcasing Mercer County’s rich history within newsletters.
      3. Ensure staff/board member engagement with newsletter content.
3. Community Engagement
   1. Community events
      1. Maintain presence at annual community-wide events, including Rhubarb Fest, Antique Days, and the Mercer County Fair.
      2. Conduct outreach and host temporary exhibits throughout the community.
      3. Host spring and fall open Board meetings to educate and engage the public on both museum initiatives and local history.
   2. Partnership
      1. Build and sustain partnerships with existing and potential local sponsors/members.
      2. Build and sustain partnerships and a culture of information sharing with peer institutions in the region.
      3. Engage community leaders in museum initiatives, events, and programs.
   3. Museum branding
      1. Conduct marketing campaigns on museum events via local/regional press.
      2. Continue to expand social media engagement across all platforms.
      3. Provide institutional information and resources to the public by consistently updating the museum’s website.
4. Operational Sustainability & Excellence
   1. Membership
      1. Provide robust experiences and benefits for museum members.
      2. Increase membership numbers via community engagement, marketing, and collection highlights.
      3. Engage members in institutional initiatives and collect strategic direction feedback.
   2. Innovative use of resources
      1. Maintain a sustainable annual budget.
      2. Maintain ethical stewardship of donations and museum income sources.
      3. Obtain new grant funding and maintain ethical stewardship of grant funds.
   3. Facilities management
      1. Ensure regular facilities maintenance.
      2. Conduct facilities improvements as necessary to provide an engaging space and sustain museum operations.
      3. Maintain a facility that supports museum collections, visitor services, and programs.
   4. Human resource capital
      1. Maintain curator position with competitive rate and hours.
      2. Recruit volunteers and conduct volunteer appreciation to sustain.
      3. Provide professional development opportunities for staff that support regular museum operations and special projects/initiatives.
   5. Board operations
      1. Maintain a culture of integrated problem solving and information sharing.
      2. Ensure active participation of all board members in museum committees, strategic planning process, general operations, and special initiatives.
      3. Commit to maintaining the ethical guidance of all museum operations.