



AURORA COLONY HISTORICAL SOCIETY STRATEGIC PLAN

July 2014



Old Aurora Colony

Acknowledgements

Aurora Colony Historical Society's Board of Directors embarked on a strategic planning process in early 2013 to set the future direction for the organization for the next five years. The Board members, Executive Committee and the individuals identified below, dedicated many hours to researching and discussing strategies for ACHS to expand opportunities to better share with others the unique heritage of the Aurora Colony. Acknowledgements go to the following...

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ACHS Staff: Patrick Harris, Elizabeth Corley, Janus Childs, Allison Dittmar and Kathleen Mason.

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Long Time Supporters: John Herman, Larry Townsend and Mary Ann Moore

Volunteers and Members: Ginger Swift, Carol Burger, Allen Daly, Steve Fried, Kim Higgins and Cathy Harper





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Strategic Plan 2014 – 2019

Adopted: July 22, 2014

Introduction

Since its formation in 1963, Aurora Colony Historical Society (ACHS) has achieved significant success in keeping the story of the Aurora Colony alive, by caring for colony artifacts and educating others about the unique history of the colony.

Between 2008 and 2013, the Aurora Colony Historical Society Board of Directors continued the historic stewardship of its earlier colleagues by establishing a five year strategic plan. Beyond the initial efforts to preserve the buildings, artifacts, and documents, as well as the stories and remembrances of the Aurora Colony (1856 to 1883), the Board was able to achieve much of the Five Year Strategic Plan 2009-2013. *(As outlined in the appendix pages 14 - 15).*

In 2013, ACHS marked the 50th anniversary of its founding. During 2013, the ACHS Board also began development of a new strategic five year plan. The new strategic plan will help to set the tone and pace of an organization eager to tackle challenges of historical preservation, site stewardship and internal organizational growth of the Aurora Colony Historical Society.

The following strategic plan document summarizes key strategic issues for ACHS, and clarifies the organization's mission, vision and values that will guide the organization into the future.

About ACHS:

In 1956, a Centennial Celebration was organized by descendants of the Aurora Colonists and out of this gala event came a resolution to build a museum where the unique treasures of the Colony could be preserved and displayed.

The Aurora Colony Historical Society was founded in 1963. At that time a group of individuals, including descendants of original colonists, decided that an organized effort was required to preserve the buildings, artifacts, and documents, as well as the stories and remembrances, of the Aurora Colony that existed from 1856 to 1883. From this the Aurora Colony Historical Society (ACHS) was established with a Board of Directors to oversee the operation of the organization that grew to include several buildings, a larger staff, and a wide range of programs and opportunities.



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Today

Old Aurora Colony Museum exhibits focus on Colony families, crafts and history. The houses and buildings from the Aurora Colony represent one of the largest concentrations of structures built by German craftsmen in the Pacific Northwest. Five buildings are part of the Old Aurora Colony Museum and can be viewed as part of a walking tour.

Personal photographs, letters, archives and items actually created or used by the Aurora Colonists are organized by family group and are the primary focus of research and interpretation.

ACHS maintains active Family History Files of colony descendants including correspondence, family related research, photography files and lists of museum artifact donations. These files are open to qualified researchers.

Throughout the year there are several special events that feature quilts, craft demonstrations and hands-on activities for adults and children. Each spring at the Stauffer-Will Farm 4th grade students have the opportunity to experience farm life of the late 1800's.





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The Strategic Planning Process

The Aurora Colony Historical Society (ACHS) partnered with Innovative Growth Solutions (IGS) in 2012 to assist in developing a strategic plan with a 5 year planning horizon. The planning process included stakeholder interviews from the following key stakeholder groups:

- Descendants of the Aurora Colony
- Board of Directors
- Aurora City Businesses
- Long Time Supporters of ACHS
- Volunteers /Members
- ACHS Staff

Interview questions were designed to:

- Gather feedback on how key stakeholders view ACHS's level of performance.
- Consider the future and discuss internal strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and threats facing the organization.
- Determine the best method for keeping the stakeholders informed about the planning process

Upon completion of the interviews, an Organizational Assessment Report was presented to the ACHS Board of Directors in November of 2013, identifying key themes from stakeholder interviews.

As part of the report, a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis was created and strategic advantages, issues and opportunities were identified (*excerpts from the report can be found in the appendix pages 16-25*).

Following the review of the organizational assessment, the ACHS Board completed the planning process through a series of retreats and meetings, where historical data and future trends were reviewed. The Board's diligent work resulted in setting a five year (2014 -2019) strategic plan for the organization. The plan on the following pages was adopted by the Board at their meeting held July 22, 2014.





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Strategic Direction

Mission

The mission of the Aurora Colony Historical Society is to “promote interactive lifelong learning by inspiring curiosity about, and preservation of, the heritage of the Aurora Colony.”

Vision

The Aurora Colony Historical Society is recognized as the region’s leading historical learning experience.

Values

The ACHS Board embraces the following values as it creates a successful stewardship legacy for the next 50 years:

- *Preserving Heritage*
- *Enhancing Educational Experiences*
- *Collaborating with Heritage Partners*





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Strategic Initiatives

The ACHS Board will incorporate the values in its organizational best practices through five strategic initiatives. The initiatives identified for 2014 -2015 are depicted below and outlined in further detail on the pages that follow.

- Strategic Initiative 1: Develop and implement a comprehensive plan for preservation of physical assets.
- Strategic Initiative 2: Develop and implement a financial plan for increasing ongoing support for operations and growth.
- Strategic Initiative 3: Employ appropriate technology to support the administration, preservation and educational goals of the society.
- Strategic Initiative 4: Increase awareness of and emphasize the unique historical heritage of the Aurora Colony – “Tell the story!”
- Strategic Initiative 5: Develop a realistic and comprehensive plan to staff and operate the activities of the Aurora Colony Historical Society.





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Strategic Initiative 1: Develop and implement a comprehensive plan for preservation of physical assets.

Strategies /objectives:

- *Fund and build a new preservation and research facility by 2019.*
- *Continue to organize, document and maintain artifacts to museum standards and make artifacts readily available for use.*
- *Develop an on-going maintenance plan for all current ACHS buildings by 2019.*
- *Define responsibilities for maintaining ACHS buildings.*

Outcomes:

- The new **Preservation and Research Facility** safely houses collections, attracts additional donations of artifacts, serves as a potential repository for other regional historical societies, and attracts researchers from around the globe.
- All deferred maintenance of ACHS buildings are addressed, and a plan is in place to maintain buildings on an on-going basis.





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Strategic Initiative 2: Develop and implement a financial plan for increasing ongoing support for operations and growth.

Strategies/objectives:

- *Build the endowment fund to \$1.5 million by 2019 through:*
 - *Estate planning/legacy gifts*
 - *Major Donors*
- *Generate a sustainable revenue stream to cover operating expenses through:*
 - *Annual campaign: generating over 30% of operating income: identify new donors and retain long-time donors; create a “Sustainable Donor” program including appeals scheduled at least twice a year using direct mail and emails.*
 - *Corporate sponsorships: identifying and cultivating corporations (local, regional and branches of national organizations) to underwrite events; marketing outreach efforts; and fund preservation projects.*
 - *Admissions: market the Old Aurora Colony Museum aggressively to constituent groups including schools, tour groups, senior centers, etc. to increase Museum attendance and revenue.*
 - *Programs: increase volunteer and staff capacity to expand ACHS’s signature “Farm Program” to accommodate higher attendance and increase revenues.*
 - *Events: recognize that events are marketing opportunities which provide gateways for potential visitors, members, volunteers and donors.*
 - *Membership: increase memberships among both Descendant and non-Descendant groups.*
- *Continue pursuing grants to fund specifically identified preservation, maintenance and program needs.*
- *Identifying and cultivating Colony descendants who have a vested interest in the Aurora Colony story and preservation, and are likely to commit to our capital campaign, endowment and membership.*

Continued on next page...



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...Strategic Initiative 2: Develop and implement a financial plan for increasing ongoing support for operations and growth – continued...

Outcomes:

- Building the Endowment to \$1.5 million will generate \$75,000, (approximately 30% of current \$250,000 general operating expenses) in annual residual income which will contribute to the general operations of the museum.
- Revenue from admissions, memberships, programs, annual campaign, events and sponsorships will provide the 70% balance of ACHS's annual financial support for general operating expenses: admissions-\$12,000; memberships- \$15,000; Farm Program-\$38,000; Annual Campaign -\$80,000; events and sponsorships- \$30,000.
- Recognizing that there are fewer general operating funds grants awarded, ACHS resources will be used only to identify and pursue targeted preservation, program, maintenance and scholarly grants.
- The ACHS budget will be balanced on a yearly basis.





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Strategic Initiative 3: Employ appropriate technology to support the administration, preservation and educational goals of the society.

Strategies/objectives:

- *Tell the Aurora story through more interactive displays and exhibits.*
- *Digitize collections for broader public access.*
- *Manage and increase monetary donations.*
- *Maximize media opportunities through electronic communications including smart phone apps, stronger internet presence, etc.*
- *Extend the museum narrative throughout the Aurora Colony Historical Society properties through interactive visual and audio experiences.*

Outcomes:

- Attraction of a younger, more diverse population to historical society activities.
- Collections more available and accessible to the public.
- Increased monetary donations and financial stability.
- Greater awareness of the Old Aurora Colony Museum as an entertainment rich and educational destination for people of all ages.





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Strategic Initiative 4: Increase awareness of and emphasize the unique historical heritage of the Aurora Colony – “Tell the story!”

Recognizing that Aurora Colony artifacts, including furniture, baskets, textiles, etc., are the core of the Old Aurora Colony’s story and brand, every effort will be made to enhance the museum experience for visitors through exhibits which will showcase the craftsmanship, authenticity and uniqueness of the Old Aurora Colony.

Strategies/objectives:

- *Aurora will become a major tourism destination*
- *Create a succinct brand/message that consistently tells the Aurora story.*
- *Showcase the “Gifts from the Colony” exhibit program designed to acknowledge the significant donations and loans from Aurora Colony Descendant Families from the calendar year.*
- *Increase the appeal of the learning experience to engage a more diverse and younger audience.*
- *Integrate the Aurora Colony story with the broader French Prairie Region to illustrate their significant historical importance in Oregon history.*
- *Develop a more robust Docent program for guided tours.*
- *Create an outreach program tailored to attract the large Christian audience in Oregon that emphasizes the historical Aurora Colony modeled on the “Golden Rule”.*

Outcomes:

- Over 4,000 school children each year will learn about the Aurora Colony story through the Stauffer-Will Farm Program and the Museum Village Program and relay their experiences to their local communities.
- Increased marketing outreach through expanded involvement in tourist fairs, county fairs and stronger engagement with local chambers of commerce.
- Increased marketing outreach through strategic corporate media sponsorships, i.e. matching sponsorships for online and print ads.
- The “Gifts From the Colony” annual exhibit will ensure that donors see their gifts as an important and active part of the museum collection.
- Curatorial staff will be able to better gauge the number and variety of artifacts still in private hands and incorporate this knowledge in planning for the new storage facility.
- With additional exhibit grants and sponsorships, the Museum staff will be able to design and produce new exhibits with professionally generated signage, pictures and audio aids.



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Strategic Initiative 5: Develop a realistic and comprehensive plan to staff and operate the activities of the Aurora Colony Historical Society.

Strategies/objectives:

- Attracting and retaining board members with specific management talents and expertise will be a top priority, especially as ACHS moves forward with its capital campaign and building plans: town planning and zoning; relationships with bankers and realtors; project planning and management.
- Develop a plan for assessing current and future staffing needs and how to fund needed positions.
- Develop a plan for assessing current and future volunteer needs such as docents for the historic walking tours.
- Develop a plan for accessing current and future Board staffing needs and address any needs identified.

Implementation Plans

The Board has assigned committees to address each strategic initiative. Each committee will create an implementation plan for the initiative assigned and will be responsible for implementation of the plan. For example, the committee assigned to strategic initiative #1: *Develop and implement a comprehensive plan for preservation of physical assets*, has completed the implementation plan for this initiative and has taken the first step towards implementation of the plan by securing property to house a new preservation and research facility.





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Appendix

2008- 2013: Five Year Strategic Plan Accomplishments

- **Collections Preservation**

- Highly successful capital campaign steered by the ACHS Board to renovate the Stauffer - Will Farm barn.
- Addition of curatorial staff to support much-needed archival and preservation efforts
- Inputting of accession cards and corresponding data into Past Perfect Collections
- Management program creating an electronic catalog system

- **Education**

- Expansion of the highly successful Stauffer-Will Farm and Village Living History Program to serve over 4,000 school children annually. This expansion created additional revenue amounting to approximately 10% of ACHS's current annual operating budget.
- Development of the "Walk With Emma" historical walking tour based on the novels by Jane Kirkpatrick and the historical Emma Wagner Giesy.
- Preservation of Edward Finck music manuscripts leading to the creation of the "Notable Music" concert series to showcase Aurora Colony Music to the public.
- Presentation of the Giesy Exhibit of 2011 and the Ehlen Family exhibit of 2012 which resulted in several of our planning factors coming to fruition. Jane Kirkpatrick's historical novels, which featured these two families, were used as jumping off points to let us tell the non-fiction story also. Because the Ehlen's lived on the French Prairie we gained a much better appreciation for the intricate ties between the Colonists and their non-colony French Prairie neighbors. This also led to an exhibition titled "We Were Here First" which attracted descendants of these French Prairie neighbors several of whom are now active members and supporters of ACHS. This led to our discovery of the "picture" which is the focus of our 2014 "Face in the Crowd" exhibit with all of its potential. Another result of this outreach has been a recognition of an obvious need for support to our French Prairie historical groups and thus a modest effort on our part to provide services as practical; the Geer collection is an obvious first step.



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- **Descendant Donor Relations**

- Curator's development of the annual "Gifts from the Colony" exhibit which showcases artifacts, documents and photos on loan or donated by Aurora Colony Descendant Families.
- Cultivation of a major donor by the ACHS Board who subsequently funded the successful Aurora Colony Music Scholarship competition.
- Acceptance of a gift from Gail Robinson of 3,000 audio CDs of Old Aurora Colony Music to be used as a fundraising project.

- **Public Relations and Outreach**

- Development of the "Party at the Farm" fundraising event at the Stauffer-Will Farm by the ACHS Board.

- **Finance Development**

- The successful grant writing program included awards from the Tarbell Family Foundation, Marion County Development Corporation, Oregon Cultural Trust, Oregon Heritage Commission, Kinsman Foundation, Trust Management LLC.

- **Organizational Capacity**

- Hiring of a public relations-community outreach employee to expand public visibility of ACHS/Old Aurora Colony Museum to increase membership, annual attendance and event revenue.

- **Virtual Presence**

- Development of a digital newsletter for 1000 recipients and increased use of social media such as Facebook and news channel online postings for Old Aurora Colony Museum announcements and information.

- **Research Opportunities and Recognition**

- Continued access to Museum archives by authors and scholars including: Jane Kirkpatrick on the development of the Emma Wagner Giesy story; Jim Kopp for *Eden Within Eden* and *Aurora*; Jesse Turner for her children's books on pioneer life; Andrew Willette for piano music digitizing; Voyager Recordings for violin music;
- Hosting the Communal Studies National Conference in October 2009.
- Recognition with awards from Oregon Heritage Commission award for the Music Project; The American Association for State and Local History award for the Music Project; Best New Book of the Year from the Communal Studies Association to Jim Kopp's "Eden within Eden"



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ACHS Strategic Advantage *(excerpt from organizational report November 2013)*

Stakeholders consistently identified the following ACHS strengths that formulate its strategic advantage for addressing the future.

- **Unique Story.** The Story of the Aurora Colony is a unique and compelling story to tell. The Aurora Colony Heritage is truly 'one of a kind'.
- **Unique/Quality Collections.** The architecture, artifacts and textiles are unique, and of a quality not typically seen for the era.
- **Longevity of Organization.** ACHS recently celebrated 50 years of operation. This achievement was recognized by the Oregon Legislature in 2013.
- **Dedicated Staff, Board and Volunteers.** The staff, board and volunteers are committed to ACHS's mission. Once involved they stay with ACHS for a long period of time.
- **Strong Programs for Children.** The Farm program continues to sell out, and the Village program is growing.
- **Excellent Exhibits.** Exhibits do an excellent job of show casing descendant families and colony artifacts.
- **Financial Stability.** During a down economy ACHS stayed in operation, built upon its programs, and built the endowment to over \$800, 000.

ACHS Issues / Opportunities *(excerpt from organizational report November 2013)*

The following is a summary of strategic issues and opportunities from the organizational assessment dated November 2013.

- **Storage of Artifacts** – To protect valuable artifacts, ACHS needs to secure a new storage facility and/or update current facilities. While there has been some work completed on planning for a future facility, there is much more to do. It will take substantial manpower and funding to complete this project. This large scale organized effort will require coordination between the Board, Staff, Supporters and the Community.
- **Deferred Maintenance of Buildings** – Many ACHS structures are in need of repair. An organized plan needs to be developed, funded and implemented. Some advocate that a new storage facility not be built until the deferred maintenance of existing buildings is addressed.



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- **Succession Planning for Staff** is an important issue for Board consideration. ACHS has enjoyed a long run of stable, effective leadership through the current Staff. Developing a succession plan that effectively transitions institutional knowledge is essential. Also, the organizational structure may need to be reviewed. Some feel it is time to hire an Executive Director, others feel the structure is working well as is.
- **Board Development and Involvement.** ACHS has grown in size and complexity and would benefit from increasing the size of its Board to provide more capacity, flexibility, diversity of skills and renewed energy.
- **Volunteer Recruitment** – The volunteer base is dwindling and aging. An aggressive volunteer recruitment plan needs to be implemented.
- **Descendant Involvement.** While exhibits have helped to reengage selected descendant families, overall more descendant involvement is needed. Also, the next generation needs to get involved.
- **Public Relations / Marketing / Branding.** While great strides have been made with the hiring of a Marketing Director, there are still areas that need to be addressed:
 - **Tell The Story/Branding**
 - Emphasize the uniqueness of the colony and the quality of the artifacts and textiles.
 - Build on the momentum of the stories that attract, e.g. Emma.
 - Connect to German /Christian heritage
 - Freshen up the mission – make it more engaging
 - **Community Relations**
 - Continue building on community outreach
 - Partner with businesses
 - Connect with elected officials
 - **Use Technology** to connect with the younger population, to fundraise and to promote ACHS to a broader audience.
 - **Geographic and Demographics-** Aurora is growing; market to younger and more affluent families. Do more to attract diverse cultures.
 - **Build Tourism** – connect with travel partners.
- **Technology.** While it is acknowledged that advancements in technology take expertise and money to implement, the following opportunities to take advantage of technology to enhance ACHS were identified:
 - Digitize collections with the help of Assistant Curator, who brings youth and expertise to the organization.
 - Use technology to make exhibits more engaging (kinesthetic).
 - Engage the younger generation through use of technology – utilize social media.



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- Use technology to market, fundraise and tell the Aurora story.
- **Create exhibits that have a broader appeal.** Exhibits are excellent and have helped to engage descendants; it would be wise to build on this success by creating future exhibits that appeal to a broader community and to youth.
- **Funding.** While the economy is generally improving, money for non-profits seems to be dwindling. The following concerns and opportunities were identified:
 - **Grants:** Research and apply for more grants.
 - **Facilities:** Explore utilizing facilities to produce income (events).
 - **Corporate Sponsorships:** Partner with corporations for sponsorships at events.
 - **Focus Fundraising Efforts:** Do not spread efforts too thin. Focus on the important few.
 - **Generate More Admissions.** Make the museum experience more interesting; generate more admissions and funds from added activities.
 - **Build Reserves:** Build ½ year operating expenses in reserves.





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SWOT Analysis

Summary of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

	Strengths	Weaknesses
The Board said . . .	<p>Meeting Our Mission/Longevity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fantastic, unique history – a story to be shared. • Doing well overall – made a lot of progress in the last 4 years. • Longevity of the organization <p>Programs/Museum Attendance Growing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passing history on through exhibits and programs. • Programs are growing! We educate and sharing with more youth. • Length of programs/stability • Attendance up and membership. <p>Staff and Volunteers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No or little turn over in staff • Staff has been working with schools for 15 years. • Upswing with hiring marketing specialty – more visibility. • Volunteers are ‘true blue’ <p>Making Community Connections through Exhibits and Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exhibits connect people. • We stay involved with Travel Oregon. • Events: Concerts in Park, Fun Run and Emma events give exposure and are talked about. • Whole community (including businesses) benefit from ACHS. <p>Board has grown</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two new members this year <p>Good goal setting and achievement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barn is an example of setting a goal and meeting it. • Making more descendant connections. 	<p>Lack of Volunteer Recruitment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for more volunteers (younger people). • Need active recruiting, more outreach. • Not enough descendant volunteer support. <p>Staff Workload - Stretching staff too thin.</p> <p>Community Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could do more community relationship building (connecting farmers too). Have not always had good luck collaborating with the City, but improving. • Do a better job of educating community: Do people confuse ACHS with the Historical review/preservation process? • Local school district not participating – why? <p>Fundraising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are a number of fundraising efforts throughout the year, but still need to secure a solid source of funding. <p>Building Maintenance & Storage Facility Needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of funding to maintain current buildings. • Must protect our artifacts – Current building (Ox Barn) is vulnerable. Need new facility. • To move storage building plan forward we may need an Executive Director. <p>Succession Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Succession planning- example, curator retiring someday.



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The Staff said . . .

- Staff dedicated
- Volunteers – once involved, stay involved
- Membership process works!
- Collections is growing and well organized
- Professional curatorial staff
- Established
- Unique history
- Financially stable
- Strong programs for children
- Unique collections of quilts, textiles and photography

Mission needs to be freshened up –
“Inspiring curiosity by keeping the unique story of the Aurora Colony alive.”

Board:

- Too small of a Board to accomplish what we want to do.
- Board needs to get energized behind what we want to do
- Need younger people on Board
- Board needs to be more aggressive in connecting with descendants

Descendants:

- Not enough descendants involved.
- Need younger descendants involved.

Need a new storage facility:

- Some people will not donate artifacts until a new building is built.
- Need staff involvement in storage project. Assistant curator should be assigned as champion of the project and become engaged immediately.
- Not just a storage building, but a research center
- Location – needs to be close to the exhibit
- Need site ASAP!

Building Maintenance and Access:

- Need to take care of deferred maintenance
- Guests need access to outbuildings
- Need more staff and volunteers (younger)

Staffing:

- Need an ED, but historically ED’s don’t know what to do.
- Need someone at front desk – not a volunteer.

Volunteers needed

- Need volunteers for events, Farm, village, Tour guides, Emma walks.
- Volunteers need more training

The Descendants said . . .

Staff makes everyone feel special.

- Staff responsive- e.g. acknowledge contributions.

Buildings and grounds feel like home

- The feel of building and grounds (S/W Farm

Mission statement incomplete

- Missing stewardship and preservation of artifacts and history.

More transparent financials

- Would like to see summary statement of



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too). Feels at home to know the artifacts are preserved.

Good goal setting planning and budgeting

- Rebuilding of Stauffer-Will Farm was completed well, on time and within budget.
- Keeping improvements as local as possible (not sending timbers for Stauffer-Will Farm barn to Bend)

Newsletter is a good way to stay connected

accounts [especially for those not able to attend annual meeting].

Use of Technology for Fundraising- use it to raise funds from others [not just descendants].

Lack of Information -Need more information about new exhibits. How often are they changing? Quarterly?

Imbalance of focus - Seems like more energy is put into Stauffer-Will Farm than museum? There are competing priorities – could be a resource question? Need to determine, where it is smart to focus our energy.

Care of Artifacts & Property Maintenance

- Property maintenance is a real liability. There are two different maintenance responsibilities, artifacts and buildings (buildings are artifacts).
- How do we keep properties in the condition needed to take care of artifacts while we are waiting for a new building?

Lack of interest by younger generations

- Lack of interest by younger generation.

The Volunteers and Members said. . .

Exhibits have been super!

Education program thriving!

Good publicity (by Marketing Manager and Curator)

Collections organized and in shape (by the Assistant Curator)

Better job of becoming more active in the community

- Shops are advertising the Emma walk
- Good partnership for Chocolate and Wine Tour

Good grounds and buildings

- Artifacts are real, e.g. wagon
- Simplicity of keeping it simple- e.g. farm program is not stressful for volunteers.

People are great - staff, volunteers and community

Top 3 things Board should focus on in the next 5 years:

- Preservation
- Money/ Volunteers increased
- Publicity and connection to the

Finances are a concern - Need to get local businesses to support (buy tables at auction)

Lack of recognition by local region – need more publicity

- Many not aware of ACHS
 - Local businesses could promote ACHS more
- Lack of volunteer recruitment – better training**

- Need more and younger volunteers
- Need to train better (e.g. understand history at the Farm) - need a better handbook.

Better use of technology

- Need to use technology to get the word out
- Technology changes how we participate in living history

Need a clearer marketing message

- Promote the uniqueness of the colony artifacts (quality) and communal living. Quality is better than pioneer artifacts because of the specialization.

Succession planning for staff

- Prepare for retirements
- Need more staff to do all that we want to do



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	<p>community</p>	<p>Need a storage facility that will not go up in flames! - Needs to be accessible and in town. Imbalance between what customers want and what museum provides.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The recent connection with families has been great for ACHS, not so much interesting for the public. <p>Museum not utilized enough</p>
<p>The Long Time Supporters. . .</p>	<p>Serving mission well</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education is the important word, continue telling the colony story to new generations. Equally important is the protection of the artifacts and the colony story. <p>Curator’s knowledge of families - Good connections.</p> <p>Hiring an Assistant Curator - Helps with digitizing collections and good connection to youth.</p> <p>Good exhibits</p> <p>Good involvement with Stauffer/Will farm</p>	<p>Technology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need stronger online presence - The history and all our documents, photos, fabric collections as well as all documentation of furniture, the trades, philosophy, biographies of the colony should be available on line, some free, some for fee. <p>Maintenance of facilities - Need to carefully preserve the facilities. Need to maintain buildings- wiring, dings, etc.</p> <p>Need a new storage facility - Need viable solution to safe storage of artifacts!</p> <p>Volunteer Recruitment - Need to be more welcoming of new volunteers -thus reducing our dependence on the same people.</p> <p>Need to attract younger generation!</p>
<p>The Aurora Colony Businesses said. . .</p>	<p>ACHS performing well</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lots of events, media coverage. Events seem well attended. • Jane’s books have really helped ACHS image. <p>Community connection - ACHS and business community must work together, if we are together, we all will do better.</p> <p>Programs - Music program it is great.</p> <p>Connection to legislators - Doing an EXCELLENT job of developing relationships with the legislature, that must continue! You have an important friend in Senator Hansel.</p>	<p>Staffing Needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don’t have a continuity plan for retirements • ACHS does not have a full time Executive Director. <p>Need to take better care of the buildings/assets - Giesy store is terrible reflection on ACHS, potential liability if someone hurt by faulty repair. Maintain assets, the buildings should be the highest priority, PERIOD.</p> <p>Need a solid archival building -Need to preserve artifacts in a safe building – a new building would be a major undertaking that will require stakeholder involvement.</p>



Old Aurora Colony

	Opportunities	Threats or Challenges
<p>Tell The Aurora Story <i>Publicity/Marketing</i> <i>Branding/Outreach</i> <i>Public Relations / Advocacy</i></p>	<p><i>Tell the Aurora Story</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasize the uniqueness of the colony and the quality of the artifacts. • Use technology to promote the story of Aurora: Create movies of kids at Farm, create videos of Patrick’s lectures (preserves history), post all on website and You Tube. • Spend money on outreach, learn and tell more of the stories of the colony - like the Emma story. Get on the Jane train! • Branding- connect to German / Christian • Market to new demographics (more affluent) • Connect with children who attend programs and with top administration of schools • Partner community and with retail - Joint adds with businesses • <i>Build Tourism</i> Connect with tour companies. <p><i>Continue to develop relationships with elected officials</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senator Hansel is an important contact. • ACHS should get involved in helping to create a Chamber of Commerce. • Seek representation on City Council <p><i>Expand who we reach - Build Diversity</i> - invite people of color to brainstorm about how the museum might speak to them and their children.</p> <p><i>Connect to current issues</i> - Knowledge valuable in solving issues that face us today- Example - sustainability</p> <p><i>Mission needs to be freshened up –</i> <i>“Inspiring curiosity by keeping the unique story of the Aurora Colony alive.”</i></p>	<p><i>Advertising focus</i> – know who your customers are - Don’t advertise in Marion Co. - 90% of customers are from Portland.</p> <p><i>Marketing</i> – <i>need to do it in a new way for a new world</i></p> <p><i>Social world different</i> – need to get used to <i>change</i> and adjust our message and exhibits accordingly.</p> <p><i>Community not as responsive to us as we would like.</i> – how to connect in the future?</p> <p><i>Geographical Changes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City loosening the historical district – losing character of town. Question: how do other towns do it (keep the history)? • As Aurora grows geographically it will change the area / landscape. Development? • How will the airport expansion affect Aurora? • Keep an eye on highway changes, railroad changes and growth. Adjust accordingly.
<p>Preservation of Artifacts and Buildings</p>	<p><i>Build a new building to house artifacts.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need new facility to house artifacts - top goal for the future. • New facility gives ACHS opportunity to ‘brand’ what is unique about artifacts and communal living. • When storage facility completed can, then dollars can go to operations. <p><i>Leverage Past Successes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barn is an example of setting a goal and 	<p><i>Preservation of artifacts – planning for a new facility</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need an aggressive plan to build a new facility to house artifacts. • Many concerned about the man power and cost associated to make this happen. • Some felt that it was best to maintain the current. • Need leadership <p><i>Building maintenance-</i></p>



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	<p>meeting it do the same for the storage facility</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to keep up with deferred maintenance? Need a plan and funding. • Need money to take care of the buildings we have before building a new one.
<p>Technology</p>	<p>Take Advantage of Technology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology is an avenue towards engaging the younger generation - Understanding social media is critical to future growth. • Use technology to make exhibits more engaging (kinesthetic) • Digitize collections with help of Assistant Curator. • Use technology to market, fundraise and tell the Aurora Story 	<p>Technology –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need money to stay up with it. • Need training of staff.
<p>Connect with Youth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Technology to connect with youth Outreach to local youth • The work done over the summer at the concerts connecting the kids and the families with the museum was really important. <p>Expand programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create “Colony Live Days” • offer overnight program for kids 	<p>Youth becoming disconnected from museums Descendants - As time passes each generation is further removed from the colony – continuing to be diluted by time and distance – keeping the link is a strong challenge.</p>
<p>Funding</p>	<p>Funding-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally improving economy – we can look to secure more grants and grow endowments. • Look at facilities to produce more income (events) • Generate funds from more activities: • Did the colonists brew beer? Take the old time processes (meat smoking, beer making, and canning/preserving foods) and sell the products. • Find the old fruit trees and graft them to sell heirloom fruit tree stock. <p>Build a summer kitchen that people can use for a nominal fee and educate about food preservation.</p>	<p>Funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public school funding squeeze. • Need fundraising endowment ideas. • Focus on a FEW fundraising efforts – don’t spread too thin • Need to secure business sponsorships for events • Potential lack of funding from grants, personal donations, etc. • Need to build ½ year operating expenses in reserves • Slow growth in the economy - not as much money for nonprofits. <p>Facilities – not optimized use facilities to generate income</p> <p>Taxes - Tax status may change?</p>
<p>Museum experience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use technology to make exhibits more engaging (kinesthetic) • Great at attracting descendants – need to appeal to the broader community 	



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Build volunteer capacity

New wave of volunteers coming

- Over the next 5 years ACHS will have more folks to access, more people will be retiring.
- Culture promotes volunteerism
- Younger volunteers to become engaged

Volunteer capacity shrinking and aging

- Need more and YOUNGER volunteers.
- Lack of volunteer recruitment – need a robust program.
- Need an aggressive plan.

Succession planning and staffing

Succession Planning – need to plan for transfer of historical knowledge from senior staff on how to operate ACHS.

Opportunity to do more workforce planning - skill set identification and adjust staffing levels accordingly.

Recent hiring of marketing Director and Assistant Curator effective –need to plan for more staffing if ACHS continues to grow and evolve to be the type of organization that attracts youth.

Funding:

- Staff development – need more funds for salary (benefits) for key positions.
- Accommodations for staff growth – need funds for conferences, workshops in order to stay current with best practices.

Lack leadership

- No Executive Director

Board- Need to be more active *to accomplish all that we want to do.*

Volunteers - Need more (and younger) *to accomplish all that we want to do.*

Staff- Need more (and younger) *to accomplish all that we want to do.*

