

## Organizing a Lincoln Bicentennial Committee for Your Community

As you begin planning your activities, consider the number of committee members you will need and the skills that are needed to implement the projects you have chosen.

### Recruiting Committee Members

When planning for an occasion like the Lincoln Bicentennial or other major celebration, a natural first step is usually to round up your community's activists – people who wear lots of hats and are already on boards and committees all over town.

While you don't want to overlook these "tried and true" community leaders, the Lincoln Bicentennial creates a chance to involve residents who haven't been asked to serve on a committee – and who may welcome the opportunity! Here are some ways to find people to serve on your committee:

- **Identify** the skills that are needed such as historical research, fundraising, volunteer management or fundraising.
- **Ask** those already on the committee to provide names of people they think would be good additions to the committee.
- **Contact** local organizations to get names of "retiring" board members who would like to continue their volunteer service.
- **Talk** with elected officials about people they know who would like to join the committee.
- **Check** with large corporations and small businesses – often they want their employees to provide community services by volunteering.
- **Check** with local professional organizations to see if they conduct service projects.
- **Check** with local colleges for volunteer placement among faculty.
- **Review** your list of potential committee members. Make sure the list includes people who have the skills needed. Also, make sure the list reflects the diversity of the community.

## **Setting Up Committees**

Setting up an efficient committee structure will help the planning process move smoothly. Following are suggested committees and the responsibilities of each.

- **Oversight or Executive Committee**
  - ❖ Chaired by the event or project manager.
  - ❖ Other members are chairs of subcommittees.
  - ❖ Determines what the event, project or activity will be and sets goals.
  - ❖ Determines if the event, project or activity will be targeted to a local audience only or also planned to attract tourists.
  - ❖ Approves the budget – approves fundraising and expenditures.
  - ❖ Maintains master calendar with timelines for all activities.
  - ❖ Evaluates the event, project or activity after completion.
  - ❖ Writes the final report.
  - ❖ Turns over records to managing entity if project is permanent or ongoing.
  
- **Finance Committee**
  - ❖ Oversees development of the budget.
  - ❖ Ensures accurate tracking/monitoring/accountability for funds.
  - ❖ Ensures adequate financial controls.
  - ❖ Receives and deposits payments; pays bills.
  - ❖ Approves grant or sponsorship applications.
  - ❖ Oversees income through ticket sales (if needed).
  
- **Fundraising**
  - ❖ Oversees development and implementation of the fundraising plan.
  - ❖ Identifies and solicits funds from sponsors.
  - ❖ Identifies and writes grant applications.
  - ❖ Works with finance committee to develop reports required by funders.
  
- **Program (may include some or all of the skills listed below)**
  - ❖ Conducts historical research.
  - ❖ Prepares any needed text such as scripts, exhibit labels, guidebooks, etc.
  - ❖ Selects performers, re-enactors or musicians and manages rehearsals.
  - ❖ Selects guides and trains for tours.
  - ❖ Develops program or event schedule.
  - ❖ Recruits volunteers to assist with the program.

- **Logistics**

(Depending on what kind of project or event your committee has selected, the responsibilities for this committee will vary. Following are examples of logistics for an event.)

- ❖ Choose the site and make arrangements for the event to be held there.
- ❖ Obtain any necessary permits for the event.
- ❖ Schedule police, fire and emergency personnel.
- ❖ Schedule vendors such as food or arts and crafts.
- ❖ Order signage and post on event day.
- ❖ Oversees set up such as stage, sound system and seating.
- ❖ Oversees clean up after the event.

- **Promotions**

- ❖ Develops strategies for promoting the event or project to residents through the local media.
- ❖ Coordinates interviews with project manager in local media.
- ❖ Creates posters, flyers, web site and other promotions to publicize the event or project.
- ❖ Develops strategies for promoting the event or project to tourists.
- ❖ Works with the local tourism office to distribute press releases to travel media, contact tour operators and develop promotional packages.

## Committee Organizational Chart

Your planning group can use this chart to track committee member recruitment and assignment of committees.

<b>Recruitment</b>			
<b>Action Step</b>	<b>Started</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Finished</b>
Identify skills			
Collect names from planning group			
Contact local organizations			
Contact elected officials			
Contact corporations and small businesses			
Contact local professional organizations			
Contact local colleges			
Review list – check for skills and diversity			
Invite recruits to serve on committee			

<b>Committees</b>			
	<b>Recruits Invited</b>	<b>Recruits Accepted</b>	<b>First Meeting</b>
Oversight			
Finance			
Fundraising			
Program			
Logistics			
Promotions			

## Event Leader Responsibilities

*I must follow the people. Am I not their leader?*

Benjamin Disraeli

United Kingdom Prime Minister, 1874-1880

Whatever you call your event leader - committee chairperson, program manager, project director or supervisor – the person selected for the task of overseeing your event will be a key to the project's success. A good leader will understand that success depends on an effective team and will inspire enthusiasm and interest in committee members' involvement. Responsibilities of an event leader include:

- **Set and define goals.**

In the planning stages, the leader should facilitate committee discussions about your community's overall goals for celebrating the Lincoln bicentennial. A good leader needs to think creatively about the opportunities, but also be able to bring the planning group back to the realities of what is feasible given the available financial and human resources. Do you want to plan events that primarily attract local participation? Or do you want to include events that attract tourists? Do you want to plan events that take place during the bicentennial celebration time period (February 2008-February 2010) or that can continue beyond those years? The leader should document the goals set by the committee. As the project progresses, the leader should revisit these goals with the committee periodically as a reminder of what the committee's stated goals are.

- **Develop a master schedule.**

Once the committee has selected an event, the leader should develop a master schedule:

- ❖ **Action Step** – List each step required to complete the project, i.e. committee meetings, grant writing, historical research, developing and reviewing proposals for project work, publicity. Also include logistics – sound systems, food service, restrooms, signage, etc.
- ❖ **Responsibility** – List the person responsible for each action step. If the action step is the responsibility of a subcommittee, list the key person in that committee who is taking the lead.

- ❖ **Begin Date, Interim Date, Completion Date** – By clearly stating when each step is to begin and to be completed, you will ensure that steps are completed in time to move on to the next step. Schedule interim reporting dates at committee meetings. Don't assume everything is moving along – be sure to check in!

- **Recruit volunteers and assign tasks.**

A good leader does not try to do everything himself or herself. If you are starting with a core group of people who are interested in celebrating the Lincoln Bicentennial, begin by finding out what areas they are interested in helping with. Can they write press releases and contact the media? Can they help build a set or make costumes? Can they research historical records to be sure of accuracy? Keep in mind that even though someone may have skills, they may be looking at volunteer opportunities as an opportunity to do something different than they do in their job. Taking the time to find out what motivated volunteers to get involved and what they are interested in doing will help connect the right volunteers with the right positions.

Look at the list of action steps to see what skills are needed. Talk with your planning committee and ask them who they recommend to join the effort. Don't just recruit the people who volunteer for everything in your community. Think about new places to recruit volunteers. Are there organizations at the local college? Book clubs? Church groups? Professional societies? Be creative in your recruitment, and you are sure to find creative volunteers!

- **Keep volunteers motivated.**

Volunteers are just that – volunteers. They are giving of their time and have chosen this project from lots of other volunteer opportunities. It is important to let them know their time and effort is appreciated. Consider ways to keep volunteers motivated such as:

- ❖ **Build the team** – Be sure that volunteers are introduced to each other. Take the time to learn your volunteers' names and welcome them to meetings. Create a spirit of camaraderie at meetings – bring refreshments and allow time for volunteers to visit before beginning the agenda.
- ❖ **Say thank you** – Those simple words can mean the world to hard-working volunteers. Be sure to make note of your volunteers' efforts and thank them in committee meetings.

- ❖ **Plan recognition** – Consider ways to recognize your volunteers after the event. Maybe a gift certificate to the local bookstore or restaurant for top volunteers, or t-shirts or other small mementos which can be awarded at the wrap up meeting.
- ❖ **Publicity** – Recognize volunteers through publicity about the event. Refer to committee chairpersons or let them be quoted in media coverage.

- **Monitor finances.**

The planning committee should appoint one member to manage finances, but the event leader will still need to stay fully involved including:

- ❖ **Overall budget** – Know the total budget as well as the budget for individual budget categories.
- ❖ **Contracts** – Approve all contracts that require an expenditure of funds from the event’s bank account.
- ❖ **Payments** – Approve payment from invoices and sign checks. (Two signatures should be required.)
- ❖ **Fundraising** – The event leader will need to sign grant applications or funding proposals and may need to attend fund solicitation meetings.
- ❖ **Legal requirements** – If the event is being developed under the auspices of local nonprofit, be sure you provide any information needed for the organization’s financial records and 990 filing.

- **Maintain good community relations.**

As event leader, you will become the spokesperson for the event. Be available for interviews with the local media. Maintain contact with elected officials to keep them informed about how the event is developing and to ensure their participation. Consider setting up an event web site (either as part of an existing web site or as an independent web site) where you can provide regular updates on the event and encourage attendance.

- **Appoint a co-chair!**

Clearly there are many responsibilities that come with being an event chair. Realistically, one person will not be able to make every meeting, conduct every interview, negotiate every sponsorship. Select a co-chair who can help with these responsibilities and to save you from frazzled nerves!

## Choosing Commemoration and Celebration Activities

As your community's Illinois Lincoln Bicentennial Committee thinks about how to commemorate and celebrate the bicentennial of Lincoln's birth, considering your goals will help determine into which of these categories your plans fit:

- **Events** – These activities offer opportunities for local participation in planning and attendance and may also have the potential to attract tourists. There are many types of events including programs, ceremonies, re-enactments, concerts, parades and festivals.
- **Projects** – These are short-term activities that can be completed within the timeframe of the celebration – February 2008-February 2010. Projects may be activities such as special traveling exhibits, contests, publications, etc.
- **Legacies** – These are substantive projects that require a long-term commitment and which can affect the community in a positive way in the future. Examples include a new permanent exhibit at a museum, a heritage trail, creation of public art, an original theatrical production or a musical composition.

## Choosing Projects with a Lasting Legacy

The Illinois Lincoln Bicentennial Celebration offers an opportunity for communities to develop heritage tourism projects that have a lasting legacy. To ensure that your chosen activities leave a legacy, incorporate these traits into your planning:

### **Insist on authenticity**

Be sure that you are telling the true story of Lincoln in your community or region. Over the years, myths may arise and stories may be told so often they are assumed to be true.

- Include time for research in your project development phase.
- Review all available documents through local, state and national archives.
- If necessary, include funds in your budget to hire a professional historian to conduct the research and confirm that the historical data is correct.

A note on authenticity: Sometimes oft-told stories about historical figures can develop their own charms. (For example, the story of Lincoln writing the Gettysburg Address on an envelope while riding a train from Washington to Gettysburg continues to be told.) Telling the origins of a myth – was it reported in a newspaper? written in an early biography? handed down by Lincoln’s friends? – as part of a larger performance or tour can be interesting and educational for visitors.

### **Ensure Quality**

Whatever activities your community selects for the Lincoln Bicentennial, quality should be paramount – especially if you are trying to attract tourists to attend or participate.

- **Practice and training** is essential if you are planning activities such as performances or tours. Build in plenty of time for actors or musicians to rehearse for a play or performances. Also allow time to adequately train tour guides. Seek professionals in these areas to serve as directors or instructors if needed.
- **Check and recheck** materials such as self-guided walking or driving tour publications, promotional brochures, exhibit labels, posters, web sites or other information presented to the public to be sure information is accurate, grammar and spelling are correct and that materials are designed in an easy-to-use format.

- **Make decisions** on how to best present stories through tours or re-enactments. Will guides, actors or re-enactors be in costume? Will tours be presented in a living history format? Will there be demonstrations? If the answer is yes, the research process begins again to make sure that all interpretation is accurate
- **Seek professional guidance** if you plan to restore and interpret a building, develop a museum or create an exhibit to ensure that all work complies with preservation and museum standards.

### **Make it Sustainable**

If your Lincoln Bicentennial project is going to leave a lasting legacy from the celebration, it is important to consider how it will be sustained. These decisions should be made as part of the planning process – don't wait until the bicentennial is over to start thinking about how to carry on the legacy of your projects! As you are planning for the long-term continuation of your community's projects, consider the following:

- **Management: Operations and Maintenance** – Who will continue to be responsible for management of the new facility, tour or program? If you are putting up interpretive signs, who will be in charge of replacing them if they are damaged? If you are creating a new tour program, who will continue to recruit and train guides?
- **Organizational Structure** - Is there an existing organization that can take on the responsibility of the new project or do you need to set up a new nonprofit organization? How will the managing entity interact and continue to work with partners who were part of the project's development?
- **New Programs and Events** – Does the Lincoln Bicentennial project offer opportunities for continued growth in programs and events? If you developed a new tour, are there other tours that could be added in the future? Are there new exhibits that could complement the one created for the bicentennial?
- **Marketing** – If your project was developed with the intention of promotion to tourists, how will you continue to reach this target audience? Has the local tourism bureau or chamber of commerce agreed to continue promoting the new attraction?
- **Budget** – If ongoing maintenance and operations funds will be needed, have you raised enough money to set up an endowment to fund the project in future years?

### Examples of Successful Lincoln Commemorations

Each of the following examples of Lincoln Commemorations was developed with attention given to authenticity, quality and sustainability.

1. **Lincoln Statue** – A statue of Abraham Lincoln is the central figure on Hodgenville, Kentucky’s historic Lincoln Square. The statue was created by noted New York sculptor Adolph A. Weinman and placed on the square in 1909 to honor the Centennial of Lincoln’s birth. Originally, the responsibility for care of the statue fell to a group of local women, the Ladies Lincoln League; today, the statue is maintained through the civic efforts of the Hodgenville Rotary club.
2. **Abraham Lincoln Association** – The association was organized in 1908 as the Lincoln Centennial Association and led the celebration of Lincoln’s 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. In 1909, the association sponsored a banquet in Springfield. One of the guests was Robert Todd Lincoln. The organization was led by Lincoln scholars who established programs of research and publication. The association continues to publish the *Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association* and hosts an annual symposium and banquet.
3. **Boy Scout Pilgrimage to the Lincoln Memorial Shrine, Redlands, California** – The pilgrimage dates to 1940 and is modeled after the pilgrimage of the Boy Scouts in Ft. Wayne, Illinois who began their pilgrimage in 1934. A memorial shrine was funded by Robert Watchorn, a winter resident of Redlands. The centerpiece of the memorial is a marble bust of Lincoln created by sculptor George Grey Barnard. Watchorn also donated books and a collection of Lincoln memorabilia. Beginning in 1949, the Girl Scouts and Brownies were invited to participate. Each year every participating scout receives a patch with the profile of Lincoln and the words “Lincoln Shrine Pilgrimage.”

### **Example of Unsustained Lincoln Commemoration – Lincoln Heritage Trail**

The Lincoln Heritage Trail is a designation for a series of highways in Illinois, Indiana and Kentucky linking communities with pre-presidential period historical ties to Abraham Lincoln.

In 1915, the Illinois General Assembly authorized the Illinois State Historical Library to mark the exact route traveled by Lincoln from Kentucky through Indiana to Illinois. The 1,000-mile trail opened in 1963.

Unfortunately, the route's development did not include a long-term plan for upkeep or replacement of signs, development of maps and continued promotion of the heritage trail. Today, much of the trail is in disrepair and signs are missing or obscured.

## Planning Celebration Activities for “Non” Lincoln Communities

Although not all of Illinois’ communities can claim that Lincoln lived in or visited their towns, all can claim him as a “son of Illinois” and celebrate the Lincoln Bicentennial. If your “non” Lincoln community is planning to participate in the celebration, keep in mind the importance of authenticity in choosing your activities. Following are some ways that your community might participate in the bicentennial:

- **The Lincoln Years - Choose activities that focus on the time period.** Lincoln lived from 1809 to 1865. These were formative years of America’s democracy, when the country began to apply the Founding Fathers’ visions of democracy and to struggle with unanswered questions such as slavery. Research what happened in your community during these pivotal years in American history.
  - What happened in your community that reflected national events?
  - What were your community’s settlement patterns during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century?
  - Who did your community support in each presidential election during this time period?
  - Did candidates for various local, state or national offices give speeches in your town?
  - Were there performances by nationally popular entertainers who came to your community during these years?
  - How did the local economy develop? Were there both farmers and businessmen in the community?
  - How did your community view slavery – were there any speeches or rallies opposing slavery?
  - Did your community support Lincoln during the Civil War?
  - Did the town send troops to fight on the Union side?

After taking a close look at your community’s history during this era, consider activities that could be developed to help residents and visitors better understand and appreciate the times in which Lincoln lived and to honor his contributions to American democracy.

- **Plan “Honoring Lincoln” events.** Just as the whole United States participated in the 1976 Bicentennial festivities, even though only a small part of the country had been settled by that time, so too can “non” Lincoln communities participate in honoring the nation’s 16<sup>th</sup> president and son of Illinois. The key to participation is authenticity – being clear that your community is not trying to re-enact something that never happened or that can not be documented. Instead, think about how you can honor Lincoln in an authentic way through activities such as the following:
  - **Host plays or performances** – Using the resource list of actors (provided by the Illinois Lincoln Bicentennial Commission), select a play or performance about Lincoln and host the production in your community.
  - **Create an original production** – If Lincoln did not live in or visit your community, research his travels in the larger region. Create an original production – a one-man play, a re-enactment of a speech, etc. – that depicts Lincoln’s activities in your part of the state.
  - **Plan a musical performance** – Lincoln’s enjoyment of music is well documented. Work with a local orchestra or band to hold a performance of some of his favorite music.
  - **Host a traveling exhibit** – Refer to the resource materials (provided by the Illinois Lincoln Bicentennial Commission) to find a traveling exhibit on Lincoln. Host the exhibit at your local museum or other appropriate facility.

## Is It for Locals or Is It for Tourists?

### *Targeting Audiences for Your Lincoln Bicentennial Projects*

As you make decisions about what kind of activities you want to develop for your community's Lincoln Bicentennial Celebration, you will want to consider who are your target audiences? It probably goes without saying that you want to have local residents enjoy an event, tour a new exhibit or attend a performance. But if you also want to appeal to tourists, how do you know that the activities you select will draw them to your community and will fit into the current mix of things that you offer for visitors to see and do? To help you decide whether you should try to make your Lincoln Bicentennial activity a tourist attraction, consider the following categories and then complete the questionnaire.

#### **Does it fit?**

Consider the context of your Lincoln Bicentennial project. Has your community already been developed and promoted as a destination for cultural heritage travelers? If so, think about the Lincoln Bicentennial activity or projects you are planning and consider how they will fit into what you are already offering to visitors. If you are planning a one-time event, can it be packaged with attractions in your community and sold to tourists as part of a package? If you are planning a permanent addition – an annual event, a new museum or exhibit, etc. – will it enhance the offerings you already have for tourists?

#### **What activity are you planning?**

It can sometimes be difficult for a community to objectively evaluate whether an event or attraction will appeal to tourists. In general, if you are planning something that showcases a local school (such as a play by high school students) or is primarily geared toward schoolchildren (such as a hands on 19<sup>th</sup> century camp), you will want to promote it to locals and not to tourists. But, if your activity is part of preserving something of national significance – such as Lincoln's story – then activities such as exhibits, performances or celebrations may also appeal to tourists. There are exceptions to every case in terms of what will appeal to tourists, so consider carefully what is already drawing visitors to your community and if your Lincoln Bicentennial activity will enhance their experience and draw new visitors. If you still aren't sure, talk with your local tourism bureau or state tourism officials for their guidance.

### **Do you have the capacity for visitors?**

If you are going to invite tourists to your community, make sure you can accommodate them! Tourists have very specific needs. Consider everything from the size of the space for your event – will it hold a large crowd? – to responding to visitor inquiries to wayfinding signage to having plenty of hotel rooms. Another important part of deciding whether to try to attract tourists is to know if your community *wants* visitors. When you hold community or committee meetings as part of your planning process, ask residents if they think it is a good idea to promote the community and its Lincoln Bicentennial activities to tourists.

### **Can you reach the tourists you want to attract?**

Tourism is a highly competitive industry, and travelers have lots of choice about where they can go and things they can do. If you want to attract tourists to your Lincoln Bicentennial activities, begin by understanding who is currently coming to your community. See if there is local research available from the tourism bureau or if demographic information can be provided by the state tourism office. Then look at the marketing tools you will need to use to attract your target tourist audiences. Sending out press releases, purchasing advertising, setting up a web site, developing direct mail and email campaigns are just some of the ways you can reach tourists. Be sure to include this in your budget during your planning process.

## Is It for Locals or Is It for Tourists? Questionnaire

Considering and answering the following questions will help your planning committee decide whether you want to include tourists in your target audiences for your Lincoln Bicentennial activity. (You will want to answer “yes” to every question except #5 to know that your plans have the potential to appeal to and attract tourists.)

1. Has your community already been developed and promoted as a destination for cultural heritage travelers?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No

2. Will your Lincoln Bicentennial activity complement or enhance what is already being offered to visitors?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No

3. Can your Lincoln Bicentennial activity be included in a package or itinerary and promoted to tourists?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No

4. Do you have the manpower to handle phone calls, process tickets sales or package sales?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No

5. Does your Lincoln Bicentennial activity primarily showcase a local school or is it geared toward schoolchildren?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No

6. Does your Lincoln Bicentennial activity contribute to showcasing the national significance of Lincoln’s story?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No

7. Does your event or program venue have enough space to accommodate a large audience – including tourists?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes          \_\_\_\_\_ No

8. Does your community have the necessary visitor services – hotel rooms, restaurants, wayfinding signage, etc.?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes          \_\_\_\_\_ No

9. Have you sought feedback from residents to determine if they want visitors?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes          \_\_\_\_\_ No

10. Have you reviewed local and state research to determine who is currently visiting your community and who might be your target audience?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes          \_\_\_\_\_ No

11. Do you have the resources to do the marketing necessary to reach tourists?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes          \_\_\_\_\_ No

## **Tips for Developing Successful Bicentennial Events, Programs and Projects**

Planning a special event, program or project for the Illinois Lincoln Bicentennial is an exciting prospect for a community. Occasions such as this provide a unique opportunity to do something that brings a community together, attracts tourists, creates awareness of history, raise funds for long-desired projects, and contributes to the larger statewide and nationwide celebration. Following are some tips to help your community succeed in its efforts.

### **Planning**

- **Take time for thorough planning process.** There are lots of activities that your community might undertake. Which ones are most desirable? Even if there is something you have wanted to do for a long time – may develop a new museum exhibit or create a play – it’s important to think through all of the options before deciding.
- **Research activities that have been developed for other celebrations.** There are probably some great ideas out there that could be adapted for your community or that could inspire new ideas! (Refer to the resource piece “Successful Celebration Ideas and Activities” to help you get started.)
- **Hear everyone’s ideas.** By making the planning process inclusive, you will start your development and implementation phase with buy-in from the community. It is easy to turn over the planning to the chamber of commerce or historical society. While these organizations and others may be important leaders, by expanding the brainstorming process to be community-wide you may find the perfect idea from a new participant!
- **Decide who the activity is for.** Some bicentennial celebration activities may be geared specifically for local residents while others may attract tourists. Decide who your activity will appeal to.

## Development

- **Publicize the activity.** Once you have decided what your activity – or activities – will be, announce them to the community. Be sure to emphasize that the decision was reached after a process of community input.
- **Develop a timeline.** Outline each task that will be needed to make the activity a reality. If there is not enough time to complete the activity before 2009, consider how to make it part of the Lincoln Bicentennial Celebration. Can you have a groundbreaking instead of a ribbon cutting? Can part of the project be unveiled as a “sneak peek”?
- **Budget, budget, budget!** As soon as you decide on an activity, develop a budget. What is it going to cost to make your community’s dreams a reality? Once you have a budget, you will be able to start looking for funding sources through grants, sponsorships and donations.
- **Recruit enough volunteers.** Community-based projects require the involvement of lots of volunteers. Refer to the resource pieces on volunteers and organizing a committee for ideas of recruiting volunteers.

## Implementation

- **Publicize the activity.** Implement plans to gain coverage in the local media and media targeted to reach tourists well in advance of the event. Have one spokesperson appointed to talk with the media. The spokesperson can decide if they need other committee members to be interviewed by the media.
- **Check your lists!** When the big day arrives, don’t assume everything will unfold on “autopilot”! Review all of your committee’s to-do lists and make sure all of the volunteers are where they are supposed to be and that they are monitoring their assigned part of the events.

### Follow Up

- **Say thank you.** Thank all of the volunteers who contributed to the project's success. (Refer to the resource piece "Don't Forget to Say Thank You!" for some ideas.
- **Debrief.** Gather your committee after the event. Review what you originally planned and see if you met your goals. If the activity is permanent, begin the transition to a permanent management committee or organization.
- **Continue to seek publicity.** If your activity is designed to be permanent – a new exhibit, an annual event, interpretive signage, public art, etc. – continue to contact the media for coverage beyond the event or unveiling day. Additionally, be sure that this new attraction is included in visitor guides produced by your local and state tourism offices.
- **Close the books.** Be sure all bills are paid and reports are filed.

## Top Celebration and Project Ideas

### 1. **Letters to the Editor, Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania**

Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania, population 12,000, is located in the western foothills of the Appalachian Mountains. For most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century it was a one-company town, the Magee Carpet Company, but began to diversify after the carpet mill shut down in 1972.

In the mid-1990s, the Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble, a community centered professional theatre, decided to create an original production tracing Bloomsburg's 200 years of history. Rather than turning to the history books, the actors and directors headed for the library where they read every letter to the editor published in a Bloomsburg newspaper for the past 200 years. What they found were citizen comments on every aspect of the history of the nation as well as their community. There were letters regarding the Bill of Rights, the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation, the assassinations of President John F. Kennedy and Senator Robert Kennedy, as well as their opinions about local concerns such as schools and roads.

A unique production called *Letters to the Editor* created a portrait of the community, but equally reflected the issues that were important to the nation during different eras. The play was performed for appreciative local audiences, but as word of the play spread, the play also attracted people from outside the community, and ultimately garnered national publicity on National Public Radio. Four members of the Bloomsburg Theatre Ensemble published a book, *Letters to the Editor: Two Hundred Years in the Life of an American Town*, in 1998. The play continues to be produced in Bloomsburg and also is available for touring. [www.bte.org/touring/tour-letters/](http://www.bte.org/touring/tour-letters/); <http://www.simonsays.com>.

## 2. Elect Jackson! The Hermitage, Nashville, Tennessee

In 1999, the marketing and curatorial staff members were considering exhibit and program ideas for the coming year. Since 2000 was a presidential election year, the staff decided it would be the perfect time to “nominate” and “run” Andrew Jackson for president.

The project began with thorough research of Jackson’s 1828 candidacy – as well as research on his 1824 campaign when he won the popular vote and lost the electoral vote to John Quincy Adams. Research traced Jackson’s letters and other documentation as well as those of his opponent, President Adams. The culture of campaigns during the time period was thoroughly researched – including the interesting fact that candidates did not do their own campaigning at that time.

The project included several parts:

- **Exhibit** – The Visitor Center was transformed with flags hanging from the ceiling and “Jackson for President” banners. An exhibit traced the history of the campaign including the issues of the day and the candidates’ stand on each issue.
- **Collateral materials** – Visitors were given stickers to wear which proclaimed “Vote for Jackson.” A brochure was printed with the history of the campaign. The brochure also included a series of questions for children who could find the answers throughout the exhibit.
- **Mansion tour** – Jackson’s mansion served as headquarters for the campaign. The tour was revised to interpret this time period and to explain to visitors how the campaign unfolded.
- **Nomination event** – The “campaign” kicked off on Jackson’s birthday, March 15, with an event nominating Jackson for president. Musicians provided period music and a campaign rally atmosphere was created. “Andrew Jackson” made a special appearance, along with his wife, “Rachel.”
- **Voting** – Visitors found a ballot box at the end of their tour and could vote for the candidate of their choice.

The Elect Jackson exhibit and promotion garnered national coverage for The Hermitage throughout the year and provided an in-depth look at an important presidential campaign. [www.thehermitage.com](http://www.thehermitage.com).

### 3. **Traveling Exhibits, Oklahoma**

The Oklahoma Museums Association travels three art exhibits which are supported by the Oklahoma Arts Council. Museums, libraries, colleges and banks in urban and rural settings across Oklahoma use the exhibits to build community spirit and enhance local festivals, celebrations and events. ([www.okmuseums.org](http://www.okmuseums.org)) Exhibits include:

- **American Indian Realism**  
Drawn from the Photographic Archives of the Western History Collections at the University of Oklahoma, the exhibition features modern prints from vintage glass plate negatives. The photographs reflect the dignity maintained by Native Americans in spite of upheaval caused by the relocation of tribes. Photographers focused on people who still wore traditional dress and lived in traditional homes as a means of documenting a lifestyle that was being irrevocably altered. The exhibit includes 30 large framed, wall-hanging photographs and brochures.
- **As We See It: The Murrah Memorial Fence**  
Photographs of the mementos left at the site of the Alfred P. Murrah Building following the 1995 bombing reveal the public's expression of sorrow and pride for the 168 victims, their families, the survivors and those who assisted in the rescue effort. Attached to a chain link fence originally intended to keep people out of the bombing site, these mementos are collectively called "the Fence." Included in this wall-hanging exhibit is a series of text panels that explore the photographs and the bombing in the words of the photographers.
- **Oklahoma: All That Southwest Jazz**  
This photographic exhibit features Oklahoma legends instrumental in creating the music form that was to become known as "jazz." Narrative text and historic photographs trace Oklahoma blues lineage from Count Basie, who began his climb to stardom from Oklahoma City's "Blue Devils," to Yale native Chet Baker's contribution to the art form.

#### 4. **Go Boston Card, Boston Massachusetts**

Boston tourism officials created a credit card sized card which provided admission to over 70 attractions, activities and tours. Visitors can tailor custom itineraries to choose what they are interested in doing. Choices include:

- **Sightseeing** – Tours on the Beantown Trolley, Boston Duck Tours, Whale Watch and Harbor Cruise are among the choices.
- **Freedom Trail** – Visitors may take a guided tour of the trail, visit the Paul Revere House, Old North Church and other significant sites.
- **Cultural Activities** – Admission includes the Museum of Fine Arts and the Institute of Contemporary Art.
- **Top Museums:** Choices include the Museum of Science, JFK Library and others.
- **Interactive Experiences:** Sites include the Aquarium and Fenway Park Tour

Visitors selected a card in one, two, three, five and seven day increments. Cards begin at \$49 (\$35 for children 12 & under). The card also includes discounts on shopping and dining. A full-color guidebook including maps and points of interest is included.

[www.gobostoncard.com](http://www.gobostoncard.com).

## **5. Pineapple Grove ArtWalk, Delray Beach, Florida**

The Pineapple Grove District is steeped with the history of Delray Beach, blending the past with the present. Embracing the community's history has provided a framework for the grass roots development of the ArtWalk. Pineapple Grove ArtWalk in Delray Beach is an outdoor sculpture gallery, presenting international art in a casual setting.

The ArtWalk Committee, founded by Delray Beach citizens in 1998, responded to a civic need to visually enhance, and support the economic growth of the district.

The open-air gallery accommodates 30 outdoor sculptures, murals, and temporary installations as part of the changing collection of art. The sculpture collection features environmental art, phenomena inspired works, interactive works, music and water features, specialty paving, photography, stone, metal, glass, ceramic works and artful site furnishings, which is exhibited on building facades, in parks and within pedestrian corridors.

As a year-long, always open display, the ArtWalk brings visitors to Pineapple Grove and is an attraction during non-event days. A distinctive gateway provides the signature portal to the ArtWalk, inviting passers-by to see the offering of this four block commercial area.

An art selection panel was established to approve the placement of all art, on both public and private property. The panel reviews all resumes and slides of the artists' works. Artists are selected based on their level of artistic experience and history of work on a similar scale. They must have displayed work in a government, municipal or corporate museum, and have had a one-man show or exhibited at a public art institute within the last five years. The art must be durable, weather and graffiti resistant, comply with city safety and anchoring requirements and neither contain commercial advertising nor be aligned with a corporate logo.

Artwork is available for purchase through an auction held each year. Pineapple Grove Main Street, Inc., the umbrella organization for the ArtWalk is a registered not-for-profit 501-3(c). The Pineapple Grove district has been revitalized via partnerships with the city, the Community Redevelopment Agency, and property owners.

[www.delrayconnect.com](http://www.delrayconnect.com).

## 6. Jeffersonian Thanksgiving Festival, Charlottesville, Virginia

Organizers in Charlottesville, Virginia have held more than a dozen Jeffersonian Thanksgiving Festivals in the historic downtown. Over 60 events and activities are planned each year to let visitors experience what the community was like during the American Revolution between 1776 and 1781. Visitors can mingle with famous statesmen, soldiers, craftsmen, clergymen, and citizens who gather for a Day of Public Thanksgiving that was proclaimed by Virginia's Governor Thomas Jefferson. ([www.jeffersonthanksgiving.org](http://www.jeffersonthanksgiving.org).) Events include:

- **Revolutionary Soldier Encampments -**  
Mingle with Revolutionary-era soldiers, their wives, and other camp followers as they interpret camp life during the War for Independence.
- **Meriwether Lewis' 1806 Celebration Ball**  
At almost the exact time 200 years ago, Lewis and Clark returned to Virginia from their successful expedition west. Join Meriwether Lewis and President Thomas Jefferson and other citizens for a grand welcome celebration.
- **A Shocking Thanksgiving Worship Service with Jefferson**  
Governor Jefferson said that a Fast Day sermon in 1774 was like a "shock of electricity" that stirred up the people to resist British tyranny. Now the Governor has proclaimed a Day of Thanksgiving and asked for people to gather and give thanks to God for His blessings on the army and on the harvest.
- **Tarleton's British Invade, Battle with American Soldiers**  
In 1781, Charlottesville was the temporary location of the Virginia General Assembly. Gather outside the Courthouse to see Captain Jack Jouett arrive just in time to warn Governor Jefferson and other Revolutionary leaders of the imminent British invasion.
- **Meet Patrick Henry, James and Dolley Madison, and others**  
Discuss political subjects with Patrick Henry and James Madison. Discuss the exploration of Kentucky with Daniel Boone and Thomas Walker, two of the first men to explore the Kentucky frontier.



### **7. Print and Play Travel Games, Lewis and Clark Trail**

As part of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commemoration, organizers created “Print and Play: travel games for children. The Lewis and Clark Activity Sheet included a Corps of Discovery crossword puzzle, a Lewis and Clark Word Find and a series of Scavenger Hunt questions.

The web site, [www.lewisandclarktrail.com](http://www.lewisandclarktrail.com), also included other resources such as a travel planner, information on things to see and do in each state, virtual tours, timelines and historical information such as states that have Indian names. Educational resources for teachers are also found on the site. The site also offers a “Travel Stories” section for travelers to post about their experience in traveling the Lewis and Clark trail.

## **8. Visitors through the Years, The Hermitage, Nashville, Tennessee**

The Hermitage, home of President Andrew Jackson, has been open to the public for tours since 1889 after the Ladies' Hermitage Association acquired the site from the state of Tennessee and began its restoration. Since that time, visitors to the historic site have recorded their experiences with photographs and letters – as well as keeping the visit in their memories.

Staff at The Hermitage decided to ask former visitors to share their memories. A press release was sent out to all media in Tennessee and surrounding states asking people to write in a share their memories of visiting the site. The occasion was especially poignant because The Hermitage had recently experienced a tornado which swept across the property, destroying more than half of the trees including many dating to Jackson's early 19<sup>th</sup> century era. The resulting publicity from the tornado created a heightened awareness of the site and generated interest among many former visitors in sharing their memories.

The result was the receipt of letters and pictures from across the state as well as surrounding states dating back to visits 60 or more years ago. Contributors shared memories of visiting with school groups and family members – even sharing stories of childhood visits when they misbehaved!

An extensive archives is also maintained at The Hermitage with pictures and accounts of gatherings from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. By combining archival resources and pictures and stories sent by visitors, staff members were able to create an exhibit tracing visitation to the site through each decade from 1889 to 1999. The exhibit was titled "Visitors through the Years" and was displayed in the site's Visitor Center.

[www.thehermitage.com](http://www.thehermitage.com).

## 9. Flood Wall Murals, Portsmouth, Ohio

Portsmouth is a small town located in south central Ohio. A major flood in 1937 resulted in the construction of a very unattractive flood wall to protect the community. But a local resident had an idea to make the flood wall an asset to the town – and something that would draw tourists.

The idea of painting murals on the Portsmouth floodwall first occurred to lifetime resident Dr. Louis R. Chaboudy in 1992 after viewing outdoor murals in Steubenville, Ohio. When Dr. Louis and wife Ava Chaboudy searched for a muralist to transform the floodwall, they looked for someone who would not only paint a picture but would bring Scioto County's rich history to life. In February of 1993, internationally known muralist Robert Dafford came to Portsmouth to meet with the committee.

In May 1993, painting began on the longest mural in the project, 20 feet x 160 feet. The mural project was completed in October of 2002 with 2,200 feet of art along the Ohio River. The project has become the largest known work of art by a single artist.

The murals cover 2,000 years of history in the community and the region. Topics include a Shawnee village, the 1812 era, early industries, the Civil War, agriculture, the 1937 flood, education and others. The murals are promoted by the local convention and visitors bureau as a tourist attraction. A web site offers a virtual tour and gives additional background information on the project – [www.portsmouthmuralproducts.com](http://www.portsmouthmuralproducts.com).

### 10. Remembering Lincoln, Fort Wayne, Indiana

The Lincoln Museum in Fort Wayne was founded in 1928 as the Lincoln Historical Research Foundation, a private foundation of the Lincoln National Life Insurance Company. The museum was constructed in 1995 and is a nonprofit institution.

The museum offers many exhibits and programs including *Remembering Lincoln*. The exhibit gives examples of the use of Lincoln's name and image in television, movies, print and other media that show that Lincoln's image is universally recognized. The exhibit also examines how politicians of all political parties claim his legacy and how his ideals are ingrained in American political culture.

Visitors can see "Lincoln at the Movies," send letters to Mr. Lincoln and cast their votes regarding the past, present and future of America's government. Visitors can also test the accuracy of stories about Lincoln and learn the truth. Legends and myths that are answered with facts include whether Lincoln wrote the Gettysburg address on an envelope, whether he ever owned slaves, whether the hands on the Lincoln Memorial spell out a message, whether he walked miles to return change to a store customer and whether he ever fought a duel.

In addition to this exhibit, the museum offers many programs and temporary exhibits. Programs include "At Home and in Harm's Way: The Role of Indiana Women in the Civil War," and "Lincoln and Freedom: Slavery, Emancipation and the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment." Special events include "Be a Tourist in Your Own Hometown," a special day when residents receive free admission to the museum, and "Elderhostel: Day of Discovery."

[www.thelincolnmuseum.org](http://www.thelincolnmuseum.org)

## 11. Ohio Chautauqua

Ohio Chautauqua is a traveling tent show that presents history in the compelling format of first-person historical characterizations. Additional workshops, presentation and performances round out the event. Previous themes have included the Ohio frontier and the Roaring Twenties. The 2007 theme will focus on World War II.

The Chautauqua is organized by the Ohio Humanities Council and Ohio State University Humanities Institute and visits five communities across the state. Host communities have one youth and one adult workshop given by scholars during the week.

Topics include "Teenagers on the World War II Home Front," "Women on the World War II Home Front," "Children in Wartime," "Roosevelt's Personal Impact on the Great Depression and WWII."

Each evening a musical performance and historical character presentations are given under the Chautauqua tent. Living history presentations include topics such as "Rosie the Riveter," "Franklin Delano Roosevelt: President of the United States,"

[www.ohiohumanities.org](http://www.ohiohumanities.org)

## **12. Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Symposium, Harvard**

As part of the Lincoln Bicentennial celebrations, Harvard University's Houghton Library will co-sponsor with the Lincoln Forum and the Lincoln Group of Boston a symposium on *Abraham Lincoln at 200: New Perspectives on His Life and Legacy*.

The symposium will be held at Houghton Library and other Harvard University venues on Friday, April 24 and Saturday, April 25, 2009. The event will coincide with a major exhibition featuring books, manuscripts, ephemera, and artifacts from Houghton Library's Abraham Lincoln Collection.

The symposium will examine or re-examine several aspects of Lincoln's career, such as his views on race and slavery, his role as Commander-in-Chief, his use of the press to shape public opinion, his relationship with Congress and his influence on the legislative process, and his role as a politician and as a party leader.

Several prominent Lincoln and Civil War scholars have agreed to participate, including Gabor Boritt, David Herbert Donald, Doris Kearns Goodwin, Drew Gilpin Faust, Richard W. Fox, Harold Holzer, James McPherson, Edna Greene Medford, Matthew Pinsker, John Y. Simon, Edward Steers, Craig Symonds, Thomas Turner, and Frank J. Williams.

<http://hcl.harvard.edu/libraries/houghton/lincoln.html>

### 13. **Anecdotal History Tour, Washington, D.C.**

Cultural Tourism D.C. partners with a well know local author/historian/tour guide to offer creative guided tours that engage and entertain visitors. Tours include:

- Stories to inspire at the glorious monuments, memorials, and Arlington National Cemetery.
- Hear tales of duels and heroism on a stroll around the White House neighborhood.
- Listen to the saddest story in American history while seeing locations tied to the assassination of Abraham Lincoln.
- Walk the charming streets of historic Georgetown to the homes of the famous and infamous who made this neighborhood home and haunt.
- Trace the path of British invaders who burned the White House and Capitol in the War of 1812.
- See graceful Victorian homes, movie locations, and a dazzling stretch of ethnic restaurants in the Adams Morgan neighborhood.
- Drive by the homes of the Presidents before and after the White House

Tours can be customized and given for large or small groups. Tours are also offered at night for a different view of the city.

[www.culturaltourismdc.org](http://www.culturaltourismdc.org); [www.dcsightseeing.com](http://www.dcsightseeing.com)

#### **14. Pathway of History, Tennessee**

For the state's 200<sup>th</sup> birthday, the state of Tennessee created a 19-acre Bicentennial Capitol Mall near the state capitol building. The mall was designed to be a park and outdoor museum and included features such as the Walk of Counties, with time capsules buried by all 95 counties and surrounded by plantings representing all three geographic sections of the state, an amphitheater, a 200-foot granite map of Tennessee, and a 95-bell carillon.

A particularly popular area of the mall is the Pathway of History. The walkway is a timeline showcasing of history of more than two centuries. It includes a 4-foot-tall granite wall and a row of vertical granite pylons. The history of the state is recorded on the polished granite. Text is placed high enough to be easily read, but the wall is low enough to allow a view of the grassy area of the park.

The wall includes statements of fact and quotes from Tennesseans, documenting the state's accomplishments and events such as settlement, statehood, war, agriculture, industry and education. At the midpoint of the walkway, the timeline is shattered, representing the Civil War, when Tennessee's loyalties were divided. The 50-foot-tall pylons divide the wall into decades. The date of the decade is placed at the top of each pylon.

<http://nashville.about.com/od/historyandsites/ss/bicentennialmall.htm>.

### 15. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Poetry Forecast

Organizers of the bicentennial celebration of the birth of American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow in 2007 researched poems that made references to the weather. They developed categories including "beautiful and sunny," "cloudy," "cloudy and windy," "cold," "cold and windy," "rain," "rain with clearing," "snow," "snow and wind," "cold, windy and rainy," "farm and warm," "storm," "thunder," and "windy."

They sent excerpts from the poems to weather forecasters across the country with information about the Longfellow bicentennial celebration and his birthday on February 27, 2007.

Additional projects including developing activity kits for schools, inviting schools to post on the celebration web site about how they are celebrating, identifying Longfellow Landmarks, issuing a Longfellow stamp and asking governors to sign a Longfellow Proclamation.

[www.longfellow200.org](http://www.longfellow200.org).

## 16. Court Days Festival, Harrisonburg

Representatives from the City of Harrisonburg, the Main Street Program, Historical Society and interested citizens all work together to create the popular annual event, Court Days Festival. The festival includes many elements that enrich the experience for residents and visitors. These include:

- **Harrisonburg History** – Historical information about the community is posted on the event web site to allow those who plan to attend the event to learn about the time period in advance. Information included the Harrisonburg 1850 Census, Harrisonburg Town Council Minutes and information on resources to assist in researching Harrisonburg's history.
- **Articles** – Articles are written by local historians and placed on the web site including "A Glimpse into 1850s Harrisonburg," "Court Days in Old Harrisonburg," "Court Square in the 1850s," and "150 Year Old Town Minutes."
- **Workshop Series** – Beginning in January, workshops are offered to help re-enactors get ready to present their historical characters. Workshops for re-enactors answer questions about what character they should be, what they should wear, how they should talk, etc.
- **Lecture Series** – Beginning in March, a series of lectures is offered to give an in-depth look at the historical era. Topics include "City and County African-American 1850s Life," "Local Historic Structures: Saved, Lost, Endangered," and others.
- **Dance Series** – For those who want to participate in 19<sup>th</sup> century style dancing at the festival, advance dance classes are offered. Participants also learn about flirtation and etiquette of the period.

The festival brings to life the 1850s with historical re-enactors, music and dancing, food a temperance rally, medicine show, dramatic presentations and other activities.

[www.courtdaysfestival.org](http://www.courtdaysfestival.org).

### **17. City Exhibit, New Orleans**

The New Orleans Public Library created an exhibit titled "A Great and Growing City: New Orleans in the Era of the Louisiana Purchase" as part of the 2003 bicentennial celebration of the Louisiana Purchase. The exhibit was designed to tell the story of New Orleans during the 15 years between 1797 and 1812. The exhibit used original documents and maps from the New Orleans City Archives along with books from the general Louisiana Division collections to illustrate the social, economic and political life of New Orleans as it passed from Spanish to French and then to American control.

The title of the exhibit, "A Great and Growing City" came from a letter written in 1804 by Governor William Charles Cole Claiborne to President Thomas Jefferson telling him that \$15 million was a good price for the Louisiana Purchase. At the conclusion of the exhibit, all of the documents were placed online for permanent accessibility.

An accompaniment to the exhibit was "The Louisiana Purchase: A Heritage Explored" which was also accessible from the same web site, <http://nutrias.org>. This was the result of a digital project by the Louisiana State University Libraries' Special Collections to aid researchers, historians and teachers in accessing original documents.

Included are books published in or about Louisiana during the period, including travel accounts, political tracts, and scientific and religious works. Materials include maps ranging from original plans of Baton Rouge and New Orleans to sketchier depictions of the Louisiana frontier; pamphlets and government records and publications documenting the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 and the Battle of New Orleans in 1815; French-language pamphlets depicting society and commerce; and manuscripts. The manuscripts include letters and official documents of government officials and bodies, family papers of Louisiana residents, and accounts of travelers.

Many of the documents deal with New Orleans, which was then the largest city in the South and the nation's second largest port. Others reflect events in the geographic area that would become the state of Louisiana in 1812, as well as the vast new western areas claimed by the United States.

<http://nutrias.org> (follow link to Online Exhibits)

### **18. George Washington's Birthday Celebration, Laredo, Texas**

"Why celebrate George Washington's Birthday on the border?" The answer is traced to the 1890s and is attributed to the original planners of the celebration, the patriotic Improved Order of the Red Men, local chapter Yaqui Tribe #59, whose members included prominent Laredoans of both Mexican and American ancestry. The committee was looking for a traditionally "American" holiday to celebrate that might offer the best of all cultures influencing the heritage of Laredo's citizens. They settled on celebrating the birthday of the nation's first president, George Washington.

The first celebration was a phenomenal success. Its success and popularity grew rapidly and in 1923, the Washington's Birthday Celebration Association of Laredo, Inc. received its state charter. In 1924, the Celebration featured its first Colonial Pageant, which featured 13 young girls from Laredo, representing the 13 original colonies.

A major event that continues each year is the International Bridge Ceremony, a "welcoming ceremony" between officials and dignitaries from Mexico and the United States. The event is designed to symbolize the amity and understanding between the two neighboring nations. Over the years, additional attractions have been added, and the calendar includes over 25 events and spans a period of a month. It attracts over 400,000 attendees annually.

After 111 years, the Washington's Birthday Celebration has become a Laredo institution, with its traditions closely tied to the history of the community. Its focus is the fostering of greater understanding between the people of the Americas, the promotion of Laredo as one of Texas' most patriotic and culturally alive cities, and the creation of a greater sense of civic and national pride.

[www.wbcalaredo.org](http://www.wbcalaredo.org)

### **19. Capturing the Spirit of the West, Old Cowtown Museum, Kansas**

The streets of Old Cowtown Museum in Wichita, Kansas, transport visitors to a recreated Kansas cattle town circa 1865 to 1880. Wichita flourished when the railroad and the cattle business came to town in 1872. More than 40 buildings, over 12,000 artifacts and a number of live animals on 17 acres set the backdrop for history re-enactors to interact with visitors and provide a unique learning experience.

The beginnings of Old Cowtown Museum, operated by the non-profit Historic Wichita-Sedgwick County Inc., started more than 50 years ago. On a typical day, guests have the opportunity to participate in activities such as working the rip saw and driving square nails in the carpenter shop, feeling animal skins at the hunter and trader camp, and operating the blower on the forge at the blacksmith shop. In the residential area, visitors learn about things such as cooking on a wood stove. They also have the opportunity to test their skill with the toys in the parlor.

Each year the museum offers numerous special events to feature various aspects of life on the frontier with special activities and re-enactments. A popular event in recent years was an event centered on photography.

The event included a photo contest with all of the pictures staged to look historic. Winning photos were displayed at the museum for visitors to enjoy.

In addition, a Photography Weekend was offered and included workshops on how to preserve photographs and how to take better pictures. Participants enjoyed the opportunity to have a tin-type photo taken with visitors wearing historic clothing. Participants could also have their picture taken with re-enactors dressed as 1870s characters.

[www.oldcowtown.org](http://www.oldcowtown.org).

## 20. Create a Culture or Passport Card

Many communities, regions or states bring together historic sites, arts activities and special events in a special card that provides reduces admission or discounts on purchases at the site, performances and events. Cards are also created as “passports” to encourage travelers to visit numerous sites and have their passport stamped at each one.

An example is the commemorative “passport” created by the state of Arkansas as part of its celebration of the Louisiana Purchase. In 1803, President Thomas Jefferson finalized the purchase of the Louisiana Territory from France, doubling the size of the United States. The acquisition included 830,000 square miles of unmapped wilderness.

A survey of the new land began in 1815 in East Arkansas. The initial point of the survey is located at the corner of Lee, Phillips and Monroe counties. It is from this point that all land in the Louisiana Purchase was mapped – every legal description of the land west of the Mississippi depended on measurements taken from this point. This starting point for the surveyors who explored and mapped the frontier is now the Louisiana Purchase Historic State Park, where visitors can walk along a boardwalk through the swamp and experience the sites and sounds of the wilderness, much like the original surveyors did.

To encourage visitors to explore this site and others connected to the Louisiana Purchase, the collectible passports were distributed around the state at destinations, each with special events planned to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Louisiana Purchase. Passports could be stamped at any of the 28 sites.

[www.lapurchase.org](http://www.lapurchase.org)