

## **Charting a Course for the Future The Farmers' Museum**

**Mission** (Adopted 2007)

### **The Farmers' Museum**

Cultivating an understanding of the rural heritage  
that has shaped our land, communities and American culture.

### **Vision**

By focusing on interpretive quality, authenticity and visible annual improvements, The Farmers Museum will strengthen its reputation as a highly desirable destination and regional resource (real and virtual) for adults, families, and school groups, and as a leader among outdoor history museums.

We are committed to improving visitor amenities and imparting consistency in programming and organizational performance. The staff will strive to make every interaction at the museum a positive and memorable experience.

### **Values**

The staff members of The Farmers' Museum and NYSHA combine their talents and energies in a friendly, engaging manner to achieve our missions. These core values guide and inspire how we define our relationships with each other and our stakeholders.

#### **Enriching**

Nourishing mind, heart, and spirit.

#### **Enjoyable**

Creating delightful and memorable experiences.

#### **Honest**

Interacting with openness, respect, and authenticity.

#### **Audience-focused**

Connecting ideas and actions to those we serve.

#### **Inclusive**

Embracing different perspectives and reflecting the many cultures of New York.

#### **Innovative**

Performing with creativity, resourcefulness, and leadership.

## **Institutional Strategic Directions**

The Farmers' Museum will continue to improve and strengthen our programs, collections, operations and financial position; further develop our marketing effectiveness and fund raising capacity; upgrade elements of the entrance and Main Barn experience, and improve and expand its collections facilities.

For 2010-2012, we will focus on the following strategies:

### **1. Increase depth and impact of content and programming**

*Provide more content and programming to a wider audience.*

- Continue to present appealing exhibitions and public programs that are a good fit with mission and marketable.
- Form partnerships and collaborations with educational and cultural entities to make rural history more accessible to the public.
- Enhance programming for teachers and students.
- Deliver more content to visitors on-site and on the internet, in new formats, and in partnership with others.

### **2. Maximize resources and develop a strong base of support**

*Capitalize on existing collections, staffing, technology, and facilities.*

- Move forward incrementally, developing programs and capacity without increases in staffing and proceeding with major capital priorities as funding is secured.
- Focus on developing a strong foundation for the future by improving our fund raising efforts, exercising budgetary discipline, planning for capital needs, and creating the case for public and private support.
- Manage the institution in a way that allows the endowment to recover.
- Maximize the collaborations with the New York State Historical Association and the Cooperstown Graduate Program.

### **3. Impart excellence, relevance and good value**

*Enrich the quality of the experience and maximize what we offer to the public.*

- Provide steady admissions growth at a good value.
- Make improvements in orientation and signage to better serve the needs of the public.
- Pace improvements annually in interpretive programs, exhibitions and facilities to create noticeable "freshness" for visitors to experience.
- Seize opportunities to improve the visitor experience throughout the museum.

### **4. Strengthen infrastructure and improve organizational effectiveness**

*Build capacity for future initiatives.*

- Make selective infrastructure improvements and increase efficiency to function as a more nimble, effective operation.
- Address the need for salary and wage improvements.

- Establish goals, maintain staff focus, and strengthen delegation and accountability.
- Increase inter-departmental communications and collaborations.
- Upgrade elements of the entrance and Main Barn experience, and open the Creamery; work with NYSHA to improve and expand the museum and library collections facilities; and relocate Seneca Log House to Native American interpretive area.

### **Positioning Strategy**

The positioning strategy for developing our audiences at TFM is to:

- Continue to emphasize audience growth for the 30-45-50 year-old demographic including families and school groups, while maintaining our current 50-60 year-old demographic.
- Emphasize what makes TFM and Cooperstown unique and relevant.
- Emphasize the high quality and audience benefits of our experiential programming.
- Support the marketing of Cooperstown as a cultural tourism destination.
- Improve messaging and cross promotion with Fenimore Art Museum and other major local attractions.
- Heighten museum awareness and support within the Otsego County tourism community.
- Focus marketing primarily on the Albany-Binghamton-Utica region.
- Develop programs responsive to constituents' needs.

In positioning The Farmers' Museum we will emphasize that the museum experience is fun, family-friendly, and easily accessible to a broad audience. In the coming years, we also will:

- Maintain a leadership role in regional tourism promotions through continued participation at board level in the Cooperstown Chamber of Commerce, and working on advisory committees with the county tourism program.
- Form partnerships and collaborations with others (such as lodging establishments, attractions, and media outlets) in support of marketing.
- Leverage internet marketing and internet communications.
- Cultivate new and younger audiences, such as those interested in quilting, historical architecture, agricultural activities, trades and hand-crafts.

## **The Farmers' Museum Strategic Planning Goals 2010-2012**

### **Programmatic Goals**

1. To impart excellence, consistently, in the audience experience and public programming at The Farmers' Museum.
2. To extend our audience reach well beyond Cooperstown through institutional partnerships, programs, digital technology, and publishing.
3. To help develop the library into a model regional history center for staff, students, educators, genealogists, scholars, and the public.
4. To increase integration between the graduate program and the museums to strengthen each entity and enhance the learning experience of the students.

### **Infrastructure and Capital Goals**

5. To meet the standards of stewardship in the field by improving the protection and preservation of the collections.
6. To expand accessibility and enhance the visitor experience by making carefully selected facilities improvements at our museum.
7. To strengthen our museum collections and broaden their reach with selective additions of important artifacts, by gift or purchase from a healthy and sustainable acquisition fund.

### **Financial and Resources Development Goals**

8. To strengthen the fiscal health of TFM by enhancing the long-term purchasing power of the endowment and preserving the useful life of our physical assets in perpetuity.
9. To ensure that staff members and volunteers have the skills, resources and compensation necessary to move the organization forward.

## **2010 Program and Operating Priorities**

1. Continually strengthen the excellence and consistency of the visitor experience at The Farmers' Museum.
2. Increase the reach and impact of our services and accessibility to our resources for offsite audiences.
3. Address stewardship issues for museum and library collection.
4. Strengthen the long-term financial position of The Farmers' Museum.