



July 5, 2008

Dear City Council,

We at Friends of the Astor House Museum and Clear Creek History Park are excited to submit this proposal for the unification of the three history museums under one management structure, run by our organization.

This proposal presents an exciting opportunity to strengthen our mission and the mission of the Golden Pioneer Museum. As we describe in this proposal, we believe that this museum consolidation will positively impact the community by providing a better visitor experience, more integrated school and public programs, a focused concentration of historic knowledge, less history lost, more economies of scale, more strategic future planning, and a more active role in heritage tourism.

We believe that we are absolutely the best organization to shoulder this responsibility. Our strong financial track record, our experienced staff, our successes in historical education, our reputation within the community and our involved board will continue to serve Golden into the future.

We look forward to City Council's suggestions and feedback. We also look to celebrating with you Golden's 150th Anniversary.

Sincerely,

Shannon Voirol
Executive Director

William McKee
President, Board of Directors

Friends of the Astor House Museum and Clear Creek History Park Proposal

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Organizational Summary and Background

Phase One: Saving Buildings

Community spirit saved the Astor House Museum from destruction in the early 1970s. A group of hard-working preservationists called Golden Landmarks Association (GLA), led by Bo Bowers and Gene Child, lovingly restored the Astor House Museum and convinced the City and business leaders of its viability. These volunteers operated the Astor House Museum for over twenty-five years.

In the 1990s, folks got wind of new development up in Golden Gate Canyon. Irma Whys, then Director of the Golden Pioneer Museum, and many of the original GLA leaders worked out complicated land swaps and hired preservation construction expert Bill Bailey. Over many years, the cabins and outbuildings of the Pearce ranch were moved down to their current site along Clear Creek.

Like the Astor House Museum renovation in the 1970s, community volunteers pitched in for the Clear Creek History Park in 1990s. Not only was there a barn raising, there were the jigsaw puzzles of rebuilding two cabins, a chicken coop and an outhouse.

In the 1970s, Mitchell Elementary had moved the Guy Hill Schoolhouse from the canyon to Mitchell's grounds. With the help of the Marines and a flat bed truck, they carefully moved the 1870s schoolhouse. For about 15 years, Mitchell students and teachers enjoyed having the school house on their grounds. As the Clear Creek History Park was forming and Mitchell Elementary moved to a new site, once again Guy Hill schoolhouse was gently moved. In the early 1990s, the Schoolhouse came to find its permanent home at the Clear Creek History Park.

Phase Two: Bringing History to Life through Programs

In the late 1990s, one of GLA's own staff, Kim Lennox, submitted her own proposal to run the Astor House Museum and Clear Creek History Park as its own 501c3 as contracted by the City. The non-profit was named Friends of the Astor House Museum and Clear Creek History Park (Friends).

Kim began fundraising in earnest. Professional staff was hired; many programs were set up and strengthened. The Friends organization was growing up; it forged strong ties to the Chamber of Commerce, downtown merchants and funders like the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District.

From 1998-2003, Friends grew many of its successful events and festivals. Audience and volunteer programs were established and the very popular *Tea Time at the Astor House Museum* program grew significantly.

After a strong seven-year tenure, Kim was ready for new challenges and mountain living. Shannon Voirol was hired as Executive Director in August of 2003. Shannon joined a spunky organization and began to focus its efforts more on visitors – their learning and enjoyment.

Phase Three: Securing the Future through Increasing the Donor Base and Strengthening Exhibits and Infrastructure

From 2003 to 2006, Friends received a federal grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services that provided over 3,000 under-served school kids with free programming and free bus transportation.

In 2004, Friends undertook several major capital projects with important financial support from the City of Golden, the State Historical Fund and the Golden Civic Foundation. First a \$150,000 HVAC system was installed - creating heat and air-conditioning for staff offices and the third floor of the Astor House.

In 2005, the third floor costume room, meeting space, collections area and second floor staff offices were renovated. Also in 2006 and 2007, the Astor House Museum balcony, visitor welcome area, gift shop and Victorian bathroom were renovated.

In 2005, Friends began its first annual giving program. Over the past three years, this program has raised an excess of \$15,000 from individuals in Golden and beyond.

Phase Four: Maximizing the Public's Access to the History Park

In November 2007, our Board of Directors approved a strategic plan that emphasized access to the Clear Creek History Park.

In the summer of 2006, we ramped up our programming at the Clear Creek History Park by increasing our open days to include Sundays, a 13% increase in our hours of programming.

In the summer of 2007, thanks to support of The Denver Foundation, we increased our Park interpretative staff by two positions - a paid blacksmith and paid cook. This increased our hours of historical programming by 120%.

In March of 2008, we launched our brand new website, giving on-line users greater access to history of the Astor House and Pearce family, our aggressive calendar of events, our school programs, on-line program registration and on-line giving. www.astorhousemuseum.org

Project Statement

The combined operations of Golden Pioneer Museum, the Astor House Museum and the Clear Creek History Park under the management of the Friends organization would position the three museums to reach their full potential.

We at Friends of the Astor House Museum and Clear Creek History Park (Friends) envision a future where all the museums tell more interesting stories of Golden's past even the more recent past. We envision a future when all the museums are unified and work together to make more significant impacts on school students, retired older adults, families, tourists and diverse people.

We envision a time when museum volunteers and Golden residents are equally passionate about their local history. We see business members seeking out more ways to associate themselves with our museums' reputations. We see year-round programming at the Clear Creek History Park. We see a combination ticket that buys visitors a ticket to the Astor House Museum and Golden Pioneer Museum. Our proposed plan gives details on how to achieve this vision with only a 4% increase to the amount the City already gives the museums and additional capital outlays. In order to achieve this vision, we ask that City Council approving a measure in 2008 to unify all three city museums under the leadership of Friends.

To accomplish this we have four goals:

- **Goal One:** Unify the Golden Pioneer Museum, the Astor House Museum and Clear Creek History Park under Friends management organization for greater impact on visitors and greater efficiency
- **Goal Two:** Continue Increasing Visitors' Access to the Clear Creek History Park
- **Goal Three:** Support City and Golden Landmarks Association in Artifact Conveyance
- **Goal Four:** Forge a Stronger Two-Way Relationship with the City

Project Goals

Goal One: Unify the Golden Pioneer Museum, the Astor House Museum and Clear Creek History Park under Friends management organization for greater impact on visitors and greater efficiency.

Council Should Act to Unify Museums Now

The time to unify and strengthen Golden's history is now. Community leaders have said to us that unification would cut down on unnecessary and unhelpful competition. Many people have summarized by saying that "it just makes sense." In fact, Councilperson Karen Oxman predicted a merger in a December 12, 2006, Transcript article.

Statewide money and other grant income are being lost to other communities. It would be a wonderful statement to the Golden residents that the City is infusing energy into the history museums by unifying them just in time to celebrate Golden's 150th anniversary.

Golden is fortunate to have many museums; however, the three history museums have not nearly reached their full potential. We at Friends have a vision for a unified, strengthened museum organization that is stronger administratively, financially and has a much stronger impact on its citizens. To reach their full potential, the three museums need to merge. In 2003, Friends conducted a capital campaign feasibility report to explore its capital campaign. The report found that the existence of three history museums in such a small town prevented any large scale fundraising efforts.

Thomas A. McLaughlin, author of "Seven Steps to A Successful Non-profit Merger," cites several efficiencies from two non-profits merging. Certainly all three of Golden's history museums could benefit from "increased visibility, increased media coverage, increased and streamlined audience, increased efficiency, improved fundraising, increased response to community's needs and increased strategic initiatives."

The three unified museums will benefit from higher visibility. One set of marketing tools and dollars will promote the activities of all the museums. Increased media coverage will result from having one marketing contact within the museums that is knowledgeable on all programming. By merging our newsletter and membership databases, our audience for all three museums will be streamlined and will grow. The public and the City will have one primary point of contact for Golden's history.

Administratively, there will be less duplication. The finance work of the three museums will be centralized under one accounting and fundraising system. The human resources of three will be clarified and centralized. All three museums will benefit from improved fundraising. Donors and funders will have one clear organization to support Golden's history.

When museums are too small, they do not have the staff time to take on large strategic initiatives. That means valuable dollars go to museums with more staff. This is certainly happening in Golden and its history museums. Heritage tourism is now a 40 billion dollar industry in the state of Colorado. Several years ago, Colorado Tourism and the State Historical Funds began funding towns that had a strategic vision for heritage tourism. Golden is missing out on this tourism promotional money, and therefore, valuable tourist dollars because there is no single museum organization, no shared vision and no one entity responsible for implementing that vision to attract heritage tourism dollars. This tourism money is just one of the lost strategic opportunities.

Unifying the history museums will also create more impact on visitors.

"Funders and casual observers of the nonprofit world often assume that the primary reason to merge is cost-savings. Although mergers may prove cost-effective, the objectives of achieving economic size and integrating services are more important".
(McLaughlin, p. 2)

The historical educational services of the Golden Pioneer Museum, Astor House and Clear Creek History Park desperately need integrating.

School and tour groups would like to call one phone number to schedule a field trip to all three history museums on one day. Two separate management structures are not able to work out the logistical and economic differences to serve school students and other group tours in this way.

Fragmented services are also problems when the public has inquiries about Golden's history, its archives and photographs. The public has to contact the three museums in their attempt to get answers to their questions.

Case In Point: Foss's History Lost Because No Single Authority

Fragmented museum services mean that valuable history is slipping through the cracks and being lost forever. At Friends, we were concerned about the recent closing of Foss Store because we felt that valuable Golden stories were being lost.

Foss was a large part of Golden – residents grew up with Foss; kids bought their first candy there. A centralized museum organization responsible for saving all of Golden's history would have immediately worked with Foss's owners and staff to identify important Foss artifacts for preservation, such as signs, cash registers, aprons, candy display, and old pharmaceutical materials. These items would have been carefully labeled and stored by the museum organization.

The current mission of the Astor House Museum and Clear Creek Clear Creek History Park does not extend in time beyond 1910 and in scope beyond the Astor House Museum and ranching materials of Golden Gate Canyon. The Golden Pioneer Museum is responsible for collecting from all of Golden. But was anyone collecting anything from Foss? We were concerned, especially when we heard that the very large neon Foss sign was about to be auctioned off into private ownership. Golden's history should be available to all its residents; artifacts, photographs, oral histories, and videos should be archived in a public museum. History will continue to slip through the cracks, valuable artifacts that tell Golden's story will be destroyed, without one overarching management structure looking out for Golden's historical past, even its very recent past.

Strengthening the Golden Pioneer Museum Is Part of the Merger

Golden's rich history deserves a better and more comprehensive presentation for the community and tourists alike. Current exhibits at Golden Pioneer Museum will be reassessed with an eye for chronicling Golden's history through exhibit storytelling (interpretive panels, photographs, and supportive artifacts) rather than just relying on the artifacts to tell the whole story. An emphasis would be placed on interpreting the history and voices from 1859 to present using artifacts that support the exhibits.

Friends would also like to begin producing exhibits with community-generated content. For example, we might form an exhibit committee of local community members. This committee could then help community members display their own collections such as 1940s Golden Movie tickets or their own collection of Golden High Prom memorabilia. The other exhibits would be reassessed, with an eye towards using the recent Golden Pioneer Museum expansion to support the long-term exhibit on Golden history, rotating community galleries and temporary exhibits.

Improved Golden Pioneer Museum exhibits would draw from the strengths of the Pioneer Museum's collection, such as their archives and photo collections from prominent Golden families like the Parfets and items from the Jolly Rancher factory. Their large holdings of Victorian furniture and pioneer accessories could be used to supplement furnishings at the Astor House Museum and buildings at Clear Creek History Park. In this way, we could continue to expand interpretation at the Astor House Museum and Clear Creek History Park to share more of Golden's early history, while freeing up Golden Pioneer Museum gallery space for more or different exhibits about the Golden region.

To produce exhibits with a more contemporary relevance, we recommend actively collecting artifacts that relate to all of Golden's history, even very recent history. Currently, the Golden

Pioneer Museum does not collect artifacts that are younger than 1950. Events happening in this generation are just as relevant and valuable to this community as events that happened in 1859 and should be preserved for posterity.

Goal Two: Continue Increasing Visitors' Access to the Clear Creek History Park

Friends Has Increased Access Clear Creek History Park since 2006

In recent years, we increased the open hours at the Clear Creek History Park by 13%, by opening on Sundays. We increased the number of hours of historic demonstrations by 120%. We added 10 shade trees and a shade roof for visitors at the blacksmith shop. We have added a walking guide with real photos of the Pearces, we've added interpretive labels to two buildings. We have opened the Barn to visitors and the outhouse. In short, we have made many improvements to provide more programming and access to the community. To reflect that work and encourage more, the Friends Board of Directors approved a Strategic Plan in November of 2006 that has a goal of:

Provide more opportunities for visitors to use the Clear Creek Clear Creek History Park through increased programming and access.

Parks and Recreation Department Master Plan

The City of Golden adopted a Parks and Recreation Master Plan (Parks Plan) in January of 2008. This Parks Plan includes a specific emphasis on the Clear Creek Corridor. We are excited about this focus because we know first-hand that the Creek Corridor deserves and needs more attention.

While other Golden areas have received needed improvements, the area around the History Park has been ignored. To the west is a large gravel lot occasionally filled with wood chips or snow. To our East sits another parking lot, a large unsightly green transformer box and another parking lot. An infusion of money and energy will bring a fresh look to the History Park and Clear Creek corridor and will attract the public to the History Park even more.

While we are excited to see the Creek Corridor plans for improvement, there are elements of the Parks Plan that raise concern for us. Currently we are concerned about the plan's call to "incorporate Lions, History, Parfet and Vanover Parks, and the areas in between these parks along the creek, into one seamless park, recreation and leisure experience."

We are also seek clarification about the Parks plan to "incorporate historic resources into **new** parks, where applicable, and protect and preserve those resources" and "encourage partnerships between organizations in the private sector and engage the community in a heritage education plan." We would like to be an active part of a collaboration to promote positive changes along the corridor without creating damage to the historic structures or the historic classes, workshops and demonstrations.

Friends and the City Struggle with Age Old Question of Preservation vs. Access

We struggle with a delicate balancing act; that of all open space parks and national parks. How do you balance community access and still preserve?

This is the same balancing act museums have internally managed for the last several decades. A few years ago, Friends took on a calculated risk to give its visitors more access. The red ropes, that prevented visitors from walking into the rooms, were taken down at the Astor House. We choose to experiment with giving our visitors more access. We did put some artifacts in storage for safe keeping. The experiment worked – visitors have enjoyed walking into the rooms much more and we have had no problems with theft or vandalism.

The Compromise to Increase Access and the Paradigm Shift We Propose

Based on this red rope experiment, we are proposing a similar experiment and paradigm shift at the Clear Creek History Park. After a year and a half of internal discussion at Friends, we are proposing the following compromise. This compromise posits a much more active collaboration between the City and Friends. It suggests that the best for the community and the best for Golden residents can be achieved by collaboration and a business model off all three merged museums.

In this new model, the Friends organization would continue to do much of its historical programming in the buildings and on the grounds of the Clear Creek History Park. However, the Clear Creek History Park grounds will be open and free to the public year-round. The public could, for free, look in the windows of the Clear Creek History Park buildings and read the interpretive signs on the outside of each building.

Friends would continue to serve 2,500-3,000 school students a year at the Clear Creek History Park. The Hands-On History pioneer camp would continue with Friends management. Friends would also continue to manage Candlelight Walk, Summer Solstice, the Fine Arts Festival and the like. All year round, museum visitors could purchase a combo ticket to the Astor House Museum, The Golden Pioneer Museum and the interiors of the Clear Creek History Park buildings - if the buildings are scheduled to be open that day. For example, Friends might offer interactive programming in the Pearce Cabin and in schoolhouse twice a week, year round, for paid museum visitors to enjoy.

To complete this model, the City Parks Department and Friends would be required to jointly hire and facilitate a design process with a landscape architect that would look at the functions and challenges of the Clear Creek History Park current layout.

The City Parks Department would make several capital, one-time improvements to the building amenities, adding restrooms, and take over all landscaping, trash and maintenance. The Friends organization would manage all programming at the Astor House Museum, Pioneer Museum and Clear Creek History Park.

To clearly outline the ramifications of this model, below is a list of things that would stay the same or change from the current History Park model:

Operating procedures that will stay the same:

- Friends manages all Clear Creek History Park interactive visitor programming in the buildings and on the grounds.
- Friends manages all school and group programming year-round at the Clear Creek History Park, Astor House Museum and Pioneer Museum. These programs serve over 2,500 school kids a year through field trips, tours, and historic activities.
- Friends manages all special events, camps and workshops in the Clear Creek History Park buildings, such as Hands-On History Camp, Summer Solstice Music Festival, cooking workshops, and 1800s Arts Trades Fair.
- Friends manages all rentals of the Clear Creek History Park historic buildings.
- With the addition of Golden Pioneer Museum income, the overall admission stream stays about the same.

Operating procedures that will change:

- The Clear Creek History Park grounds are free to the general public, year-round. There are multiple entrances around the perimeter of the Park grounds. Walkers and picnics are welcome, following the guidelines of a City park.
- The ticket booth at the current Clear Creek History Park main entrance no longer needs staffing since there are multiple free entrances to the Park grounds. This booth could provide much-needed storage for Friends instead.
- Paid museum visitors receive a map, showing them the route between the Astor House Museum, Clear Creek History Park and Pioneer Museum.
- The general public can read historic information on signs posted outside of the historic buildings, look in the windows, and watch outdoor historic activities for free.
- Friends prepares a schedule for year-round programs. Many of the programs require pre-registration to meet minimum attendance numbers. Only paid attendees may participate in the scheduled program. Certain activities may allow people who are not pre-registered to pay and join in on the spot.
- The chickens, donkeys, community gardens, root cellar, farm equipment, wagon, sluice boxes, and bees need to be re-evaluated for feasibility of historic demonstration use and public safety. Some, unfortunately, may need to be removed to increase the public's access to the History Park without supervision. These possible program cancellations are one of the downsides un-supervised public access.
- City would build and maintain restrooms at Clear Creek History Park cabins. City would also bring heat and running water to Reynolds Cabin and Pearce Cabin to make year-round historic demonstrations possible.
- Friends does not receive Clear Creek History Park general admission revenue since the grounds are free. Friends does continue to receive special event and educational program income.
- City and Friends would collaborate on a landscape plan that would promote public use of the grounds and provide designated areas for child safety during outdoor historic activities. The plan would work hard to preserve the ranching feel of the History Park and the well-loved chickens, this summer's donkeys and community gardens.

Goal Three: Support City and Golden Landmark Association in Artifact Conveyance

Friends has been an active participant in the collections conveyance agreement between the City of Golden and Golden Landmarks Association. About 95% of the artifacts on display at the Astor House Museum are owned by GLA. Decisions about exhibition, placement of artifacts and the like have mostly been determined by GLA. Since Friends has the responsibility of attracting 18,000 visitors a year and raising \$170,000 a year, it needs to be able to change exhibits or artifacts based on visitor demands. If the City owned the GLA artifacts and tasked Friends with caring for them, Friends could be more flexible and market-driven. Also, more GLA artifacts could be integrated into the Golden Pioneer Museum.

Goal Four: Balancing Revenue with Community Access

This model for unified history museums critically depends on **all three museum** venues for programs – the historic buildings of the Clear Creek Clear Creek History Park, the Astor House Museum and the Golden Pioneer Museum.

The Astor House Museum cannot survive financially on its own. All over the country, historic houses that were saved passionately by citizens with 1970's Bicentennial spirit have had very real financial problems; many are closing or turning over to private ownership. Pairing the year-round Astor House Museum with another year-round attraction, the Golden Pioneer Museum, would offer both museums more stability and a year-round combination ticket at a good value.

The immersive and interactive nature of programming at the Clear Creek Clear Creek History Park is critical to the financial health of the other two museums. The school programming at the Clear Creek History Park, the camp at the Clear Creek History Park, the love people have for the Clear Creek History Park that translates into membership revenue and donations and cannot be separated out from the Astor House Museum or the Pioneer Museum. They are completely financially dependent on each other in this model.

To operate the three sites, Friends will need to add three part-time staff to work with our program managers.

An Events Assistant will help orchestrate events at all three locations. An Exhibits and Facilities Assistant will help catalog the collection and create permanent and changing exhibits for the Astor House and Pioneer Museum. An Education Assistant will help coordinate the volunteers, part-time teachers and all the school groups. Additionally a part-time receptionist will be hired to staff the Front Desk at the Golden Pioneer Museum, if volunteers aren't available.

Goal Five: Forge a Stronger Two-Way Relationship with the City

At Friends, we absolutely know that our museum work is for the greater good of the City of Golden. We do not see our work as just for the museums, we know that our museums help to bring 1.2 million visitors a year to Golden. We know that our museum visitors bring money to local businesses. In fact, the Golden ticket redemptions clearly show that our museum customers also spend their money at Pickets, Clear Creek Books and Chelsea's of London.

Friends' Executive Director, Board Members and staff work on projects for the good of the town. In fact, as our strategic plan and 2007 annual report show, one of our strategic goals is "to actively participate in the renewal and growth of Downtown Golden and the Clear Creek Corridor." We believe this is a two-way street to support each other's growth. To that end, our board and staff are active on the Downtown Character Plan, GURA's open house forums, successful Orton Foundation grant proposal, Golden Fine Arts Festival and more.

We believe that the RFP process demonstrates the need for a stronger relationship between the museums and the City. During this RFP process, Friends called a meeting with the Mayor Smith and the Parks and Recreation Director to request a more collaborative process. Friends is open, honest, and willing to collaborate with the City. We have included a two year budget as instructed for the RFP. However we seek a longer operating agreement with annual formal dialogue and points of communication about how the City believes we are serving the residents and fitting the City's plans. We value the City's input.

Project Activities

In addition to the goals and transition plan, there are other activities within the scope of this project that will increase the positive impact on Golden residents and visitors.

Education at the Three Museums

The joint operation of the three Golden history museums would allow the public to be more significantly impacted and served by educational classes, workshops and demonstrations.

Golden Pioneer Museum artifacts and photographs could be incorporated into current Astor House Museum and Clear Creek History Park educational programs to provide a richer experience to the public. These photos and artifacts could be coupled with Astor House collections to provide a better understanding of Golden and Colorado history for the visitor. The current Golden Pioneer Museum program, "Colorado Roots," would still be offered to the public because it fulfills the need for more inclusiveness and diversity in education programming. This program offers the public an understanding of the different ethnic groups that settled and shaped Colorado.

New programs could be developed by using the Golden Pioneer Museum photos and artifacts, new school group programs could be developed including history of ranching, cowboys, children's toys, and prohibition in Colorado. More Native American programming could be built around the current exhibit at the Golden Pioneer Museum and would allow the Golden museums to be more competitive with other regional museums that offer Native American programming.

School group projects geared toward older students could be developed to address Colorado state standards for history and geography. A course on historical interpretation could be developed that introduces students to the need to use multiple sources. After students choose an historical topic to research, students could meet with long-time residents of Golden to study oral histories. They could investigate the Golden Pioneer Museum Library for historical resources. They could research historical articles online via the Golden Transcript archives.

Education programs could grow with a museum merger. Currently we must limit the size and time that we can serve groups. We turn school groups away many times during the year because we do

not have an indoor space that can accommodate a group larger than 30 people. Schools are understandably reluctant to keep their students outside in February for longer than 20 minutes. However, the Golden Pioneer Museum library space is large enough to accommodate groups over 30. Therefore, we could more easily serve school groups of over 30.

Educational overnights could also be offered to the public by using the library as the sleeping space. The Golden Pioneer Museum offers a contained, safe environment with indoor plumbing and hot water for overnight campers. We have been requested to do overnights at the History Park but without a more controlled space and closer access to a restroom, we have chosen not to take on that liability.

Events at All Three Museums

Events should further the mission of an organization. There are many good historical events currently produced at the Astor House, Clear Creek Clear Creek History Park, and Golden Pioneer Museum. It will be an ongoing process to develop the events that best fit the organization's mission, are most cost-effective, and promote the most community participation. Through on-going assessment, some events will be altered or cut, and new events will be developed. Looking at current events at all three of these museums, this is how Friends proposes best to merge them for the first year.

Friends would continue the museums' involvement in Candlelight Walk, Buffalo Bill Days and the Fine Arts Festival. The community will continue to see traditional demonstrations, special treats, and costumed presenters at these events. Community favorite events, such as Tea Time at the Astor House, the Holiday House tour, and Cemetery Tours will continue. Friends has experience producing the Golden Cemetery Tours, since that was a joint event between Friends and the Pioneer Museum in the recent past. This may be a good collaboration event to continue with the Golden Cemetery in fall. Friends could coordinate the Holiday House Tour to include the Astor House. The spring *Tea Time at the Astor House Museum* is for adult audiences and Friends would also develop a Tea series geared toward parent-child audiences, incorporating the Pioneer Museum's Teddy Bear Tea.

Fundraising events would be assessed by the Executive Director, Board of Directors and Business Manager to determine what is best for the organization as a whole. Friends' Summer Solstice Music Festival and the Pioneer Museum's Winter Benefit Tea and Silent Auction are the two current major fundraising events. The Solstice Music Festival might change into a summer concert series in the Park, in collaboration with Swallow Hill Music Association, with whom Friends already has a relationship. A paid concert series would bring more opportunities for the public to enjoy music in the Park. The Tea and Silent Auction may be continued for another year, to accurately assess the return on investment.

For these combined museum events to succeed under Friends management, we would bring the previous event planners and volunteers together in planning sessions, pooling our experience and ideas. We will listen and address concerns of all involved in a way that will foster a sense of collaboration and growing unity. We see all people in this process as valuable contributors.

Key Staff

- Executive Director, Shannon Voirol. Shannon oversees all activities of the museums. She is responsible for staff and board, raising \$170,000 every year through a variety of fundraising programs, strategic planning and public relations.
- Business Manager, Kathy Forchas. Kathy is responsible for all the finance and book-keeping activities of the organization. She also works closely with the Executive Director on grant proposal creation and donor reporting.
- Events and Volunteer Manager, Angela Cape. Angela handles an aggressive event calendar that includes the Teas, Fine Arts Festival, Summer Solstice, Candlelight Walk and many more. She also recruits, trains and supports our active volunteer core.
- Exhibits and Facilities Manager, Mark Dodge. Mark is responsible for all buildings, grounds, exhibitions, collections and many marketing materials including our new website. This summer, he is supervising the summer seasonal staff at the History Park.
- Education Manager, Lynnette DeSchepper. Lynnette is responsible for all of our group programs and Hands-On History camp. She is responsible for the content, logistics, and enjoyment and safety of thousands of schools students and also many adult groups.
- Front Desk Coordinator, Carol Happ. Carol is responsible for membership, program registration, and ensuring that parents and schools have correct paperwork.
- Clear Creek History Park Supervisor, Kathy Husband. Kathy Husband is responsible for scheduling and coordinating the living history demonstration staff at the History Park.
- The Board of Directors, while not paid, is a huge part of labor force at Friends. They fundraise, plan for the future and help out at numerous events.
- The 90 other volunteers at Friends work so much that they surpass the actual hours of a full time employee – over 5420 hours in a year. They do every imaginable task – work with young pioneers, cook on woodstove, weed gardens, mend fences, care for the chickens, and greet visitors.

Detailed Statement of Qualifications for entity and key staff

Friends Has Strong Finances and Fundraising

From 2002 – 2006, we had absolutely no budget deficit at all. We have been very careful with our finances. In 2007 we had a very small deficit of \$500. Our bank balance and cash-in-hand has remained solidly in the positive. We have always used an external CPA to prepare our annual taxes and financial review. We are forthcoming with our financial documents. To ensure our responsibility of accurate and transparent financial accountability, we hired our own in-house Business Manager to coordinate and complete our finances.

Five years ago, our fundraising activities were numerous but not very productive. Slowly we have changed our fundraising strategy to be more sustainable and focus more on building relationships with life-long donors. One part of this is our annual giving fundraising program. Annual giving is the cornerstone to any strong fundraising program.

Five years ago, we had very few opportunities for businesses to support us. Now we have a range of opportunities that offer different levels of benefits and exposure. Ads in our Solstice program

provide an entry point for many businesses and our website and business memberships provide that next level of exposure and support. Over the past few years, we are thrilled to see several businesses first buy a Solstice ad, then become increasingly interested in our programs and join as a Business Member. Returning business members like Meyer Hardware, Wagner Burke Barnes and the Buffalo Rose tell us that the membership is of value to them

Friends Has Significantly Improved Visitor Access

We have made consistent improvements in providing our visitors access to more historical content and more immersive historical experiences. As previously mentioned, five years ago, we had red ropes preventing the Astor House Museum visitors from going inside the rooms. Now, we have no red ropes and we encourage our visitors to go in each of the rooms.

Five years ago, we offered visitors to the Clear Creek History Park, no written interpretation anywhere. Now, all the buildings have identifying signs, the blacksmith shop and the school house have large interpretative signs and all visitors receive an informative four-page walking guide complete with never before published photos from the Pearce family archive.

Five years ago, the entire staff at the Clear Creek History Park was one person, who was tied to the ticket booth, taking money and thus could offer no programming or demonstrations. Now, every open day, at the Clear Creek History Park, we have at least two, often three staff in the Park working directly with visitors showing them textile demonstrations, panning for gold, giving behind the scenes tours of the chickens or making ice cream.

Friends Has Strong Staff and Board

Five years ago, we had a Board of Directors focused mostly on operational issues and event planning. Board and staff were more often at odds than working together. Now, we have a supportive, active board that is focused on strategic issues, governance and future planning.

Five years ago, before Shannon's leadership began; we had an organizational staffing structure that was set up by site, not by staff function or expertise. Then we essentially had an internal merger – merging the staff functions of the Astor House and Clear Creek History Park. Now, we have a staff organized by what staff does (i.e. Education, Exhibits, Events) rather than which site they do it at. This functional staff organization is particularly important for an organization with two sites and will be even more important for an organization with three sites.

Museums are very unique places that require specialized staff. They are not quite schools, not quite libraries, not quite amusement parks, not quite storage vaults, not quite the Internet and not quite movies. But, they contain elements of all those things. Museums need the public to trust them with their time, their things and their money. Sometimes people go to museums to be by themselves and think quietly or just see something. Other times people want a museum to be busy, active and social.

In order to do all those different things and fulfill all these different motivations, museums need museum professionals on staff to oversee the whole experience and forever seek a perfect balance of competing priorities. The Friends staff has over thirty years combined museum experience; including two graduate degrees in museums.

Shannon Voirol

Shannon Voirol assumed leadership of the Friends in August of 2003. She has been in museums for fifteen years and has been involved in many large education and exhibition projects. For five and half years, she was at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science. At DMNS, she created and managed the Community Science department and was part of the management team of Space Odyssey project. Shannon also worked on large exhibition and education renovation projects at the Cranbrook Institute of Science, the Maryland Science Center and Smithsonian's National Postal Museum. She has served two terms on the Board of Museum Education Roundtable and is currently the President of the Golden Cultural Alliance. In 2008, the American Association of Museums brought its annual conference of 6,000 participants to Denver and Shannon was very active participant in the Local Host Committee. Last fall, she enjoyed teaching a graduate level class on Museum Management at the University of Denver as an adjunct faculty member. She is also an advisory board member for the CU Museum of Natural History. Shannon received her Masters in Museum Education from The George Washington University and her undergraduate degree in psychology from University of Delaware.

Angela Sabott

Angela has been the Events and Volunteer Manager for three years. She has streamlined special events, created a friendly volunteer atmosphere, and expanded connections to historic performers and resource people. She has also served on the Golden Fine Arts Festival committee for three years. She is serving on the American Association of Museums Local Host Volunteer Committee to ensure that the conference has ample volunteer coverage. Before working at Friends, Angela had been involved in community theatre, primarily at the Attic Theatre in Appleton, Wisconsin. At Attic, she was the operations director in charge of 280 volunteers, group sales, subscriptions, and ticketing, daily operations for a busy season of plays, educational theater workshops and several fundraising activities. She's active in professional development for Volunteer Coordinators and in 2003 served as the President for the Volunteer Action Council of the Fox Cities in Wisconsin. Angie has a B.A. in English and Theatre from University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.

Mark Dodge

Mark started managing facilities, exhibits and collections for Friends in December of 2004. He enjoys championing the visitor experience and creating unique environments. His strengths include exhibit development and graphic design. At the Fort Collins Museum he led the museum through the first major renovation of its permanent galleries. At the Denver Art Museum, when he wasn't learning from some of the best in the Exhibit Design department, he managed group sales for special exhibits. He learned the basics of exhibit evaluation working at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science and helps teach exhibit development to graduate students at the University of Denver. Mark has a Masters in Museum Anthropology from the University of Denver and an undergraduate degree in Sociology from the University of Michigan. He has worked in the museum field for eight years.

Lynnette DeSchepper

Lynnette joined our staff last summer to run our Hands-On History Camp Program. This fall we asked her to join us as Education Manager. Lynnette taught at Denver's The Logan School for Creative Learning for five years, especially arranging one on one field trip experiences for students. She has a deep knowledge of what students and teachers need from the museum learning

environment. She has been active writing curriculum for the Bureau of Land Management and Zoo Boise. She has a Masters in Education from University of Denver, a Masters in Biology from University of Denver and an Undergraduate in Biology from Rockford College.

Kathy Forchas

Kathy Forchas brings with her 15 years of business management experience along with specialized training in Non-Profit Accounting. She has a broad base of business knowledge, having managed a Health Clinic, Art Center, her own Arts & Crafts business and currently 2 history museums. With a firm understanding of fund accounting, donor intent and government contracts, she is able to tackle Foundation and SCFD grant writing with optimistic enthusiasm. Kathy balances her left brain numbers work with her creative artistic side, by sketching portraits and painting abstract canvases.

Kathy Husband

Kathy Husband has a long history with Friends. She started her involvement as a Board Member, serving a 3-year term. She continued to volunteer at Astor House teas, working periodically in the Park's ticket booth, and helping out during various special events. In 2007, she worked the summer as a Visitor Host in the History Park. Throughout 2007 and 2008 she became one of the organization's Education Program Guides. This summer she serves as History Park Supervisor, liaison between seasonal Park staff and regular staff. In a former life she managed the Golden Library, and became active in Friends through involvement with the Golden Cultural Alliance, of which she served one term as President. What she enjoys most is sharing the excitement of history with visitors to our sites. She holds a Masters in Information Studies from Drexel University, and a B.A. in Spanish, from West Chester University in PA.

Carol Happ

Carol Happ has been working at the Astor House since August 2005. She is responsible for opening up the Astor House Museum Tuesday through Thursday for tours, customers, and program registrations. She is responsible for tracking all membership data, including new and expiring members. She handles all registrations for Hands-On History summer camp and teas. Lately she has been taking on more tasks involving marketing and gift shop ordering.

Friends Has Experience Managing Multiple Locations

For ten years, Friends has run two separate museums on two separate locations. We understand the physical challenges moving things between two sites. We understand the challenges of keeping staff at the two locations in close communication. We understand the challenges of directing visitors between the two sites and selling combo tickets to both. We know the marketing challenges and benefits of having multiple locations. We have working solutions to many of these challenges. Friends' experience is invaluable to managing three locations.

Friends Education Programs Are the Envy of All Local Non-Profits

Friends serves significantly more school students than Golden Pioneer Museum, Foothills Art Center, and the Rocky Mountain Quilt Museum and most museums our size and budget. Also, our school programs are significantly better than those of the local museums. Students learn more, teachers are continually impressed. We hear it again and again from students, parents, scout leaders, teachers, Red Hat ladies and our museum peers. Our programs meet school standards, schools' logistical needs and kids' needs for hands-on activity.

Friends Has Experience Building Trust

As our organization overview described, Friends' founder was once part of the Golden Landmarks Association. Friends split from GLA in 1998. There were some very difficult years between the two organizations. Recently, through very deliberate actions by Friends, including a philosophy of respecting our elders, we have re-built trust. We understand that there will be some emotional difficult with a merger with the Golden Pioneer Museum. It will not be easy to re-build trust and create a comfortable working environment. But we have learned how to do this with GLA and we are ready to take on this responsibility.

Friends Builds Community

Friends has always been an active collaborator in the community and a local and regional leader. Because we are a scrappy, hard working, authentic organization, we make local friends easily. We take on activities with the expressed goal of building community. Our Hands-On History camp week ends with the kids performing for their community and everyone sharing watermelon. We have community gardens, so that folks can enjoy the Clear Creek History Park and sustainably grow their own heirloom vegetables there. We have a volunteer party, members' party and luncheons with our tour guides. We are a community of learners, a community of volunteers, a community of history buffs, and a community of folks who are actively responsible for "what makes Golden, Golden."

Measuring Project Results

Friends already measures our results by tracking attendance, volunteer hours, fundraising results, and expenditures. Our school groups fill out evaluation forms, as do our Hands-On History parents and our tea participants. These are available through our monthly reports, our annual report to SCFD and are available by requests form our Executive Director.

Twelve to eighteen months after the official start of a new contract, we would recommend hiring again assessor Virginia Steel again to look at museum operations. Virginia would have an excellent baseline and could provide a critique of the merger process, what is meshing together well and what needs more attention.

A third measurement tool could be the American Association of State and Local History Performance Management Program. This federal program of Performance Management was developed in partnership with the Center for Nonprofit Management of Nashville. It is based on measurements of visitor satisfaction and opinions, digging deeper to determine root causes of weaknesses identified by visitors, fixing the problems, and then re-measuring in the future (three to five years later) to make sure problems have been corrected. We would welcome this opportunity to rank ourselves nationally and take a hard look at our strengths and weaknesses through our visitors' eyes. This performance tool would make sense three years into a merger.

By participating in Performance Management, the three unified Golden museums can implement positive change based on visitors' or teachers' wants and needs. The program examines the important issues that discourage people from returning to and from recommending that others visit your museum. Here are examples of the questions that the Performance Management Program would answer:

- Do people enjoy visiting your museum? Do you know if their visit exceeds their expectations or disappoints them? If they leave disappointed, do you have any idea why? Is it the exhibitions? Parking problems? Dirty bathrooms?
- Do you know whether visitors, teachers and students feel they learned something from their visit? If participation in education programs is down, do you have solid data to back up your assumptions of why?
- Do you have any idea how your museum compares to other museums of similar budget size, type, and geographic location when it comes to visitor satisfaction?
- Would knowing how much people value your museum help with grant writing and local fundraising projects?

Transition Plan

Year one of the transition will be very busy with meshing logistics and procedures, staff and volunteers from the two organizations. Most of the changes in the first year will be procedural and structural and will lead to building a strong foundation for the new organization. On a board level, articles of incorporation, by-laws and a new mission statement will be re-written and filed with the various federal and state agencies. Staff, board and volunteers will all be very involved in the changes.

In the first year, Friends will pay special attention to the Golden Pioneer Museum volunteers and members. Listening and building trust will be goals in the first year. We know that there will be challenges but we build community with the Pioneer Museum supporters as do in so many other arenas. We hope that some members of the Pioneer Museum Board of Directors will be energized by the merger and willing to join the Friends board.

Some suggested culture building activities for a merger from “Seven Steps to a Successful Nonprofit Merger” book are:

- Record each partner's hopes, expectations, and fears.
- Evaluate the merger's impact on clients and donors.
- Build trust. In fact, make the growth of trust an explicitly stated goal of the process.
- Build personal relationships among staff and volunteers. Bring members of the board and key staff together socially at beginning.
- Solicit the help of a consultant or facilitator.
- Identify the amount of personal commitment and ownership staff and volunteers have in success or failure of organization (values, ideology, and preoccupation in trappings of the position)
- Candor and decisiveness of job reductions, if any
- Lots of communication
- Implementing the merger – board will determine overall structure of programs but all organizational functions must be evaluated and restructured

Other year one transition activities will include:

- Meeting with Parks Department to write RFP for landscape architect
- Choosing landscape architect with Parks Department
- Reviewing safety, programmatic needs for open and free Clear Creek History Park
- Implementing capital change to gates, fences, paths, cabins, ticket booth, bathrooms
- Re-write articles of incorporation
- Re-write by-laws
- Re-write mission statements
- Ensuing SCFD eligibility status
- Assessing air quality at two indoor museums, making changes if necessary
- Apply Friends book keeping account codes to Golden Pioneer Museum income and expenses
- Meeting with core volunteers from all three museums

Year two of the transition will be more concerned with program modifications more obvious to the general public.

- Modified program development
- Planning for new exhibitions
- Fundraising for new exhibitions
- More assessment of events
- Logo development
- Website meshing
- Writing or modifying lesson plans for all Golden Pioneer Museum tours and programs
- Modifying group programs to fit into three rotations of Golden Pioneer Museum, Astor House Museum and Clear Creek History Park
- Cross training all staff and volunteers on content and artifacts of all three museums

Conclusion

We at Friends of the Astor House Museum and Clear Creek History Park are excited to submit this proposal for the unification of the three history museums under one management structure, run by our organization. This is an exciting opportunity to strengthen our mission and the mission of the Golden Pioneer Museum. As we have described in this proposal, we believe that this consolidation will positively impact the community by providing a better visitor experience, more integrated school and public programs, a focused concentration of historic knowledge, less history lost, more economies of scale, more strategic future planning, and a more active role in shaping the vision for heritage tourism.

We believe that we are absolutely the best organization to shoulder this responsibility.

We look forward to City Council's suggestions and feedback.