

Clarke County Historical Association Strategic Plan 2013-2018

Executive Summary

Introduction

Founded in 1939, the Clarke County Historical Association (CCHA) maintains a state-of-the-art museum and extensive archives in Berryville, Virginia, and the Burwell-Morgan Mill, a circa 1785 operating gristmill, in nearby Millwood. A private, non-profit 501(c)3, CCHA is dedicated to preserving and sharing the history of Clarke County, Virginia.

In January 2013, CCHA decided to take a step back and envision what its future would look like — and to create a strategic plan that would help guide the organization to achieve that vision. Strategic planning is about big-picture thinking: Who are we as an organization? Who do we want to be? This thinking is *key* to creating an essential framework of goals that can inform decision-making, provide benchmarks, and direct our efforts as an organization in an efficient and strategic manner. The fifteen member Board of Directors of CCHA, as elected representatives of the membership, played the primary role in this process.

The purpose of this strategic plan is to create a living document clearly stating the mission, values, and goals of CCHA. This document may be amended and adjusted as conditions change but will continue to focus the energies and efforts of CCHA by providing a primary statement of who we are, our purpose, and the concrete objectives we will achieve. This document is also intended as a first step toward creating an organizational culture that is forward thinking and ready for growth and change. This plan charts a course for CCHA through 2018.

MISSION

The mission of the Clarke County Historical Association is to preserve, promote, and make available the valuable historical resources of Clarke County through stewardship, outreach, and education.

VISION

- To be known as *the* source for Clarke County History.
- To preserve and protect the history of Clarke County. To be the repository for resources and records.
- To be an outstanding source for outreach and education both internally (on-site) and externally.

Priorities

After intense discussion and scrutiny of the current state of CCHA, the Directors arrived at three principal areas of focus on which to concentrate our efforts:

Outreach:

A primary objective is to increase the awareness of, access to, and available information about the history of Clarke County and CCHA. We will become the go-to place for Clarke history, adding outreach programs specifically designed to engage the general public, educators and students, and becoming a conduit for publications that share information about Clarke County and its environs with a wider audience. We will achieve these goals by developing rich enticing content and programs, creating opportunities for hands-on interdisciplinary learning, and by supporting high-quality research and writing about Clarke County history and related topics.

Infrastructure:

In order to support the mission of CCHA both in the present and in the future, we will dedicate time, energy, and needed resources to preserving and maintaining the collections (artifacts, archives and library) of CCHA in accordance with the best practices for access, preservation, and interpretation. This includes both current collections and potential future additions. We will also ensure that CCHA has appropriate facilities to house its collections and exhibit space to showcase them for outreach to the public. To accomplish these goals we will both establish a well-developed and up-to-date funding and maintenance plan for the long-term upkeep of properties and explore opportunities to expand and or improve facilities to allow for future growth.

Operations:

Inherent in all aspects of this plan is a commitment to building long-term, forward looking operational policies for CCHA. We will seek and maintain sufficient financial and organizational resources to support programs and long-range plans. We will collaborate with other organizations to provide an atmosphere for the development of mutually beneficial partnerships throughout the area. We will build a core of ongoing support, maximizing membership growth, retention, and involvement. In all activities, we will employ effective organizational policies, resources, and skills to support CCHA programs and to meet future challenges.

How we will measure success?

A guiding principle in the development of this plan was the question “How will we measure success?” The vision, goals, and strategies proposed and accepted were judged based on the ability to know, at the end of 2018, whether CCHA did or did not succeed. Specific benchmarks for individual goals can be found within the plan itself, and detailed timelines will be developed for each strategic focus area. Progress on the plan will be reviewed at each quarterly Board Meeting as well as annually at the September Board meeting for success,

relevance, and needed adjustments. The strategic plan will also be used to develop benchmarks to measure performance during the Director's annual review.

Conclusion

The strategic plan is a roadmap to a shared vision of CCHA's future. It is a stepping stone to achieve both new aims as well as a renewal of CCHA's commitment to its mission. By 2018, we aspire to bring the following vision to life:

As *the* source for Clarke County History, the Clarke County Historical Association is committed to:

- ❖ **Education:** Offering notable opportunities for hands-on, back-to-basics education focused on "doing." Providing extracurricular education opportunities for both children and adults. Offering outstanding outreach and programs within CCPS, including practical educational programs across the curriculum.
- ❖ **Community Outreach:** Being a full-service destination for Clarke County History. Bringing the whole history of the county to life and supporting the exploration of history and heritage throughout it. Being a noteworthy participant and leader in the community, known for involving the whole community and being involved.
- ❖ **Operations:** Being one of the best-funded organizations in the Commonwealth, acting as an umbrella organization for other history education and preservation efforts in Clarke County, and being known for operating one of the best run, most unique mills in the country. Having a growing and energized active membership.

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