

Amphitheater Public Campaign to be Announced October 3

The Preble County Historical Society is excited to announce that the public campaign for funding an outdoor amphitheater at the Historical Center will be launched on Sunday, October 3, 2010 at 1:30PM at the Fall Gathering at the Preble County Historical Center. The Center is located at 7693 Swartzel Road, just off of Route 122 southeast of Eaton. Join us under the tent to meet members of the community who have made substantial commitments of time and resources to support the construction project. We will walk together to the amphitheater site for the formal launching of the campaign.

The Society is announcing that we recently have met a local donor's challenge to raise \$50,000 in cash by August 31 to match the donor's \$50,000 gift. In fact, our solicitations have resulted in cash contributions and pledges of over \$192,638 including approximately \$34,000 in project expenditures by the PCHS.

The \$700,000 Amphitheater Project has been awarded \$350,000 through an appropriation in the State of Ohio Capital Budget. That we have won this support in such a competitive forum shows the strength of the program we currently run and seek to expand through this new facility. The state money only will be released to us when we raise matching donations on a dollar-per-dollar basis. Hence we have \$157,362 remaining to raise.

We would love to have every member and friend of the PCHS as a financial supporter for the construction of the amphitheater. Every gift is welcome regardless of size. Construction of our amphitheater will enable us to bring larger groups to the Historical Center for presentations, demonstrations, and hands-on learning experiences. The topics will range from environmental and conservation practices to arts and cultures through the 200 years of history in Preble County.

Come celebrate the launch with us as together we:

Imagine an evening of arts overlooking a dramatic landscape of natural wetlands and forest on the grounds of the Preble County Historical Society.

Imagine a community endeavor to provide a permanent and accessible outdoor educational facility for historical, cultural, environmental, and special event programming.

Imagine a summer season that will expand the cultural, arts, and educational opportunities for the community.

Imagine how a fully accessible, outdoor venue with a wide-reaching schedule of events would put the PCHS and Preble County on the summer destination map for residents and tourists alike.

We welcome opportunity to talk with you about your interests in programming and funding this exciting project! Contact Jane Lightner at 937-787-4256 or preblecohistsoc@brecnet.com. Or mail your contribution to the Preble County Historical Society designated for the amphitheater

to 7693 Swartsel Road, Eaton OH 45320. Visit our web site at www.pchs.preblecounty.com for more information about the PCHS. All donors will be acknowledged permanently at the amphitheater.

For more information about this release, contact Jane Lightner at 937-787-4256.

Further Background Information about the Amphitheater:

Primary purpose: Develop a new community resource at a proven site – For over thirty years, the PCHS has pursued its mission of providing opportunities for the community to experience, learn, create, and imagine the historic flavor of the rich cultural heritage of Preble County. The center's 255 acre location, only one mile from the intersections of SR 503, SR 122, and SR 725, added to the Society's current partnerships with schools, community volunteer organizations, local government, state and federal entities, creates a depth of opportunity for the type of family programming, culture, and activity that attracts residents, businesses, and visitors from beyond Preble County. Indeed the Historical Center serves the entire southwest Ohio and southeast Indiana area.

Secondary Purposes:

Create a natural and green design to take advantage of an extraordinary site at the Historical Center – The amphitheater will highlight the natural contours of the dramatic hillside location into its low-impact design. Incorporating Preble County limestone seating with environmentally friendly lighting for the hand rails, stage, and canopy will further enhance this beautiful setting. Solar and wind energy resources, as well as composite materials for the stage and sail cloth for the stage roof, will be incorporated to reduce operating costs. Lined with the natural forest of the original farm, the site will overlook the 15-acre restored wetland area providing visitors with a dramatic panorama of the lush natural features of the western Ohio landscape – woods, water, and wildflowers. Also on view will be rural agricultural activities that change with the seasons.

Create a unique facility for community events – In addition to its natural beauty, the amphitheater will provide significant additions to the community's outdoor facilities.

- An outdoor classroom for hands-on education and demonstrations.
- Venue opportunities for corporate, public, non-profit, and private functions with seating for 350+ people and additional terracing for lawn seating for a total of 1,000 people.
- An event/booth space at the top of the grounds.
- Paved parking for autos, buses, and handicap access with designated drop-off areas.
- Electrical capabilities for lighting, audio, and video.

Promote community-wide economic benefits – Imagine the many community-wide benefits from this project:

- Added exposure for area attractions, shops, food, services, lodging, and amenities from residents and visitors.
- Increased tax revenue and job opportunities by utilizing local materials, contractors, and summer help.
- Broader cultural offerings to attract relocation and investment by employers and residents.
- Opportunities for local businesses in design, construction, maintenance, partnership, and programming.
- New PCHS revenue opportunities from potential ticket sales, car entrance fees, new memberships, and food and gift shop sales.

The purposes and the benefits of this project intertwine to create a vast array of opportunities for the community. For example, in 2007 the U. S. Air Force Band came to the Center as a part of the Society's participation in the Smithsonian Institution's traveling exhibit of covered bridges. (Preble County has seven intact covered bridges including the second-oldest double barrel covered bridge in the country!) After seeing the site and the early plans for the amphitheater, the Band's operations manager declared that they would be back when the amphitheater was completed!

Similarly, a substantial donor to the construction funding became committed when the donor recognized the prospect for a local high school steel drum band in which the donor's grandchild plays to perform at the amphitheater. Since many new school facilities have "cafeteriums" rather than traditional auditoriums, the idea of concerts at the amphitheater appeals to many local school and community band, orchestra, and chorus personnel. Another donor has begun thinking about developing a theater troupe to perform at the amphitheater. In fact, there are several area theater troupes and performing musical groups that welcome the opportunity to appear at the amphitheater.

Along with such performances are educational opportunities for people of all ages. A local supporter is ready to start a monthly star-gazing program using the amphitheater site. The Miami University Institute of Environmental Studies can provide student interns to provide educational programs about the site, including the wetlands area. Scout troops, environmental organizations, and schoolroom programs will make maximum use of the amphitheater as a location for education in the environment.

In addition, PCHS intends to make the amphitheater facility available to private individuals and organizations as scheduling permits. It is easy to envision family reunions, weddings, memorial services, and similar events of significance to individual families occurring at the amphitheater. It also is PCHS' intent to provide opportunities to businesses and corporations that serve the area to conduct annual meetings, conferences, employee appreciation events, lunches and dinners for visitors, and other similar

events at the amphitheater, particularly in conjunction with the other PCHS facilities at the site. The amphitheater will enable the Historical Society to expand its educational offerings to the community in such a way that more volunteers will be needed to conduct these events. Accordingly, PCHS looks forward to linking with businesses of all types that may be looking for volunteer opportunities for their employees or associates. Hence, many new opportunities for partnerships with business and industry will exist as a result of this facility.