

**Roscoe Village Foundation
Cultural Tourism Planning Grant Project Narrative**

1. What do you plan to do?

The Roscoe Village Foundation is requesting a Planning Grant in the amount of \$2,000 from Ohio Humanities to conduct an initial collaborative planning process that will utilize humanities, historic preservation, and planning professionals to engage the Board and leadership team in learning about current best practices in cultural tourism; how the humanities, interpreted within an authentic environment, can enhance visitors' experiences; and to identify opportunities for infrastructure and programmatic improvements that can make Historic Roscoe Village a dynamic cultural heritage destination.

The planning process will be facilitated by Nancy Recchie and Jeffrey Darbee.

Roscoe Village is, without question, one of the finest and best preserved collections of Canal-era buildings in the State of Ohio. The resources, which include historic, commercial and residential buildings, triple canal locks, and the entire physical setting create an unmatched authentic environment in which guests can learn about the development of Ohio as a result of the Ohio & Erie Canal and the lives of Ohioans during the early to mid-19th century.

The planning process to be undertaken with the OH grant includes three separate activities:

- A Roscoe Village Foundation Board planning session will take place on April 2, 2015 from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. The purpose of this meeting will be to educate and inform the directors and leadership team about cultural tourism today; detail innovative methods of interpretation and creating experiential learning; and discuss current humanities and educational content being provided by the Foundation.
- A Stakeholders Workshop will be held (May 2015, date TBD) to engage current and potential partners in a discussion regarding opportunities for collaboration, education, heritage tourism and economic development within the framework of the historic, educational, and preservation mission of Historic Roscoe Village. Potential invitees include but are not limited to: Roscoe Village Foundation, The Montgomery Foundation, The Coshocton Foundation, Schooler Family Foundation, Coshocton City and County Park District (owners of Triple Locks), Coshocton County REACT (caretakers of REACT Memorial Park), Footlight Players (owner/operator of Triple Locks Theater), Coshocton County Convention and Visitors Bureau, Johnson-Humrickhouse Museum, Central Ohio Technical College – Coshocton Campus (in Roscoe Village), local school districts (Coshocton City Schools, River View Local School

District, Ridgewood Local School District), Roscoe Village Business Owners Association, Local Bounty (farm to table co-op), and local artisans and artists.

- The consultants and the leadership team will analyze the results of the two meetings, assess the Roscoe Village Foundation's current approach to interpretation and tourism activities, and define specific cultural tourism projects that will utilize the humanities to accomplish long-term goals of the Roscoe Village Foundation.

It is expected that one or more specific project proposals will be developed as a result of this planning process. The Roscoe Village Foundation is looking to Ohio Humanities as a potential source in funding humanities-focused projects that will culminate in 2016 *Rebirth of Roscoe* initiative.

2. How do the humanities inform this project?

The humanities have played a central role in the Roscoe Village story since its founding by Mr. and Mrs. Montgomery in the 1960s. The history and development of the Ohio & Erie Canal and its importance in the early development of Ohio and the lives of early Ohioans have been interpreted throughout Roscoe Village Foundation properties as a central part of the mission of the foundation. Educational programs for school groups are heavily humanities-focused and address Ohio educational curriculum standards.

However, recent evaluation of visitation has indicated that over the past five years there has been a drop in attendance by school groups and reduction in adult ticket sales but an increase in adult tour groups. This indicates an opportunity to evaluate current humanities content, interpretation, and delivery. It is also an opportunity to identify potential new historic and cultural themes to introduce into the experience of visiting Roscoe Village.

3. Who are the humanities professionals and what are their roles on the project?

Nancy Recchie and Jeffrey Darbee will lead this planning process.

Nancy Recchie is an architectural historian who has spent 39 years working in historic preservation in Ohio. During this time, she has developed expertise in the areas of Ohio architectural, urban, and cultural history. She began working in heritage/cultural tourism as a consultant to the Ohio Arts Council in the mid-1990s and facilitated the planning and development of the state-designated Ohio's Hill Country Heritage Area, which covers the state's Appalachian region. She serves as adjunct faculty for Ohio Dominican University where she has taught classes in Columbus Urban History, and study abroad courses in the art and architecture of public places in Rome, Florence, Venice and Paris, and at the Knowlton School of Architecture at The Ohio State University where she teaches a graduate-level class in Historic Preservation.

Jeffrey Darbee's background is in American Studies and during his 41 years working in historic preservation in Ohio he has become known for his expertise in the history and development of transportation (especially railroads and canals) and Ohio urban and architectural history. He has published books on local history for Germans in Columbus, the Cincinnati Parks and Parkways, Delaware, Ohio and the Little Cities of Black Diamonds. Other publications include *Architecture Columbus*, the *AIA Guide to Columbus* (which he co-authored with Nancy Recchie), and *Indianapolis Union and Belt – Two Railroads and the Shaping of a Midwestern City* (to be published by Indiana University Press in 2015).

4. How will you publicize the project?

Participation in the planning process will be by invitation. This is a focused process with the intent to bring together the Roscoe Village Foundation and other stakeholders who can think creatively about how to revitalize Historic Roscoe Village as a cultural tourism destination, while focusing on the history and preservation of its cultural resources.

5. Who is the intended audience?

The planning project will focus on the Board and leadership team of the Roscoe Village Foundation and stakeholders that could be potential partners in implementing future projects that maximize the cultural tourism potential of Historic Roscoe Village, as well as providing cultural, educational and economic benefits to the local community.

6. What are the goals and outcomes of the project and how will it be evaluated?

- To facilitate informed conversation among the Roscoe Village Foundation Board of Directors, leadership team and humanities professionals to understand the opportunities to increase and refine the cultural tourism experience in Roscoe Village through the humanities;
- To identify potential stakeholders for collaboration on future projects that enhance the educational, instructional and visitor experience in Roscoe Village including public, non-profit, educational, cultural, and private entities;
- To identify opportunities to engage the visitor in learning about the history and development of Roscoe Village and its place in local and state history;
- To identify opportunities to engage the visitor in experiencing the historic and cultural resources managed by the Roscoe Village Foundation and other stakeholder;
- To identify specific humanities-based projects that could result in a grant request to Ohio Humanities for implementation funding.

7. Who is the sponsoring organization?

The sponsoring organization is the Roscoe Village Foundation, a private non-profit operating foundation.

Preservation and restoration of Roscoe Village was initiated in the mid-1960s through the vision, leadership, and financial support of Edward and Francis Montgomery. Savvy entrepreneurs, dedicated citizens, and passionate philanthropists, Mr. and Mrs. Montgomery established the Montgomery Foundation, a private family foundation, to support Roscoe Village restoration, preservation, and operation. Roscoe Village Foundation Inc. was established to execute the historic and cultural mission including village restoration, education, and related business operations. For nearly 50 years the Montgomery Foundation has been the principal source of funding for village restoration and operation and currently provides nearly \$500,000 annually to maintain this historic and cultural treasure. The balance of financial support needed to maintain operations is provided by donations, memberships, event sponsorships, and revenue from historic tour ticket sales, festivals, special events, and light retail.

The Roscoe Village Foundation Board of Directors and leadership team are committed to long term revitalization of Roscoe Village. This includes planning future infrastructure improvements; redeveloping historic and humanities content to maximize learning and experiential opportunities and to deliver superior content for Roscoe Village guests including adult groups, school tours, individuals, and families; enhancing cultural tourism opportunities and visitors' experiences; and establishing more sustainable business practices to increase revenue from special events, tours, and repurposed buildings.