



# A Vision & Framework for the Next 10 Years 2017 - 2027

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*By Craig Hadley, Executive Director*

*"Big thinking precedes great achievement."*

# **TCHA: A Vision and Framework for the Next 10 Years 2017 to 2027**

By Craig Hadley, Executive Director  
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*Vision is the art of seeing what is invisible to others.*

-Johnathan Swift

A vision and framework for the future is not the same as a strategic plan. A vision gives us inspiration, and a framework provides a direction towards the goals. We first need to agree to a vision and a basic framework, and then determine the logistics and the steps necessary to achieve the goals.

TCHA has spent the last 10 year in stabilization mode and has established a firm foundation. Now that this strong foundation is in place, TCHA is ready to evolve to the next level. We are poised for an exciting expansion congruent with the mission of the Association to “enrich the lives of Tippecanoe County residents and visitors.” To this end, I have divided this expansion into the following categories:

1. Building Expansion & Renovation
2. Fundraising
3. Membership
4. Programs
5. Social Media & Community Engagement

## **BUILDING EXPANSION & RENOVATION PROJECTS**

I have divided the expansion of TCHA into four distinctive phases along with their time periods of implementation. They are:

### **PHASE 1 – 2017**

#### ***TCHA Community Center & Museum (Building Renovation) & TCHA Branding***

With the purchase of the Masonic Lodge and Temple we will be focusing our attention of renovation plans. The closing of the sale of the building will likely take place in February of 2017. Our first step is to move our stored collections into the basement of the new building. This will take some careful planning and implementation headed up by our Curator of Collections, Kelly Lippie. This will likely occur sometime in March of 2017.

While we will be able to utilize the building for various activities on a smaller scale throughout 2017, we have agreed to allow the Mason's to continue to occupy and use the building for 180 days after the sale to give them time to find and relocate to another site.

During this time we will be fundraising to pay for the extensive renovation projects inside the building, including ADA compliance issues, security, exhibit designs, and other cosmetic and practical renovations. The goal is to have the building ready for major programs as well as a community facility resource that provides revenue streams for TCHA by renting out various aspects of the facility for special events and meetings. This will be our primary focus for 2017 along with programming and membership goals.

Additionally, we need to increase our brand and community presence. With this in mind I propose that we explore the costs and viability of changing the signage on the genealogy and research library from Arganbright to the "Tippecanoe County Historical Association Genealogy & Research Library." We would then have a brass plaque made to mount on the wall in the foyer

that would read something like “Arganbright Genealogy & Research Library named in memory of Frank Arganbright” I have reviewed the paperwork for this donation and there are no requirements on how the building is to be named or displayed or requirements for signage in the agreement. We need to be more visible to the community as these are where our main offices are located and business is conducted. This would accomplish that.

## **PHASE II – 2018**

### ***Tippecanoe Battlefield & Museum (Museum/Exhibits Renovation)***

In order to work our way to the ultimate goal of building a large County History Museum and Center, we have to prove to potential large donors that we are capable of successfully tackling such a project. We do this creating engaging, innovative, and interactive exhibits and interpretation in a museum setting. The Battlefield Museum is a perfect canvas for us to prove on a smaller scale we can do just that. The Battlefield Museum has done a good job with the limited resources made available to it over the years. However, due to those limitations it is neither interactive nor engaging as most modern museums are. We now have the opportunity to make this museum shine and attract a whole new demographic and audience. It will also aid us in our future endeavors to raise significant capital.

Therefore I propose that we focus our energies in 2018 with revitalizing the entire museum into a modern, engaging, interactive state-of-the-art museum. A special fundraising campaign will be created to raise the money for this renovation. Various aspects of this project will take place over the course of 2018 as money becomes available. Major exhibit replacements will occur in the winter of 2018/early 2019 with a grand re-opening taking place in March of 2019. The total estimated cost for this renovation is \$400,000.

### **PHASE III – 2021**

#### ***Fort Ouiatenon Interpretive Center & Museum (New Building Construction)***

We have made great progress the past two years in acquiring significant tracts of land surrounding the original Fort Ouiatenon site. Due to this success, the contributions of the Roy Whistler Foundation and other foundation grants, and the work of Colby and Del Bartlett, we now have 200 acres of this land. In the future we hope to obtain continued support from the Roy Whistler Foundation and other organizations for this project.

This interpretive center and museum would be approximately a 14,000 to 15,000 square feet and would cost approximately \$3 to \$4 million dollars. A special fundraising campaign to raise capital for this project will begin to take shape in 2019-2020

### **PHASE IV – 2027**

#### ***Tippecanoe County History Museum & Education Center (New Building Construction)***

This is the ultimate goal we hope to reach by 2027. This will not be an -easy task, but we can certainly get there if we create the building blocks of success with all of our previous projects. This will be a build-from-scratch project as we would need approximately 45,000 to 59,000 square feet to meet all of the needs required for the museum exhibits (20,000 square feet alone), library and archival facilities and storage, collection vaults, offices, meeting rooms, education rooms and a small auditorium.

This facility will likely cost \$15 million to \$20 million dollars and will require a significant capital campaign that will take two years to properly plan followed by a year-long silent campaign. A silent campaign is where internal fundraising and outreach to major donors and corporate sponsors take place to raise a significant percentage of the total funds required in

order to properly “prime the pump” for the public fundraising aspect of the campaign. \This will be followed by an active public fundraising campaign that will combine small and large donors, foundations, and grants, Success will depend upon a strong commitment and a willingness to build upon previous projects as proof that we have a solid vision and plan, and that TCHA is a professional organization that benefits the community we serve.

## **FUNDRAISING**

### **Special Fundraising Events**

TCHA has been heavily reliant on the *Feast of the Hunters Moon* event for the major share of the gross income (72% in 2015). It is risky to depend so much upon a single, outdoor event for the income of the Association. Our goal should be to create additional new and exciting fundraising efforts that will help ease our dependency upon a successful Feast to balance the TCHA budget. I propose a three-year plan of new fundraising events to eventually get the gross income dependence of the Feast down from 72% to less than 50%. This three year plan consists of:

- 2017 – Addition of a annual themed Black-Tie fundraiser in the spring
- 2018 – Addition of a celebrity golf tournament
- 2019 – Addition of a large spring event like a Native American Pow-Wow

### **Spring Black-Tie Fundraiser**

This event will consist of a fun theme and will have live music, food, an open bar along with a silent and live auction, with all auction items donated. We will sell sponsorships for the event that will potentially cover the entire cost of the event, making all ticket sales and auction sales net profit. Potential net income - \$20,000 to \$35,000.

We have set the date for our first gala for Saturday, April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017. The event will take place at the Fowler House and the theme will be a 1920s Great Gatsby party with a live Dixieland Jazz band, 1920s cars parked out front and event period dancers. There will be displays of related items such as a 1920s gun collection and Lafayette Brewing Company bottles and memorabilia from related local companies. Tickets will be \$125 each or \$200 a couple. The event will have its own web site for promotion ([www.TCHAgala.org](http://www.TCHAgala.org)) that will also tie into our own website.

Subsequent years will have the following themes:

- 2018 – World War II Big Band Swing Dance
- 2019 – 1950s Rock and Roll Party
- 2020 – 1970s Disco Party
- 2021 – We will rotate back to the 1920s and start the line-up again

This will keep our event fresh each year and exciting, eventually making it THE gala to attend each year.

### **Celebrity Golf Tournament - Begin in 2018**

Golf tournaments have always been popular, especially in a town with multiple courses and nice country clubs. We have a senior board member (Shane Weist) who manages two of these country clubs and has a great deal of experience in running such events and can be a very valuable source of insight in developing this event. We will work with Shane on coming up with an appropriate theme and event layout. Once again we would sell sponsorships to help cover the cost of the event. Pre-event planning for this would begin in early 2017. Potential net income from such an event would be approximately \$20,000 to \$35,000.

## **Native American Pow-Wow – Begin in 2019**

Events like this usually garner a large audience and the focus would be entirely on the Native American culture. There would be Native American vendors and merchants along with dancing and singing competitions and other related activities by various members of Federal and/or state recognized Native American groups. I am working with Leslie Martin Conwell to make the appropriate introductions and contacts to start laying the ground work for putting a successful event together.

The event would likely take place on the Feast grounds in either the spring or early summer. Potential revenue for this event could be \$20,000 to \$40,000 with revenue going up each year as we build a following.

### **Grants**

We need to expand our grant outreach, both large and small. With this in mind, beginning in 2017, each department head (curatorial, feast, and programs/membership) will search and target specific grants that are geared for their department, while I look to go after larger state and Federal grants. In this way we can expand our grant outreach and potentially our grant income for specific projects that will aid us in our mission.

### **Donors**

We need to expand our donor base and attract larger donors who we can count on to contribute regularly to TCHA and its projects. This will take time to not only identify those donors but to build relationships with them. But this needs to be an active goal. As Executive Director it is my job to build those relationships. As board members, it is your job to help me identify these individuals and if possible, make those introductions in order to crack those doors open.



## **MEMBERSHIP**

Based on the online survey that we conducted with our membership (85 responses out of 433 members) we know that the vast majority of members are older members of the community, and we have not been successful in attracting younger members, especially those young millennial families. While we need to increase program and event opportunities for all of our membership, we especially need to better engage younger members and families. I will talk about that more in the programs section of this report. We also need to expand our membership levels to include:

1. Student Membership Level
2. History Rangers Membership Program
3. Veterans Membership Level

We have a large student population of more than 35,000 students at Purdue University. I have been asked on more than one occasion by students if we had a student membership level.

We should look at creating a junior membership program that targets elementary school or “junior” members that perhaps has its own newsletter and special member events. The possibilities are very exciting with proper planning and execution.

Finally, we have a large veteran’s community here in Tippecanoe County and veterans are always attracted by opportunities that recognize and honor their service. This is a small way to show that TCHA recognizes and honors their service to our country and our community.

We should also create a yearly Members Appreciation Day that we can hold perhaps at the battlefield where we get volunteers and staff to each cook something and we have an old-fashioned pot-luck meal along with other activities for both children and adults. These types of events help bring our members together and strengthen their ties to not only TCHA, but to each

other, which only strengthens our membership program and increases membership renewal and retention.

Finally, we need to better use the *Feast of the Hunters Moon* event for additional opportunities to engage with visitors made up of families that constitute one of our key demographics that we need to target for membership expansion. . We need to purchase a large marquee tent to set up inside the feast grounds that will offer a place to rest and get free refreshments for TCHA members only. Additionally, we should have a large table set up outside of this tent to sell memberships. This event is a lost opportunity as it is filled with

## **PROGRAMS**

### **Living History Events**

While we have our large programs such as the *Feast of the Hunters Moon* and the *Battle of Tippecanoe* Commemorative events, we need to expand our public programs and historical period interpretation. These would be smaller weekend or Saturday events. I would like to add a Civil War encampment living history event commemorating Camp Tippecanoe, which was responsible for training thousands of Indiana troops during the American Civil War. This would be an event that would take place at the Tippecanoe Battlefield in either May or June. The Civil War is a very popular time period to interpret and would let us branch out beyond just the Colonial period or the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Additionally, I would like to make our new Programs and Membership Director create a great living history program where they could go out to the Battlefield Museum the first Saturday of each month from May through November where they would do interactive living history programs inside the museum gun room. Once it became a regular event that people know

about, it should drive more traffic to the museum as well as offer members another program to enjoy for free.

### **Monthly Lecture Series**

We need to do a monthly lecture series on various related topics related to the history of Tippecanoe County. These would be free to members and \$5.00 for non-members. This will actually take place beginning in 2017 with the 50/300 celebrations. These events are currently under planning and will be announced soon. Following the 50/300 event lectures, the 2018 lectures would cover a wide array of Tippecanoe County history from life here during the Great Depression and other 20<sup>th</sup> century history topics to talks on specific personalities and individual families in the county. The topics are endless and exciting.

### **Additional Events**

Once we have and renovate the Masonic Temple, we can do all manner of new and exciting program each month that could include:

- Lunchtime workshops
- Monthly Classic Film Night
- History According to Hollywood film night each month

These are only a few of the limitless programs we can create at this new facility that would be free to members and a fee charged to non-members.

### **SOCIAL MEDIA & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

We need to create a strong social media campaign that will bring in additional memberships and attendance to special events and our sites. While we do have a Facebook page and Twitter accounts, there needs to be a better coordination among the media channels and a longer range strategic plan for how best to capitalize on these channels of communication. A

coherent social media strategy needs to be developed encompassing the many sites and large events we promote especially to the younger demographic that has more thoroughly incorporated social media into their daily lives. I am working towards creating such a strategy to implement sometime in March or April of 2017. Our Programs and Membership Director will take the lead on this strategy and implementation and I will work closely with them on the planning.

Community engagement is another important tool and we need to be more visible to the community we serve. This will entail everything from utilizing our new community center to offer the community exciting and engaging programs, as well as partnering with other community organizations with joint programming and support. We need to become more visible to all corners of Tippecanoe County and not just the immediate Lafayette/West Lafayette area. Finally, we need to find new in-roads into the 35,000 Purdue students that will engage them more than we have done in the past. This includes the Purdue faculty. They have financial stability and an intellectual curiosity in the county they now call home. They also have a direct in-road and influence into the student community.

## **CONCLUSION**

TCHA has an incredibly bright future if we choose to be ambitious and bold in our future endeavors. All of these projects and goals are attainable and realistic. This vision lays out the framework for growth and success. All we have to do is say “yes we can” and then roll-up our sleeves and do the hard work that is necessary to succeed.

*Vision without action is merely a dream.  
Action without vision just passes the time.  
Vision with action can change the world.*

Joel A. Barker