

Concerned Citizens for Historic Eaton

Upstate Institute staff worked with members of this group to develop a plan that would help clarify their project goals and develop steps to move forward with the project. The goal of the group is to create the Heritage Fest Park. In the short term, the park will encompass a restored hop kiln. The kiln will be moved from its current location in Eaton to the proposed park location near the intersection of Routes 20 and 46. In the long term, the park will include an interpretative center that focuses on local history, facilities for travelers, space for demonstrations of historical agricultural methods and perhaps a rathskeller pouring beer made from locally grown hops.

The group revisited their mission statement and confirmed that it was as follows:

To establish a rural tourism center in Madison County by 2006 at a major crossroads to capture the travelers' attention to the rich and unusual cultural heritage in the area and convince that traveler to linger longer.

Stakeholders in the project were identified to help the group determine who to bring into the project and in what ways each group could benefit from the development of the Fest Park. The list of stakeholders is as follows:

- Other non-profit/historical associations
- Existing Businesses
- New Businesses
- Tourists
- Historical Groups/Sites
- Local Government
- Local Colleges and Universities
- Local Residents
- Downstaters/"Re-Locaters"

The Upstate Institute worked with this group to narrow their goals and discuss ways to bring more people into the project. The current group of 4 core volunteers is not enough to sustain momentum and achieve the significant goals set out by this group. Goals for the project were broken into three categories – tourism, heritage/cultural and economic development.

Tourism goals included:

- Collaboration among different groups
- Increased tourism spending
- Embrace heritage tourism
- More service oriented businesses
- Increased tax revenue

- More "heads on beds."
- People extend their visits
- Year around tourism
- Entice people to relocate to the area

Cultural and Heritage Goals included:

- Increased education and understanding of where we come from.
- Awareness of heritage
- Gaining a deeper understanding of the area and the ability to build on our past.
- Understanding that we still have an existing structure of historic buildings and sites to work with.
- Revisit the past and use it as a tool to understand our area and heritage
- Enhance and promote the area's rural and agricultural character
- Promote the history of all the diverse sites in the area.

Economic Development goals included:

- More dollars to bring businesses in
- Creation of small businesses
- More buses and tourists to the area means increased dollars for businesses.
- Create an entrepreneurial culture that will be perpetuated over time.
- Recognize that capacity exists in the area for this type of creation and growth.

After completing an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of each set of goals, the group decided that the primary focus of their project should be on cultural and heritage and tourism goals. Although economic development was important to the group, they recognized that these were secondary effects of the project and would be more clearly evident over the long term.

Next steps:

- Complete the paperwork to receive an approved member item from Senator Hoffman.
- Finish grant research and work on applications to local foundations.
- Find money to complete the land purchase.
- Develop a plan for disassembling and moving the kiln. (Planned to take place sometime in the summer of 2005)
- Work with local schools (Morrisville and Colgate) to find students that would be interested in working on various pieces of the project.
- Work with a larger group of organizations interested in cultural tourism to develop a coalition to obtain funding for these efforts.
- Apply to the Upstate Institute for a summer Student Fellow.

