

## **Focus Group #4 – Cultural and Educational Institution Attendees**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Agency</b>	<b>E-Mail</b>
Steve Reif	Kalona Village	reifs@kctcnet
Mark Schneider	Mi-Prairie Schools	mid-prairie.k12.ia.us
Anne Skaden	Public Library	kaloplib@kctc.net
Marilyn Woodin	Kalona Quilts & Textile	woodin@kctc.net

---

## Cultural and Educational Institutions

---

### ***School District***

Have a 1% sales tax available to us in Washington and Johnson.

10 years ago we passed bond for \$5.5million worth of additions and remodeling for 5 district buildings.

Affordable housing for young families is a concern.

Also don't want to see too much growth.

Enrollment has been stable, but we have some large classes at the high school that will be graduating and we're seeing fewer numbers in kindergarten.

Has 1200 students and covers an area of 250 miles.

I am trying to figure out what is preventing some of the Iowa City growth from appearing in Kalona.

This year we lost 20 students off of budgeted enrollment.

Towns like North Liberty, Clear Creek are growing and we haven't seen the Iowa City effect yet.

We are currently putting together facilities committee for looking at future needs.

We have school property in both counties so we receive funds from both counties, will help provide our facility needs.

2/5 buildings in Kalona (elementary and middle school) High school is in Wellman Another elementary in Wellman and a third elementary school in Washington township-about ½ in-between Kalona and Wellman, but 7 miles north.

### ***Kalona Library***

Bond issue passed the first time because the Library Foundation worked very hard.

Challenge is trying to figure out how to come up with what we need.

City council agreed to give \$75,000 to help pay off a new library.

Facility is doing well and being used.

Have a very good children's program.

In the process of starting to offer beginner computer classes.

Just received a grant from the Riverboat Association for 10 laptop computers.

Long range focus is programming in the community and being a full part of the community working with and for seniors and students, preschoolers, retired, families.

More programming for adults and high school students is being explored.

The way the bond passed really showed support in the community.

Was built 2 years ago.

We've got ideas, we need people, time, and money.

***Do the Amish use the library?*** Some use, depends on the family. Some use regularly every week. Some come and have never used a library before.

### ***Kalona Historical Village***

Annual attendance is 10-17000

We need help from the city in paying a full time director/combination curator or whatever it takes.

\$117000 of the \$240-220,000 came from casino money and we are in the process of planning to raise the rest of that. \$2 million + in assets.

Brings in 10,000-17,000 people in every year and yet we have the lowest attendance/ notice by local people, which is basically true in small communities.

City support would help us tremendously.

Concerts have been hosted at the Grout church.

Fall Festival-hear bluegrass, have engaged children.

Has been in existence 28 years getting ready to do a \$240,000 addition (extension on original building)  
Have an Iowa group that comes in twice a year, signed on as an associate of the village, donates some money.  
Have another museum and we change our show there every 3-4 months.

Museum has really added class to Kalona as a whole.

Museum has tried very hard to bring an upgraded culture to the community.

Over last 4 years the museum has gotten a match of funds \$12,500 from the city to reduce debt on the existing building. In the next 2 year we'll be out of debt on that.

Quilt capital of Iowa.

Quilts represent women and have done a good job of bringing women/tourists in.

Self supported for the last 35 years and provides a lot of services.

The museum needs some funding from the city; most museums get 90-95% of funding from their city.

The village had 40 countries and all states represented last year.

We don't have a foundation; have been advised not to have a foundation.

We need public support.

We're very fortunate we have an outstanding donated time curator and we have a part time paid director in charge of tourism, special events and the fall festival.

### ***What specific improvements does the Historical Village need that will impact the ground?***

First museum, which is now deteriorating, kept most items until we got our new building, but we still have tremendous stuff in there; will cost 6-8,000 just to get the outside done.

Parking is a problem during the fall festival.

We have 2/3 of the space to the creek and have tried to get land next to the park on our side of the creek. There is a 2.5 car garage sitting on the land there close to the creek; we want it when it comes available.

We have buildings that need new roofs and a lot of little and big needs.

We need land for parking and many projects.

### ***How does the Historical Village's parking (during the regular course of the year) needs interact***

Good working relationship.

Properties; there are 3 houses, one of them is very well kept up, 2 are not, and 1 is for sale. Those types of accessible properties would be just great for us.

Sale is definitely a big promoter of the town.

They've been very cooperative.

### ***What is fall festival and how does the museum get involved?***

Museum contributes to children with school tours.

Brings about 4-5,000 people into town at a time.

Downtown community doesn't recognize fall festival having impact like the quilt show, but the fall festival does.

It is basically a museum function.

It is our biggest thing/money maker for the museum and for the community.

Museum began with the movement of the little depot and the city contributed nothing.

Takes place on the museum grounds.

Tour director is now working on color books, etc. so we can keep growing a little bit with services and businesses.

We had a \$350,000 debt on our new building 7 years ago that is almost paid off and that's due to a couple of superb benefactors from 3-400 miles away.

### ***How do you (Historical Village) relate to Kalona Days?***

Fall Festival brings many more people to town than Kalona Days.

Museum gets some people from Kalona Days if activities are held at the park.

So many other activities going on during Kalona days, it's really not geared towards the museum.

We don't relate; they are separate things.

### ***Is there a linkage between the museum property and downtown, or do people want to walk?***

Chamber is downtown and we work very closely with them.

Moving around town without an automobile is not a problem.

Museum tries very hard to work with everyone downtown and around the town.

The bus has been used at the sale barn to take people back and forth on sale days.

The old Rice building had a map of the whole area.

We have combined ownership with the chamber of a van that gives tours; buy tickets downtown.

We own the bi-ways tour bus.

You do get an intermix, we still offer minivan tours, if they take it they get a dollar off admission to the museum.

### ***Summarize events focused on historical museum***

#### **Antiques**

We have pushed an antique show for 3 years that could get a lot bigger.

Antiques right now are a little soft everywhere.

#### **Connection to Kalona**

Both the library and village are probably the cultural things going in Kalona, but the school does different things too.

in Cedar Rapids, they want one panel from us to represent Kalona. Who could we get for artists? Called the art teacher at Mid-Prairie and she two young women who came down and took pictures and presented us a sketch, we have a copy at the village, which has been accepted as one of the panels. First panels will be displayed at North Liberty recreation center then be displayed at different venues. The project will bring the students and the school a great honor.

#### **Events**

Textile museum and fall festival bring most people.

in.

and the town.

When weather turns bad at the antique show we have a large tent and the ag building if it's empty.

When it rains it sucks in a tent because you have high end antiques, which is what the show is for.

#### **Quilts**

people come in for that.

#### **Tourism**

countryside.

Tour numbers are down since gambling came to Iowa.

We had two tours in the spring because of the casino.

Culture corridor, which includes us is a new aggressive group formed 2 years ago.

***Do you have any issues with the parks in Kalona?***

Always a lot of club sports in the communities, district tries to be as cooperative as possible.  
get kids across highways?

***Does the school district bus kids into town/school?*** Yes, from Harvest Hill, mobile home park south of town.  
practice, play etc.)

School board allows groups to use facilities for structured activities.

School district has a home school program that makes use of our facilities.

***Does the school district have any growth needs/issues/facilities?***

I mentioned some practice facilities being stretched and we also have that issue with just our high school, which is currently as large as ever with 4 grades (used to be a 3 grade).

In 1998 we brought 9<sup>th</sup> graders up to high school-stretched kind of thin on classroom space, some facility needs but not a new and the school space in Kalona is not really affected.

We are in good stead, but there is need in our home school program for space.

We are putting together a facilities committee to look at our concerns and come up with space.

***Any growth issues from the school's perspective?***

***Amish impact on the schools?*** Amish have their own schools since 1960. (9 Amish schools are on the countryside)

Need some more families with young children.

School has no soccer program, other than the high school soccer team.

Soccer clubs practice in any flat area they can find; would allow clubs to use areas around the school in the afternoons.  
practice.

Sunday afternoon soccer games go to Wellman.

but no permanent fields.

***Does the library have any other planning issues?***

different things.

Have a group of people made up of area commuters that meet weekly and monthly (book group).

Have been approached with the idea of having a family night, discussed what kind of projector, where would show it (side of the rec center). Then he found out how much it would cost and there was no money.

bring in their laptops.

Wellman and Washington.

We are currently trying to prioritize those needs.

We are looking at having a film series.

indicating who has donated.

We have a home school program that meets here.

We have a projector on a cart that we are trying to connect to the ceiling.

With trying to show movies, the problem is trying to find a projector and location that is the right size. Someone else wanted to do it and started seeing how much it would cost again.

## *Where do you have special events/community town square?*

### **Current Situation**

Farmer's market downtown seems successful, but the location is unhandy, trying to find parking, get across street, not convenient for people trying to sell. Some sort of a lot or town square would be nice.

City park is located on edge of town and has commercial all around it.  
sidewalk downtown.

Tuscan Moon's outdoor garden seems to be a town square type of thing.

We need something to tie everything together.

Need something to tie the north and south side together.

Christian Baptist church windows are amazing and we haven't mentioned those before.

### **Outdoor Recreation**

Talking about distance between historical village and school-Iowa City has a rider's walking tour; we could have something that could give you an interest in going from one place to another.

The thing that struck me when we first moved here is that there is really no reason to bike or walk around.

### **Potential Space**

Telephone company has land.

Unless we tear some buildings down, I don't know how we'd get space for a town square.

### **Public Ideas**

As the community grows, I have thought about that.

What do you anticipate/envision in this town space?

Small light posts similar to Alton is possible here.

Could we put something in the sidewalk or have something that's hanging?

## *When thinking of a community theme, what image comes to mind?*

### **Amish**

My son had just visited Lancaster; he said it is so much more commercialized than Kalona. Kalona is so much more low key, which doesn't slap the Amish in the face, come to the farm. Our Amish would be insulted if you casually dropped in on their farm. It's a different time and different economy.

Long ago, when we set up historical tours we said we have got to protect the Amish in the area.  
conservative.

Need to make sure Kalona doesn't become a Lancaster.

Kalona has developments going up like Lancaster.

They no longer care about protection in some ways.

On our tours we warn visitors about taking pictures and approaching them to buy bread etc.

### **Highway traffic**

How many people that live in Kalona go to Riverside and up?

I go to Riverside and up when I am in a hurry.

Highway 1 has gotten so busy, you can't pass.

Highway 1 needs to be improved.

Improving Highway 1 was in DOT's 5 year plan.

From 4-6 it's terrible on Highway 1.

when you look at the growth of surrounding communities and the communities gaining families with younger kids we are losing out.

### **Potential Residents**

City is an expensive place to live-how do we get them to come to Kalona, what do we have to offer 20 and 30 year olds?

Does route between here and Iowa City makes a difference?

I don't want us to be a North Liberty either; we can't handle that kind of growth.

You don't want a totally retirement community.

You need a mix to make a vibrant community.

We are a vibrant community, but we need a younger mix.

### **Quilts**

The Amish and Quilt Capital is it.

### **Residents**

anywhere in the country and do a good jobs, for instance Marilyn is a nationally recognized authority on quilts and we are fortunate to have her in a town this size.

The school is well and the village is well.

### **Small Town Atmosphere**

We deliberately moved here when our children were small.