

# **Shawnee Town, 1929**

## **Vision and Strategic Plan for the Future**

### **2015-2025**

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*An understanding of our past enriches our lives today. Shawnee Town 1929 invites visitors to experience a typical day in and around the farm community of Shawnee, Kansas, in the 1920s through authentic and engaging exhibits, programs, events, and historical collections.*

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## **Background**

Since 2004, when the first Strategic Plan for Shawnee Town 1929 was published, the Museum has undergone a massive transformation. Over the last eleven years, Shawnee Town 1929 transitioned from Old Shawnee Town, to a vibrant and relevant museum that resonates with visitors of all ages. The original 2004 Strategic Plan set the ground work for the Museum's future, and consisted of two main components: the physical building of the site, and a rough plan of what programs would take place there. Adopted by the Shawnee City Council in 2004, the plan was followed, as logistics, budget, fundraising, staffing, changing tourism and industry trends, and volunteer recruitment allowed. The purpose of this 2015-2025 Strategic Plan is to set the course for the next 10 years of the Museum's development.

Beginning in 2004, Shawnee Town 1929 focused all improvements, programming and services on Shawnee's history, using Kansas City, Missouri as the backdrop in which to place the small Kansas town into context. Since 1999, the Museum has conducted significant primary and secondary research projects to establish the foundation for historically accurate interpretation of Shawnee's interpretation of the 1920's. The Museum focused resources on documenting the lives of Shawnee's residents—their daily lives, their livelihoods, social life, and community, as well as farms and business activity that is general in nature for the time period. Based on solid research, the Museum slowly transitioned from a wide range of buildings from 1855-1930 which represented Old Shawnee Town, to a more focused 1920's farm, town, and agricultural community of the late 1920's. Above all, the goal in 2004, remains the goal in 2015, *to provide visitors with a memorable, evocative, and relevant educational and entertaining experience that keeps them coming back for more.*

To review, the original strategic plan focused on moving the educational mission to interpreting the 1920's, and 1929 specifically. Through a series of discussions, the strategic planning committee chose to focus on (and around) that year for the following reasons:

- The City of Shawnee, incorporated in 1922, was a farm town supporting a cash crop economy in the surrounding rural community and served as a link to the Kansas City market. This continued until the 1940s.
- The Mission Theater opened in Shawnee in 1927, showing silent movies, and, coincidentally, was owned by Shawnee's mayor.
- Jazz, sports, radio, and Prohibition all came to Shawnee in the 1920s.
- In 1929, the local county paper changed ownership and began to have increased coverage of Shawnee giving a weekly glimpse of life in this community.
- 1929 is recognized as a significant year in the nation's history as the beginning of the Great Depression.
- The 1920's represents a time period in metropolitan Kansas City history that no other museum interprets and provides a unique niche for programming.
- The Strategic Planning Committee agreed to incorporate and link as many of the existing structures as possible in one interpretive story.

### Physical Transformation of the Museum

Since 2004, the layout and appearance has changed significantly to represent Shawnee in the 1920s, which as mentioned was a community center and farm town. Because it was the center of a rural cash crop economy, it met the needs of area farmers before suburbs and annexation changed the landscape of Johnson County and the rest of rural America after the Second World War. Farmers in Shawnee grew vegetables, flowers, and fruits, and took them to Kansas City to sell in the City Market. With the onset of the Great Depression in October, 1929, Shawnee remained a rural town, providing the day-to-day necessities for area farmers who came to town and stayed to catch up on news, visit with friends at the Dry Goods Store, Barber Shop, or on the Town Square, or in the evenings to see a movie. This story and interpretive emphasis has largely remained unchanged since the first strategic plan was adopted in 2004, but how we arrived at our program and physical plant goals was very different in reality than in concept. What has stayed the same is the central core mission of what is interpreted.

Interpretive programs and exhibits emphasize three historical themes: Shawnee's role as a farm town supporting area farmers; the strength and resilience of community spirit in Shawnee through difficult and prosperous times; and the effects of transportation on Shawnee as a link between points to the west and the urban center of Kansas City and beyond. As these themes have been developed and have come to fruition, other opportunities have availed themselves, and challenges have also become apparent, so realistic and practical adjustments have been made to the original plan to keep the project within budget, on time, and to maximize its human resources.

In Shawnee Town 1929, three distinct zones for historical interpretation were originally planned in 2004, and represent a "Farmstead, Farm Town, and Transportation Zone." The Farmstead was completed in 2013, and about half of the Farm Town buildings have been completed as of 2015. Within the Farm Town, businesses around the original historic town square of Shawnee were researched and buildings have been replicated or restored to more accurately reflect the mix of businesses present in Shawnee in 1929. The landscape, plants, signs, equipment, furnishings, and vehicles in and around the Town reflect what was common in Shawnee in 1929. Completed town buildings include the Grocery Store, Ice House, Undertaker Establishment, School House, City Jail, Barber Shop, and the Typewriter Repair Shop. These completed buildings in town and on the farm have all been thoroughly researched and documented in the form of in-house-produced and contracted Historic Structures reports, Interpretation Reports, and have each had furnishing plans written for them. The Farmstead and related outbuildings were the subject of the 2011 interpretation plan titled *Interpretive Manual, Shawnee Town*. The completed town buildings were the subject of the 2014 *Interpretation Plan for The Farm Town of Shawnee Town 1929*. The "Transportation Zone" referenced in the 2004 Plan is largely more of a "theme" than a "zone," and in this 2015 plan has been incorporated into the farm and town interpretive program.

The remaining historical interpretive buildings to be built in the Farm Town are divided into work phases which vary in scale, length of time to complete, cost, and whether fundraising is needed. ***It should also be noted that each phase is a complete unit, that can be moved up or down in the completion timeline, because we all know outside forces such as a sudden donor windfall, the awarding of a grant, or on the other end—budget reductions—can affect the***

**project timeline.** For example, if two buildings are planned for in Phase 1, and fundraising has begun, that phase might be pushed back in the timeline if a donor comes along and wants to pay for two buildings in Phase 2. Fundraising would still continue for Phase 1. The same schedule for building completion would stay in place—except the two buildings finished would be different than what was originally planned for that completion slot. This was purposely planned this way because of real-world experiences that happened during the completion of the 2004-2014 Plan. During that period the farm was completely finished because of the efforts of a generous donor, yet other buildings in town which were slated for work were completed later.

### **Construction to Complete the Mission**

#### ***Phase I: Landscaping, Chevy Dealership, Gas Station/Firehouse***

The first building phase will be one of landscaping and checking utility lines such as gas, water, and sewer. The storm creek that extends through the south side of the site (east of Town Hall) will be enclosed and covered with soil and planted with grass. At that same time the road and other areas near the current Firehouse, Trail Café, garden plot, and school house will be graded, landscaped, and drains added for proper drainage.

The next building construction phase is the Chevy Dealership and Gas Station/Firehouse (the Shawnee Fire Department kept its truck in the garage bay when not in use—and this effectively served as the City’s first Fire Station). The stone building, formerly known as the “Old Jail,” will also be getting repairs during this construction phase. The Chevy Dealership will go along the East block, south of the current Typewriter Repair Shop. The Gas/Fire Station will be the first building constructed on the West block, which will begin to replace the much dilapidated current Funeral Home, Shawnee State Bank, and Dry Goods Store. These existing 1960’s recreated buildings are deteriorated beyond repair, and even if repaired, would cost more than a new historically-accurate reconstruction. Mold growth is rampant in the State Bank, and the buildings have been closed for several years. In the back of the Dry Goods Store and Funeral Home are spaces used for artifact collection storage, interpreter changing area, and lumber and golf cart storage. When the two new buildings are erected, new storage spaces will need to be found and reconfigured elsewhere. Proper collection storage space is at a premium at the Museum. The stone building, relocated to the grounds in 1966 and effectively starting “Old Shawnee Town,” is suffering from cracks in the foundation. The stones in the foundation and walls will need to be thoroughly tuck pointed, and the roof replaced.

The estimated cost for this phase is \$384,000. Most of the money will come from the Liquor Tax Fund 207.

#### ***Phase II: West Block: Drug Store, Dry Goods Store, State Bank, and Electric Store***

The Drug Store, Dry Goods Store, State Bank, and Electric Store will be the next phase of construction, and will be built at the same time. This will be a large project involving the construction of four frame buildings with stone and brick facades. Although the buildings will be constructed at once, they will be furnished and opened one at a time. The Electric Store will have a cased display window, but the interior will be a modern use facility. It will either be a

temporary classroom/activity space (until the Visitor Center is built), or will serve as collection storage.

The cost for this 4-building section is about \$819,000. Most of the money will be raised from private funds.

### ***Phase III: Renovations of Trail Café and Fire House***

While fundraising is going on for the four buildings in the north block, the two buildings currently known as the Trail Café and Fire House will undergo major renovations. The Trail Café was built in 1984 and currently needs considerable maintenance. The building is used primarily for a food vending area during special events and as a workroom/classroom the rest of the year. The kitchen and restroom need to be renovated and modernized, and the back utility room completely renovated. The Firehouse was built in 1985 and was made from a combination of new materials as well as historic materials for the exterior siding, windows, etc. It is in need of major work, with much of the exterior siding crumbling and falling off the building. Since the 1920's fire station will be reinterpreted on the west block in a more authentic manner, the need for this dilapidated building to represent the early Shawnee Fire Department will no longer be applicable. The building will be taken down and the space used as a covered picnic pavilion, which will serve school children during school visits, and the general public, family reunions, and other large groups who wish to use it. It will be a site amenity that currently does not exist.

The cost for this phase is \$150,000. Most of the money will come from the Liquor Tax Fund 207.

### ***Phase IV: Visitor Services***

As mentioned, the last “building” phase of the strategic plan will involve visitor services and public engagement. In this realm, visitors will be better served by providing more efficient access to the Museum by moving the Museum's entrance to the south side of the park (Johnson Drive), as opposed to its current entrance on the north side (W. 57<sup>th</sup> Street). This was discussed in the original Strategic Plan also. To say the Museum is difficult to find is an understatement, and once the historic building phase is completed, a “proper entrance” from a major metro artery street makes sense. The parking lot in Town Hall will double as the Visitor Center parking lot, and could possibly be expanded to the west if the need is there.

The Visitor Center (VC) will serve a variety of functions for both the visitors and the infrastructure of the Museum, as well as provide added sustainability to the Museum's fiscal operations. The current VC located on W. 57<sup>th</sup> was built in the 1970's and originally served as a souvenir and craft shop. Called “The Trading Post,” it has been retrofitted several times over the last 40 years to provide various functions, which are: visitor services desk, gift shop, public restroom (single), one-room Museum exhibit, staff offices (for 8), and special artifact collection storage. Once the town is completed, the building will be retrofitted to be used solely for much needed collections storage. Most retrofitting will be in the form of removing partition walls, and adding shelving and light-blocking shades.

The new VC will serve to welcome and orient visitors at a front desk/check-in area. It will have a large Museum store available where mission-based memorabilia, souvenirs, wearing apparel, books, movies, and other related items are available. Other metro area museums have had great success marketing their regional and mission-specific items for sale, and Shawnee Town would be no different. This could increase revenue by as much as twenty percent. Two modern accessible restrooms would be available with a baby-changing station in each one. A classroom with a modern sink would be available for a variety of programs and classes, and could function year-round, functioning as a meeting space, classroom, work room, library, reading room, and small program space. Staff offices would be moved out of the old VC and would be provided for in the new one, and would be designed with a central meeting space as well as work area for volunteers who help with research and program projects. Finally, there would be a space large enough for a comprehensive exhibit on the history of Shawnee, with a “permanent” (20 year) exhibit and other space allotted to feature new acquisitions and/or small traveling exhibits. The exhibit and welcome station serve as an orientation to the site, and further deepen the visitor’s site experience.

The cost for this phase is approximately \$885,000. Most of the money will be raised from private funds.

#### ***Phase V: Dr. Sullivan’s Residence***

After the completion of the north block, the last historical building to be completed will be the recreation of Dr. Sullivan’s Residence, between the West block and the Farmstead. It will consist of a 1900-era frame house which will be complete with town amenities such as running water, indoor toilet, and telephone. Programmatically, this town residence will be in stark contrast to the simple farmstead house which was built in 1877 and had no modern amenities. Visitors will be able to compare and contrast the two lifestyles of town and country.

The cost for this phase is approximately \$156,000. Most of the money will come from the Liquor Tax Fund 207.

#### ***Phase VI: Farmer’s Market/Performance Area***

Another key aspect of the visitor experience has to do with civic engagement, and public interaction, in a way that brings people to us, but not necessarily for a “museum or mission-based” experience. Museums across the country learned about civic engagement in the early 2000’s when budget cuts to federal, state, and local governments trickled down to the museums they supported, and many institutions were severely cut or closed altogether. Gone were the days of “build it and they will come”. People needed more than interesting historical programs to capture their time and attention. Museums needed to make themselves available and get connected to a new audience—people who would not ordinarily come for traditional programs. The good news is that Shawnee Town has been doing this since the day it was created in 1966 by way of Old Shawnee Days, and later through added events such as Historical Hauntings, Christmas Around Town, and the Craft Fair. These are all premier examples of the community using the Museum as a gathering place where they can have fun, catch up, make new friends, and do it in a safe and family-friendly place. While there, they can discover the educational and cultural aspects of the program. Over the years, we have added many mission-based aspects to

these popular events to keep that expanding segment of our audience coming back. Museums that only focus on mission-based programs that appeal to a narrow audience have largely outlived their usefulness and went away during the 2008-2010 budget cut era, because they were no longer seen as relevant.

What has been discussed, is to expand this civically-engaged aspect of Shawnee Town in the form of the Shawnee farmer's market. The market would be a pavilion-covered space for vendors and their customers to be protected during inclement weather. A performance space, located on the west side of Town Hall, would be available for the Old Shawnee Days committee to use for the event and for the main-stage performers. This space could also be used for various other concerts throughout the year, either for the Parks Department "Concert In The Park" program, and Shawnee Town's "Jammin' On The Green" 1920's concerts. It could be used for other musical and theatrical performances as well, both museum and non-museum related.

The cost for this phase is approximately \$370,000. The money will come from both Liquor Tax Fund 207 and privately-raised funds.

The herb and flower garden plots have added much beauty to the Museum grounds the past 10 years, and continue to do so. They are completely maintained by the Johnson County Master Gardener volunteers and require no Museum staff time. It is planned to continue these plots and our good relationship with the Johnson County Master Gardeners during the next 10 years.

#### **Modifications from the 2004 – 2014 Strategic Plan**

In 2004 a plan was mentioned in the Strategic Plan to reconstruct a partial segment of the Interurban Trolley Line, which connected Merriam, Shawnee, and Kansas City, Missouri, a line which ceased operation to Shawnee in 1929. The 2015 – 2025 Plan includes a suspension of that part of the plan, and focuses efforts on the other historic structures to get them built in a timely manner, and get the site finished. As the site nears completion, our attention, energy, and resources need to be focused on creating a strong Visitor Services area. At the time it was proposed (in 2004), the total cost to research the project, build the trolley line, build or restore a trolley car, and install a railroad platform was estimated to be \$506,300. With further research, it is apparent that it is not economically feasible to build an exhibit on a subject that went away in 1929, and by the time the historic buildings and Visitor Services are completed, there will be little physical space left for such an operation. However, after these other projects are completed, the Interurban Trolley Line initiative can be revisited.

#### **The Interpretive Program**

For the past 10 years Shawnee Town 1929 has been using the 2004 Strategic Plan as a guide, and modifying it as the programs and funding make it necessary. The interpretive program has been progressing at a steady rate and comes in many forms. Although the emphasis in the old plan was on living history, the Museum uses (and will continue to use) many other interpretive mediums to deliver its content to our audiences. Audiences have changed significantly since the 2004 plan. For one, people are much more sedentary than 10 years ago because of so many entertainment options at home including instant downloadable movies and games, and added cable and satellite channels. This trend is starting to change, as the ill health effects are being seen widespread, and now there are campaigns to get people outside their homes and moving.



For another, there are more cultural events going on in the community, and more cultural and entertainment facilities, so visitors have to carefully choose how they will spend their precious leisure time. Ten years ago there might be 10 interesting things to do in the community on a Saturday, today there are easily twice that many. The intent with this strategic plan is to describe the different audiences and programs that have been successful at Shawnee Town 1929 since the last plan, and what the interpretive program will look like during the next 10 years.

### ***Living History and Staffing***

The concept of living history came about in the 1890's at Skansen, a recreated village and agricultural site near Stockholm, Sweden, which showed what Swedish life was like before the Industrial Revolution. This site and concept became hugely popular and successful, and similar museums followed suit in the United States beginning in the 1920's, including Colonial Williamsburg, Old Sturbridge Village, and Plymouth Plantation. The Midwest also developed its share of popular living history sites including Conner Prairie near Indianapolis, Living History Farms in Des Moines, and Historic Fort Snelling in St. Paul. Sites in the Kansas City metro that have used living history as an interpretive medium include Mahaffie Stagecoach Stop and Farm in Olathe, Missouri Town near Lee's Summit, and Fort Osage near Sibley, Missouri. Shawnee Town 1929 has been using living history to teach visitors about the past at various times over the years, with a special refocus on the program starting in 2011.

In 2004, the Shawnee Town 1929 Strategic Plan called for using living history as an interpretive method in select areas, citing volunteers as the labor source.

*“The one volunteer role considered to be the most critical to the success of the Strategic Plan is providing human contact and a sense of activity...Trained demonstrators or interpreters would be stationed throughout the Farmstead and Farm Town demonstrating daily chores, gender roles, seasonal activities, and answering questions for the vision (Strategic Plan) to be realized. Ideally, key points in the visitor's tour would be manned everyday (sic), especially the farmstead and Dry Goods Store.” (Shawnee Town Strategic Plan 2004-2014 p.28)*

What has been learned from experience at Shawnee Town (and throughout museums across the country) is that recruiting and retaining volunteers to handle the bulk of the interpretive program—and do the primary heavy-lifting, especially for a medium as labor intensive as living history—**is not a realistic or sustainable solution**. It was easier 20-25 years ago but not so in 2015, because of a variety of reasons: 1) people who 25 years ago would have retired at age 60-65 are working longer because of the unstable and poor economic times witnessed since the late 1990's, 2) people who are retired have many more volunteer “options” than they did then, from arts organizations to hospitals; from animal shelters to pre-schools, and 3) living history volunteer retention is difficult when it's 90 degrees outside and the Museum is having a light visitation day. Volunteers have the “freedom” to not show up, which debilitates the Museum when it is relying on them to conduct the daily program. This is a key problem when the Museum has 80 third graders who are scheduled to show up in 45 minutes, and then staff receives a call from a volunteer stating they won't make it in that day. To build an interpretive

program based almost solely on volunteers to deliver quality daily programs is unrealistic, and unsustainable.

The solution is a combination of two things. The first is a slow introduction of part-time paid staff into the educational side of the institution as well as readjusting current duties of current staff. The second part is to utilize other interpretive mediums to deliver (or help deliver) our programs.

### ***Part-time Interpretive Staff***

The Museum currently has one part-time Museum Interpreter position. It is desired to gradually bring that number to four. Eventually having four staff to conduct the interpretive work on a seasonal basis, along with volunteers to help them, would enable the Museum to offer more substantial living history program offerings. It would move the Museum light-years ahead of a program that depends almost solely on volunteers. All other viable living history programs in the country, that were used as inspiration for the Shawnee Town planners back in 2004--used part-and full-time staff to conduct their programs. Shawnee Town 1929 needs to follow this model over the next ten years because it will ensure high program goals are met.

### ***Adjustment of Duties***

Over time, the Curator of Education position would also be adjusted to work more directly with the program staff (the four Museum Interpreters, Museum Director, and volunteers) by becoming more familiar with the work tasks and activities of living history interpretation. This person will be expected to have a strong background in living history programming and will have the ability to train new interpretive staff and volunteers on the duties they will be performing, such as cooking on a woodstove, canning, washing, sewing, planting, harvesting, light animal husbandry, interpretive techniques, how to interpret to school children, historical clothing, and the history of Shawnee and the surrounding areas. The Curator of Education will be the point person on staff for these skills. Each Museum Interpreter will then conduct the programs, with and without the Curator. The Museum Director will also assist in the training and demonstrating of 1920's lifeways when needed. The living history program hours will be expanded as staffing (both paid and volunteer) becomes available to offer such programs.

Volunteers will still play a vital role in the living history program, but will no longer be expected to be the **sole source** of program support. They will work alongside the Museum Interpreters, Curator of Education, and Director, and until the four interpreters can be hired--will still be needed to conduct a good portion of the living history programs. To lessen this dependency, other programs are also available that don't use living history to deliver the interpretive message. Volunteers are still needed in all areas of our public programming and behind-the-scenes areas of the Museum, and are appreciated, and are essential to the continued success of the institution.

### ***Guided Tours***

Up to this point in the Museum's history, most tours offered to the public outside the realm of living history have been self-guided, meaning visitors go through the Museum at their own pace—without a guide. This is fine and we will always continue to offer this option, but seeing the historical buildings interiors and exteriors without much interpretive information (having just a map or a basic brochure) offers little in the way of drawing relevance from and understanding

the past. Staff met in 2015 to specifically address tour logistics, what has been done up until then, what should be done to move forward, impacts to financial and human resources, and ultimately what the program should look like in 10 years. The consensus was to move the “guided tour” program forward in a way that catches up to our physical growth and the other parts of our interpretive programs, and one that complements current staffing levels and meets growing visitor needs.

Tours of the town will continue to be self-guided and a specially-designed brochure will supplement the tour. For the farmstead, guided interpretive tours will be offered March 1 – October 31, at the top of the hour from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. They will be 1 hour in duration. The front desk staff orients the visitor, and all tours will meet and leave from the gazebo. This will be published in all print and online material and will begin March 1, 2016. Staff will monitor this program and chart progress. If things need to be changed/edited, they will do so. One guide will be needed per hour, and during the non-summer season will consist of paid staff, including the Museum Director, Curator of Education, Curator of Collections, Curatorial Assistant, Front Desk staff, Office and Facilities Coordinator, Volunteer Coordinator, as well as volunteers. During the summer season it will consist of the Museum Interpreter(s) and volunteers, augmented when needed by the Curator of Education and Museum Director. It will potentially be easier to recruit volunteers for this type of tour over recruiting living history interpreters. Guided tour training will be conducted during the winter each year.

In addition, the Museum will offer hourly tours on Saturdays of the site, but move the living history emphasis and programs to days that will be better attended, including Tuesday and Thursday days, and Wednesday evenings. Staff agree the Museum will be able to attract more families, as well as be more successful at getting volunteers to sign up to help the Museum Interpreter staff the programs.

A new brochure will be designed to be used during both guided and self-tours, which visitors can pick up and use for reference. As time progresses, this brochure can have web-based elements which further augment the visitor experience.

### ***First-Person Role Playing***

For special events, first-person interpretation (where a living history character portrays an actual person from the past--who relates a specific experience or event) can be used for more dramatic effect. Specific events can be reenacted, such as a historic trial, with visitors acting as a jury. A 1929 political boss could make a speech. A famous Kansas aviatrix could make a personal appearance and tell visitors about her journeys. The possibilities are endless, and this type of special living history interpretation will be used over the next ten years to reach a wider and more diverse audience. Opportunities like this can also create unique partnerships with outside organizations, storytellers, drama departments in schools, and community theater organizations.

### ***Technology-based Tours***

There are other interpretive tools which can be meaningful to visitors, yet less demanding on staff resources. These other forms of delivering the educational message can be used instead of a guided tour or living history experience, or in addition to such a program. These include digital brochures, QR codes (which take visitors to a mobile website), cell phone tours, iPod tours, and

triggered recorded narrations set to holograms. Sound weird? All of these mediums, whether simple or hair-brained, can be funded through grants, donors, or our Friends of Shawnee Town group. The Museum has compiled much substantive research data on Shawnee in the 1920's, including oral histories, which can be used to develop a comprehensive and evocative visitor experience. Staff is currently looking into using one or more of these technologies to further complement our interpretive programs. IPod tours can combine the original recorded voices of actual participants with lively narration, and can feature fast-forward ability so visitors can regulate the depth (and length) of their interpretive experience.

### ***Special Events***

Since the Museum was created, Shawnee Town has engaged the public with entertaining and family-oriented special events. Since 2004, a special emphasis has been spent on making sure program offerings have a 1920's focus. In 2014, job duties were shifted to better enable staff to perform their duties in a more efficient manner, and the Curator of Education was designated event planner for all mission-based events, and the Facilities Coordinator was designated event planner for all community-based (non mission) events. This reorganization has worked out quite well.

The mission-based events are part of the interpretive program and have evolved (and continue to evolve) over time. Mission-based events have a lifespan, and after they have been done and tweaked a number of years, others are designed to replace them. What may be a popular event in 2016 may no longer be exciting in 2020, so the Museum staff design a new event. The goal is to have return customers and attract new ones. With staff help, the Curator of Education designs and implements these events, which in 2015 include: classes of all kinds, Jammin' On The Green concert series, Hair Bobbing, Game Night For Families, Ladies Catalogue Shopping, Shave and A Haircut program, Speaker Series lectures, Speakeasies, Dinner On The Farm, Home School Days, and historical elements added to Old Shawnee Days, Christmas Around Town, and Historical Hauntings. These mission-based events take everyone on staff and a large amount of paid and free advertising to be successful.

The community-based events are part of the museum's civic engagement with the community, and include hosted, sponsored, in-house events, and off-site outreach. These include Old Shawnee Days, Christmas Around Town, Historical Hauntings, Barbeque Contest, Craft Fair, Tomato Roll, Bloody Mary Party Fundraiser, Cycle Cross, Relay for Life, Oktoberfest, Shawnee Chamber Business Expo, and What's Going On In Your Neighborhood. Like the mission-based ones, these community-based events and outreach takes everyone on staff and a large amount of paid and free advertising and marketing to make them happen and be successful. They also utilize resources in the forms of community partners and Department of Parks and Recreation staff. As of 2015, the special events, whether community or mission-based, accounted for over 95% of the Museum's yearly attendance. A history of attendance is below:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Overall Attendance</u>	<u>School Programs</u>	<u>Mission Based Programs</u>
2005	126,372	1,823	496
2006	144,174	1,927	400
2007	149,120	1,489	692
2008	146,856	1,349	553
2009	153,193	2,051	753
2010	146,361	1,896	640
2011	137,311	1,547	675
2012	140,178	1,127	567
2013*	136,026	1,133	952
2014	143,763	1,269	1,225
2015	145,076	2,322	1,632

\*The Farmstead had its grand opening in May 2013, programming for it started in the fall of 2013.

### ***Website***

Although Shawnee Town 1929 is part of the City of Shawnee Parks and Recreation Department, it maintains its own independent website (with the help of the City’s Information Technology Department and Graphic and Media Specialist). The Museum’s website contains information important to teachers, visitors, students, and scholars, and serves a wide and diverse audience. Established and designed in 2006, the website is now outdated and needs a complete overhaul. Diagnostics were run on the website by an independent consultant in 2015 and all agreed that it quite adequately served an audience well when it was created, but since then social media and smart phones have been invented, which completely changed the digital landscape and the way customers want to receive their information. It is desired that the website be changed to answer modern visitor needs, and also that a mobile website be created. Both websites will have components that can be integrated into the interpretive program, such as web-based tours, oral history access, and other easily accessible educational components. The project will be part of the City’s overall website redesign project.

### ***Social Media***

Social media is a way Shawnee Town advertises its educational programs and events, and builds new audiences. With the advent of Myspace in 2003-2004, young and middle-aged adults found a new way to network and share information. The age of social media was born, and Myspace ruled the Internet. Museums across the world were slow to jump on this phenomena, as the true value of social media was not to be seen for a few more years. By 2009, Facebook had surpassed Myspace and was starting to become a regular part of our communication culture. Museums were seeing the value, and were now advertising events and activities to their followers. Shawnee Town was able to create a Facebook page in 2012 and it has paid rich dividends ever since. Currently, the Museum uses Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to share its information and reach new audiences, and the three sites are maintained by the Facilities Coordinator with help from the Curator of Collections. As the Museum grows both in facility and programs, it will be critical to disseminate our progress to the public, and these various sites (and those that become the “norm” in the future) are the best and most affordable way to do this,

especially among the younger audience. Staffing needs will be monitored and possibly augmented to keep up with the workflow needed for such media. As an educational institution, we must follow the way people choose to receive information, and social media is the way this is largely done today.

### **Income, Donations and In-Kind Support**

Shawnee Town 1929 generates two main revenue streams (from facility rentals and admissions/sales), which go back to the City General Fund. Both sources of earned revenue have steadily increased since the last strategic plan, and continue to grow each year. This is due mostly to much more attention to in-house-generated publicity and marketing, using modern social media to help with the publicity and marketing, and offering a much wider and more relevant variety of mission-based and community programs. In 2015, total revenue generated by Shawnee Town was \$123,198. Rentals made up the largest share of revenue at \$104,845 or 85%. On the program side, the Museum brought in \$18,353, or 15%. In 2005, total earned income was \$86,866, with rentals accounting for 92% of the earnings and programs 8%.

What is not captured in these earned revenue figures are in-kind donations and monetary sponsorships for various City-run events. Examples of in-kind donations include businesses who provide candy and staff (to give out the candy) during Historical Hauntings. The Museum has dozens of local businesses who participate in this event, and this amounts to over \$1,000 in in-kind donations just for that one evening. An example of monetary sponsorships would be the various businesses who underwrite some or all of the costs for certain special events and programs, such as a local bank paying \$500 towards the Museum bringing in reindeer for the Christmas Around Town event. Other businesses would chip in for this, so the Museum does not have to incur the cost. The businesses are then thanked and listed in all publicity associated with the event.

### ***Fund-Raising***

In addition to in-kind donations and sponsorships, Shawnee Town 1929 also conducts fundraising for building projects and special projects and events. Each year the Museum receives approximately \$10,000 in awarded grants from various organizations. Past granting organizations include the Johnson County Heritage Trust Fund, Kansas Humanities Foundation, Freedoms Frontier National Heritage Area, Walmart, and others.

Large capital projects require significant fundraising, and these have been successful in the past, and will be sought in the future. The campaign to finish the farmstead successfully raised \$500,000 in 2011, and the funding was provided by the Ron Deffenbaugh Foundation. Similar fund raising campaigns will be conducted to construct the four buildings on the North Block, Visitor Center, and Farmers Market.

### ***The Friends of Shawnee Town***

Shawnee Town's founding organization, the Shawnee Historical Society was a non-profit membership organization, incorporated in the state of Kansas on March 30, 1966, to develop and maintain Old Shawnee Town. By the time the City became responsible for the management of the Museum in 1997, the Shawnee Historical Society's activities and membership had shrunk considerably, due mostly to the age of the organization's members. In 2004, the Shawnee

Historical Society became the Friends of Shawnee Town (FOST) which had their own 501c3 non-profit organization status. Reinvigorated by the new strategic plan in 2004, the FOST membership grew, and since 2006 they have conducted several fund raising events per year that are designed to educate, entertain, raise awareness, and raise money for the Museum. The FOST is a membership organization that is led by a 9 member volunteer board of directors, made up of local citizens who are active in the local community and who care about Shawnee history and culture. The FOST have raised enough money to pay for all the artifacts needed for all historic building reconstructions since 2009. It has been the practice that the City of Shawnee pays for the buildings, and the FOST pays for the contents within the buildings, which becomes City property and part of the Museum's permanent artifact collection. Today, the Friends of Shawnee Town is a thriving organization that helps the Museum in considerable ways, including fundraising, advocacy, and maintaining a high profile within the community.

### ***Parks and Recreation Staff and City Staff***

The Parks and Recreation Department and City of Shawnee greatly supports Shawnee Town 1929. As part of the Shawnee Parks and Recreation Department, the Museum has access to and support from Parks Maintenance division, who sets up the tents, tables, chairs, electrical, trash, recycling, etc., for the major special events. Additionally, expertise and guidance is provided by the Parks Director, Parks Maintenance Manager, and the City Engineer's office on all construction projects. The City provides support and expertise in engineering, planning, information technology, finance, publicity, ad design, marketing, and many other areas, which come from other sources of funding. This is formally recognized, and appreciated. In return, the City comes to Museum staff for expertise on all things historical, and we have cooperated on many projects the past several years. Shawnee Town 1929 is present at all City functions and participates fully as a partner in all City initiatives. This relationship with the City of Shawnee will continue over the next 10 years.

### ***Admission Rates***

Visitors perceive value to a program when there is a price for it. Free programs are often seen to not carry the same value as ones that cost. As odd as that may sound, it is human nature, yet Shawnee Town is in the education business, and keeps admission prices at an extremely affordable level. The Museum has maintained the same admission rates since 2009, and even at that time only one rate was changed. Currently, the admission rates are as follows:  
Adults \$3, Children \$1 (free under age 5), School Group Program \$2.50

In 2017 it is proposed that the children's rate be raised to \$2 and the school rate be raised to \$3. For school programs, special curriculum-based programs are given and the programs are markedly different than all other programs because they are designed to meet Missouri and Kansas graduation standards.

### **Accreditation**

The staff of Shawnee Town 1929 identify accreditation by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) as an objective for the Strategic Plan, but the Museum needs to be substantially completed for this to happen. Staff recognize the benefits of accreditation and see the accreditation requirements as appropriate benchmark tools for setting a standard of professionalism as we work to achieve the various aspects of the Strategic Plan. Accreditation

by AAM will provide recognition within the museum field by professional peers, and can also serve as a point of promotion/sales tool to focus attention within the community on the Museum's meeting a level of professional operation.

### **Coach Tourism**

A large area for visitor growth potential at Shawnee Town is in the group tour or "Coach Tour" market. With the plans for the next 10 years, the Museum is developing a physical plant that will eventually have everything a coach tour market is looking for: plenty of parking space for tour buses, level ground (on which seniors can walk), diverse and interesting buildings and programs, outdoor eating facility, and accessible modern restrooms. This will happen once the visitor center and picnic pavilion are built, but until then, potential business can still be recruited from this market.

The Museum Director and the Executive Director of Visit Shawnee both strongly believe in coach tourism, and both regularly attend group tour conferences in an effort to get the Museum's name out there. As our population ages, research shows seniors are wanting to be active, and take day or overnight trips to explore their culture and heritage. The Visit Shawnee Executive Director is willing to help the Museum put together package tours which include other area attractions as well as a meal at the Museum, which provides a full day's worth of activities. This model works at other museums, and has great potential at Shawnee Town.



## Estimated Costs

### **PHASE I: Landscaping, Utility Lines, Gas Station, and Chevy Dealership**

<u>AREA</u>	<u>Estimated Costs</u>
1. Relocated water, electrical, sewer	\$ 20,000
2. Remove West Block bldgs. (material disposal)	2,500
3. Relocate Collections	1,500
4. Design/Engineering/Hist. Architect 2 Bldgs	40,000
5. 1929 Chevrolet Dealership*	120,000
6. 1929 Garage w/Fire Station*	120,000
7. Tuck point stone building, replace roof	80,000
<i>*cost is estimated at \$150/sq. ft.</i>	
PHASE I TOTAL COST ESTIMATE:	\$ 384,000

### **PHASE II: West Block: State Bank, and Dry Goods, Drug, Electric Store**

<u>AREA</u>	<u>Estimated Cost</u>
1. Research for 4 buildings	\$ 24,000
2. Landscape/Utility Adjustment	15,000
3. Design/Engineering/Hist. Architect 4 Bldgs	80,000
4. State Bank*	175,000
5. Drug Store*	175,000
6. Electric Store*	175,000
7. Dry Goods Store*	175,000
<i>*cost is estimated at \$150/sq. ft.</i>	
PHASE II TOTAL COST ESTIMATE:	\$ 819,000

### **PHASE III: Trail Café and Picnic Pavilion**

<u>AREA</u>	<u>Estimated Cost</u>
1. Update/Remodel Trail Cafe	\$ 100,000
2. Remove Old Fire Station/rework concrete pad	10,000
3. Picnic Pavilion	40,000
PHASE III TOTAL COST ESTIMATE:	\$ 150,000

### **PHASE IV: Shawnee Town Visitor Center**

<u>AREA</u>	<u>Estimated Cost</u>
1. Design/Engineering/Architect Visitor Center	\$ 50,000
2. Build and furnish Visitor Center	800,000
3. Improve Collections Storage in Trading Post	35,000
PHASE IV TOTAL COST ESTIMATE:	\$ 885,000

**PHASE V: Dr. Sullivan's House**

<u>AREA</u>		<u>Estimated Cost</u>
1. Research for 1 building	\$	6,000
2. Design/Engineering/Hist. Architect		20,000
2. Build Dr. Sullivan's House*		130,000
<i>*cost is estimated at \$150/sq. ft.</i>		
PHASE V TOTAL COST ESTIMATE:	\$	156,000

**PHASE VI: Farmer's Market/Performance Area**

<u>AREA</u>		<u>Estimated Cost</u>
1. Design/Engineering/Architect	\$	30,000
2. Build Pavilion		140,000
2. Build Performance Stage w/Roof		200,000
PHASE V TOTAL COST ESTIMATE:		370,000

**TOTAL IMPROVEMENT COSTS: \$ 2,764,000**

## Expenditure and Revenue Forecast

SHAWNEE TOWN 1929											
ACCT. #	CLASSIFICATION	BUDGET 2017R	BUDGET 2018	BUDGET 2019	BUDGET 2020	BUDGET 2021	BUDGET 2022	BUDGET 2023	BUDGET 2024	BUDGET 2025	BUDGET 2026
<b>OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE</b>											
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>											
	Shawnee Town 1929	773,800	789,276	819,062	835,443	866,152	883,475	901,144	919,167	937,550	956,301
	<b>Total Expenditures</b>	773,800	789,276	819,062	835,443	866,152	883,475	901,144	919,167	937,550	956,301
<b>REVENUE</b>											
43052	Hotel Occupancy Tax	254,000	259,800	265,700	271,700	277,900	284,300	290,900	297,700	304,700	312,000
43371	Shawnee Town Rental	111,100	112,200	113,300	114,400	115,500	116,700	117,900	119,100	120,300	121,500
43395	Shawnee Town Historical Programs	5,700	5,800	5,900	6,000	6,100	6,200	6,300	6,400	6,500	6,600
43396	Shawnee Town Tours	8,400	8,500	8,600	8,700	8,800	8,900	9,000	9,100	9,200	9,300
43397	Farmer's Market	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600
43398	Shawnee Town Mdse. Sales	2,900	2,900	2,900	2,900	2,900	2,900	2,900	2,900	2,900	2,900
	<b>Subtotal Revenues</b>	383,700	390,800	398,000	405,300	412,800	420,600	428,600	436,800	445,200	453,900
	General Fund Support	390,100	398,476	421,062	430,143	453,352	462,875	472,544	482,367	492,350	502,401
	<b>Total Revenues</b>	773,800	789,276	819,062	835,443	866,152	883,475	901,144	919,167	937,550	956,301
<b>CAPITAL INVESTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN</b>											
	<b>Project Fund Balance Beginning</b>		251,830	168,722	66,014	(30,594)	139,098	563,598	10,698	348,698	536,799
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>											
	Strategic Plan - Phase 1		384,000								
	Strategic Plan - Phase 2			410,000	410,000						
	Strategic Plan - Phase 3					150,000					
	Strategic Plan - Phase 4							885,000			
	Strategic Plan - Phase 5									156,000	
	Strategic Plan - Phase 6										370,000
	<b>Total Expenditures</b>	-	384,000	410,000	410,000	150,000	-	885,000	-	156,000	370,000
<b>REVENUES</b>											
	Special Alcohol Tax Revenue	251,830	200,892	207,292	213,392	219,692	324,500	332,100	338,000	344,101	351,101
	Donations		100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000				
	<b>Total Revenues</b>	\$ 251,830	\$ 300,892	\$ 307,292	\$ 313,392	\$ 319,692	\$ 424,500	\$ 332,100	\$ 338,000	\$ 344,101	\$ 351,101
	<b>REVENUES OVER EXPENDITURES</b>	\$ 251,830	\$ (83,108)	\$ (102,708)	\$ (96,608)	\$ 169,692	\$ 424,500	\$ (552,900)	\$ 338,000	\$ 188,101	\$ (18,899)
	<b>Project Fund Balance Ending</b>		\$ 168,722	\$ 66,014	\$ (30,594)	\$ 139,098	\$ 563,598	\$ 10,698	\$ 348,698	\$ 536,799	\$ 517,900

### Summary

The next ten years will be a period of physical and program growth for Shawnee Town 1929, and the site will be essentially completed by 2025. The first strategic plan guided the Museum from 2004-2014, and this plan will guide it to completion. This next phase will be done as the first one was—as a community effort with the help of the City of Shawnee, Department of Parks and Recreation, the Friends of Shawnee Town, Visit Shawnee, Shawnee Chamber of Commerce, educators, and scores of volunteers in and outside the community.

To continue to be relevant and useful to the citizens of Shawnee, Johnson County, and the Kansas City metro area is the goal for the next ten years, and will ensure our permanence in the Museum and education community. Dedication, hard work, relationship building, and technology will get us there. Together we will enrich our visitor's lives by creating understanding and connectivity to our shared past.