



County of Peoria

County Administration

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Date: November 21, 2007

To: Timothy Riggenbach, Chairman
Finance Legislative Study Committee

County Board Members

From: Patrick Ulrich,
County Administrator

Re: Peoria Riverfront Museum Project Options

On November 8, Lakeview Museum and Caterpillar Inc. officials approached Peoria County as they attempt to secure funding for the Peoria Riverfront Museum. The City of Peoria owns the museum site in downtown Peoria and has entered into a Development Agreement with Lakeview Museum and Caterpillar Inc. As part of this Development Agreement, the City will lease the museum site to Lakeview; Lakeview will construct, own and operate a \$65 million museum on the museum site; and Caterpillar Inc. will construct a \$42 million visitor's center on an adjacent site to be purchased from the City. \$24.5 million has been raised and pledged to-date, including a very substantial contribution toward the cost of the construction the museum by Caterpillar Inc. Museum officials pursued New Market Tax Credits that could bring an additional \$4-6 million to the project. This would leave a shortfall of \$22-24 million required of public sources to make this museum a reality. Furthermore, Caterpillar Inc. indicated they will not build their visitor's center if the Peoria Riverfront Museum is not constructed. Lakeview Museum officials have stated that they need a response by mid-December to not lose the New Market Tax Credits and to keep the project moving forward.

The following report outlines the County's statutory authority for involvement in the project, the structure needed for involvement in the project, and the various avenues available to the County to finance the project. Lastly, my recommendations are included.

1. Statutory Authority and Structure for Involvement

As a non-home rule county, Peoria County may only perform the duties explicitly outlined in state statute. The following statute is key to the museum request:

55 ILCS 5/5-1038. Historical museums; tourism grants. A county board may own and operate historical museums and may make grants to not-for-profit tourism organizations from federal, State or any other monies available. (Source: P.A. 86-962; 86-1028.)

Based upon this statute, the structure for County involvement in the museum project is as follows:

1. *Transfer of Tenant's Rights Under Ground Lease by Lakeview to the County.* Pursuant to an amendment to the Development Agreement, Lakeview would assign its rights as tenant under the Ground Lease of the museum site from the City to the County. This would place the City and the County in a landlord/tenant relationship with respect to the museum site.
2. *County/Lakeview Management Agreement.* The County, in its capacity as tenant of the museum site and at least part owner of the Museum, would enter into a long term management agreement with Lakeview covering the development, construction and operation of the Museum (the "Lakeview Management Agreement").
3. *Operating the Museum.* Lakeview would be responsible for operating and maintaining the Museum pursuant to the Lakeview Management Agreement; and would be responsible for all costs associated with operating the Museum.

There are various avenues available for the County to become involved in the museum project and to finance the \$24 million needed to complete construction of the Museum. The following sections detail the avenues available to the County and the relative advantages and disadvantages of each avenue.

2. Public Building Commission

The County, as tenant of the museum site and owner of the museum, could supply the \$24 million shortfall in construction funding through the Peoria Public Building Commission (PBC). The County would assign the tenant's rights under the Ground Lease (that it received from Lakeview) to the PBC. The PBC would construct the museum and sublease the museum back to the County. Each step would be subject to the Lakeview Management Agreement. The PBC would issue PBC Bonds that would net an amount equal to the County contribution for the construction of the museum. The County would then institute an additional annual property tax levy that would cover (i) annual lease payments by the County to the PBC sufficient to cover principal and interest on the PBC Bonds and possibly (ii) an additional negotiated amount to cover annual maintenance of the museum. This maintenance payment would be paid by the County to the PBC annually and immediately transferred by the PBC to Lakeview to maintain the Museum. When the PBC Bonds were repaid, the PBC would assign the tenant's rights under the Ground Lease (or fee title to the Museum site) back to the County.

The advantage of this avenue is expediency. With a majority vote of the County Board, the museum project would be financed and the project could proceed. The \$24 million would be financed through the PBC, and the maintenance of the facility would be covered by property taxes. It is estimated that a 20 year financing of the debt at 5% interest would be just under \$2 million annually. The major disadvantage of this avenue is that the County property tax levy would need to increase nearly 7 cents, the largest increase in the tax rate in 15 years. Peoria County has had a long-standing policy of holding the property tax rate constant or even reducing the tax rate, and this avenue would reverse that policy.

3. County Historical Museum -

As previously stated, 55 ILCS 5/5-1038 authorizes Counties to own and operate museums. The State's Attorney's Office has reviewed the statutes and has identified various means by which a County may financially support a Historical Museum through a property tax levy.

3.1 County Historical Museum - Single County

The first method of providing for such a tax requires the creation of a County Historical Museum District. The County Historical Museum District Law, 55 ILCS 5/5-31001 et. seq, provides for the creation of county historical museum districts and allows a tax for such districts. The purposes of such a district are stated in Section 5-31002 of the law which broadly provides for collection and creation of materials illustrating a wide variety of aspects of the county's history. This would include the acquisition of property and the construction of a building to house the collection. This aspect of the law is important because if the proposed use of the taxes is not connected with Peoria County history, then such use would constitute a violation of the law. Under Section 5-31004, counties with less than one million population, not organized as a forest preserve district in which the county board has not levied this type of tax in any 3 of the past 5 years, such a tax is allowable. Peoria County does meet these three criteria, so a tax to support a county historical museum district is possible.

The authorization to levy such a tax first requires a petition to be filed with the circuit court. This petition would have to be signed by 1% of the voters of Peoria County. The petition would request the creation of a county historical museum district which would have boundaries identical to Peoria County. In addition to stating these boundaries, the petition would have to name all of the municipalities in Peoria County, name the proposed museum district, state the population of Peoria County and request that the question of establishing the museum district be submitted to the electors residing within the proposed museum district (all of Peoria County). In addition to the costs of filing the petition, there are also publication costs for 3 newspaper notices and 10 notices posted in the 10 most public places in the County at least 20 days prior to the hearing on the petition.

If the court finds that the petition and proceedings meet the requirements of 55 ILCS 5/5-31004 then the Court shall order the proposition submitted to the voters of the entire county by reference in accord with the general election law requirements. The general election law requirements provide, among other requirements, that the referendum will be placed on the ballot of the next general election to be held more than 108 days after the filing of the petition (10 ILCS 5/28-2(b)). Additionally, 10 ILCS 5/12-5 requires that the election authority (the County

Clerk and the Board of Elections) publish notice of the referendum not more than 30 days nor less than 10 days prior to the election. The standard notice must be amended to include a statement of the purpose of the referendum, a description of the territory of the proposed museum district, and a statement of the powers of the museum district, including the power to levy a tax not to exceed .02 percent of equalized assessed value of all taxable property in the proposed district (55 ILCS 5/5-31004(c)).

The form of the proposition on the ballot is specified in 55 ILCS 5/5-31004(c) and the results of the vote are to be reported to the Court. The Court will then enter an order declaring the results of the election which will be entered of record in the circuit clerk's file. If the majority of voters in the county approve the creation of the museum district, then the County shall be deemed an organized museum district.

The County Board Chairman will then have the power to appoint a board of 5 trustees for the district. All trustees have to be Peoria County residents. The trustees, once approved by the County Board, will serve for initial terms of 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 years respectively. The terms expire on June 30 of a given year and successors shall be appointed no later than June 1 prior to their term. Successor trustees will serve 5 year terms. Trustees are not to be compensated but can be reimbursed their actual and necessary expenses.

The board of trustees of the museum district would then have the power to levy two separate taxes if they choose. The first tax could be up to .01% for the general purposes of the district, while the second tax could be up to .01% for acquisition of historic properties. The second tax may also be used for general purposes and real property development. The aggregate maximum levy of the two taxes would be .02%. The biggest difference between the two taxes is actually in the amount allowed to be accumulated. The general purpose levy can only accumulate to .05% of equalized assessed value for the district, while the acquisition tax can reach .10% of equalized assessed value.

The advantage of this avenue is that voter approval would be required to determine if a district should be formed and a property tax imposed. The first disadvantage is that the election code would require 108 days lead time for a referendum to create a political subdivision, meaning the

earliest this referendum could be put on the ballot would be November 2008. The major disadvantage of this avenue is that a levy of only 2 cents could be authorized, not enough to finance the \$24 million shortfall.

3.2 County Historical Museum District - Multiple Counties

The second method available in the Counties Code would be to create a multi-county historical museum district. It would follow the same statutes as a single county historical museum district, but the appointment process for the 5 trustees would be different. First, up to 5 counties could be drawn into the district. If the museum district is composed of 2 counties, 3 trustees shall be residents of the larger population and 2 trustees shall be residents of the other county. If the museum district is composed of 3 counties, 1 trustee shall be appointed from the smallest county and 2 trustees each from the other 2 counties. If the museum district is composed of 4 counties, 2 trustees shall be appointed from the largest county in the district. If the museum district is composed of 5 counties, 1 trustee shall be a resident of each county. Following the referendum, each county voting in the affirmative would be part of the museum district. The last requirement is that a multi-county museum district must receive the approval of the Illinois State Museum to be established.

The major advantage of this avenue is that not just Peoria County would be subject to the taxation under a multi-county museum district and voter approval would be required to determine if a multi-county district should be formed and a property tax imposed. Since many schools from Tazewell and Woodford Counties would be using the new museum, a multi-county district would spread the financing burden more equitably among those that would use the museum. The 108-day election code requirement would still mean a November 2008 referenda, and a levy of only 2 cents, even across multiple counties, may still not be enough to finance the \$24 million needed to construct the museum.

3.3 County Historical Museum - Property Tax

As an aside, if the County were to become a part owner in the museum, under 55 ILCS 5/6-23001 any county having less than two million inhabitants may levy an annual tax of no more than .002% of equalized assessed value for the maintenance of an historical museum. This tax

can also be increased to a maximum of .004% of equalized assessed value if a proposition to that effect is presented to the voters. That would require compliance with the general election law covering referenda. However, according to our current equalized assessed value, this method would only generate \$60-120,000 annually, not nearly enough to finance \$24 million.

4. Special Museum District

70 ILCS 1105/ et seq. is the Museum District Act. A museum district has the power to acquire, improve, and maintain any interest in lands containing one or more historical sites, together with related lands and facilities, for the purpose of protecting and preserving the historical sites and establishing a museum for the purpose of public awareness and education. The district may be coterminous with the boundaries of the county or may be smaller in size than the entire county.

4.1 Museum District- Countywide

Any 200 legal voters of the district may file a petition with the circuit court. This petition would request the creation of a museum district which would have boundaries identical to Peoria County. In addition to stating these boundaries, the petition would have to name all of the municipalities in Peoria County, name the proposed museum district, a description of each historical site within the district, and request that the question of establishing the museum district be submitted to the electors residing within the proposed museum district (all of Peoria County). The circuit court would schedule a hearing on the petition at least 15 days after the filing of the petition, and the circuit court clerk would publish notice in the newspaper of the hearing for 3 consecutive days with the last hearing being at least 5 days before the time set for the hearing. At the hearing on the petition, the court shall hear any person owning property or residing within the proposed district desiring to be heard. If the court finds that all the provisions of the act have been complied with, the court shall enter an order fixing and defining the boundaries and the name of the proposed district. The court shall then order that the question of organization of the proposed district be submitted to the electors of the proposed district in accordance with general election law.

As previously stated, the general election law requirements provide, among other requirements, that the referendum will be placed on the ballot of the next general election to be held more than 108 days after the filing of the petition and the notice provisions had been met. The form of the proposition on the ballot is specified in 70 ILCS 1105/5-31004. If the majority of voters in the county approve the creation of the museum district, then the County shall be deemed an organized museum district. If the boundaries are the same as the boundaries of the county, then the corporate authorities of the county shall have the powers to perform the duties of the commissioners, and no commissioners shall be appointed for the district. The corporate authorities shall receive no additional compensation for governing the museum district.

The museum district would have the power to issue debt up to .3% of the assessed value of taxable property in the district for the development of historical sites together with related lands and facilities without referenda, currently \$8.85 million (70 ILCS 1105/17). The museum district may issue debt up to 1.5% of the assessed value of taxable property if they submit the questions to the voters of the district (70 ILCS 1105/17). A museum district would also have the power to levy two separate taxes if they choose. The first tax could be up to .02% for the general purposes of the district, while the second tax -in counties over 100,000 in population but less than 2,000,000- could be up to .05% for constructing, restoring, reconditioning, reconstructing and acquiring improvements for the development of the historical sites. These taxes are exclusive of the taxes required for the payment of debt (70 ILCS 1105/18). Further, the district would be able to issue alternate revenue bonds based upon the taxing authority established under the act and 30 ILCS 350/15 for the first .02% tax levy.

The advantage of this avenue is that voter approval would be required to determine if a district should be formed and a property tax imposed. The amount of the property tax is larger than under the county historical museum district, also a plus. Nearly \$8.85 million in debt could be issued without referendum. Alternate revenue bonds could also be issued that would increase the financing available to \$16.2 million, and an additional \$1.5 million could be levied annually for construction. However, the 108-day election code requirement would mean that the earliest this referendum could be put on the ballot would be November 2008. Further, the proceeds are still not sufficient under the legal debt financing means to finance \$24 million, so a second

referendum would be needed to issue debt up to the amount needed. The earliest this referendum could be presented to the voters would be February 2009.

4.2 Museum District - Partial County

The second method available under this act is to create a museum district covering only a portion of Peoria County. It would follow the same statutes as the museum district, but the County Board Chairman would get to appoint 5 commissioners to manage the district, with the advice and consent of the County Board. The first appointments would be made more than 60 but not more than 90 days after the district is organized. Each commissioner must be a legal voter in the district, and will serve for initial terms of 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 years respectively. The terms expire on June 30 of a given year and successors shall be appointed no later than June 1 prior to their term. Successor commissioners will serve 5 year terms. Commissioners are not to be compensated but can be reimbursed their actual and necessary expenses.

The major advantage of this avenue is that the governing body of the museum district would not be the Peoria County Board, thus the taxation authorized would not be part of Peoria County's tax rate and it would be listed as a separate taxing district on the property tax bill. The 108-day election code requirement would still mean a November 2008 referendum. Since the countywide museum district would not be able to generate the financing needed to finance \$24 million, a smaller district would not as well, thus a second referendum is likely necessary. February 2009 would be the earliest that a second referendum could be presented to the voters.

5. Advisory Referendum

In order to gauge public opinion on the subject, the supporters of the museum project could place an advisory referendum on the ballot inquiring of the voters of Peoria County whether they would support a property tax increase to finance the Peoria Riverfront Museum. Under the election code, on a written petition signed by a number of voters equal to at least 8% of the votes cast for candidates for Governor in the preceding gubernatorial election by the registered voters of county it shall be the duty of the proper election officers to submit any question of public policy so petitioned for, to the electors of such political subdivision at any regular election

named in the petition at which an election is scheduled to be held throughout such political subdivision under Article 2A. This method of placing the issue on the ballot expired on Monday, November 19, 2007, which was the deadline for such petitions to be filed. However, the County Board has the authority to place the issue on the ballot by a simple majority vote. The caveat is that the Board must meet and approve a resolution on or before December 3, 2007 directing the County Clerk to place the question on the primary ballot in February 2008 countywide.

The advantage of this avenue is that public opinion could be sought within the next 90 days to determine the level of support for the museum project. The question could be tailored to specifically address the project. The disadvantages include the continued reliance on property taxes to support this project, and the fact that an advisory referendum is non-binding, leaving the implementation discretionary.

6. Legislative Options

The previous options reviewed legal mechanisms for the County Board to consider that rely on property taxes to finance the Peoria Riverfront Museum. The following options are available, should the County seek affirmative legislative action in the Illinois General Assembly. This adds an additional level of complexity and uncertainty to the project. The earliest either of these options would be available would be the November 2008 general election, and more likely the February 2009 primary election.

6.1 Hotel, Restaurant, Amusement (HRA) Taxes

According to the City of Peoria's 2007 budget, "The City adopted ordinances on August 31, 1976, which authorized the levying of the following taxes: a 3% tax on hotel and motel rental, a 2% tax on food and beverages purchased in restaurants or taverns, and a 2% amusement tax on admission fees to public movies, exhibitions, and performances. These revenues are primarily used to pay debt service related to the original construction, expansion, and renovation of the Civic Center. In 1988, the hotel/motel tax was increased from 3% to 5% and, in 1993, an additional .5% hotel/motel tax was enacted for tourism and development purposes. These taxes are projected to generate \$7.4 million in 2007, or 9.8% of the City's overall local taxes. HRA

taxes are appropriated for the repayment of the existing Civic Center Bonds as well as the bonds issued in 2005 for the expansion. Excess HRA taxes revenues are used to support the Civic Center operating and capital needs, Peoria Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, and the ArtsPartner operations." Discussions with the City Finance Director and City Manager have indicated that a 1% increase in the HRA taxes would generate \$3.1 million in the City of Peoria alone. Following historical sales tax collections, where 70% of the County's sales tax base is in the City of Peoria, spreading the tax across the entire county at 0.5% would likely generate \$1.56 million in the City of Peoria and an additional \$416,000 in the rest of the County. This \$1,972,000 would be sufficient to finance the museum.

The advantages of this method are significant. First, admissions into the museum would be paying the tax. Thus, the users would be assisting in paying for the construction. Second, as a regional center, people shopping, dining and entertaining in Peoria County would be paying the tax, not just the residents of the County, many of whom may never set foot into the museum. However this does not come without a price. City staff strongly believes that any increase in the restaurant tax would competitively disadvantage the City of Peoria. Furthermore, City staff is rightly concerned that the increase would not take into account the new hotel in East Peoria as well as the shift in tax dollars to other communities as a result of the proposed increase in tax. If the county could get legislative authority to impose the tax over and above the City's HRA tax by 0.5%, and seek additional legislative authority to set the tax at the same rate as the City of Peoria throughout the County, the shift throughout Peoria County may be lessened.

6.2 County Sales Tax For Public Facilities

In 1997 voters in Peoria County passed a 1/4% public safety sales tax. This local option sales tax was authorized by the General Assembly, subject to a referendum. The law was subsequently amended to include transportation as an eligible purpose. The last avenue that could afford the County the opportunity to assist in the museum project would be to amend the local option sales tax to include public facilities as an eligible purpose.

Recently, the Special County Retailer's Occupation Tax for Public Safety or Transportation (55 ILCS 5-1006.5) was amended by Senate Bill 345, adopted as Public Act 095-0474. The Public

Act revised the language of the referendum imposing the tax and the additional language that appears below the question. It also allows the county to include a sunset provision for the tax. By amending the statute to broadly include public facilities, Peoria County would have the ability to ask the voters if they would support an additional sales tax to construct the Peoria Riverfront Museum, and to assist the County in future construction projects, such as Bel-Wood Nursing Home, or even school construction.

Similar to the HRA tax, the sales tax is appealing because it lessens the reliance on Peoria County citizens to pay the tax. As a regional retail center for downstate Illinois, a permissive sales tax for public facilities would spread the tax burden to transitory visitors to the region, not just property taxpayers within Peoria County. The tax is not imposed upon titled goods, meaning automobiles and boats are not subject to the tax. A 1/4% sales tax, \$0.25 on every \$100 purchased would generate \$4,700,000 annually. The permissive tax would require voter approval, and the existing law has a sunset provision that would allow the County to limit the timeframe of an additional tax.

7. Recommendations

The nine options outlined in this report provide various strengths and weaknesses for the County Board to consider with regard to assisting in making the Peoria Riverfront Museum a reality. The most expeditious route, the Public Building Commission, is also the route that increases the County's property tax rate for 20 years for something that is not a core service of the County. The county historical museum district act does not generate sufficient funds to adequately assist the museum project. The museum district - drawn countywide or a portion of the County - has the smallest number of petition signatures (200), but may require an additional referendum to finance the project. An advisory referendum would provide the County Board with input from the voters, but would still require the board to issue the debt through the PBC. Seeking legislative authority from the General Assembly for the HRA tax or a local option sales tax is a remote possibility, but provides the largest opportunity to spread the tax burden to visitors to Peoria County and others from the region dining or shopping in Peoria County.

The following table summarizes the options available to the County Board. The table details if the option is regional in nature, whether a referendum is necessary, the earliest date of approval, whether legislative authority is needed, the estimated tax rate, the estimated annual revenues and the key pros and cons of each.

Table 1. Summary of Options for Peoria Riverfront Museum Funding

	Regional	Referenda	Petition Size	Earliest Date	Legislative	Tax Rate	Estimated Annual Revenue	Pros	Cons
Public Building Commission	N	N	N/A	12/07	N	\$0.07/\$100*	\$2,100,000	Expediency	Large tax increase
Historical Museum - Peoria	N	Y	1,110	11/08	N	\$0.02/\$100	\$600,000	Voter approval	Not enough \$
Historical Museum - Multi	Y	Y	2,000+	11/08	N	\$0.02/\$100	\$1,000,000	Spreads burden	Not enough \$
Historical Museum Tax	N	N	N/A	12/07	N	\$0.002/\$100	\$60,000	Additional help	Not enough \$
Museum District - Peoria	N	Y	200	11/08	N	\$0.07/\$100	\$2,100,000	200 sig. petition	2nd referendum?
Museum District - Partial	N	Y	200	11/08	N	\$0.07/\$100	\$2,000,000	Separate Entity	2nd referendum?
Advisory Referendum	N	Y	4,300	02/08	N			Quick Answer	Discretionary
Countywide HRA Tax		Y		11/08	Y	0.5%	\$1,972,000	Spreads burden	Remote possibility
Public Facility Sales Tax		Y		11/08	Y	1/4%	\$4,700,000	Spreads burden	Remote possibility

*estimates

Based upon the County Board's diligence in keeping the tax rate constant or decreasing it slightly, and due to the fact that the County has other capital needs - such as Bel-Wood Nursing Home - that require our attention, a sales tax that could be established for public facilities is the most appealing. This new revenue stream would provide Peoria County with the means to finance both the museum project and the renovation/new construction of Bel-Wood. However, this route would most certainly increase the cost of the museum project from \$24 million to \$32 million as the new market tax credits would have to be foregone in 2007. By spreading the tax burden to others - the Central Illinoisans working, shopping and dining in Peoria County; the visitors to our community during the IHSA March Madness Tournament; and the thousands that Caterpillar brings into our community annually - the many Peoria County property tax payers that may not ever set foot in the museum would not be paying for it.

As a secondary option, the countywide museum district would provide the easiest means to a referendum and the opportunity to construct the museum. Should voters support the museum district, the property taxes generated would significantly close the \$24 million shortfall. In fact,

a successful museum district referendum could provide the County Board with the means to fill the gaps between any funding shortfall that may still exist following the creation of the museum district.

A third option exists to place a nonbinding or advisory referendum on the February 5, 2008 primary ballot. The exact phrasing of the question may be worded to so as to give the voters a clear understanding of the financial scope and commitment to the project. Based on the options as outlined above, the question would need to ask in some form the issuance of debt by the Public Building Commission that are backed by a property tax increase. There are two methods in which a referendum question may be placed on the ballot, the first of which requires a petition of 4,300 signatures as outlined above. This option expired on November 19, which was the deadline for petition based referendums to be filed. However, the County Board may vote to place the referendum on the ballot. A resolution taking this action needs to be filed with the County Clerk on or before December 3. A special meeting of the County Board would need to be held on or before December 3 to consider such an action.

Special thanks to John Elias, legal counsel to Lakeview Museum, City Manager Randy Oliver and Finance Director Jim Scroggins, and Chief Civil Assistant State's Attorney Bill Atkins for assisting with this report.

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Appendix 1. Examples of Other Museum Collaborations

Information provided by the Peoria Riverfront Museum organizers



*Gustave Caillebotte (French, 1848-1894) x Paris Street; Rainy Day, 1877 x Courtesy of The Art Institute of Chicago
 **Jeff Koons, Rabbit, 1986, Stainless Steel x Collection Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago x Partial Gift of Stefan T. Edlis and M. Gae Aulenti

Museums in the Park

Chicago, IL

Collection of 10 museums on Chicago's Lake Front..

\$33.8 million annual property tax subsidy from Chicago Park District.

All museums are long existing, and subsidy goes towards operations.

Web Links:

<http://www.museumsinthepark.org/>
<http://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/>



The Children's Discovery Museum

Normal, IL

\$8 million capital project

\$4.5 million (56%) from Town of Normal

Normal used 1/4¢ HRA sales tax and TIF funds to finance project.

Web Links:

<http://www.childrensdiscoverymuseum.net/>
<http://www.normal.org/>

The "McLean County Children's Discovery Museum," was founded in 1988 in answer to a need in our community. Six years of planning resulted in an 1,100 square foot preview museum space donated by College Hills Mall. Innovative, hands-on exhibits dealing in the arts, sciences and communications greeted our visitors on opening day, March 27, 1994. In 2001 the Museum began a capital campaign to fund the design and construction of a new 24,000 SF museum with professionally designed exhibits as part of a public/private partnership with the Town of Normal to be the cornerstone of their downtown renewal effort. As the plans unfolded for the museum site, the Town of Normal came to recognize the importance of the Children's Discovery Museum building as the first evidence of rebirth in the downtown redevelopment. Normal knew that the Museum would be a tourism draw and an economic development driver, and it would give our community a quality of life competitive advantage when courting new businesses and employees to Bloomington/Normal. On November 18, 2002, the Town of Normal officially announced a commitment to constructing a \$ 4.5 million, 34,000 sq. ft. building and to encompass the operations of the Museum within the Town's Parks and Recreation department.



Science Center of Iowa

Des Moines, IA

\$60 million project

\$17 million (28%) capital investment by City of Des Moines. City approved a 2.5 year bond-financed loan and mortgage.

Des Moines used an HRA tax to finance their contribution to the project. The City also owns and plans to redevelop the previous Science Center building.

Web Links:

<http://www.sciowa.org/>

<http://www.dmgov.org/>

The Science Center of Iowa is a center devoted to lifelong learning featuring six dynamic experience platforms and where visitors can explore and experiment. In addition to the experience platforms, SCI showcases a 216-seat Blank IMAX Dome Theater, a 175-seat John Deere Adventure Theater featuring live performances, and a 50 foot domed Star Theater. The Iowa Learning Center houses the educational programs for SCI and features resources for educators and students, the renowned preschool, outreach and distance learning programs. The new SCI opened in the fall of 2006 and is four times larger than the previous facility.

Existing Museum Districts in Illinois

Byron

Boone County

LaSalle

Lake County