

## **Update Note to "The HOST Members" - November 15, 2009**

(modified slightly - December 10, 2009)

Dear All:

Ideas are continuing to progress on next steps on possible plans for HOST at the College Football Hall of Fame Building (the CFHOF).

The general comments continue to focus on (1) no new white elephant and (2) financing needs. My apologies for what is quite a long note...reporting on discussions and suggestions from both inside and outside Notre Dame:

### **1. Within Notre Dame**

Several administrators met with John Affleck-Graves to discuss Notre Dame involvement in plans for the CFHOF - Tim Sexton, associate VP for community relations in on the Mayor's "28-committee" .

At the Affleck-Graves meeting, the one other ND possibility - a Notre Dame Sports Center - was deemed to not be feasible, leaving HOST as a primary program possibility. However, the main thrust of the meeting, in which I completely concur, is that any plans for the CFHOF must be driven by the local Community as a whole.

The question of financial support is, of course, a delicate one, and at this time, any not-for-profit CFHOF, should not expect any influx of dollars:

- a science-based program, as is HOST, needs to be built up in the regular way, with outside Federal and other support (local donors and otherwise).

In other discussions, Innovation Park Director David Brenner, and the MIND Managing Director Robert Dunn, gave their enthusiastic support to our proposals. The HOST facility would be a great way to demonstrate the successful developments of their products.

I asked Tom Loughran, a member of the HOST group, and also involved in ND science outreach for several years, for a bit of analysis on plans - I quote his very thoughtful and reasoned answers here:

### **"HOST thoughts:**

--I believe we would need a strong revenue-producing strategy associated with any attempt to dedicate the Hall of Fame (HoF) space to educational concerns, and to a HOST-like effort .

There are three dimensions of revenue production that come to mind.

"First, local businesses in the DTSB area must be satisfied: crowds need to come, at the right times, in the right demographic (with a significant retail-spending component). Filling the Century Center with workshops, conferences, etc, must be part of that picture. So the educational workshop industry would have to grow in association with any investment of the HoF space in an educational direction. The recent I-STEM initiative (on the Alabama model) could be part of that equation.

"A second set of economic concerns are the broader Chamber-of-Commerce-scale concerns: we need a workforce that is actually and perceived to be well equipped for new industry. Nanotech and Biotech training with seeds planted early through in-space exhibits and out-to-classroom initiatives and everything in between could be coordinated through HOST. MIND (on nano); the biotech web associated with the B&T luncheon series; perhaps Innovation Park ("start up your business here, and have an influence on attracting and training workers for the long haul"); all these and their likes should be part of the conversation. HOST could be a center where research

grant- and other E/PO programs, workforce development programs, long- and short-term commercial needs and the needs of local schools could be brought to a common table in an innovating environment. Another dimension of attracting industry to the region is the perception of local education. HOST in the HoF if done well could greatly change the perception of education in the Michiana area, and to change that perception should be an explicit concern of HOST planners.

"A change in the perception could have the kind of payoff that would offset the lack of tax revenue to the city, which is a third level of financial concern. "

Thank you Tom

## **2. Outside Notre Dame**

The principal developments here are in terms of overview of the usage of the CFHOF: Mark Tarner, (owner of the Chocolate Factory) who is on the Mayor's "28-committee" is strongly in favor of a Children's Museum on the lines of the very successful one in Indianapolis - I completely agree with him, but we believe that the combination of HOST with such a children's museum could be a dynamite and thriving usage of the CFHOF.

In the initial HOST plan, our model was an updated educational variant of the San Francisco Exploratorium. One should ask which are the most successful children's museums, and why are they successful - besides the two above, the Chicago Children's Museum on Navy Pier, the science museums in St. Louis and in St. Paul are great examples. Looking carefully at their "goals and missions", one sees a very strong overlap between their programs for children, and also their programs in science and technology for people of all ages.

Their financial sources of support are extremely varied, in some cases with a large endowment, but in others, the newer ones, still building up their endowment. Keys to all of them are: strong hands-on features in the exhibits; a strong visitor base with annual or longer subscriptions; a strong educational component in contact with areas schools; frequent and changing exhibitions of current interest; and an open visitor policy with "frequent "free days and evenings" to encourage local community attendance.

Note that essentially NONE of these ideas were developed by the College Football Hall of Fame. Some of you may have seen that the South Bend Tribune posed the question to its readers: do you want a Children's Museum at the CFHOF? The vote was 56%/44% in favor - could be better, but that is without people yet understanding the broad possibilities of such a facility. Perhaps the moral of the story is that we still have a lot of persuading to do: - we need to get up to a 90% acceptance from all the community and local businesses - I think a Facility that has the 2 strong components - helping educate our children and helping to make South Bend a mecca for learning about 21 century science and technology.

I am sure we are on the right road for building up that support.

Sincerely

Gordon