

Dedicated to educating the public and preserving the rural heritage of Illinois.

Thank You Monsanto

All of us are aware of Monsanto's America's Farmers Campaign, which recognizes the important role of farmers in their communities and in feeding the world. Monsanto also offers programs such as America's Farmers Grow Communities and America's Farmers Grow Rural Education which allow farmers to give back to their local communities.

The Illinois Rural Heritage Museum is benefiting from Monsanto's generosity in three ways:

- The Monsanto Exploration Hall will be a key exhibit in the Museum. It will chronicle advances in ag technology over the decades and will include interactive exhibits on corn and soybean developments.
- Monsanto will loan the Museum one of the early gene gun's used to modify the genetic traits of soybeans and corn. The gun will be housed in the Education Center.
- America's Farmers' Mobile Experience, major traveling exhibit will be provided to the Museum in August, during the American Thresherman Association's events. Future Newsletters will cover Monsanto's exhibit in more detail.



Museum Opens in April

In April, Charlie and Mary Greer's dream of a Museum focusing on all aspects of the rural heritage of Illinois will become larger than life! During the past five years, they have been business planners, architects, construction workers, fund raisers, exhibit designers, public relations specialists, and above all, very hard workers. They have sold their dream to individuals and companies, big and small. As you read the description of exhibits in this Newsletter, we expect that you will be pleasantly surprised by the results of their efforts.



Morton Buildings Makes Additional Contribution

A \$10,000 contribution was received from Morton Buildings in January, adding to their generous contributions in 2011. The 2011 contributions were key elements of the funding needed to begin construction of the Museum. We thank Morton for their support.

Greer's Museum Dream Becomes a Reality

In 2007 Charlie Greer and a group of three other interested individuals got together to discuss a Museum in Pinckneyville, IL. A business plan and legal documents were prepared, and the Museum was on its way. The group embarked on a journey to build a museum focusing on rural life in Illinois. In the five years since the time of the project's official beginning Charlie and wife Mary Greer have poured blood, sweat and tears into the Illinois Rural Heritage Museum. Grants, support from the Foundation for Pinckneyville and the Engelhardt Family Foundation, community assistance and thousands of volunteer hours have let the Greer's dream of preserving our rural past become a reality.

Phase One: The Signature Red Horse Barn

As other large projects of it's kind, the Illinois Rural Heritage Museum's plan is to be completed in phases. On August 16, 2011 the Museum's Signature Red Barn was unveiled at a ribbon cutting ceremony. Over 200 visitors came to the ceremony and enjoyed the displays inside the replica horse barn built by Morton Building.

The Signature Horse Barn is the main visitor entrance to the Museum. Upon entering guests find a modern introduction to the museum. Inside the doors on the left side "horse stall" there is a reception area where a constant video stream of agricultural history is displayed on a large flat screen television. On the right side of the entrance, visitors can find the welcome and ticket booth, as well as the souvenir shop. The main display area houses horse related items and other related exhibits that create a benchmark for measuring the progress to be depicted in later exhibits. Currently on display are horse and pony drawn buggies and a horse drawn surrey. Also on loan are materials that offer a glimpse back in time at what a doctor's office and desk looked like during the early 1900s.

A special thanks to Morton Buildings and White Walnut farms, along with all the contributing families and individuals who made the introduction of Phase One a success!

Phase Two: Beyond the Red Barn

After the special opening of the main building, the Greer's put their noses back to the grindstone to continue

development of the museum beyond the red barn, aka: Phase Two. As major architectural work is now complete, each new display exhibit is undergoing special consideration. Each little detail of how the areas will incorporate history, education, visual appeal and technology can quickly become a daunting task. But the Greer's, along with the Chairman, Irl Engelhardt and Board of Directors are happy with the progress of planning the space.

As visitors exit the red barn, they will enter the second of the museum buildings into the "Agriculture Education Center". The area will include a video viewing area, guide to the current museum exhibits and a gallery of smaller exhibits.

The next room will contain the exciting "Monsanto Exploration Hall", where children of all ages can interact with exhibits while learning about technological advances related to corn and soybeans. The changing dynamics of rural populations, yields and other key events over the decades will also be shown. And, America's farmers receive a tribute for their role in making the world a better place. The Museum thanks Monsanto for making this exhibit possible.

The third area in the phase two space will highlight what everyday rural life was like in the early to mid 1900s. The area will contain a medical office, a general store, and farmhouse. All displays in this area can be viewed from a roped off area as all furnishings and display items are authentic for the period. The area will also contain detailed written information about items that can be identified in each display.



At the opening in August 2011 an early 1900s medical office was placed on display in the Museum's main building. During the spring of 2012 the items will be moved to their permanent home next to the period general store and farmhouse displays.

The fourth and final 5,500 sq. ft. area is being planned as a "Progression of Power" exhibit. The Museum is currently discussing the loan of display equipment from Case IH. The area will introduce visitors to a display of hand tools used to plant and harvest the earliest crops. Also planned for the area are displays of horse drawn equipment such as a plow, disk, planter and drill. As time progressed from horse drawn equipment to the age of steam power, museum organizers plan to display steam engines, a threshing machine and a separator, among several other progressive tractors that are to be announced.

Tentatively set to open in the Spring of 2012, the combined area of phase one and two is 9,300 sq. ft. of rotating displays and exhibits which promises visitors to the Museum a glimpse at our rural heritage dating from the 1850s.

Phases Three and Four

The Museum will focus on planning activities for Phases three and four during 2012 and 2013. An additional 8,640 sq. ft. of unfinished space is available in existing buildings for new exhibits that would cover other aspects of rural heritage. For example, the installation of the rail and interstate systems, the addition of electricity and telephone systems and advances in conservation practices have all had a profound impact on rural Illinois.

To Complete the Look...

A 40' tall windmill will be erected in the early Spring 2012 beside the signature red barn.

This will complete the look of the Illinois Rural Heritage Museum logo and provide a landmark to guide visitors to the Museum.

Windmill Fun Facts

Windmills have been an important part of American history. The technology helped rural development to flourish. Even today, windmills are an important part of our culture and increasingly a part our everyday lives.

History

Windmills first became popular in the United States in the mid-1800s in the rural Midwest.

Function

The blades on windmills harness the energy of the wind, using it to turn the gears. These gears were often connected to a pump system to pull water from the ground.

Significance

Windmills allowed farmers and settlers to live in areas that might have otherwise been too dry to sustain them.

Design

Even with all the technological advances since the time that windmills were invented, their basic design has remained unchanged for more than 120 years.

Size

The size of a windmill was determined by factors such as the depth and size of the aquifer beneath it. In the past, settlers opted for the most efficient size to utilize as much of the water as possible.

Developments

Today, windmills--often called wind turbines--are commonly used to generate electricity.

Source: traveltips.usatoday.com

The Ag Educators Advisory Committee, A Focus on Education



In the "Monsanto Exploration Hall" visitors to the Museum will be able to interact with displays such as the ones pictured here. Above is a portion of the Hall which will portray the progression of agriculture over the past several decades. On the left is an 11' tall ear of corn that will quiz viewers on Illinois crop facts. The next display depicts an "opened" soybean and will tell the stories of Illinois farm families. Additional educational displays such these will be found throughout the museum.

The Mission of the Museum is to tell the story of the fortitude and innovative spirit of the individuals and organizations who created the rural heritage of Illinois. The Museum aims to tell story of rural life from different perspectives. Our challenge is to develop exhibits that capture and hold the interest of young visitors. In a world filled with social media, it's a monumental challenge as the competition for the visitor's attention is usually in their pocket!

The Ag Educators Advisory Committee and companies with a similar focus on education will help us win the competition for the attention of young visitors. The Advisory Committee is comprised of college and high school educators who work with young people on a daily basis. Their goal is to offer suggestions about our exhibits and the way we operate the Museum. They will be given priority in the scheduling of the Museum's Ag

Education Center for field trips and other events.

Monsanto and other companies are helping us with interesting exhibits. The Monsanto Exploration Hall includes interactive exhibits on the evolution of agriculture. And, we are very excited with Monsanto's plans to loan us one of the first genetic guns, used to alter the genetic traits of corn, soybeans, cotton and tomatoes. The gun (really a machine) will be housed in the Ag Education Center.

As Charlie and Mary have learned, the effort required to create a high quality museum is, "a long row to hoe." They have visited numerous museums throughout the country and looked at the web sites of countless others. The Museum's Board of Directors thanked them numerous times for their tireless efforts during its January meeting.

"I do not believe that any man can adequately appreciate the world of today unless he has some knowledge of – a little more than a slight knowledge, some feeling for and of – the history of the world of the past."

Theodore Roosevelt



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New Contributors



Cape Girardeau, MO

Limited Edition Birdhouses

The official souvenir of the Illinois Rural Heritage Museum, these birdhouses are made out of stained white cedar from end cuts of the boards used to finish the inside of the Signature Red Barn. Fifty-one birdhouses were produced and only a few remain. Each house is numbered with the limited edition numeral. Own a piece of history today! Painted houses \$40, Unpainted \$35.



More Info

For more news, to view videos or donate to the Illinois Rural Heritage Museum please visit www.illinoisruralheritagemuseum.org.

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