



Brief History, Current Status, and Strategic Plan

Prepared by the Strategic Planning Committee

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Introduction

The Lake Jackson Historical Association took on the challenge of drafting the organization's first strategic plan in May of 2014, and after many months this document is the result. The strategic plan will provide the staff and the Board of Directors' direction for growth. The Association possesses all of the resources to become greater than it is today, and a host of paths forward are open. This strategic plan provides the focus necessary to fulfill the Association's mission and to develop the necessary human and material resources to support current and future operations.

Brief History

The Lake Jackson Historical Association came about from a desire to save a local landmark, the Alden B. Dow office building. In 1981, a Miss Gena Weddell and former Lake Jackson mayor Vic Vickers had a simple conversation about how best to go about saving the office building, and in a short time a committee was formed. Saving the Alden Dow office building proved to be a challenge for the long haul, and it was soon decided that the committee's goals would be best served by a formal non-profit organization. The Lake Jackson Historical Association received official 501(c)3 status in 1984, and soon set up a small museum in a vacant medical office. The Association was also designated an official archive of The Dow Chemical Company's Texas Operations Division during this time.

The Association's leadership soon set their sights on building a new museum. In 1984 the heirs of A.P. Beutel (first general manager of Dow Texas Division) unexpectedly approached the Association with the intent of donating Beutel's Lake Jackson home and property to the Association. The Board of Directors gladly accepted the donation, but the diversion stalled the effort to build a new museum. It soon became apparent that although the Beutel property was beautiful, it could not easily be developed to host a museum. Additionally the existing buildings were proving to require more maintenance than the Association could sustain at the time.

In 1989 a land swap between the Association and The Dow Chemical Company was announced. The Dow Chemical Company donated to the Association 16 acres of land which was being used as a lake side park, and the Association ceded the Beutel Property to The Dow Chemical Company. The Association sold 12 acres of the donated land, with the revenue becoming the seed money to build a new museum, and retained 4 acres which contained ruins of the 19th Century Abner Jackson Plantation. These 4 acres were designated a Texas State Archeological Landmark (now termed Texas Historical Commission Antiquities Landmark). Local citizens attempted to buy and retain the 12 acres for public use but failed to raise enough money, and the land was sold for private development.

With seed money in place, the Association undertook a successful fundraising campaign headed by H. H. McClure to build a new museum. Long term financial sustainability of the museum was a major concern, so it was proposed that the Association would pay for the design and construction of the new building, and that upon completion, the land and facility would be gifted to the City of Lake Jackson. The City would be responsible for the utilities and maintenance, and the Association would be responsible for day to day operations. The City of Lake Jackson agreed to this arrangement, and in 1998 the Lake Jackson Historical Museum opened to the public. The center piece of the museum is the Windecker Eagle airplane, which was graciously donated to the Association by the Windecker family.

The Historical Museum became the focal point of Association resources and activities. Over time the activities and growing collection of the museum required more and more support, and in response the Association began to employ paid staff, eventually including a director, a curator, and a service coordinator. A high level of support and development was made possible because of the establishment of a significant endowment, and because the Association became a recipient of Lake Jackson Hotel Motel Tax shortly after the Historical Museum opened.

In 2006, the long-pursued goal of saving the Alden Dow Office Building was realized when the Association purchased approximately one third of the property. Although the remainder of the building was demolished, the portion purchased by the Association was carefully restored and converted to a small museum. The effort was led by John May and included a mix of volunteers donating time and professionals donating services. The Alden B. Dow Office Museum opened to the public in 2008, and has since been generously supported by the City of Lake Jackson for maintenance and utilities.

Current Status - 2015

The Lake Jackson Historical Association today is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization whose mission is to provide education relative to the history and culture of an area of Brazoria County, Texas known as Lake Jackson. The Association is managed by a Board of Directors. In addition to the Board of Directors, there is also an Advisory Board and individuals who have been honored as Emeritus Board members. The Association currently retains 3 full time employees and approximately 30 volunteers who are responsible for the day-to-day operations and services the Association provides.

The Association is currently in good fiscal standing. The Association ended the last two fiscal years with a surplus of cash. This was accomplished through an increase in revenue and a decrease in expenditures. The Association has two primary sources of income. It receives income earned on investments, and a percentage of the Hotel Tax collected by the City of Lake Jackson. The revenue from these two sources has grown considerably over the past two years. Also, the current Executive Director has successfully implemented an austerity program to curb expenditures without reducing core programs and services.

The Lake Jackson Historical Association presents a number of special events, tours and educational programs that are well attended. However, overall attendance is substantially lower than that of other local educational facilities. The Museum's accumulative attendance for 2014 was 7,316 while Sea Center Texas and the Center for Arts & Sciences reported annual attendances of 50,000 and 35,000 respectively. The attendance issue has never been studied; however, anecdotal information suggests that visitors are deterred by the static nature of the exhibits and that many area residents do not know the Museum exists.

Sites/Facilities

The Association currently operates three distinct sites; the Lake Jackson Historical Museum, the Abner Jackson Plantation Site, and the Alden B. Dow Office Museum. Admission is free to the public as it is underwritten by the Museum Admission Program, which uses donations from individuals, local businesses and corporations to replace the revenue from an admission fee.

The Lake Jackson Historical Museum is a large two story facility located at 249 Circle Way Lake Jackson, Texas. The Museum houses the majority of the Association's collection, exhibits, equipment, supplies, and the employee offices. The building and grounds are owned by the City of Lake Jackson, while the

contents and exhibits are owned by the Association. By contract, the City is responsible for the upkeep of the building and grounds while the Association is responsible for the daily operation of the Museum. The Museum is open to the public Tuesday through Saturday from 10am until 4pm. The Museum is closed to the public on Sundays and Mondays. Staff or volunteers are always present when the Museum is open, and staff is generally available at the Museum Monday through Saturday from 8am until 4:30pm. The Museum contains permanent exhibits ranging from the Karankawa Indians to the local Petrochemical Industry. These permanent exhibits have not been changed since the Museum was first built. The Museum hosts the majority of Association programs and functions.

The condition of the Museum building is fair. The internal support structure of the building is in good condition and in cosmetic terms the exterior and the interior are in good to fair condition. The electric systems of the building are in poor condition and are prone to failure and malfunction, most often resulting in the failure of light fixtures. The roof of the building has leaked for the majority of the building's 15 year history and has been completely replaced in a two phase project from 2014 to 2015. Leaks have continued through the air handling systems, and have been addressed as they appear. The leaky roof has resulted in minor damage to the second floor ceiling, damage to wallpaper throughout the building, and discoloration of carpets on the second floor. The unpredictable nature of the leaks poses potential risk to visitors, exhibits, and equipment with every rain shower. It is also possible that the leaks have led to the development of mold and mildew in the interior of the building structure. This is as yet undetermined pending further repairs and investigation. It is also believed that the leaks are a contributing factor in the failure or malfunction of electronic equipment and fixtures in the building.

The Abner Jackson Plantation Site is a Texas State Antiquities Landmark owned by the Association. The Site is located off of FM 2004 behind the Lake Jackson Target store. The Site is bordered by water on two sides with pedestrian access via a covered bridge; a small gated side road provides vehicle access. The Site contains the ruins from a 19th century sugar plantation. Having been designated an Antiquities Landmark means that there are specific laws and regulations regarding practically all activity at the site and that any significant disturbance of the ground or exposed ruins must be preapproved or reported to the Texas Historical Commission.

The Plantation Site and its management face unique situations. The Plantation Site is the only Texas Archaeological Site not owned by the State of Texas, which leads to confusion when dealing with the Texas Historical Commission. The pedestrian and vehicle access points are situated on the property or in the right of way of The Dow Chemical Company, Velasco Drainage District, and the Texas Department of Transportation. As a result the Association maintains a mix of written and verbal agreements with these organizations for access and maintenance. It is also worth noting that the Plantation Site was once part of a larger public park owned by The Dow Chemical Company and that the closure and development of that park was not well received by some members of the community.

The Plantation Site is open to the public on the first Saturday of every month from 10am until dusk. Volunteers are always present to greet and orient visitors when the Site is open. Access to the site is limited via fencing, water, and locked gates when the site is not open. The Association has made significant investments in equipment and materials to maintain the accessibility and appearance of the Plantation Site, including a covered bridge, a riding lawn mower, an electric golf cart, and storage shed. Management of the site and equipment is vested in the Plantation Site Committee Chair and Executive Director.

The Alden B. Dow Office Museum is a small one story building located at 101 South Parking Place in downtown Lake Jackson. The building is itself historic, as it is one of the first structures built in Lake Jackson and served as the office of Alden Dow and Associates for the design and construction of Lake Jackson in the early 1940s. The structure was designed by Alden Dow, and he personally supervised the construction and furnishing. Over the decades the building served in many roles including city hall and post office. The Association took ownership of a portion of the original structure in 2008. This was restored and converted to a small museum. The remainder of the building was demolished. The Office Museum is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a unique, local example of Mid Century Modern architecture and for its historical significance to the City of Lake Jackson.

The Office Museum is open to the public on the second and third Saturday of each month from 1pm to 4pm. Volunteers are always present to greet and orient visitors during open hours. The Office Museum contains multiple displays about life in the 40's and 50's. Structurally the building is in fair condition. The restoration included a full teardown to the framing, foundation repair, roof replacement, and electrical overhaul. So, the overall structure is in good condition; however, parts of the building have begun to deteriorate since the restoration. Major areas of concern include the roof underlayment, chimney, and decayed windows and doors. The Association is actively working to manage these areas of concern. The Management of the Office Museum is vested in the Alden Dow Office Museum Committee Chair and Executive Director.

Association Staff

Executive Director

The Executive Director reports to the Board of Directors and is responsible for conceptual leadership, daily operations, supervision of staff, and coordination of Lake Jackson Historical Association (LJHA) activities through the staff and committee chair board members. This position supervises a professional staff and volunteers working with locations in Lake Jackson, Texas.

Curator

The Curator manages and supervises the care and acquisition of artifacts for the Association's collection. This includes oversight of the collection's registration, conservation, and exhibition activities. Additional responsibilities include research and interpretation as applicable to exhibit preparation and educational endeavors; disseminating results of that research through publications, exhibits, lectures, or other means.

Museum Services Coordinator

The Museum Services Coordinator is responsible for the development and implementation of Association programming, management of Museum services, and coordination volunteer contributions to the Association.

Strategic Plan

Mission

The Mission of the Lake Jackson Historical Association is to provide education relative to the history and culture of the city of Lake Jackson, Texas.

Values Statement

“To be an effective and sustainable vehicle for the study, preservation, and presentation of local history and culture.”

Guiding Principles of the Lake Jackson Historical Association:

- Present accurate historical facts to our clientele
- Collect local history as it occurs
- Preserve our artifacts
- Be available for our clientele
- Involve the community
- Be a premier local history resource
- Routinely refresh the presentations
- Be a good employer

Our Uniqueness

- Trained, experienced, and productive professional staff
- One of a few local Plantation sites
- The only historical office building in Lake Jackson
- Dow Texas Operations official records retention location
- Interviews with our early city’s “movers and shakers”
- Owners of the Abner Jackson Plantation artifacts
- Displaying one of three Windecker planes
- Financially sound due to:
 - No debts
 - Receives 7% of growing hotel tax
 - The City of Lake Jackson pays for buildings’ utilities, insurance, and maintenance
 - Solid income from Endowment Funds of \$600,000

Challenges

- Declining membership
- Large, mostly un-cataloged collection
- Inactive committees
- Increasing competition for resources
- Dated, static exhibits
- Limited financial resources, largely dependent on external factors
- Ineffective communication with the community
- Need for Board development, reducing disconnect between Board and normal operations
- Aging facilities
- Complex and time consuming financial management
- Overlapping lines of authority and responsibility

- Shortage of storage

Goals

The Strategic Planning Committee developed the following goals as key milestones in establishing a new baseline of operation for the Association, which will facilitate future growth.

Short Term Goals (Prioritized list to be completed within one year)

Item	Responsible Agent
Director will research feasibility and make presentation to the board about hiring an accountant to take care of Association finances.	Director
Have a retreat for Association Board Members.	Committee of staff & Board
Develop and present to Board a buying policy for the gift shop.	Committee of staff, volunteers, Board
Develop a visitor responsibilities policy	Staff
Develop a policy for collecting and recording interviews of persons of interest.	Staff
Develop a master calendar	Staff

Long Term Goals (Prioritized list to be completed over the next 5 years)

In recent years the Association’s committee system has degraded to only the most fundamental elements, resulting in increased distance between the Board of Directors and normal operations, greater work load for paid staff and volunteers, and leaving some aspects of the organization devoid of oversight or development. The majority of the long term goals are intended to re-establish or restructure committees with specific mandates.

Item	Time Line (completed within)	Responsible Agent
Marketing - Develop marketing plan.	3 years	Committee
Exhibits - Develop a master plan for updating and/or rotation of exhibits with priority given to the chemical exhibits.	1-2 years	Staff
Programming - Further Develop educational programming, special events, site-specific programming, and off-site programs.	3 years	Programming Committee, Staff
Collections – 1. Completely document and catalog collection.	2-5 years	Staff
Collections – 2. Properly archive collections, review policy, and restructure collections committee.	2 years	Staff
Collections – 3. Make plan to increase accessibility of collections.	Completed after Collections 1 & 2.	Staff
Partnerships/Collaborations – Develop partnerships/ collaborations with the community, businesses, area schools and college, and city government.	3 years	Staff, Committee, Board
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Revenue/Fundraising – Develop long range fundraising plan to include revenue generating events, personal giving, and memberships.	2 years	Staff, Committee, Board
Facilities – 1. Alden Dow maintenance plan to include an assessment, prioritized list, budget, and restructured committee.	2 years	Staff, Committee, Board
Facilities – 2. Lake Jackson Historical Association to develop stronger relationship and awareness of needs with City Council and City Staff.	2 years	Staff, Committee, Board
Facilities – 3. Develop Abner Jackson Plantation Site master plan.	2 years	Committee, Staff, Volunteers, Board
Facilities – 4. Form a committee to study artifact storage issues and make recommendations	2 years	Committee
Research the purpose and relevance of the Museum Gift Shop, and recommend next step.	2 years	Committee, Staff, Volunteers, Board

Appendix A
Financial Information

The Lake Jackson Historical Association uses the calendar year as the fiscal year, with annual budgets being drafted by the Executive Director and Treasurer. The annual budget is reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors, usually in December.

Year	Budgeted Income	Actual Income	Difference	Budgeted Expense	Actual Expense	Difference	Annual Surplus or Deficit
2000	\$67,409.88	\$65,924.86	-\$1,485.02	\$59,271.02	\$74,484.09	-\$15,213.07	-\$8,559.23
2001	\$67,044.96	\$65,764.53	-\$1,280.43	\$68,004.40	\$67,503.47	\$500.93	-\$1,738.94
2002	\$94,050.00	\$59,008.67	-\$35,041.33	\$92,564.00	\$79,170.59	\$13,393.41	-\$20,161.92
2003	\$50,687.72	\$60,764.70	\$10,076.98	\$82,963.64	\$75,220.17	\$7,743.47	-\$14,455.47
2004	\$96,248.52	\$91,157.73	-\$5,090.79	\$98,908.52	\$82,659.14	\$16,249.38	\$8,498.59
2005	\$110,919.15	\$98,924.35	-\$11,994.80	\$91,728.97	\$89,719.84	\$2,009.13	\$9,204.51
2006	\$145,738.11	\$177,982.30	\$32,244.19	\$142,722.96	\$125,293.30	\$17,429.66	\$52,689.00
2007	\$114,602.50	\$90,508.89	-\$24,093.61	\$106,982.68	\$160,217.34	-\$53,234.66	-\$69,708.45
2008	\$105,686.38	\$190,014.36	\$84,327.98	\$139,142.40	\$164,379.14	-\$25,236.74	\$25,635.22
2009	\$80,299.84	\$71,164.10	-\$9,135.74	\$141,287.60	\$122,774.52	\$18,513.08	-\$51,610.42
2010	\$118,459.90	\$118,943.63	\$483.73	\$194,117.85	\$179,224.08	\$14,893.77	-\$60,280.45
2011	\$81,926.00	\$178,281.18	\$96,355.18	\$172,317.59	\$240,752.46	-\$68,434.87	-\$62,471.28
2012	\$87,175.00	\$192,294.64	\$105,119.64	\$153,063.61	\$226,099.45	-\$73,035.84	-\$33,804.81
2013	\$122,275.87	\$224,115.36	\$101,839.49	\$136,456.74	\$214,688.69	-\$78,231.95	\$9,426.67
2014	\$173,643.94	\$203,861.81	\$30,217.87	\$157,717.92	\$148,697.96	\$9,019.96	\$55,163.85

Appendix B
 Visitation Information

The Lake Jackson Historical Museum is by far the best attended site of the Association’s 3 sites, usually receiving between 6000 and 8000 visitors a year. The attendance numbers are captured using a visitor sign in book and a greeter entered log. The two methods are checked against each other at the end of each day, and again when monthly totals are tallied and reported.

In order to see how the LJHM’s attendance compares locally, the Executive Director requested information from area museums and Sea Center Texas. The request was informal in nature, and sought annual attendance from 2010 to 2014 and capture method. Organizations contacted included:

- Alvin Historical Museum
- The Center for the Arts & Sciences
- Freeport Historical Museum
- Brazoria County Historical Museum
- Brazoria Historical Museum
- Brazosport Museum of Natural Science
- Sea Center Texas

Sea Center Texas, Brazosport Museum of Natural Science, and Brazoria County Historical Museum responded at least in part. A table of reported annual attendance is below.

Annual Attendance 2005-2014

Year	LJHM	Sea Center	BCHM	BMNS
2005	6118			
2006	6353			11073
2007	6222			
2008	6303			11734
2009	6851	54144		10789
2010	7272	55468		12929
2011	8367	56260		12296
2012	7569	61066		11951
2013		57371		11446
2014	7316	54585	4741	10584

The Brazosport Museum of Natural Science and Brazoria County Historical Museum both reported using a sign in book and greeter tally/log to capture visitation numbers and additional data such as where visitors are from. Both institutions regarded the greeter tally as the more accurate source and did not report cross checking the two. Sea Center Texas reported using a visitor log in book.