



Keokuk Union Depot Foundation
P.O. Box 463
Keokuk, Iowa 52632

September 25, 2018

Thomas M. Jeffris, President
The Jeffris Family Foundation
P.O. Box 1160
Janesville, WI 53547-1160

Dear Tom,

Bob and I thoroughly enjoyed meeting you in Janesville—at last, after working together for almost five years!

We mentioned that Jeffris Family Foundation grant requirements were instrumental in making the Depot roof restoration a success.

Most importantly, the challenge grant itself provided a huge incentive for the community to respond to the capital campaign with the urgency and enthusiasm that it needed. That a prestigious historic preservation organization from out of state had selected the Keokuk Union Depot as one of a handful of projects to support was very helpful in convincing the local public of the value of our preservation endeavors.

The rigorous, professional analysis that was required to qualify for a Jeffris grant ensured that the project was thoroughly planned with realistic expense estimates:

- The Historic Structure Report focused us on the Depot's history and architectural significance early in the grant application process. This focus sharpened our later educational and funding presentations throughout the project. It was critical to educate the community about the importance of and potential for the building, which had long been neglected and taken for granted. By setting out a detailed 10 to 15-year restoration plan, we were able to demonstrate a well-reasoned goal for use of the building. Moreover, by securing the support of professionals in historic preservation, we had a handy collection of documents to call upon to buttress other grant applications.
- We provided copies of the HSR to the Keokuk Public Library, Keokuk City Hall, and several local foundations, and made the report available on our web site. We brought a copy of it to all presentations about the Depot, whether one-on-one or in groups. Our audience was always impressed by the obvious thoroughness and expertise with which the project was planned. We refer potential donors to it even

Keokuk Union Depot Foundation

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The Keokuk Union Depot Foundation is a tax-exempt charitable organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code

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today. Although construction cost updates will be necessary for future phases of the restoration, the HSR continues to serve as the roadmap for the Depot's full restoration.

Having to demonstrate our capacity to meet the match requirement was a daunting challenge:

- The \$1 million Depot 125 Capital Campaign would be by far the largest capital campaign ever attempted in the community.
- We met with potential donors and local foundation representatives to explain the proposed project and gauge the willingness of individuals and local banks, businesses and foundations to support the project. We asked these potential donors what range of giving they might consider and made it clear that we needed to have their responses just to qualify for the Jeffris challenge grant. Later, we used this information as the basis for carefully identifying potential donors and grant sources. Nearly all who had provided a range prior to official commencement of the capital campaign gave at least that amount!
- We identified potential donors at giving levels of \$1,000 to \$100,000, with more names at each level than would be necessary to reach the match. The donor pyramid that we developed during this process served as a useful tool when meeting with donors once the capital campaign began. We worked our way through the list of prospects. We showed them a simple version of the pyramid without names and asked if they would consider a gift at an appropriate level. It made the "ask" easier—we had a well-defined goal and they could help meet it in a clear way.

The timing of the major steps required for the capital campaign contributed to our success:

- Having to demonstrate the ability to raise the match jump-started interest in the restoration project and ensured we started with a detailed plan and with people who could execute it.
- After receiving the grant, we were able to go back to major potential donors immediately to ask for their donations or pledges. We did so at the celebration that we scheduled to receive notice of the grant. The distribution of pledge/gift forms at this event and throughout the capital campaign enabled us to obtain names, mail and email addresses, phone numbers, and preferences for recognition or anonymity. By doing so we developed an impressive donor list that will serve us well in future fund-raising.
- The monthly reports to the Jeffris Family Foundation of our fund-raising progress gave us incentive to have meaningful progress as we went along and helped with progress reports to donors.
- Also key to our success in meeting the match was your approval of our starting various phases of the roof restoration project before we met the full match. Specifically, this approval enabled us to structure two separate successful grant requests to the State of Iowa, thus maximizing the state funding obtained. The actual construction work was going to require three annual construction seasons and we were able to do the first two years' work on a schedule that made sense without waiting until we had earned the Jeffris grant. The early commencement and completion of these two phases demonstrated to the community that the project was feasible, encouraged existing donors to contribute additional funds, prompted new donors, and converted former sceptics to actual contributors. The news coverage of our progress was great free publicity!
- We developed a loyal following of donors to the project, evidenced by the fact that during this first year after the official end of the capital campaign 100 of our approximately 400 capital campaign donors have made contributions for improvements and maintenance of the building. In addition, the local foundations

who participated in the capital campaign have awarded grants for a fire detection and alarm system to be installed soon.

The success of the Depot's capital campaign has spurred several other local organizations to implement sizable capital campaigns using the Depot's fund-raising model.

- The Depot's success has reinvigorated efforts to revive Keokuk's riverfront, where the Depot is located, including construction of a shelter building, landscaping, and a sculpture area. A trail head along the riverfront is also being discussed.
- A museum devoted to the century-old dam and power plant is well underway.
- The library is raising funds for an outdoor park and media area.
- The community foundation has embarked upon a capital campaign to shore up its grant endowment fund.
- The YMCA is improving its facilities and programs.

The leaders of these projects point to the Depot as their inspiration, contributing to an increasingly optimistic spirit in the community.

Keokuk is a better place thanks to the vision of the Jeffris Family Foundation.

Sincerely,



Janet Smith
President, Keokuk Union Depot Foundation



Robert Woodburn
Secretary, Keokuk Union Depot Foundation

BY MAIL AND EMAIL