

## Communication Plan for The Edgewood Museum in Edgewood, IA

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Museums in a Digital World | Department of Anthropology Museum Studies Program

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# The Edgewood Museum

## Communications Plan

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**Original report by:**

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This report is appended to include additional recommendations from reports by other student groups in the class. Additional information is noted with the word “appended” and was obtained through online website created by each group as part of the class project. Individual group work can be viewed by visiting:

<https://padlet.com/HeidiLung/FinalEdgewoodProject>

# The Edgewood Museum

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The community of Edgewood, located in Northeastern Iowa, has come together to establish a community museum. The museum will be housed in the historic Edgewood Feed Mill building and will feature exhibitions composed of items from community members as well as loaned items from neighboring community museums.



# Museum Mission

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- To bring local history and culture to life for the Edgewood area and community.
- To archive documents, photographs, artifacts, etc. for historic and genealogic research.
- To cultivate creativity, critical thinking, and spark conversation in the community.

# Communications Plan

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# Plan Goals

- The main goal of this communication plan is to create a dialogue within Edgewood and the surrounding community about the museum.
- We hope to encourage active community participation in donating collection items and building exhibitions.



# Target Audiences

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- The Edgewood museum hopes to reach the surrounding community and those who currently or have previously lived in the Edgewood area. The museum also hopes to draw in tourists and those who may not be from the area.
- The museum will strive to reach those of all ages and social standings.
- Residents within a one-hour radius will be a key target audience (appended)

# Key Themes (appended)

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- A “Heritage” theme will include connecting local individuals to the history of their families and connecting local individuals to past traditions that were carried out by Edgewood residents. We suggest enacting this messaging through using phrases such as “Connect. Learn. Reminisce.” and “Your Heritage is Waiting”
- A “History” theme will focus on sharing the geographical, social, and political history of the Edgewood area. Phrasing here may include “fun facts” about the Edgewood area, posts of historical objects, and things like “Making history FUN!” and “The more we know, the more we want to learn.” to encourage curiosity and learning. This message stresses the importance of keeping the history of our community alive.

# Social Media - Facebook

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- The Edgewood Museum is currently using a Facebook page to update the community on building and fundraising progress.
  - As the museum grows, this Facebook page should grow with it.
  - Communication with the community is key to the museum's success. Keeping the community updated on exhibits, special events, and volunteer opportunities will help the museum to grow.
  - Encouraging visitors to 'check in' to the museum and share photos of their visit will provide exposure to a larger audience and bring in new visitors.

# Social Media – Facebook (appended)

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- Consider combining the Edgewood History Facebook and Edgewood Museum Facebook pages with multiple administrators (e.g. Art and Bart).
- Use recurring posts such as 'Trivia Tuesday' where the museum posts a fun trivia question about the town.
- Curate twice-weekly images with accompanying articles written by Edgewood staff. These posts should be on general topics and incorporate the themes of history and heritage.
- Check out [Post Planner's ways to boost your engagement on Facebook](#)

# Social Media – Facebook (appended)

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- Facebook feature “Go Live” allows the museum to have video bursts of information when important and exciting things are happening at the museum
- Use Facebook “Live” to encourage the audience to share posts and engage in “live” videos, which will help the museum reach a larger audience. During live broadcasts, audience members can ask questions in real time and get small virtual tours of the museum.

# Other Social Media

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- In addition to Facebook, Edgewood would benefit from creating an Instagram and/or Twitter account.
  - These would reach an even larger audience by broadening the online presence of the museum. Facebook has become a tool for older audiences, so utilizing Twitter and Instagram will help the museum reach younger crowds.
  - Photos posted to Instagram can be shared and cross posted to the Twitter and Facebook accounts ensuring that more people see them.
  - Each of these platforms has a sharing feature which followers can use to spread the posts even further.

# Other Social Media (appended)

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- Instagram
  - Instagram will allow the museum to highlight individual objects or photos to have specific conversations with their audiences.
  - Curate Instagram posts at least once a week detailing an object in the collections. The Facebook and twitter would get these pictures in addition to updates about what is happening at the museum.
- Twitter
  - Twitter will allow the museum to be more interactive, as there are more ways to respond to a comment than a written reply or a like, for example through a re-tweet or the use of gifs.
- Snapchat
  - Snapchat can be adapted to provide an inner look into collections or new exhibit spaces, a method The Field Museum of Chicago, IL utilizes.

# Other Social Media (appended)

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- YouTube
  - The museum could begin a web series on YouTube where museum staff, volunteers, local community members, and visitors to the museum talk for 5 to 7 minutes about their relation to a certain piece of the collection or the history that the museum is representing. This would provide a more personal connection with the museum for those that share their stories and those that know them. Additionally, these videos could eventually be incorporated into the museum itself, which would provide a more fun avenue of receiving information than simply having a docent recite facts or reading various text panels.
- Creating these sites and giving them all a similar username will allow for ease of transition between platforms and help visitors easily track down all forms of social media.
- “Like” and “Follow” other museums/institutions to build more connections

# Social Media (appended)

## Social Media Post Examples



**The Edgewood Museum** @EdgewoodMus

Come check out the historic Edgewood Sherrif's badge we just added to our collection! #EdgewoodMuseum

Reply Retweet Favorite More

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**The Edgewood Museum** @EdgewoodMus

Trivia Tuesday: Edgewood was formally incorporated in 1892, but there were city council meetings held before that. #TriviaTuesday #EdgewoodMuseum



**The Edgewood Museum**

**PHASE ONE GOAL**

\$80,000

70  
60  
50  
40  
30

EDGEWOOD MUSEUM

With Christmas right around the corner we have almost reached our fundraising goal! All the while we should be able to reach our goal of opening in June! #edgewoodmuseum #fundraising

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**The Edgewood Museum**

John Richards just dropped off this photo of the Edgewood Standard Oil gas station from the 1950s for us to add to our collections. Come see us when we... more



**The Edgewood Museum**

Friday is Trivia Day!  
What year was Edgewood officially made into a town?  
a) 1870  
b) 1892  
c) 1900  
d) 1920

Like · Comment · 9 minutes ago · 🌐

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**The Edgewood Museum**

Special shout out to @John Doe for his donation this week helping us move one step closer to our goal!

Like · Comment · 9 minutes ago · 🌐

👍 4 people like this.

# Museum Website

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- The Edgewood Museum would do well to create a dedicated website separate from social media platforms.
- The website would have essential museum information such as location, directions, hours of operation, special events and volunteer opportunities.
- This website, which could be created using the Past Perfect software, would include digital examples of collection items.
- The website would also include a section with information on the history of the museum as well as goals for the future.
- The website would include a section on monetary and collections donations for community members, organizations, and other small museums.

# Museum Website

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- The website, in conjunction with Past Perfect software, could include a sign up for a mailing list for those interested in regular updates on the museum.
- As opposed to a Facebook or Twitter account, a dedicated website would be more customizable to the needs of the museum.
- In order to create and update this website, Edgewood would need to choose whether to hire web developers or reach out to volunteers in the community with the appropriate skills.
- The Social Media team and board member would also be in charge of the website.
- The [Marion Heritage Center](#) website is an example of an effective website created by a similar small museum

# Newsletters (appended)

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- Online and paper newsletters to interested visitors and donors offer a more personal method of communicating with the public. Newsletters can be utilized to encourage donations from visitors, publicize upcoming events, and highlight certain exhibit pieces.
- Including the social media handles of the Museum in newsletters that are sent out
- Provide opportunities on the website and at the sign-in at the museum for people to subscribe to the newsletter
- You can also repurpose this email newsletter as a physical brochure. Post them in public places in Edgewood and surrounding towns to gain even more exposure.

# Newsletters (appended)

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- Resources for learning and implementation:
  - [How to Create an Email Newsletter](#)
  - [5 Uses for Your Newsletter](#)

# Crowdsourcing (appended)

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- Crowdsourcing is a way to further involve social media users in both history and heritage by engaging the people of Edgewood in discussions about their community while also gaining information for the museum. Crowdsourcing should include posting pictures and asking followers if they know anything about the people or events in the photos.
- To kick start participation in the museum, Edgewood can ask the community if they have any personal and family historical items of museum quality that should be displayed.
- Resources for learning and implementation:
  - [Crowdsourcing and Crowdfunding Explained](#) (YouTube video)

# Administration

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- Who will run the accounts?
  - A member of the board of directors will be the administrator of the accounts, having the ultimate say of what posts are acceptable and how information is shared.
  - Along with that member, a small group of volunteers will put together posts, share photos, and create updates on events and exhibits.
  - The board member and volunteers will meet regularly to go over social media content and discuss what is working and what is not. They will work together to keep the accounts updated and effective.

# Action Plan

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How will we implement these steps in the coming months?

- Before Museum Opening

- Edgewood board members and staff decide on whether to hire a website developer or seek out skilled volunteers to build a website, using Past Perfect software as applicable.
  - Edgewood board members appoint a Social Media team made up of volunteers and staff members.
  - Social Media team and website developers create and establish an online presence.
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- Within the First Six Months:

- Board of Directors set a goal for a desired number of visitors to the museum per month.
  - Reach that goal by having social media drawings for reduced admission costs
  - Hold and advertise special events to draw more first-time visitors.
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- Within the First Year:

- Keep guests coming back by continuing to update the collection.
- Regularly change exhibits.
  - Interactive exhibits are encouraged as they may draw in different age groups.
- Encourage word-of-mouth promotion as well as keep online presence active and updated.

# Looking Ahead...

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- As the museum grows, continue to keep community involvement active by keeping the online presence active.
  - Encourage donations or loans of collections items from community members and nearby institutions.
- As collection and staff size grow, look into integrating more technology into exhibits.
  - Use technology to create more interactive exhibits.
  - Collaborate with community learning organizations to create new types of events and exhibits.
- Encourage visitors to share ideas for museum growth, exhibits, and events.
  - This gives community members a sense of ownership in the museum and can create more interest in visiting and in donations.
- Annually or Bi-Annually revisit museum goals, action plans, and mission statements to remain current and ensure goals are being met.

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Thank You!

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