

Historic Southwest Ohio Welcomes a New Executive Director for the Heritage Village

William J. Dichtl has joined the Heritage Village Museum as the new Executive Director, effective April 6th. The Board of Directors of HSO approved this appointment at a Special Board Meeting, March 14th.

Bill brings over twenty-five years of historical museum experience to the Village leadership position, in all aspects of museum management and operations.

Since 2000, and until he accepted this new opportunity, he served as Director of the Ohio County Historical Society and its museum in Rising Sun, Indiana. In addition to the normal museum executive duties of fundraising, developing programs and managing collections, he oversaw significant building renovation which virtually re-made the museum into one that the Rising Sun/Ohio County community is proud of. He created its unique J. W. Whitlock Exhibit Gallery, which features the 1920's Hoosier Boy Hydroplane Race Boat. Bill also worked closely with community leaders and local businesses not only to obtain sponsorship donations, but also in an effort to improve their downtown area. In addition, he has initiated cooperative ventures with other Southeast Indiana museums, for which his efforts have been recognized at the state level.

Prior to his tenure in Rising Sun, Bill worked with the Tippecanoe County Historical Association in Lafayette, Indiana for fourteen years. During that time he held several positions including manager of the Fowler House Museum. He also had been Curator of Exhibits refurbishing the Battle of Tippecanoe Museum and managing various traveling exhibits. Early on he had served as Assistant Curator of Education creating new exhibits and running summer programs. In that position, Bill also provided program oversight for the Association's major fundraising event, the Feast of the Hunters' Moon, that welcomed over 4,000 re-enactors and 60,000 guests.

Bill holds a Master of Arts in Historical Administration from Eastern Illinois University and a Masters Degree in History from Northeastern Illinois University. While in university, he was an active volunteer, docent and researcher at the Chicago Historical Society as well as the Des Plaines Historical Society; and, he completed an internship at Kline Creek Farm, a living history farm near Chicago.

"William has achieved many accomplishments in his museum career and, combined with his broad experience, he brings great hope for the future of Heritage Village Museum," says HSO Board President, Wayne Purinton. Wayne also thanks the Search Committee, led by Carolyn Nightingale, which had been working diligently for many months to find a director who would not only be a good fit for the Village but also provide strong positive leadership.

Bill and his wife Julie, who is Development Director for Butler County Big Brothers and Big Sisters, live in Fairfield, Ohio. His daughter Lauren is a senior at Fairfield High School and his son Zachary is a seventh-grader at Fairfield Middle School. In his spare time, Bill enjoys reading, gardening, traveling, and is a member of the Bell River Vintage Base Ball Team.

Members and friends will have an opportunity to meet and chat with Bill at the HSO Annual Meeting on Wednesday, May 25th. The pre-meeting reception is at 5:30pm, followed by the meeting at 6:00pm.