**Tar River Center for History and Culture Strategic Plan, 2014-2017**

**Mission Statement**

The Tar River Center for History and Culture (TRCHC) works with local governments, private organizations, educational institutions, and individuals to develop the Upper Tar River region's historical and cultural assets, to foster economic development through heritage tourism, and to promote knowledge of the region’s rich history and culture. The center’s work will focus on Edgecombe, Franklin, Granville, Halifax, Nash, Vance, and Warren counties.

To carry out this mission, the TRCHC will pursue the following goals and objectives:

**Goal 1**

Promote knowledge of the Upper Tar River region’s history and culture.

***Objective 1***

Continue writing the semi-monthly column, “Tar River Roots,” in *The Franklin Times* and making each article available on the Web site of the TRCHC. To the extent possible, produce articles that reflect the connectedness of counties in the Upper Tar River region. Begin a monthly column in one other newspaper in the region (e.g., *Daily Dispatch* (Henderson) or *Warren Record* (Warrenton).

***Timeline***

*Franklin Times* column: Ongoing.

Additional newspaper: Develop an agreement by December 2014.

***Resources Required***

Staff time.

***Criteria for Success***

At least twenty articles per year are published in *The Franklin Times* and added to the Web site of the TRCHC; beginning in January 2015, 12 columns per year are published in an additional newspaper in the region and added to the Web site of the TRCHC.

***Objective 2***

Sponsor an annual lecture series consisting of at least four presentations of a historical or cultural nature. To the extent possible, the presentations should have some connection with the history and culture of the Upper Tar River region. Seek corporate sponsorship to defray the cost of the lectures. Designate one lecture per year as the “Joseph E. Elmore Lecture.” Expand publicity for the series by obtaining permission to use the mailing lists of other cultural organizations in the region.

***Timeline***

Ongoing. During the 2014-2015 academic year, the lecture series will focus on the period of settlement in the Upper Tar River region, with lectures pertaining to the geology and geography of the region, native Americans, transportation, settlement patterns, and cultural history. If the town of Louisburg is interested, at one of the lectures an early canoe owned by the Town of Louisburg will be displayed.

***Resources Required***

$2,500 per year, supplied by corporate sponsorship.

***Criteria for Success***

Four lectures are held each academic year. At least sixty people attend each lecture. Corporate sponsorship defrays the cost of the series. Two area cultural organizations agree to share their mailing lists.

***Objective 3***

With the assistance of Louisburg College’s webmaster, develop an online cultural events calendar for the Upper Tar River region and add this to the Web site of the TRCHC. Establish contacts with cultural organizations in all counties within the Upper Tar River region and receive from their representatives information about upcoming events. Update the calendar regularly and publicize its availability.

***Timeline***

Identify cultural organizations in early 2014 and determine the level of interest in the calendar; work with webmaster in summer of 2014 to develop the calendar and an online form for submission of news; launch and publicize calendar in August 2014. During first two months of operation, gauge need for volunteer to assist with updates.

***Resources Required***

Staff time.

***Criteria for Success***

Calendar is developed and added to the TRCHC Web site by August 2014. During the first year of its operation, calendar includes news from at least six organizations throughout the TRCHC’s service area. During the second year of operation, at least ten organizations representing all of the counties in the region regularly submit entries for the calendar.

***Objective 4***

With the assistance of the Louisburg College webmaster, establish a Facebook page for the TRCHC.

***Timeline***

Page is established by August 2014 and updated at least two times per month.

***Resources Required***

Staff time.

***Criteria for Success***

Page is established by August 2014 and updated at least twice a month. By the end of the first year, at least 100 users “like” the page.

***Objective 5***

Provide local history resources to enhance the fourth- and eighth-grade social studies curricula in the Franklin County Schools.

***Timeline***

Meet with Dr. Peggy McGhee, a retired educator, in the summer of 2014 to develop a proposal for consideration by the superintendent of the Franklin County Schools. The proposal would involve the use of presentations and articles already developed by the TRCHC, but might include additional initiatives. If the school system approves the proposal, develop electronic course materials for use beginning in the fall of 2015. The materials could be explained in a teacher workshop scheduled during the summer of 2015.

***Resources Required***

Staff time.

***Criteria for Success***

Proposal is developed and approved during the summer of 2014. Materials are developed and explained at a workshop held during the summer of 2015

***Objective 6***

Develop portable exhibit(s) pertaining to key aspects of the history of Franklin County for use within the Franklin County school system.

***Timeline***

Meet with professors in the public history program at North Carolina State University in the early fall of 2014 to discuss the possibility of hiring an intern from the program to develop the exhibit(s) during the summer of 2015. In the fall of 2014, meet with social studies teachers in the Franklin County Schools to discover subject matter that would be especially useful to the teachers. During the 2014-2015 academic year, seek grant funding to hire a graduate student intern from North Carolina State University during the summer of 2015. Supervise the intern during the summer of 2015 and meet with school officials early in the fall of 2015 to give them the exhibit(s).

***Resources Required***

Staff time. Perhaps $5,000 provided by the school system, a corporate sponsor, or a grant.

***Criteria for Success***

An exhibit or exhibits are developed during the summer of 2015 and distributed to the Franklin County school system in the early fall of 2015.

***Objective 7***

Conduct an oral history project concerning changes in Franklin County since the Great Depression; sponsor a public program to highlight the findings; transcribe the interviews and make them available online.

***Timeline***

Form a steering committee and hold a workshop on oral history fundamentals in the spring of 2014; plan the program during the summer of 2014; using volunteers, conduct 10 interviews during the fall of 2014; transcribe interviews during the winter of 2015; hold public program in 2015; mount transcribed interviews on Web site of TRCHC during 2016.

***Resources Required***

Mini grant of $1,200 from North Carolina Humanities Council and a $500 grant from the North Caroliniana Society will be used to purchase a digital recorder, fund keynote speaker stipend, and pay for transcription of 10 interviews. Staff time will be used to organize program and to mount transcribed interviews on the TRCHC Web site.

***Criteria for Success***

Steering Committee is formed and workshop is during spring of 2014; project is planned during summer of 2014; 10 interviews are conducted during fall of 2014; at least 60 people attend public program held during 2015; all 10 interview transcripts are mounted on the Web site of the TRCHC during 2016.

**Goal 2**

Promote heritage tourism.

***Objective 8***

Assist in the organization of a comprehensive survey of the historic architecture of Franklin County.

***Timeline***

Winter of 2014: organize a meeting to be attended by county officials, members of the Person Place Preservation Society, and a representative of the State Historic Preservation Office, to discuss the benefits and feasibility of the survey. If the county sponsors the survey, the director of the Tar River Center for History and Culture will assist the consultant hired to conduct the survey by organizing volunteers who can assist with information gathering.

***Resources Required***

Staff time.

***Criteria for Success***

Meeting is held with county officials, members of the Person Place Preservation Society, and an official of the State Historic Preservation Office during the winter of 2014. County commits to the survey during 2014. Consultant is hired and begins survey in 2015. Director of TRCHC assists by forming a committee to assist the consultant with making local contacts and collecting information about historic properties.

***Objective 9***

Contact appropriate organizations in Vance County to encourage sponsorship of a comprehensive survey of the architecture of Vance County.

***Timeline***

Contacts will be made once funding has been allocated and a consultant is hired to conduct the Franklin County survey (2015).

***Resources Required***

Staff time

***Criteria for Success***

An organization in Vance County agrees to pursue funding for a comprehensive survey of historic architecture in Vance County.

***Objective 10***

Publish and make available a walking tour brochure to Louisburg’s historic district.

***Timeline***

A committee is formed during the winter of 2014 to choose properties, write descriptions, and take photographs for the brochure. With images and text completed, TRCHC director seeks design and printing estimates in early summer of 2014. Grant proposal for funding is submitted to Franklin County Tourism Development Authority by August 31, 2014. Brochure is printed by October 31, 2014. Distribution takes place in November 2014.

***Resources Required***

Staff time and possibly $1,000 in matching funds to demonstrate commitment to the TDA.

***Criteria for Success***

Brochure is printed and distributed to appropriate outlets (Chamber of Commerce, Interstate rest areas, Louisburg Town Hall, public libraries, etc.) by end of November 2014.

***Objective 11***

If the comprehensive survey of Franklin County’s historic architecture is completed, develop and distribute a driving tour brochure of historic architecture of Franklin County, with insets for the towns of Franklinton, Youngsville, and Bunn. Utilize TDA grant for most of cost. Mount online version on Web sites of Franklin County, Greater Franklin County Chamber of Commerce, and Tar River Center for History and Culture.

***Timeline***

2017

***Resources Required***

Staff time and possibly $1,000 to demonstrate commitment to the TDA.

***Criteria for Success***

Print and online versions of county driving tour brochure is made available by 2017.

***Objective 12***

Organize a Road Scholar program centered around historic mills and local food ways, to be held at Louisburg College, Franklin County, and the region. The program would be conducted in cooperation with the Ben Franklin Society.

***Timeline***

Begin planning in the early summer of 2014; propose program to Road Scholars program with a view toward having the program during the summer of 2016.

***Resources Required***

Staff time; presumably, costs would be covered by registration. Louisburg College would need to provide housing and transportation (vans) for participants.

***Criteria for Success***

Program is held during the summer of 2016 and at least 15 people participate; evaluations are predominately positive.

***Objective 13***

With the assistance of volunteers, establish regular guided tours of Louisburg’s historic district, the Person Place, and the permanent exhibit on the second floor of the Franklin Male Academy building.

***Timeline***

In the winterof 2014-2015, after the walking tour brochures for the Louisburg Historic District are available, hold a training session for a group of volunteers who are willing to commit one Saturday morning a month to give walking tours. Through public service announcements and paid advertisements, advertise the tour in regional media and begin to offer them the first Saturday of April 2015.

***Resources Required***

Staff time; grant funding from Franklin County Tourism Development Authority to pay for advertisements in regional media.

***Criteria for Success***

Walking tours are offered monthly beginning in April of 2015, excepting the months of December, January, and February. An average of five, people participate in each tour.

***Objective 14***

If the tours meet expectations, the TRCHC will contract with a public relations firm to produce a short video on the history of Louisburg and Franklin County, to be shown in the Franklin Academy building at the beginning of each tour and included on the Web site of the TRCHC.

***Timeline***

The film is developed and produced during the 2016-2017 fiscal year and is available for use by June 1, 2017.

***Resources Required***

Time of staff and volunteers for research and writing; $10,000 for production of video, provided by corporate sponsor or grant funding.

***Criteria for Success***

Funds are secured and the video is ready for use by June 1, 2017.

**Goal 3**

Foster long-term financial stability of the TRCHC.

***Objective 15***

Work with the Tar River Center for History and Culture Foundation to identify sponsors who would provide financial support to the foundation for the ongoing operation of the TRCHC. Have an annual banquet featuring a well-known speaker, to raise funds. Seek endowment funds from individuals, foundations, and corporations.

***Timeline***

Gauge interest in the idea of sponsorships at the time the initial meeting of the TRCHC Foundation in May 2014. Pursue funding on an ongoing basis.

**Resources Required**

Staff and volunteer time.

***Criteria for Success***

TRCHC Foundation considers this concept at its May 2014 meeting and decides whether to pursue this objective. At least $50,000 is raised for an endowment by December 2016.

**Goal 4**

In cooperation with county and local officials in Franklin County, undertake planning to assess the best means of developing a repository for collecting, preserving, displaying, and providing access to family and local history materials documenting Franklin County and the Upper Tar River region.

***Objective 16***

Relying to the extent possible on staff and officials of such organizations as the State Library of North Carolina, the North Carolina State Archives, the Society of North Carolina Archivists, the North Carolina Genealogical Society, and the North Carolina Museums Council, but also on paid consultants if necessary, carefully consider the feasibility of developing such a repository.

***Timeline***

2017

***Resources Required***

Staff time and grant funding of perhaps $10,000.

***Criteria for Success***

With the participation of county and town officials, a study is conducted in 2017 that clearly addresses the feasibility of developing a family and local history repository for Franklin County and the Upper Tar River region.

**Goal 5**

In addition to pursuing the objectives above that enhance the quality of life for people in Franklin County and Louisburg, serve as a consultant to Franklin County and Town of Louisburg as needed.

***Objective 17***

Respond to requests made by local governments for information and assistance in matters relating to the history and culture of Franklin County.

***Timeline***

Ongoing

***Resources Required***

Staff Time

***Criteria for Success***

Requests are addressed in a timely manner as they are made.

**Assessment of Resources**

***Cash, Equipment, and Facilities***

Annual funding provided by Louisburg College

Financial assistance provided by Franklin County and Town of Louisburg

Office space, office furniture, computer and printing equipment, computer support, telephone service, maintenance support, and housekeeping services provided by Louisburg College

Storage space in Cecil W. Robbins library provided by Louisburg College

Use of Louisburg College vehicles for travel

Use of Louisburg College facilities and audio-visual equipment for public events

Resources of the Cecil W. Robbins Library at Louisburg College and of other local libraries

***Human Resources***

Board members of the Tar River Center for History and Culture Foundation, Inc.

Citizens in Franklin and surrounding counties who have expressed interest in the work of the TRCHC

Citizens who have offered to volunteer on behalf of the TRCHC

The publisher of *The Franklin Times* and other newspaper publishers in the region

County and municipal officials

Local cultural organizations, including arts councils, preservations groups, and the Ben Franklin Society.

Staff of the Greater Franklin County Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Development Authority

Staff of the North Carolina Division of Tourism, Film, and Sports Development

Corporate officials and business people who may wish to sponsor activities and events