

Falls of the Ohio pushes for upgrades to Center in Clarksville

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October 23, 2008 02:10 pm

— Clarksville's Falls of the Ohio State Park is looking to update exhibits at its Interpretive Center within the next few years.

A fundraising drive, with a goal of approximately \$2.5 million, is under way, according to Dani Cummins, executive director of the Falls of the Ohio Foundation.

The Interpretive Center exhibits — pictures, placards and the like — have been in place for the last 15 years or so, Cummins said. The typical lifespan of a museum exhibit is about 10 to 15 years.

Currently, she said, the updates are still in the planning phase, so ideas for what's to come are still being generated.

"We want to make (the exhibits) more interactive and immersive," she said, likely using newer technology and "getting away from looking at text panels and pictures."

Foundation members are also talking about opening up new spaces with renovations. The control room behind the theater, for example, could be opened up as a walkway because newer technology would omit the need for it.

"We'd even like to add onto the building," she said.

Officials hope to have the design phase of the project started by next year. Ideally, she said, the improved Interpretive Center would be up and running by the summer of 2010. However, it all depends on how long it takes to raise the needed funds.

The James Graham Brown Foundation, of Louisville, has offered the falls a \$500,000 challenge grant. That means if officials can raise \$500,000, the foundation would match it, Cummins explained.

Earlier this week, the Clark County Convention and Tourism Bureau agreed to provide \$200,000 toward that goal.

"We've been involved with helping fund components of the Interpretive Center since the early 1980s," said Jim Keith, the bureau's executive director.

He said the Interpretive Center frequently attracts visitors in the area. And the fact that a matching grant has been offered makes it even more of a worthy cause to give.

"That's what really makes it exciting," he said.

Cummins said the bureau's grant was helpful and noted that other local organizations — Horseshoe Foundation of Floyd County and the Paul Ogle Foundation — have also provided donations.

The Interpretive Center is located at Falls of the Ohio State Park, 201 West Riverside Drive in Clarksville.

WANT TO HELP?

Those interested in donating
to the Falls of the Ohio

Foundation's fundraising drive can contact Dani Cummins at (812) 283-4999

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