Chapter Newsletter Archive Proposal

The Advisory Council requested a proposal be brought forth to permit the storage and public access to Chapter newsletters so they may be shared with other Chapters and members in the NRHS. NRHS management has concerns about the feasibility of sharing newsletters since that would devalue Chapter membership by giving away for free a primary Chapter member benefit. It also poses some logistical challenges in presenting the information. A massive list of Chapters and PDF files is not very visually appealing and becomes time consuming to maintain. Finally, only a subset of information contained in Chapter newsletters is of interest to those outside the Chapter.

Management would like to propose a slightly different approach to share Chapter articles that would be of interest to an expanded audience. National will setup a branded web site built on a blogging platform called WordPress. Chapter representatives will have the ability to author articles as a blog entry. National will review each submitted entry to ensure the content is appropriate and to perform basic editing (spelling, grammar, etc.). The hope is that the blog could generate several articles per week. Blog entries – or articles - would focus on new equipment acquisitions, completed preservation projects, progress reports on preservation projects in process, artifacts that a Chapter is advocating for preservation, a recent addition to library collections, or similar topics. Topics that would not be appropriate including: editorials on Chapter and National topics, Chapter meetings (board, membership, banquets, etc.), trip reports, and announcements of interest only to individual Chapters (meeting cancelation notifications, Chapter elections, Chapter event information, etc.).

The concept behind this is that there will be a chronological collection of Chapter articles on topics that are of interest to others – the public and within the NRHS - that is accessible to the public and can further the mission and objectives of both the Chapter and National NRHS. Articles would consist of text and images. The inspiration for this idea came from an organization called Hidden City Philadelphia. (http://hiddencityphila.org/). To quote their site:

"The Hidden City Daily, our online publication, fosters public dialogue by exploring the intersection of people and place, and the tension between the past and the possible future. The Daily publishes 10-12 posts a week (Monday through Friday) that cover planning, preservation, architecture and design, along with articles that explore the city's history."

The costs associated with this effort will include:
- Website Design Estimate (one-time cost) - $1,500
- Website Technical Development Estimate (one-time cost) - $5,000
- Monthly Hosting Estimate - $100 / year
- Domain Registration - $15 /year

Timing needs to be determined based on existing business priorities, but NRHS management feels that the site could be operation in 6-12 months from the time the Board authorizes the funds.

The Board needs to consider a few additional questions related to this proposal and its implementation.
- How confident are we that this product will be used if National makes the investment in creating it?
- Is this offered for free to all Chapter, including those who have dropped the requirement of National membership?
- Do we have reliable volunteers to perform the editing and moderating functions to create a quality product? Will we need to pay for these services?
- Where does this fit in the list of projects in front of the organization: preservation site, dues renewal system, etc?