

**BONANZAVILLE U.S.A. BLUE RIBBON PANEL
REPORT TO
THE CASS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

September 19, 1990

West Fargo, North Dakota

**BONANZAVILLE U.S.A. BLUE RIBBON PANEL
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ORDER OF PRESENTATION

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BONANZAVILLE U.S.A. BLUE RIBBON PANEL

REPORT TO

THE CASS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SECTION I. INTRODUCTION

Members of the Cass County Commission and the Cass County Historical Society Board of Directors developed a plan for establishing a Blue Ribbon Panel during the Spring of 1990. The panel was asked to examine the general questions of the mission and purpose of Bonanzaville U.S.A., and to develop policy statements and recommendations for implementation of a long range plan for the facility. The following persons were appointed to serve on the panel:

George Pratt, Chairman	
Charles Bailly	Harriett Light
Donna Chalimonczyk	Clark Richards
Irene Fraser	Wayne Solberg
Dan Gust	Basil Walker
Michael Gustafson	Victor Welk

Elizabeth Iken served as recorder for the Panel. The Panel began meeting early in May, and met approximately weekly throughout the summer. Most meetings were devoted to interviews with a wide range of people who were interested in Bonanzaville. Final meetings were devoted to preparation of the report that follows.

SECTION II. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF BONANZAVILLE U.S.A.

The Cass County Historical Society was started by the Daughters of the Dakota Pioneers in a small school building in Fargo to preserve historical artifacts and data. The museum was later moved to Minard Hall at North Dakota State University. In 1966, The Red River Valley Fair moved its headquarters to a site at West Fargo. They made a request that the Historical Society move to the Fairground location and build a Pioneer Village. They were seeking an attraction that would utilize the facilities of the fairgrounds more often than for just a fair. The Historical Pioneer Village named Bonanzaville U.S.A. resulted. The Bonanza farms of the early days of Cass County was the source of the name selected. Land for Bonanzaville U.S.A. was allocated by the Fair Board, and a mill levy was established by the Cass County Commission to help support the program. Since that time, a wide range of people having an interest in the history of Cass County and North Dakota contributed to a highly successful development of Bonanzaville U.S.A.

The growth and development of Bonanzaville U.S.A. can be measured in a number of ways. Approximately 50 buildings and other attractions are listed in the promotional material available from the Historical Society. Funding has grown to the point where the annual budget is in the range of about \$200,000 per year. Attendance totaled about 63,000 in 1989. Those attending come from all over the world. Comments on the quality of the displays are universally good. Annual attendance at Bonanzaville U.S.A. is exceeded in North Dakota only by the attendance at Medora. There are no incumbrances on the property of Bonanzaville U.S.A.

SECTION III. ISSUES CONSIDERED BY THE BLUE RIBBON PANEL

The Blue Ribbon Panel was created to evaluate a series of issues that were identified when major disagreements developed between a group of concerned Historical Society members, and the Board of Directors of the Society. The Cass County Commission was involved by the concerned Society members. Many issues were identified and discussed. Panel evaluation of the general areas are presented in the order they appear in the listing. The listing follows:

A. FOCUS

- tourism
- historical
- marketing efforts
- market share
- * - direction (museum or commercial)
- * - living up to CHS/Bonanzaville U.S.A. purpose
- advertising and distribution of information
- quality vs. quantity

B. ORGANIZATION AND LONG RANGE PLANNING

- * - submit a plan
- consider doing a nominal group process by/with the Board

C. ADMINISTRATION/MANAGEMENT

- committees that report at board meetings
- budgeting & goals
- fund raising
- grant writing
- membership
- * - accountability
- * - conform to standard accounting practices

D. LEGAL

- organizational structure
- relationships with the County
- personnel

E. LAND AND FEATURED ATTRACTIONS

- adequacy
- future purchases
- maintenance
- * - railroad (tracks and available land)

- * - buildings in general
- * - bulldozer, slab and building

F. CURATOR

- policies. Is there an existing policy?
- programming (schools, nursing homes)
- procurement of items
- retirement of items
- displays - a few good vs. many items, continued upgrading, signage, care
- preservation
- staff/volunteer training
- building adequacy (lighting, climate control, smoking, etc.)
- cataloguing
- theme, focus, exhibit integration (quality vs. quantity)
- get rid of "rummage sale" atmosphere ---> museum quality

G. SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP DUES

H. SMOKING POLICY

- * Motion by the County 9-25-89

SECTION IV. EVALUATION OF ISSUES CONSIDERED BY THE BLUE RIBBON PANEL

GENERAL PHILOSOPHY FOR DEALING WITH CONCERNS

Bonanzaville U.S.A. was founded through the Cass County Historical Society as an organization that developed its projects through the labor of volunteers. Today an Operations Manager and a Secretary are the only full time salaried employees. The remainder of the work is still carried out by part time and volunteer labor.

Current operating budgets are at a level of approximately \$200,000. About \$135,000 of this budget comes from admissions, lobby sales, Pioneer Days, and tax receipts. Most of the remainder comes from donations, and most donations are given for specific projects.

The problem faced by the Cass County Historical Society Board is how to implement projects, and at the same time maintain the financial integrity of the Society.

The established system using volunteers is the approach that should continue to be emphasized in putting projects in place at Bonanzaville U.S.A. Most developments to date have occurred in this way. Interest groups have been encouraged to locate projects on the grounds of our Pioneer Village. Work has been done on a pay-as-you-go basis.

A second approach that the Board could use is to incur indebtedness to establish approved projects, and pay off the indebtedness with

the added revenue that may come in. Revenues from these projects often take several years to develop. Some financial projections do not always prove to be accurate. Some projects pay off handsomely, while others fail. Some historical groups in the area surrounding Cass County have had good success using this system. Others have not.

In either choice, the procedures used in establishing projects should involve:

1. Project identification
2. Organize volunteer committee
3. Project planning
4. Project financial planning
5. Board approval
6. Implementation by volunteers

The critical thing is that the Board should thoroughly explore the pros and cons of the alternative methods of financing each new project, and then make a well-defined decision consistent with the general direction, long-range plan, financial limitations of the Society, and compatible with the revised operating agreement with the County.

A. FOCUS

The paramount, overriding, overwhelming issue is "What direction should Bonanzaville U.S.A. now take?" The two basic choices are:

1. The "down-home," comfortable, low-budget, low-key operation it now is; or
2. In very simple terms, go "big-time."

We feel both options are feasible from the standpoint of financial and other resources. Bonanzaville U.S.A. is truly "at the crossroads."

Who should make this critical decision? Emotionally, it is easy to answer: "The people who built it." However, four major reasons point instead to a joint decision by the total membership of the Cass County Historical Society and the public, as represented by the elected body in this scenario, the Cass County Commission. These four reasons are:

1. The people who built it are absolutely, unequivocally split on the question of direction for Bonanzaville U.S.A. Although there should certainly be a degree of compromise in the implementation of this decision, the basic issue is not of a nature to be compromised. We feel any attempt at a crossbreed, a "down-home," "big-time" facility, would be an invitation to financial disaster. Therefore, it is apparent that efforts to get the two groups (those supporting McIntyre, and the Committee for a Better Bonanzaville U.S.A.) to sit down and iron out their differences would be fruitless

and a waste of everyone's limited time and energy.

2. Over the years, the builders chose to "go public." This has taken the form principally of soliciting or accepting the mill levy allocated by the Cass County Commission. This is a most critical point! The builders had the option of maintaining the status of a completely private enterprise but chose not to do so. Today Bonanzaville U.S.A. is a public enterprise. If current management wants to change that, they should explore ways to repay the public for its accumulated investment.
3. Since we are dealing with a public institution, it is germane to this decision that our geographic area has a great public need that is largely unsatisfied. Our children and grandchildren should be learning about their heritage and the history of the Red River Valley. Our community sorely needs a heritage interpretive center. How to meet this need is a question which should be answered by the public, and accomplished with public funds. A better understanding of their heritage could well be a major deterrent to the annual emigration of our well-educated young people.

If the Society and the Commission agree on the value of the Society and Bonanzaville U.S.A. being developed as a heritage interpretive center, we recommend that a dialogue be started as soon as possible with the Heritage-Hjemkomst Interpretive Center. This would give the Cass County community a very direct plug-in to a \$5,000,000 running start financed by the State of Minnesota, the County of Clay and the City of Moorhead together with the private sector of our community.

4. The annual emigration of our well educated young people leads very directly into the fourth reason for a broadly-based decision on the future direction of Bonanzaville U.S.A. That is just one of many very substantial problems that are screaming out the need for economic development in our area. The development of Bonanzaville U.S.A. to date has been magnificent, incredible -- a real feather in the cap of Ken McIntyre and all of the many volunteers who have shared their elbow grease, devotion, and enthusiasm. Now, today, it has the potential of being a medium for significant economic development in our community. We do not have a lot of potential in the Valley for economic diversification and development. We have discovered that increased tourism offers a clean, quiet way to accomplish this with a great multiplier effect. But whether to do this and how to do it should be primarily a decision for the tax-paying public to make.

B. ORGANIZATION AND LONG RANGE PLANNING

To make the Cass County Historical Society as effective an organization as possible and to ensure that the voice of the majority of its bona fide members be heard, we feel it is imperative that:

1. Critical to the long-range planning process is the development of a Mission Statement. We hope this statement will focus on the education of our children and grandchildren in the heritage of the Valley and surrounding area and economic development.
2. A well-thought-out, thorough long-range plan needs to be developed very soon. This should reflect Bonanzaville U.S.A.'s future overall direction as well as many specific facets. A specific example is the related matters of tour guides, restricted areas or access to exhibits such as the giant dozer, and liability insurance coverage. If an eight-year-old visitor were involved in an on-site accident tomorrow, the ensuing litigation would include the Society, the County, and many individuals! This long-range plan should be updated at least every five years.

Other specific matters that should be addressed in this planning function include long-range income and expense projections, anticipated capital improvements and expansion - i.e., land, buildings and equipment, additional sources of funding, projected staff needs, major operating changes and other major identifiable goals. Apparently there is a separate committee now on grants and funding; this need is so critical that a separate committee is a good idea.

Many of these identifiable goals come under the caption of Management of Artifacts. Margo Lang furnished our panel with a summation of needs and recommendations in this regard that should be studied and analyzed by the Society's long-range planning committee and incorporated into their current planning process!

3. The proposed revision of the Society's bylaws be accomplished as soon as possible.
4. The Bonanzaville U.S.A. enabling agreement between the Society, the Cass County Commission, and the Red River Valley Fair Association should be updated and revised as soon as possible.
5. Future meetings of the Society's membership and board must meticulously conform to the Society's bylaws, Robert's Rules of Order, and whatever federal, state or local regulations or statutes may be applicable. In addition, the good faith of all members is critical. Mickey Mouse tactics to stuff the ballot box or to otherwise deny the bona fide majority their mandate is not a sound basis for building a solid organization to serve our community and our grandchildren.

C. ADMINISTRATION/MANAGEMENT OF BONANZAVILLE U.S.A.

A great deal of the present disharmony at Bonanzaville U.S.A. centers on the question of what and who should be the management. Nevertheless, everyone interviewed by our panel seemed to agree that the overall management authority must be

vested in the Board of Directors. The Board has the ultimate responsibility to the members of the Cass County Historical Society for policy determination and monitoring conformity to the bylaws and other mandates of the membership. If the constituency of the Cass County Historical Society wants to influence that management, it must be via the election process, and other provisions of the Society's bylaws.

People hired by and responsible to the Board of Directors must provide the bulk of the management, including the control of daily operations. Today we understand that those management responsibilities are assigned to two people -- an operations manager and a project coordinator.

Is this management structure adequate for a growing Bonanzaville U.S.A.? The answer to this question focuses on the determination that must be made as to the future direction of Bonanzaville U.S.A. The approach to this determination is discussed in another section of this report.

Whichever direction Bonanzaville U.S.A. takes in the future, some facets of management are critical to the development and maintenance of this wonderful institution which McIntyre and Associates have built. For this purpose, management can be divided into four components: Management of Artifacts, Management of Volunteers, Financial Management and General Management. We herewith briefly review each component:

1. Management of Artifacts

Someone needs to be specifically designated to manage the artifacts. In the people we interviewed, we noted disagreement on the level of training and the title for this person. We submit the following information and findings:

- a. Written Policies. Other than what is contained in the bylaws, there is no written policy regarding management of artifacts. This includes:
 - (1) Procurement. Identification and selection of needed items, decisions regarding purchases, loans, donations, upgrading, etc.
 - (2) Retirement. Permanent storage, return to owners, trade, disposal, notification to original owners, etc.
 - (3) Funding. There is little if any budget set aside for procurement or retirement of artifacts.
- b. Care of Artifacts. There is no one specifically assigned to care for artifacts other than existing staff and those volunteers who have special interest in them. Some formal training is taking place, but is very inadequate considering the collection value. Some artifacts are stored in closets, but staff feels this is desperately

inadequate even though efforts are being made to compensate. The budget has not addressed this problem.

- c. Displays. There is no changing of displays or programming of exhibits other than the middle room in the office building (behind the glass doors). A "rummage sale" appearance is present in some areas rather than quality displays. Signage is inadequate for displays. There are few, if any, who are trained in the appropriate display methods. Story plaques could be utilized as well as the tour book. The promotion and advertising committee has suggested tape recorders for some areas but this has not been tried.

There is no formal plan to involve the county's children through school curriculum. Staff was not aware of the method of funding the Heritage-Hjemkomst Interpretive Center uses in the Moorhead schools. This process could also be used to generate family membership sales. Likewise, there is no formal plan to include nursing home/elderly populations.

Some of the artifacts are so valuable that they should be displayed so that people cannot touch them. Other artifacts that can be replaced should be integrated into hands-on displays.

- d. Building Adequacy: There is a very definite need to protect the artifacts in the various building, to improve building climate, lighting, security, and to implement an immediate no-smoking policy. Example: While staff has submitted recommendations as to lighting changes, monies were not allocated. No effort was made to generate funds in any other manner. The Board of Directors is urged to implement immediate improvements in security and a no-smoking policy. The long range plan should address other artifact protection issues.
- e. Staff and Volunteer Training: The training of both staff and volunteers has been limited in scope and should be increased significantly.
- f. Cataloguing: There is only a manual cataloguing of artifacts and this is three years behind. They do not have a computer program for this. The computer they have is used for administrative and accounting tasks.
- g. Insurance on Artifacts: There is no special insurance -- only the insurance through the ND Reserve Fund (general liability, no theft or vandalism, just on buildings, etc.). Contents are insured but not correct or adequate. There is no adequate inventory and even if there were, many items are irreplaceable so insurance amounts would be difficult to determine. The ND museum only insures very, very valuable possessions (i.e., the large state silver service).

The Panel believes it is crucial that an ad hoc committee be formed of staff and volunteers to consider the above issues regarding artifact management, and the question of someone to supervise the collections. We feel the issue of written policies, the care of artifacts, the manner in which items are displayed, programming and displays, the security of the grounds and buildings, climate and lighting controls, insurance on the collections, cataloguing, training and the adoption of a long-range plan for the collections are all tasks that should be considered for this committee's plan of work.

2. Management of Volunteers

Volunteers are the life blood of Bonanzaville U.S.A.. To be effective to the maximum, this function needs to be coordinated, organized, scheduled and strengthened. Numerous organizations in Fargo-Moorhead have gone through this process with notable effectiveness (two examples are St. Luke's and Dakota Hospitals), all involving a Volunteer Coordinator. In most instances this has been a volunteer position. However, this is a critical enough need so that funding should be provided if the Board cannot secure a volunteer.

3. Financial Management

As Bonanzaville U.S.A. continues to grow and develop it is critical that its operating structure include tight controls of cash and other assets. The audit of the financial statements of the Cass County Historical Society made by Charles Bailly & Company for the year ended December 31, 1987, indicated several major deficiencies in this internal control. The Blue Ribbon Panel did not attempt to evaluate the present status of those deficiencies. However, we agree that:

- a. The recommendations included in that audit report are very important and changes should be made to conform to such recommendations.
- b. The Board of Directors of the Society has the responsibility to ascertain that those changes are made.
- c. A second audit should be made as soon as possible to determine the present status of those deficiencies and what changes have been effected.

The other part of Bonanzaville U.S.A.'s financial management that needs current improvement is the budgeting process:

- a. If the Board of Directors is to provide effective overall management, their efforts should center on annual and monthly operating budgets prepared by staff and adopted by the Board in December or January each year. Taking year-

end figures and increasing by 10% is an abortion of the budget process.

- b. The budgeting process should also include annual and monthly capital improvements budgeting, separated from the operating budgets.
- c. All parts of the budgeting process should then flow into regular cash forecasting.
- d. Each monthly meeting of the Board should include current monthly financial statements comparative with last year and budget. Actually it appears that Bonanzaville U.S.A.'s computer configuration includes the columns and space for such information. The total budgeting process should be the Board's most effective management tool.
- e. Although the entire budgeting process is prepared on an annual and monthly basis, it should be reviewed for possible revision at least semi-annually.

4. General Management

Although the overall management responsibility is vested in the Board of Directors, the volunteer Board of a not-for-profit organization cannot possibly provide satisfactory daily general management. In fact, in our opinion, the attempts of past Boards to do this is a major reason for the present management problems.

The present Board has assigned general management duties to two people -- one nominally compensated, the other a volunteer -- Margo Lang and Ken McIntyre. It is significant that they are operating via the general authority of the Board with no job description, no employment contract and no statement or manual of personnel policies, all of which are standard in today's marketplace. In view of the emphasis today on the personal liability of directors and officers of both for-profit and not-for-profit organizations, this is one of the areas in which the Board of Directors of Bonanzaville U.S.A. is very vulnerable.

We do not recognize part of our responsibility as a "Blue Ribbon Panel" to do an evaluation of the work performances of Lang and McIntyre. This is a major portion of the on-going duties of the Board. Obviously this is very difficult to implement in the absence of job descriptions, contracts, and a personnel manual.

Another interesting question which needs to be addressed by the Board -- if they decide to implement their previous decision and hire a curator: "How will this person fit into the general management structure of Bonanzaville U.S.A.?" Whichever future direction the operations of Bonanzaville U.S.A. take, a very clear-cut organizational chart and job descriptions are mandatory.

It is possible for the Board to assign all four of the above-described management functions to one person, or to four people, or something in between. The principal thing is that all four functions must be recognized as critical, and incorporated into the job description or descriptions.

If the Society should decide to "go big-time," a fifth function must be added: Sales and Promotion Management.

Related responsibilities of the Bonanzaville U.S.A. Board include:

1. Being certain that staff has adequate accounting and financial knowledge to meet the needs of the organization. In this regard, Ms.Lang's ability may be adequate. We did not attempt an evaluation because we understood this was not within the scope of our charge.
2. Considering a possible revision of the Society's present system of fund accounting. The confusion between operating income and expense, and capital improvements receipts and disbursements appears to be a significant hindrance to effective use by the Board of the monthly and annual financial statements.
3. Working with the Cass County Commission. The Commissioners are the elected representatives of the public. By accepting and continuing to accept public funds in the form of the annual mill levy, Bonanzaville U.S.A. has become a public institution. "Working with" means, as a minimum:
 - a. Negotiating a new operating agreement with the County as soon as possible.
 - b. Unraveling, clarifying and purchasing adequate insurance coverage as soon as possible.
 - c. Adopting a comprehensive long-range plan (probably five years) as soon as possible.
 - d. Having an annual audit that is satisfactory to the Commission.
 - e. Adopting the County's or comparable personnel policies.
 - f. Furnishing the Commission expeditiously with such financial information as they reasonably request.

We made no attempt at a detailed analysis of present insurance coverage. However, it was evident that it is critical to the future of Bonanzaville U.S.A. that:

1. There must be substantial liability coverage to protect the Society and the County.

2. There must be errors and omissions coverage on staff -- probably including officers and volunteers.
3. For the protection of the Board of Directors of the Society, there should be specific coverage of their potential individual liabilities. Current litigation has been increasingly focused on the individual liability of directors. More discussion of the matters related to the County Commission and insurance are found in the next section titled "LEGAL."

Any treatise on or discussion of the matter of improved management should include response to the question of "How can we afford it!" Our first response is: "In view of the seriousness of the above matters, how can you possibly not afford it?" With significant housecleaning, we feel the County Commission might well consider a higher mill levy. Also, tourism experts whom we have interviewed are convinced that Bonanzaville U.S.A. has the potential for substantial increased gate receipts and other operating revenues. Finally, we see the opportunity for major endowments and grants if the Board directs the development of a well-orchestrated campaign to promote a well-managed, exciting historical village.

D. LEGAL

1. Background

The relationship between Cass County and the Cass County Historical Society is defined in a number of agreements and other documents spanning approximately 35 years. These documents are briefly described as follows:

- a. December 13, 1954 - Original Articles of Incorporation of Cass County, North Dakota, Historical Society.
- b. December 13, 1954 - Original Bylaws of the Historical Society. This document indicates that it has been amended twice (1961 and 1981), but the substance of the amendments is not evident from the document itself.
- c. May 3, 1967 - Agreement between Cass County and the Cass County Historical Society regarding the one-quarter mill tax levy. The agreement provides for distribution of the tax proceeds and requires an annual financial report to the County Commission.
- d. May 3, 1967 - Agreement between Cass County, the Red River Valley Fair Association and the Cass County Historical Society. This is the agreement which creates Bonanzaville U.S.A. and describes, by metes and bounds description, the tract upon which Bonanzaville U.S.A. is situated. This document imposes certain restrictions and duties on the

Society regarding the operation of Bonanzaville U.S.A. and also requires that the Fair Association and the Society procure liability insurance for the facilities.

- e. November 2, 1977 - Statement of change of registered office or registered agent was filed with the Secretary of State. The registered office was designated as P.O. Box 719 in West Fargo and the registered agent was Mr. Ken McIntyre.
- f. February 22, 1982 - Certificate of Amendment of the name of the society and the Articles of Incorporation. (Amended articles not available.)

Bonanzaville U.S.A. appears to have developed over a period of years by a process of evolution. For the most part, these documents have never been amended to accommodate the changing needs of the Bonanzaville U.S.A. facilities.

In addition to the above-listed documents, there were others which were furnished to the panel which indirectly relate to the Cass County Historical Society and are not listed in this report. Those documents include various deeds from and to the Red River Valley Fair Association and the Cass County Park Commission and are generally not relevant to the issues in this report.

2. Articles of Incorporation

The Articles of Incorporation dated December 1, 1954, are basically sufficient in their present form but should be examined, and appropriate amendments filed with the North Dakota Secretary of State if necessary to accommodate current needs. It should be noted that the articles which were made available to the panel reflect no amendments. Although there is a certificate indicating that the articles were amended in 1982, the purpose and content of this amendment is unknown. It should also be noted that the original articles (Article VII) provide that the number of directors of the Society shall be nine. There is no authorization in the original articles for additional directors, whether ex officio or otherwise.

3. Bylaws.

The panel feels that bylaws for the Society should provide for an adequate and fair means for election of the Board of Directors and executive officers, and for the calling and conduct of meetings. They should not impinge upon the broad authority of the Board in matters of management, budgetary practices and rule-making authority. Accordingly, the present bylaws should be amended to define more adequately the respective roles of the membership, the Board, and the executive officers of the Society. Specifically, the panel recommends:

- a. The provision in the current bylaws which provides that past presidents serve on the Board of Directors as ex officio members should be eliminated.
- b. The provision in the bylaws relating to an administrative manager should be eliminated in order to permit maximum flexibility on the part of the Board with respect to employees.
- c. The bylaws should contain a specific provision authorizing the Board to establish the number, duties and compensation of its employees, subject to budgetary constraints.
- d. The bylaws should not establish specific fees for dues for membership in the Society. This should be left to the discretion of the Board so that a change in the bylaws will not be required to effect a change in the dues structure.
- e. The bylaws should contain a specific provision granting broad rule-making authority to the Board relating to management and operations. These rules should be subject to change by the Board, without the necessity of a change in the bylaws.

4. Property Delineation

An accurate survey of the property which is designated for use as Bonanzaville U.S.A. should be commissioned for future planning use. Any agreements, future or existing, should contain a property description which is accurate and understandable.

5. Agreements

As indicated above, there are several documents and agreements between the County and the Historical Society which should be reviewed and amended to accurately describe the relationship between the County and the Society. The basic relationship between the County and the Society has been landlord/tenant, and that can be continued, with updating, if the County and Society so agree.

However, we recommend that consideration be given to an alternative basic relationship that would provide certain cost reductions and other advantages. This relationship would center on County ownership of the land and buildings comprising Bonanzaville U.S.A., and the agreement between the County and the Society being in the nature of a management agreement. This change should not mean any diminution in the autonomy of the Society with regard to the operation of Bonanzaville U.S.A. The advantages of this alternative relationship are discussed in the next section of this report relating to employees.

Whichever approach is taken for this agreement, it should

also include definite provisions requiring sound fiscal management and budgetary practices, with annual reports to be filed with the County.

6. Employees

The number and scope of employees should be left to the sound discretion of the Board of Directors, operating within budgetary limitations. This concept would permit maximum flexibility in future operations of Bonanzaville U.S.A. and would allow the Board to adjust to changing conditions, without the necessity of additional change in the articles, bylaws or agreement between the Society and Cass County.

Personnel policies and job descriptions should be developed, and a personnel handbook compiled. If the County and the Society should decide to adopt the "management agreement relationship" described in Section 5 "Agreements" above, we feel that these advantages would accrue:

- a. The County has established personnel policies which would eliminate the need for separate policies by the Society.
- b. Employees of the Society would have the assurance of some uniformity in employment, retention and compensation practices.
- c. It would insure that employees of the Society/County are afforded all protections under the Political Subdivisions Liability Act (Chapter 32-12.1.NDCC).
- d. It would automatically provide insurance for the Society through the North Dakota Insurance Reserve Fund.

The panel wishes to stress that under the "management agreement relationship," we are not advocating any diminution in the autonomy of the Society Board in the operation and management of Bonanzaville U.S.A. However, Bonanzaville U.S.A. is a public facility by virtue of the infusion of tax dollars, and we anticipate that this financial assistance will continue indefinitely. Therefore, it is not inappropriate that Bonanzaville U.S.A. be operated as a department or subdivision of the County. If that alternative is selected, a portion of the County's liability insurance costs would be properly allocated to Bonanzaville U.S.A. and included as a line item in the budget.

E. LAND AND FEATURED ATTRACTIONS

1. Railroad

This is another highly emotional, very complicated question - a good example to illustrate how Bonanzaville U.S.A. should be managed, in our judgment. We do not fully comprehend what initiated this project or the present status of it. We do not

recognize the scope of our responsibilities as a "Blue Ribbon Panel" to include a full investigation of any such specific issue. Accordingly, we are not in a position to recommend any present course of action in this matter, except that time is wasting and the engine is rusting, so a decision should be reached soon. Our limited exposure to the project also produced a consensus that it would be a great addition to Bonanzaville U.S.A., if we can afford it space wise and financially, if satisfactory arrangements can be made with the Fair Association, and if adequate safety features can be developed and adequate, affordable insurance secured.

We do recommend that this issue and other present or future major proposed projects be handled in this fashion:

- a. The Society's Board of Directors should appoint an ad hoc committee to study the applicability and feasibility of the project. The committee's subsequent report to the Board should include recommendations as to whether or not the project should be pursued, where it should be located, how it should be financed and any other major questions involved in the possible implementation of the project.
 - b. Then the Board should make a decision. If that decision is: "Proceed with the project," a written project plan should be developed for circulating to staff, suppliers, media, outside financiers (if any are involved), and anyone else involved with the project. In addition to the who, where, and how components, this plan should include a timetable for the completion of the project -- very important because of the impact on the Society's cash flow and other operating facets.
 - c. It is very important to the future of Bonanzaville U.S.A. that this planning not only include complete analysis of the original costs of acquisition, construction and installation, but also thorough projection of the cost of maintenance and other on-going expenses.
- 2. Articulated Steer Dozer with Tandem Axles Front and Back/Machinery Display Building (the Big Bulldozer)**

An articulated steer dozer with tandem axles front and back is presently located on a special slab of concrete in the Bonanzaville U.S.A. complex. An extension of the concrete slab is also in place. Apparently a plan has been developed for erecting a structure to house the dozer, as well as the collection of farm machines.

Several members of the Historical Society object to the location of the building, and claim that the dozer is inappropriate for Bonanzaville.

The Bonanzaville U.S.A. Blue Ribbon Panel presents the

following list of considerations that have been provided to them from several sources:

- a. The existing concrete slab lies to the east of the antique automobile display building; it lies to the north of a tractor collection building, and it lies diagonally across the street intersection from the historical fire department building. The proposed building would match buildings that exist around this intersection.
- b. The building would lie behind backyards of most neighboring houses and other buildings.
- c. A considerable investment has been made in the existing concrete slab.
- d. The articulated steer dozer is a one-of-a-kind unit.
- e. The dozer is patterned after design concepts featured in Steiger-Case/International tractors that were or are built in Fargo.
- f. The dozer was built by a firm owned by people with strong ties to Cass County.
- g. The donor of the dozer has in the past provided gifts valued at several hundred thousand dollars.
- h. The dozer generates more than average interest among visitors.
- i. The dozer engine will not run.
- j. Cost of a new concrete slab and moving the dozer would be very high.
- k. The Board of Directors has approved the project.

The members of the Blue Ribbon Panel suggest that the siting of the building has many similarities to the pattern of siting of several other large buildings at Bonanzaville U.S.A.. Appropriateness of the dozer may be compared with the appropriateness of many other machines and devices now located at Bonanzaville. Linkages of the dozer to Cass County are as strong as many of the other artifacts now in the collections.

Most of this matter is now academic because the dozer is in place -- the Board has spoken. Also, we feel it is evident that because of the investment in the slab, and because its present location does not appear to be incompatible with its neighbors, it should be left where it is. Future generations may wish to remove it on the basis that it is not a normal part of a pioneer village -- or the Board now can reverse its position and dispose of the dozer. The principal immediacy is for the Board to reverse or confirm their previous decision,

and if it is confirmation, certain measures need to be taken now. These include some sort of building to protect the dozer and farm machinery with implementation of safety restrictions.

3. Plot Layout for Village Expansion

It appears that the space available in Bonanzaville U.S.A. today has been nearly utilized. One solution to this is to declare Bonanzaville U.S.A. complete, and plan for no new additions. The Panel feels, however, that tentative plot layout planning should be completed and filed in the event that attractions are offered that are too good to turn down. Installations should be made based on well-thought-out plans. Establishment of a volunteer committee for this work is recommended.

4. Docents

Our limited interviewing process indicated that school teachers like our present guide manuals very much -- but as a supplement to good docents. Some indicated that in the past they had encountered both good docents and poor docents, and that a good docent is very important to the learning process. We recommend that the development of a stronger volunteer structure, as discussed above, include well-trained and readily-available volunteer docents. Cooperation and coordination with Heritage-Hjemkomst Interpretive Center should be very helpful here inasmuch as they have developed a fine group of docents. It also seems logical to be working with HHIC in the development of joint tours of the two facilities for area schools.

F. CURATOR

What is a curator? Do we presently have a curator? What should be the credentials and job description of a curator for Bonanzaville U.S.A.? On these questions there is major confusion and differences of opinion. All of this must be resolved by the Society through their elected representatives, the Board of Directors.

This problem has been noted or alluded to earlier in this report. The Board has wrestled with this question for many years. More management time has been invested in this matter than any other. And rightly so! The future of Bonanzaville U.S.A. as a great education facility and community attraction centers first and foremost on the proper management of the artifacts. In the limited time and with the limited resources available to us, we could not possibly come up with meaningful recommendations for solutions. However, again we suggest the appointment of an ad hoc committee, with:

1. Suitable representation of the various groups.

2. A timetable for early resolution.
3. A clear-cut decision by the Board based on the ad hoc committee's recommendations and the available resources of the Society.
4. Obviously, that decision must be implemented by follow-through and by monitoring to see that the mandate of the Board is met.

G. SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP DUES

We recommend a substantial increase in the dues structure. One possible approach could be:

1. Life/corporate membership with voting privileges
2. Full membership with voting privileges
3. Senior membership, no voting privileges
4. Junior membership, no voting privileges

This could produce a significant increase in revenues to the Society, develop a higher level of appreciation for Society membership and help to reduce the possibility of manipulative practices in the voting process.

H. SMOKING POLICY

We recommend immediate consideration of a "no smoking" policy. The two major reasons are protection of priceless artifacts, and the effect on insurance coverage.

SECTION V. CONCLUSION

We appreciate the many courtesies and cooperation given us during the course of our review of Bonanzaville U.S.A.. We doubt that we have produced all of the answers which you hoped we might. We hope that we are successful in giving you and the Society a renewed vision and direction to develop a bigger and better Bonanzaville U.S.A. The entire membership of the Cass County Historical Society should be proud of the great accomplishments to date in the accumulation of artifacts and the development which Bonanzaville U.S.A. is. Truly amazing in many ways! We hope that suitable recognition is being planned for Ken McIntyre before he retires.

In the meantime, "back at the ranch," the Board and the entire Society have grave responsibility for "shifting gears" into the next decade if the great opportunities and challenges for Bonanzaville

U.S.A. are to be met. Personal differences, past mistakes and assorted trivia must be set aside. A common bond, growth, accountability, preservation, and improvement must be the watchwords. The correct beginning for this process is the development of a Mission Statement which we hope will focus on the education of our children and grandchildren in the heritage of the Valley and surrounding area and the critical need for economic development.

BLUE RIBBON PANEL:

George Pratt, Chairman	
Charles Bailly	Harriet Light
Donna Chalimonczyk	Clark Richards
Irene Fraser	Wayne Solberg
Dan Gust	Basil Walker
Michael Gustafson	Victor Welk
Elizabeth Iken, Recorder	