



AGRICULTURAL INTERPRETIVE CENTER

EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY



Overview

The Agricultural Interpretive Center (AIC) at Naper Settlement will capture and bring to life the rich farming heritage that was instrumental in building community and business in Naperville and the surrounding regions. Forming bridges between today and our agricultural past will not only bring stories of iconic figures to life, but connect us to the story of our nation. A connection with the soil was a central part of our nation's founding.

A strong agricultural base allows us to feed our people, and to enter the economic pipeline on strong footing. The golden cornfields, dairy farms and rows of soybeans that once graced our community symbolize American's economic independence and strength, core values upon which the nation was built. Farming is vital in the production of food, a human necessity shaped by historical changes.

It is impossible to understand America without appreciating the role agriculture has played throughout our history. Naperville and the surrounding regions are an important part of that tale. The "amber waves of grain" were grown right here. They symbolize not only a city feeding its people, but also the can-do spirit, tenacity, perseverance and innovation of a nation.

Even now that a burgeoning city and suburb stands on much of that farmland, it is farm families' struggles, successes and innovations that propel us forward and upon whose shoulders we've built a vibrant population.

Site Significance

WHY NAPERVILLE?

Located in the heart of Naperville, Naper Settlement is a twice nationally accredited, award-winning outdoor museum set on 12 magnificent acres and is administered by the Naperville Heritage Society. Naper Settlement brings together historically important buildings and their stories, connecting visitors to Naperville's heritage and beyond.

The Agricultural Interpretive Center will build on Naper Settlement's foundation of heritage, providing an immersive opportunity to learn about Naperville's storied agricultural history and how it connects to the farming story of the region and nation. The AIC will utilize farming history to teach students and visitors the practical application of the educational principles of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics).

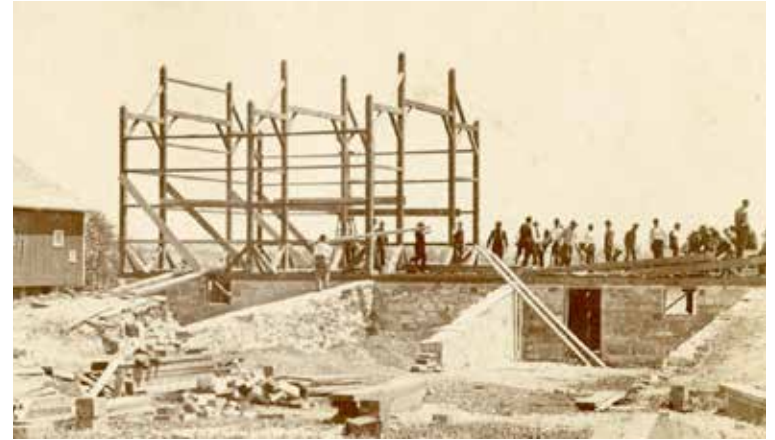


EXHIBIT GOALS

The Agricultural Interpretive Center will:

- Convey the story of **FARMING** in Naperville and northern Illinois communities through the use of key artifacts preserved in the collection
- Recognize farmers as **INVENTORS, ENGINEERS** and **ENTREPRENEURS**, whose grit and risk-taking are crucial for success
- Underscore that farming is vital in the production of **FOOD**, a human necessity shaped by historical changes
- Convey the continuing **RELEVANCE** of agriculture today
- Show the transformation of **FARMLAND** into **SUBDIVISIONS**
- Demonstrate how **TECHNOLOGY** impacted the practice of farming
- Connect the principles of **STEM** learning to the history of farming
- Explain the differences between **SUBSISTENCE** and **COMMERCIAL** farming
- Support educational programming that engages and inspires **STUDENTS** and **LIFELONG LEARNERS**

Exhibit Themes



FARMING AS A WAY OF LIFE

Farm and town create a community of interdependence in Naperville and beyond

- Everyone had a role in running the farm and daily life involved every family member, young and old
- Interdependency created a strong community bond between farm and town, as each relied on the other
- Lessons from the past continue to help farmers evolve techniques, tools and machinery that have changed the nature of farming
- Farming is vital in the production of food, a human necessity shaped by historical changes



INNOVATION ON THE FARM

Transformation in technology and communications changed American agriculture

- Transportation innovations connected Naperville to national markets while evolving communication technologies circulated vital farming knowledge
- Machinery innovations continuously changed farmers' relationship with the land and increased how much they could produce
- Advanced agricultural knowledge and science allowed farmers to cultivate new and varied crops
- Evolving farming methods helped Naperville farmers succeed



THE FARM AS A BUSINESS

A successful farm requires attention to the business of agriculture

- Farming is a business venture that requires community stability, astute business thinking and strategic planning to mitigate risks
- Farmers focused on different types of agriculture to meet changing market demands
- Naperville has been a strategic location for various business ventures, from the farming of the past to the tech businesses of today
- Naperville's agricultural history encompasses the rich resources of the prairie and its central Midwestern location



Learning Lab

A unique component to the space will be a multi-use Learning Lab. This flexible space will be adaptable to specific groups, content and to the methods of teaching and self-expression that will best serve a fluid range of learning objectives.

The **Learning Lab** will interchangeably function as a classroom, workshop, science laboratory and community exhibit and presentation space.

Conclusion

The Agricultural Interpretive Center will build on Naper Settlement's foundation of heritage, providing an immersive opportunity to learn about Naperville's storied agricultural history and how it connects to the farming story of the region and the nation.

The AIC will enhance the stories told throughout Naper Settlement, illustrating Naperville's importance within the agricultural development of Northern Illinois. This is an exciting and worthwhile endeavor that will preserve our American history and enrich the lives of children and families.

EXHIBIT HIGHLIGHTS

STEM-based learning opportunities:

- The science in food preservation
- Processes of planting and harvesting crops
- Manpower to machine power
- Mechanics of simple machines
- Engineering of agricultural structures
- Pollination, reproduction and plant diversity
- Biology of milk production and cow lifecycle
- Animal genetics
- Climate, weather and natural resources
- Economic value of agriculture to communities
- Transportation and communication

Interactive historical experiences:

- Daily life and chores
- Plow match game
- Evolution of farming
- Barn raising & build a farm
- Milk a cow
- Living landscape
- Simple machines
- Communication technology



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