

A VALUE ASSESSMENT OF CRAWFORDSVILLE MUSEUMS



Lane Place
General Lew Wallace Study & Museum
Old Jail Museum

April 2007

Introduction

Crawfordsville has a rich heritage and boasts three history museums in its downtown area. In 2007, a fourth museum will join the ranks and further establish Crawfordsville as a destination for Hoosier history and culture.

In 2006, the directors of Lane Place, Old Jail Museum and General Lew Wallace Study & Museum banded together to conduct an assessment of how the museums are regarded in the community. The project was the result of numerous discussions between the museum directors about how community members are often confused about what each museum offers and who works where. In addition, comments and questions were often heard asking why the museums are separately operated (because they have different funding sources and organizational histories) and that “the town is too small for this many museums.” In response, the museum directors felt it was time to collectively “take the temperature” of its constituents and look at how the museums’ community value is perceived.

Assessment Goals

With this initial idea in mind, the museum directors began meeting with their respective staff and board members as well as the staff of the Montgomery County Visitors and Convention Bureau (MCVCB) to develop the projects goals and methods. The goals of the value assessment were refined as the project took shape.

1. Gauge community perceptions
What are they thinking about us? How do they perceive our value?
2. Find synergy between museums
What do we have in common? Are there strong collaborative opportunities?
3. Inform strategic and long-range planning processes
4. Develop a communication tool for educating civic leaders/decision makers
Community leaders frequently hear from non-profits when they want a donation or a grant. Why not meet with them when there is nothing on the line and share some good news?
5. Build awareness of the museums’ value among a core constituency

Methods

A basic ten-question survey tool was developed which asked the same questions about all three museums. Eight questions were open-ended and two were multiple-choice answers. The response section was re-ordered for each section so that respondents were more likely to consider different answers for each museum. It was feared that the same sequence for each question would result in weaker responses for the third museum listed. At the end of the survey, an optional section was included to collect demographic information. The questions asked are included in the results section of this report and a complete copy of the survey tool is in Appendix A.

Each museum director selected twenty individuals who were members and/or donors of the organization to participate. Duplicate names were weeded out so that each museum had the potential for 40 respondents who were not regular museum visitors. Once the list was compiled, a postcard was mailed announcing that they had been selected and to look for the survey soon. A week later, the surveys were mailed and a return date was provided. A second postcard was sent two weeks after they received the surveys extending the deadline for another two weeks.

The project was announced in the museums' newsletters and during public presentations. In the end, the recipients had four weeks to complete and mail their surveys. A total of 71 surveys were mailed and 40 were returned complete, resulting in a 56% response rate.

A volunteer combed through the returned surveys and looked for patterns and trends in the open-ended responses. While not designed to be a heavily quantitative assessment tool, surprisingly, clear categories of information were found in the responses. Using these categories, responses were tabulated in a spreadsheet and analyzed.

Results and Analysis

Participant Demographics

Although the demographic information requested was not extensive, three key results are noted.

- 75% of respondents were female
- 85% of respondents were 56 years old and older
- 84% of respondents graduated from college and 69% of them had post-graduate degrees

This breakdown is nearly a mirror image of each museum's membership base, so we were confident that the respondents were truly our constituents.

Museum Comparisons by the Numbers

While numbers may vary year to year, the following figures are mid-2006 averages. Fortunately each museum has enjoyed growth and the numbers are on the rise for each organization. For example, the General Lew Wallace Study & Museum finished 2006 with record visitation numbers hovering around 5,000 and Lane Place has grown its staff by an additional part-time person. It should be noted that visitation for each museum is evenly divided between local (county) residents and non-local visitors.

Lane Place

- Annual visitation: 2,100
- Collection size: 1,300
- Annual budget: \$45,000
- Number of staff: 2 P/T
- Number of volunteers: 10 docents, 50 special event volunteers
- Admission: \$3.00/adult, children vary by age
- Funding Sources: 55% investment income, 10% government, 12% earned income, 8% grants, 15% charitable donations

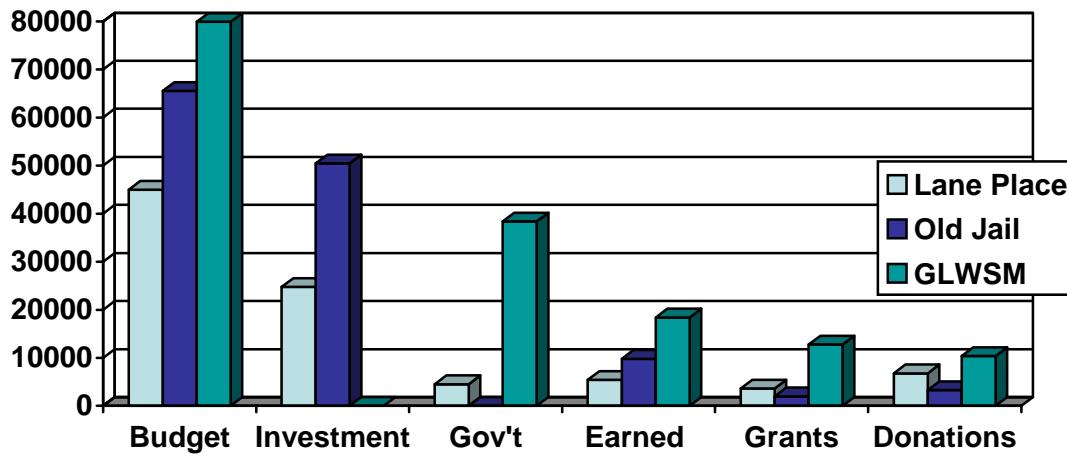
Old Jail Museum

- Annual visitation: 3,500
- Collection size: 2,113
- Annual budget: \$65,550
- Number of staff: 2 P/T, 2 seasonal
- Number of volunteers: 30 docents
- Admission: \$3.00/adult, 12 and under free
- Funding Sources: 77% investment income, 15% earned income, 3% grants, 5% charitable donations

General Lew Wallace Study & Museum

- Annual visitation: 3,500
- Collection size: 2,000
- Annual budget: \$79,929
- Number of staff: 1 F/T, 3 P/T
- Number of volunteers: 3 docents, 30 special event volunteers
- Admission: \$3.00/adult, \$1.00/student
- Funding Sources: 48% government, 23% earned income, 16% grants and sponsorships, 13% charitable donations

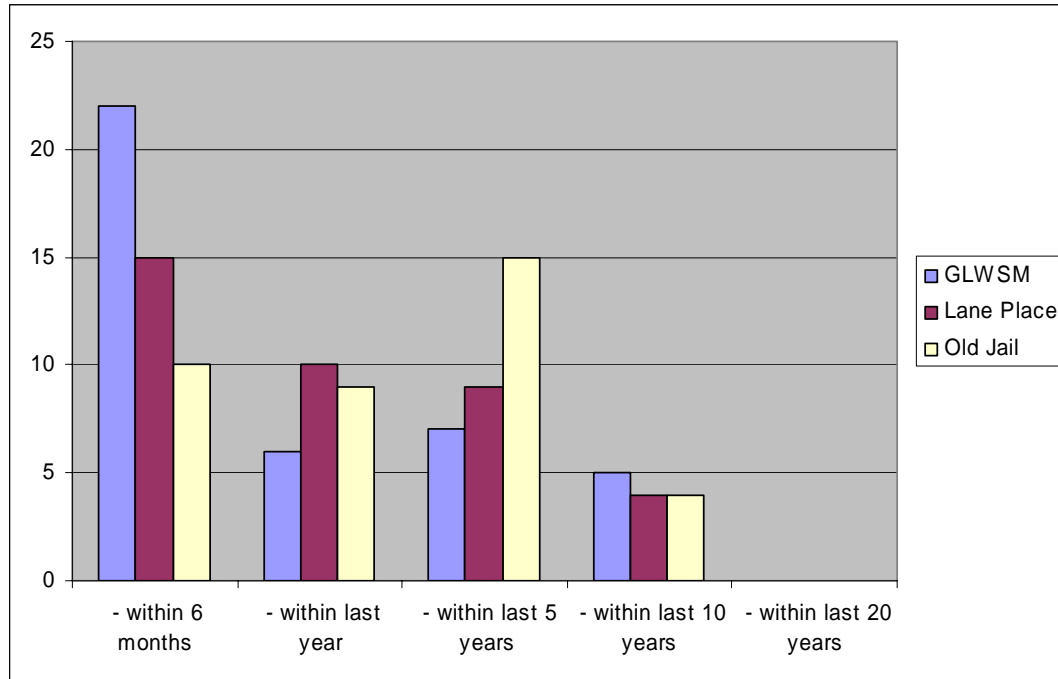
Comparison of Museum Funding Sources



Participant Responses

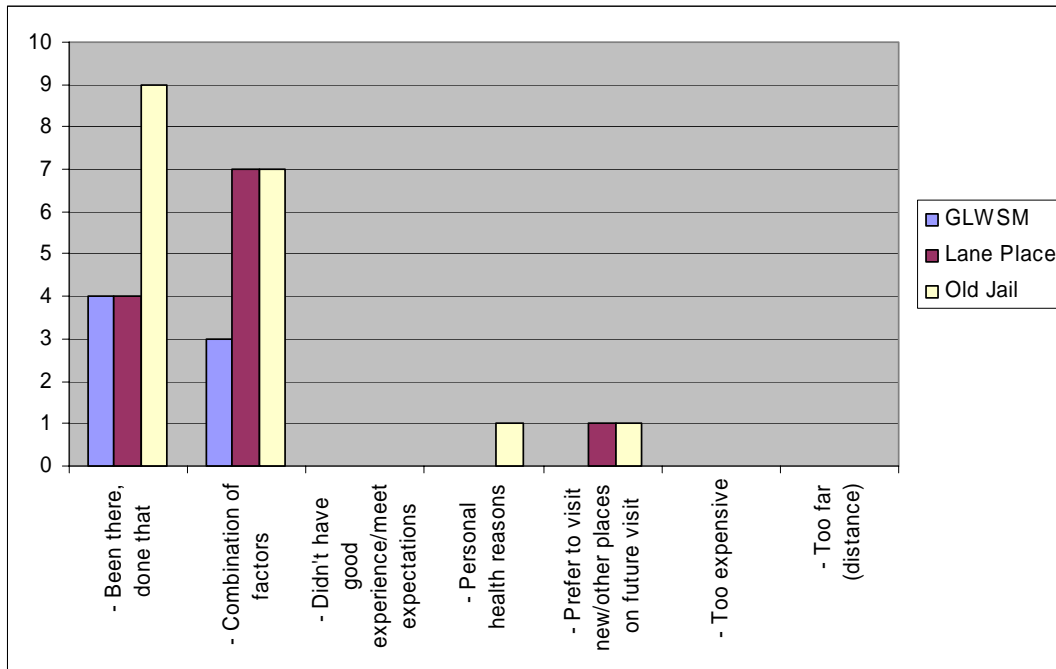
For ease of interpretation, the data has been formatted as tables. The first two questions were multiple-choice and the remaining questions were open-ended. The raw data results are included in Appendix B.

Table 1. When was the last time you visited one of these Crawfordsville museums?



The majority of respondents have visited one of the museums within the past 6 months, tapering off to “within the last five years.” This response demonstrates that the museums are seeing regular traffic patterns and are rarely forgotten destinations. For decades, the museums have been maintained in static caretaking patterns and with the past ten years, all three museums have revitalized with new leadership and community support. Table 1 demonstrates this community reaction.

Table 2. If you have not visited the museum in the last 12 months, what was your reason?

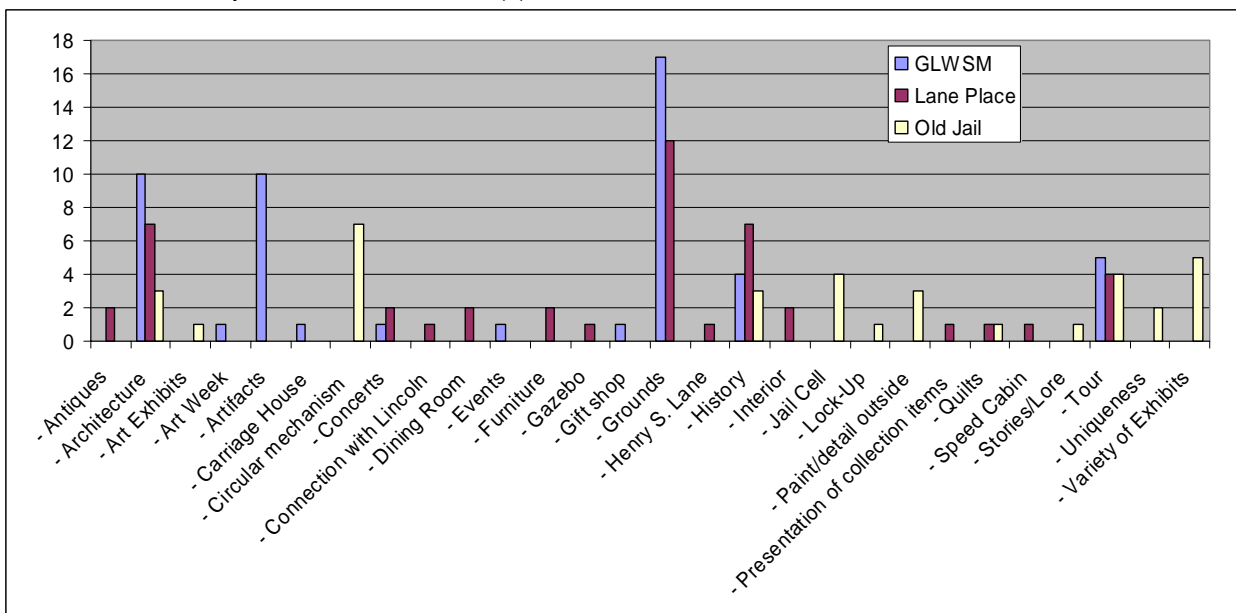


The responses to this question also illuminate that there are many individuals still left to attract. The “been there, done that” mentality still prevails among many respondents. The multiple-choice answer “combination of factors” was selected quite often, but unfortunately it is not a helpful response. The remaining choices received little to no selection.

3. Do you regularly participate in museum programs?

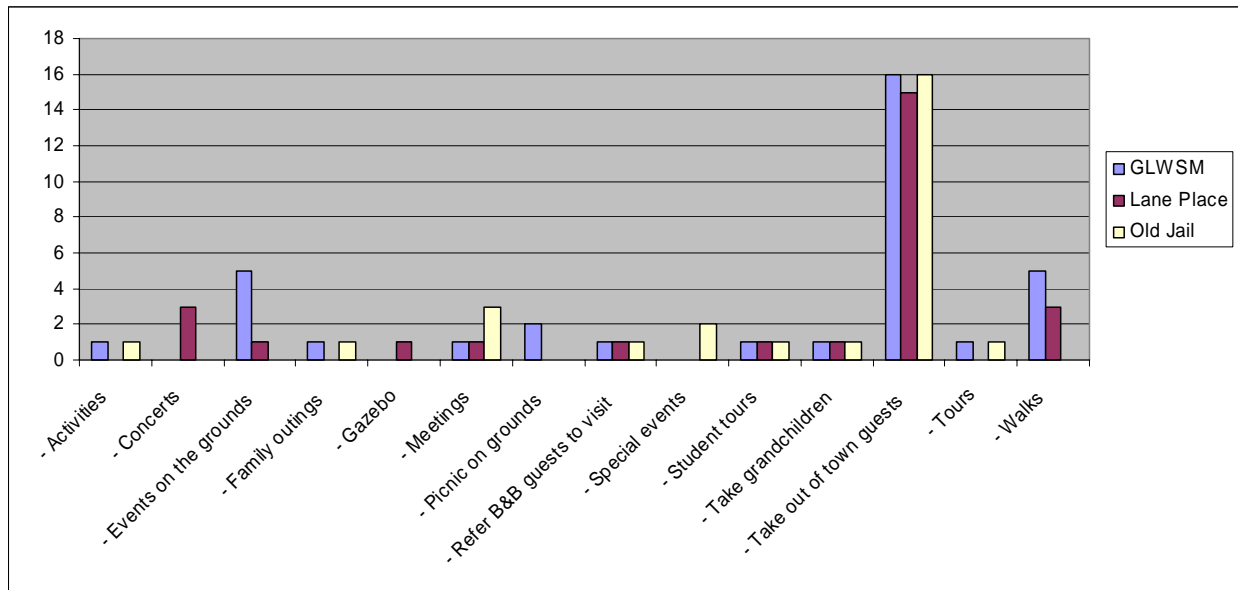
Results were not included as they are too variable and could not be quantified.

Table 4. What is your favorite feature(s) of the museum?



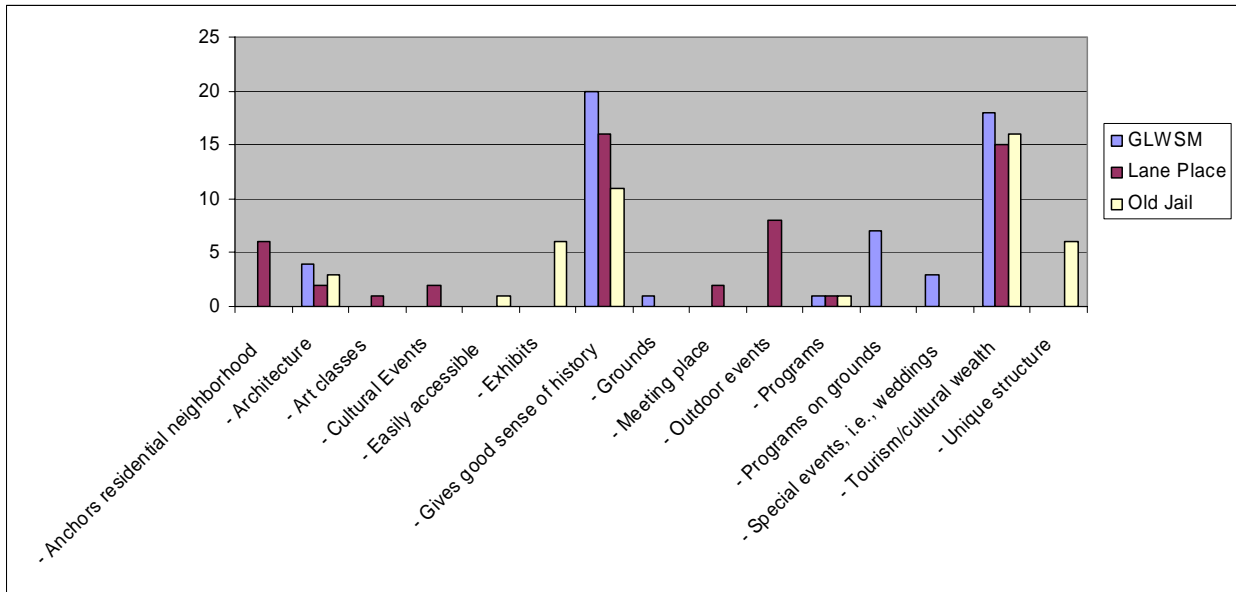
History, architecture, the grounds, and guided tours received the most attention when the museums' features were considered. The distinguishing characteristics of each museum were also commented on, e.g. the Old Jail's circular mechanism. This table demonstrates areas where the museums should concentrate resources and planning. It also indicates concentration areas where the museums would better spend their time collaboratively. For example, a walking tour map of downtown Crawfordsville would be an excellent project to collaborate on, but a traveling exhibit on the history of correctional institutions in Montgomery County would not be the best way to use resources.

Table 5. How do you use the museum most?



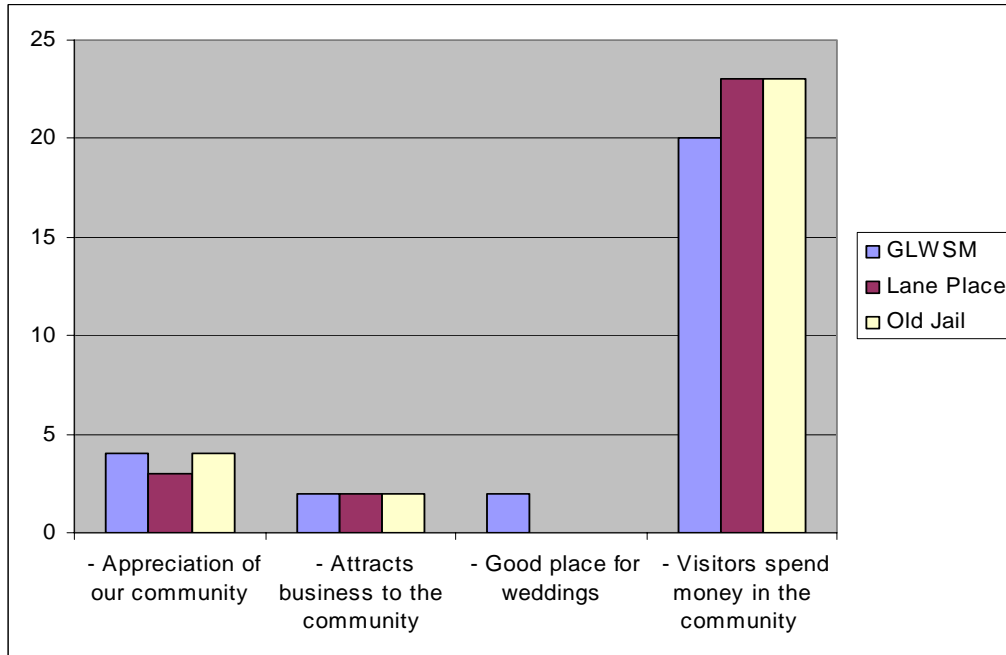
Consistently, local residents visit the museums when they have out of town guests and they want to show off Crawfordsville heritage and charm. A second pattern in this table is the frequent mention of the grounds for Lane Place and General Lew Wallace Study & Museum. One comment made when the data was being reviewed was, "It's as if the architecture is the background for the grounds. The grounds seem to be the centerpiece." This indicates that events on the grounds might be well received and these two museums have increased programming efforts in these areas.

Table 6. How does the museum contribute to the community?



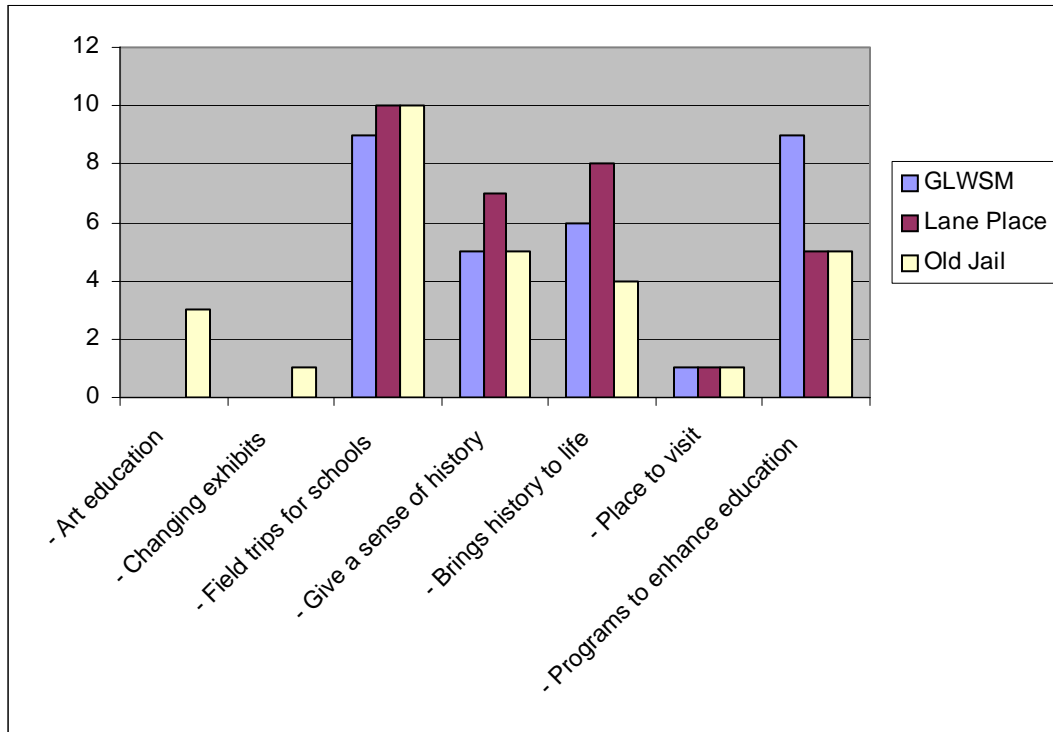
The top two responses for this question were: gives good sense of history and contributes to the tourism value/cultural wealth of the community. This demonstrates that the respondents view the museums as contributors to community history and a sense of place. In addition, they see the tourism value of these sites.

Table 7. How does the museum impact the local economy?



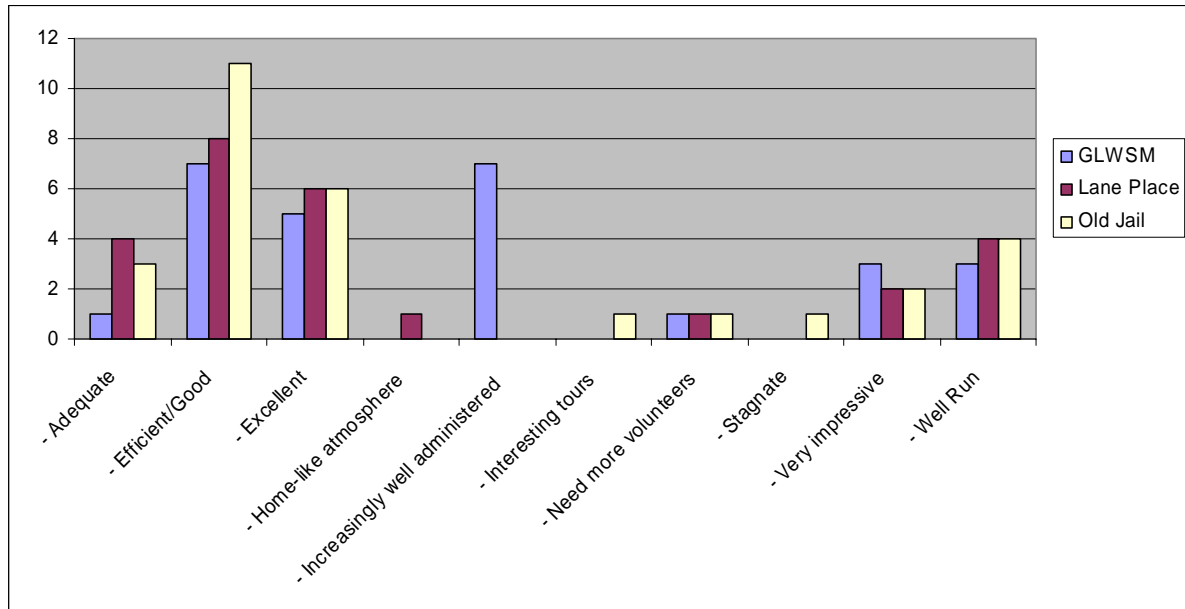
Overwhelmingly, respondents indicated that museum visitors spend money in the community, whether through gas and meal purchases or through admissions and gift shop sales. It's evident that museums are an economic engine for the community.

Table 8. How does the museum enhance local educational opportunities for students, adults & families?



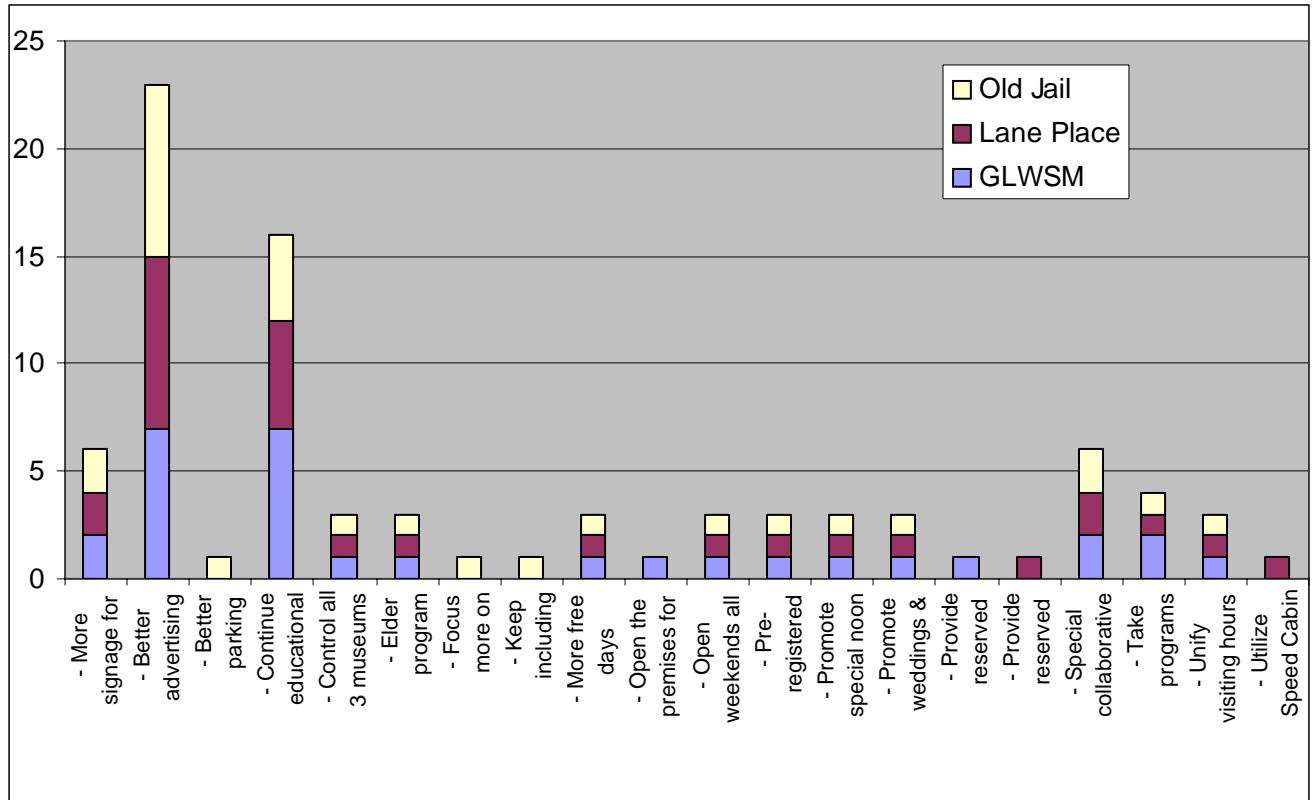
Responses to these questions were nearly evenly spread across categories, but of note is that field trips are the strongest way that the museums are identified as contributing educationally. Programs beyond the standard field trip aren't as strongly identified with, but they do show up on the radar. This indicates that the museums need to do a better job advertising/communicating about their programs and working harder at having these programs identified as "educational outlets."

Table 9. What is your general impression(s) of museum operations?



The spikes in the table correlate with very positive comments about museum operations. The terms excellent, efficient, good, well administered, and well run are used heavily to describe respondent perceptions. This is a clear indication that the museum directors are moving their respective museums along a path that the community can support.

Table 10. How can the museum better serve the community?



A variety of responses were offered, but the key ones include better signage, better advertising, continued educational programs, and special collaborative events for the three museums. The first two items are of key importance as the museums continue to attract visitors to the Crawfordsville economy. The last two responses are ways that the museums can contribute to the personal development of the Crawfordsville and Montgomery County citizenry.

Conclusion

This assessment process has provided a peek into how the museums are viewed in the community and, for the most part, they are viewed quite positively and a few areas have been identified for future work. In the short term, the museums are rich with collaborative opportunity based on common elements and are charged with getting the word out about programming and events. This process also reveals areas where more detailed assessment tools are needed in the future for gauging performance and impact in a more quantitative fashion. The information gathered through the assessment will be useful to demonstrate the organizations' contributions to community leaders and other constituents.

Appendices

APPENDIX A
SURVEY TOOL

VALUE ASSESSMENT OF CRAWFORDSVILLE MUSEUMS – AUGUST 2006

1. When was the last time you visited one of these Crawfordsville museums?

General Lew Wallace Study & Museum

a. within the last 6 months

b. within the last year

c. within the last 5 years

d. within the last 10 years

e. within the last 20 years

Lane Place

f. within the last 6 months

g. within the last year

h. within the last 5 years

i. within the last 10 years

j. within the last 20 years

Old Jail

k. within the last 6 months

l. within the last year

m. within the last 5 years

n. within the last 10 years

o. within the last 20 years

2. If you have not visited the museum in the last 12 months, what was your reason?

Lane Place

a. Been there, done that

b. Prefer to visit new/other places on future visit

_____ c. Didn't have good experience/meet expectations

_____ d. Too expensive

_____ e. Personal health issues

_____ f. Too far (distance)

_____ g. Combination of factors

General Lew Wallace Study & Museum

_____ h. Been there, done that

_____ i. Prefer to visit new/other places on future visit

_____ j. Didn't have good experience/meet expectations

_____ k. Too expensive

_____ l. Personal health issues

_____ m. Too far (distance)

_____ n. Combination of factors

Old Jail

_____ o. Been there, done that

_____ p. Prefer to visit new/other places on future visit

_____ q. Didn't have good experience/meet expectations

_____ r. Too expensive

_____ s. Personal health issues

_____ t. Too far (distance)

_____ u. Combination of factors

3. Do you regularly participate in museum programs?

Old Jail

_____ yes _____ no

If yes, which programs and why?

General Lew Wallace Study & Museum

_____ yes _____ no

If yes, which programs and why?

Lane Place

_____ yes _____ no

If yes, which programs and why?

4. What is your favorite feature(s) of the museum?

General Lew Wallace Study & Museum

Lane Place

Old Jail

5. How do you use the museum most?

Lane Place

General Lew Wallace Study & Museum

Old Jail

6. How does the museum contribute to the community?

Lane Place

Old Jail

General Lew Wallace Study & Museum

7. How do the museums impact the local economy?

Old Jail

General Lew Wallace Study & Museum

Lane Place

8. How do the museums enhance local educational opportunities for students, adults, and families?

General Lew Wallace Study & Museum

Old Jail

Lane Place

9. What is your general impression(s) of museum operations?

Old Jail

General Lew Wallace Study & Museum

Lane Place

10. How can the museums better serve the community?

General Lew Wallace Study & Museum

Lane Place

Old Jail

GENERAL DEMOGRAPHICS (optional)

11. Sex: male female

12. Age: 18-25 26-35 36-45 46-55 56-65 65+

13. Zip code: _____

14. Education level: _____ high school diploma _____ college, 2 years or less _____ college graduate
_____ associates/technical degree _____ post-graduate degree _____ other: _____

15. Are you a member of the museum? General Lew Wallace Study & Museum _____ yes _____ no

Lane Place _____ yes _____ no Old Jail _____ yes _____ no

16. Your name: _____

APPENDIX B
RAW DATA

Questions/Responses	GLWSM	%	Lane Place	%	Old Jail	%
#1 When was the last time you visited one of these C'ville museums?						
- within 6 months	22	55.00%	15	39.47%	10	26.32%
- within last year	6	15.00%	10	26.32%	9	23.68%
- within last 5 years	7	17.50%	9	23.68%	15	39.47%
- within last 10 years	5	12.50%	4	10.53%	4	10.53%
- within last 20 years						
Total responses	40		38		38	
#2 If you have not visited the museum in the last 10 months, what was your reason?						
- Been there, done that	4	57.14%	4	33.33%	9	50.00%
- Prefer to visit new/other places on future visit			1	8.33%	1	5.56%
- Didn't have good experience/meet expectations						
- Too expensive						
- Personal health reasons					1	5.56%
- Too far (distance)						
- Combination of factors	3	42.86%	7	58.33%	7	38.89%
Total responses	7		12		18	
#3 Do you regularly participate in museum programs?						
- Yes(see comments at the bottom of this report)	11		6		2	
#4 What is your favorite feature(s) of the museum?						
- Architecture	10	19.61%	7	15.22%	3	8.57%
- Grounds	17	33.33%	12	26.09%		
- Artifacts	10	19.61%				
- History	4	7.84%	7	15.22%	3	8.57%

- Tour	5	9.80%	4	8.70%	4	11.43%
- Concerts	1	1.96%	2	4.35%		
- Carriage House	1	1.96%				
- Gift shop	1	1.96%				
- Events	1	1.96%				
- Art Week	1	1.96%				
- Quilts			1	2.17%	1	2.86%
- Interior			2	4.35%		
- Dining Room			2	4.35%		
- Antiques			2	4.35%		
- Gazebo			1	2.17%		
- Presentation of Historical Items & Antiques			1	2.17%		
- Connection with Lincoln			1	2.17%		
- Henry S. Lane			1	2.17%		
- Furniture			2	4.35%		
- Speed Cabin			1	2.17%		
- Art Exhibits					1	2.86%
- Uniqueness					2	5.71%
- Variety of Exhibits					5	14.29%
- Circular mechanism					7	20.00%
- Jail Cell					4	11.43%
- Paint/detail outside					3	8.57%
- Lock-Up					1	2.86%
- Stories, i.e, ghost, arm caught in cell block					1	2.86%
Total responses	51		46		35	

#5 How do you use the museum most?

- Refer B&B guests to visit	1	2.86%	1	3.70%	1	3.70%
- Take out of town guests	16	45.71%	15	55.56%	16	59.26%
- Walks	5	14.29%	3	11.11%		
- Meetings	1	2.86%	1	3.70%	3	11.11%
- Concerts			3	11.11%		
- Events on the grounds	5	14.29%	1	3.70%		
- Gazebo			1	3.70%		
- Student tours	1	2.86%	1	3.70%	1	3.70%

- Take grandchildren	1	2.86%	1	3.70%	1	3.70%
- Activities	1	2.86%			1	3.70%
- Family outings	1	2.86%			1	3.70%
- Picnic on grounds	2	5.71%				
- Tours	1	2.86%			1	3.70%
- Special events					2	7.41%
Total responses	35		27		27	

#6 How does the museum contribute to the community?

- Gives good sense of history	20	37.04%	16	30.19%	11	25.00%
- Architecture	4	7.41%	2	3.77%	3	6.82%
- Tourism/cultural wealth	18	33.33%	15	28.30%	16	36.36%
- Cultural Events			2	3.77%		
- Anchors residential neighborhood			6	11.32%		
- Outdoor events			8	15.09%		
- Meeting place			2	3.77%		
- Art classes			1	1.89%		
- Programs	1	1.85%	1	1.89%	1	2.27%
- Exhibits					6	13.64%
- Unique structure					6	13.64%
- Easily accessible					1	2.27%
- Special events, i.e., weddings	3	5.56%				
- Programs on grounds	7	12.96%				
- Grounds (need more benches??)	1	1.85%				
Total responses	54		53		44	

#7 How do the museums impact the local economy?

- Visitors spend money in the community (tourism)	20	71.43%	23	82.14%	23	79.31%
- Appreciation of our community	4	14.29%	3	10.71%	4	13.79%
- Good place for weddings	2	7.14%				
- Attracts business to the community	2	7.14%	2	7.14%	2	6.90%
Total responses	28		28		29	

#8 How do the museums enhance local educational opportunities for

students, adults, and families?

- Give a sense of history	5	16.67%	7	22.58%	5	17.24%
- Field trips for schools	9	30.00%	10	32.26%	10	34.48%
- Programs to enhance education	9	30.00%	5	16.13%	5	17.24%
- Living history	6	20.00%	8	25.81%	4	13.79%
- Art education					3	10.34%
- Place to visit	1	3.33%	1	3.23%	1	3.45%
- Changing exhibits					1	3.45%
Total responses	30		31		29	

#9 What is your general impression(s) of museum operations?

- Adequate	1	3.70%	4	15.38%	3	10.34%
- Increasingly well administered	7	25.93%				
- Interesting tours					1	3.45%
- Homey atmosphere			1	3.85%		
- Very impressive	3	11.11%	2	7.69%	2	6.90%
- Efficient/Good	7	25.93%	8	30.77%	11	37.93%
- Well Run	3	11.11%	4	15.38%	4	13.79%
- Excellent	5	18.52%	6	23.08%	6	20.69%
- Need more volunteers (challenge)	1	3.70%	1	3.85%	1	3.45%
- Stagnating					1	3.45%
Total responses	27		26		29	

#10 How can the museums better serve the community?

- More signage to locations (town/museums)	2	6.45%	2	6.90%	2	6.90%
- Continue educational programs	7	22.58%	5	17.24%	4	13.79%
- Better advertising	7	22.58%	8	27.59%	8	27.59%
- Special events tying the 3 together	2	6.45%	2	6.90%	2	6.90%
- Keep including children's programming					1	3.45%
- Unify visiting hours	1	3.23%	1	3.45%	1	3.45%
- Take programs into schools	2	6.45%	1	3.45%	1	3.45%
- Promote special noon tours for service groups	1	3.23%	1	3.45%	1	3.45%
- Promote weddings & other special events	1	3.23%	1	3.45%	1	3.45%

- Elder program	1	3.23%	1	3.45%	1	3.45%
- Focus more on justice issues					1	3.45%
- Utilize Speed Cabin more			1	3.45%		
- More free days	1	3.23%	1	3.45%	1	3.45%
- Pre-registered catered dinners (fund raisers)	1	3.23%	1	3.45%	1	3.45%
- Parking					1	3.45%
- Provide reserved picnic area	1	3.23%				
- Provide reserved private events			1	3.45%		
- Visitors Bureau provide local "step guide"	1	3.23%	1	3.45%	1	3.45%
- Control all 3 museums by one board	1	3.23%	1	3.45%	1	3.45%
- Open the premises for meets for a nominal/no charge fee	1	3.23%				
- Open weekends year round	1	3.23%	1	3.45%	1	3.45%
Total responses	31		29		29	

Comments from Item #3 - Activities Participated In

Art Exhibits - Old Jail
 Lew Wallace Conference
 Lane Place - Christmas Tour
 Study 100th Anniversary Celebration
 Music Events - Study
 New Carriage House Opening
 Special Events at the Study
 Outdoor band concerts at Lane Place
 Summer program for kids at the Study
 Athena Brass at Study
 All professional programs w/ significant cultural or local history (study)
 Labor Day Break Out

The items in red mark notable data "spikes."