

Kent Willmeth – Troop 71 – Seneca, KS
Eagle Scout Project
Documentary – Seneca’s History of the Pony Express

Project Description

The Pony Express is celebrating its 150th anniversary in 2010. Seneca, Kansas was a pony express station during the 18 month run of the Pony Express. The Pony Express museum in Seneca has been going through a renovation in preparation for the 150th celebration.

My project will be a mini documentary called Seneca’s History of the Pony Express. This movie will include history of the Pony Express and how it impacted Seneca and the surrounding area. The project plan will include research, interviews, script writing, filming and editing. The final movie will be part of a new audio/visual display at the Pony Express museum and will be included on the websites of Seneca Downtown Impact, Inc., City of Seneca and Nemaha County Historical Society. DVD’s of the movie will be made and will be sold at the museum to benefit the operation of the museum.

I will partner with 3 different organizations to complete this project: Seneca Downtown Impact, SCTV, and the Pony Express Museum.

Linda Honeyman, Executive Director of Seneca Downtown Impact, has agreed to write and submit a grant to help fund the project. If the grant is awarded, the funds will be used to pay SCTV for their time and use of their camera equipment. Linda also will assist me in enlisting the help of John Vorhes, an audio visual specialist with the US Information Agency. John’s great grandfather was a sheriff in the 1800’s in Seneca and has documented a lot of history of Seneca and the region. Funds from the grant will also help pay for Mr. Vorhes’ time and travel expenses from Maryland.

Jim Copeland and Cindy McWilliams of SCTV will provide direction for the filming and editing of the movie. In return, I will be helping SCTV this summer with filming baseball games and events in Seneca to be broadcast on SCTV.

Mary Jane Fleming of the Pony Express Museum in Seneca will provide historical insight for the facts of the Pony Express. She will also help with research material and the museum will provide a back drop for scenes in the documentary.

This documentary will tell the story of the Pony Express and how it impacted Seneca. In celebration of the 150th anniversary, The Pony Express Museum in Seneca is undergoing renovations to preserve its history. The movie will help preserve the history for generations to come and will help attract tourists and visitors to the museum. Sales of the DVD’s will bring in revenue for the museum.

The Pony Express Museum is a tourist attraction for Seneca. Bringing more people into Seneca will help the local economy. The museum is located downtown so visitors to the museum will also be attracted to shopping at stores, eating at restaurants and staying in our hotels.

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Project Details

Research

Books - I have read the book “Phantom Riders of the Pony Express” which describes the history of the Pony Express.

Websites – www.xphomestation.com – This website is a compilation of the people, places, vocabulary and dates of the Pony Express.

Museums - I plan to visit the Pony Express National Museum in St. Joseph, Missouri, to gain more knowledge about the Pony Express. I will interview Mary Jane Fleming from The Pony Express Museum in Seneca and take an in depth tour of the museum.

Interview – I am going to interview Dan Koch who is a native of Seneca and a current Pony Express Rider.

Script

Based on my research, I will write a film script for the documentary. The script will be reviewed and approved by Mary Jane Fleming, Linda Honeyman, John Vorhes and Jim Copeland.

Filming and Editing

With the help of Jim Copeland and Cindy McWilliams from SCTV, I will film and edit the documentary.

Narration

I would like to have John Riggins to narrate the movie based on the script I write.

Project Helpers

Linda Honeyman – Executive Director, Seneca Downtown Impact

Mary Jane Fleming – Pony Express Museum

Jim Copeland – SCTV

Cindy McWilliams – SCTV

John Vorhes – US Information Agency

Dona Willmeth – Mom

Funding

Linda Honeyman is writing a grant through the Kansas Historical Society. This grant will pay for the time and expenses of Jim Copeland, Cindy McWilliams and John Vorhes. The grant money will also pay for the DVD’s needed to sell at the museum.

I plan to volunteer my time helping SCTV film baseball games and events in Seneca during the summer of 2010.