

PMI Award for Project Excellence

APPLICATION

GESA Carousel of Dreams



INTRODUCTION - SUMMARY

The Gesa Carousel of Dreams was a 13 year project to restore, house and present a 100 year old world class carousel for the Tri Cities community to enjoy that was completed in August of 2014. The goal was to create a legacy in the form of an entertainment facility that would last through the century and fill a need for family destinations in this community.

The project was very atypical and is a great candidate for a number of reasons.

Complexity: The project was built on leased land inside a city park, completely owned by a not-for-profit foundation which will run a for-profit museum style presentation of this priceless piece of artwork.

Without a precedent for this type of project everything was negotiated from the ground up with federal, state, city and other entities. The project included 12 major and 20 minor contractors.

The Three Rivers Carousel Foundation (the Foundation) chose to be our own general contractor on the project and implement every cost saving measure possible. We asked for donated labor, materials, and asked every entity involved to provide us with bids that were greatly discounted or no cost. This included a board member who was hired to be the project manager.

The foundation began the project with about 50% of the budgeted funding required to complete the project, so fundraising during the project was required and it was completed without a core of experienced project managers or leaders.

In the end, The Gesa Carousel of Dreams was completed in late summer of 2014 for a total cost of 4 million dollars without any legal, accounting or construction issues and borrowed less than 10% of the overall cost to pay final bills.

SPONSOR LETTER

As the board chair of the Three Rivers Carousel Foundation dba Gesa Carousel of Dreams it is my honor to share this world class facility with your group and the entire region. This ends a 13 year project that is all about community and demonstrates what partnerships with private and public entities can accomplish for the good of the community.

The Gesa Carousel of Dreams is arts, history, entertainment, culture, family, community, and legacy all rolled up into one facility.

Not only is the facility world class but the community is clearly supporting the project results, the GESA Carousel of Dreams. In the first 100 days of operation we have shared 75,000 rides and hosted over 125 events in our banquet room.



Eric Van Winkle

Board Chair

Carousel of Dreams Foundation

2901 F Southridge Blvd.

SCHEDULE

After 10 years of preparation including, acquisition and restoration of the 100 year old carousel, gaining city approvals, upfront fund raising, establishing the Foundation board and finalizing design and plans the project broke ground in January of 2013, and was completed in August of 2014, a total of 19 months.



(Photos, site work to move an existing gazebo, building and mechanism assembly)

In an effort to be as efficient as possible we partnered with every entity we could. For scheduling we reached out to the City of Kennewick who had an established internship with a student from Columbia Basin College in the project management program who utilized *Primavera* software thru his educational internship to schedule our project for us.

We were able to utilize this software with his guidance and leadership which allowed us to complete the project within about a month of his original estimate back in early 2013.

The schedule was reviewed and updated by the project team weekly and reported to the Foundation Board monthly.

Due to the high level of discounted and donate services, many schedule impacts were encountered and mitigated.

COST

The overall cost of this project was always \$4,000,000, how we got there was a moving target on account of the goals set by the foundation to find the most efficient means to any task. We used donated labor in some cases, donated materials in others, yet found many line items that although promised did not come to the table in the end.

Overall budget for the project was \$4 million, as follows:

| | | |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Purchase of the Carousel | \$1,000,000 | 2003 |
| Restoration | \$500,000 | 2004-2006 |
| Building | \$2,500,000 | 2012 - 2014 |
| Total Project Cost | \$4,000,000 | |



In the end we spent just over \$2,300,000 million dollars on the building. One of the benefits of being a not-for-profit building a community project is that we were able to beg, borrow or find well over 10% of our overall project in-kind from contractors, vendors or sponsors. This included floor coverings, railings, roofing, insulation, concession, and building furniture and equipment.

By generating corporate sponsorships, selling the floor tiles and rounding boards, and adopting out our horses we generated nearly 90% of the cash needed to pay for this project. We ended up borrowing \$354,000 dollars at the time we opened, of which we only owe \$250K four months later.

We took a 2 year old construction budget, revised it and started managing it in January of 2013, making changes monthly until we opened the door in September of 2014.

SCOPE

This is where this project becomes more of an art than science.

The scope of work was:

- Construction of a 9600 sq. ft. facility
- Purchase a new mechanism (the platform on which the horses are mounted)
- Assemble a 100-year-old restored carousel inside of the building
- Furnish and install equipment for an operational entertainment facility
- Staff the initial operations team and related procedures to run a business

Once construction started there were no major scope changes made. Minor scope changes are covered in change section

TEAM

The Three Rivers Carousel Board was the leadership team which met every week throughout the project. The project manager brought the latest status reports and budget for review. The keys here were, the board was confident in our choice of contractors, our partnership with the City of Kennewick was very strong, and we included our sponsors in our progress.

There were 12 major contractors and 20 some minor contractors that contributed to the project.

The final carousel assembly consisted of volunteers from the board and the local community, who worked under the direction of Carousel Works from Ohio.



(Photo: Ongoing marketing and outreach)

STAKEHOLDERS

The Gesa Carousel of Dreams project has been well publicized in the community as it had taken many years to get to the point of construction of the building. There were several key stakeholders, including the City of Kennewick, Gesa Credit Union, Toyota of Tri-Cities, Baker Produce, many other sponsors and the community itself. In the end the community is the key stakeholder of the GESA Carousel of Dreams

The task of sating all of these was daunting. We chose to overcome these challenges by controlling a positive message and by scheduling regular meetings with city council and media and by reaching out to our sponsors by inviting them to the site as we showed progress. Controlling the message and keeping it positive was pivotal.

The media treated us well and sponsors really enjoyed getting hands-on touch at key steps along the way.

RISKS

The project started with two major risks.

FINANCIAL – At construction start there was only about 50% of the projected budget in the bank. The remaining 50% needed to be raised from the community. There was no “big brother” that held a bank account the project could access.

CONTRACTORS – Many of the contractors provide donated services. However they would prioritize their work such that full paying customers were often handled first.

While risks were identified on a daily basis the project did not have the experience to fully manage this, so the contractors, partners, and vendors were engaged to manage the risks.

Early on we established a weekly onsite meeting for all scope of work in the next few weeks where everyone was introduced to our site and its challenges.

This gathering was very helpful as all involved got hands on feel for our daily issues.



CHANGE

Focus on the end product was the key here, accepting that change was eminent and finding the best solution was the answer. The project manager was empowered to make the call and was able to navigate these daily changes. Our theory was, “if it’s right for the client, meets building standards, and enhances the end product, make the call”

The key areas of change that were larger decisions included

- Final plans for the unique building
- Building plan changes during construction
 - o Roof material
 - o Siding
 - o Final interior designs
 - o Banquet room divider

Each of these change items included a budget and schedule impact before being incorporated.

LESSONS LEARNED

Endless list of Lessons Learned, but in the end we found that the key lessons learned were

The important step was choosing the right contractors and vendors. We often did not pick the cheapest; rather we chose the ones with the most ties to the community.

We had an involved and passionate board of directors. Their commitment to seeing this project come to fruition was vital to its success. Taking on the financial risk and not letting it stop us was very important.

Developing and using key contacts in the city and other government entities. After years of “squabbling” having these groups with us helped immeasurably.

Keeping the community as a major stakeholder, educated, informed and engaged during the project, has shown benefits in the use of the facility since it opened.



(Photo: We lit up the building during the Seahawks run to the SuperBowl in 2013)