Freedom’s Frontier staff, a few Board members, and Partners met at the Geary County Historical Society Museum for the May Partner meeting. The Pilot Club catered a lovely lunch for us.

The museum has three floors of exhibits — both permanent and rotating — and a gift shop. The Museum building is available for rent, email for more information. There are also three Satellite sites.

You can read about regional history here. Like the Geary County Historical Society’s Facebook page for news, events and photos.

Photos in this presentation were taken at the museum building pictured at left. Please visit our Partner for a better look at the exhibits and artifacts!
Museum Director Jamie Clark and her staff and volunteers were gracious hosts, and welcomed Freedom's Frontier for our regular meeting.

Since we rotate meeting locations, we count on our Partners to help out, and they never let us down!

They even provided centerpieces at our tables! Do you know what these things are? On the left is a string dispenser, and on the right is a candy hammer. What a clever way to make artifacts hands-on, and also a nice ice-breaker, as it sparks discussion at the table.
This was exciting for those present – Partners have been waiting for this for ten years, and now Freedom’s Frontier is very close to the beginning of signage implementation. Our Signage Coordinator, Doug Pickert (pictured at right), jumped into this project with both feet, and has made great progress toward getting signs in the ground at pilot locations in Bates County, MO, and Johnson County, KS. We’ll continue to update you as the signage project advances.

Doug (with Freedom’s Frontier Managing Director Julie McPike’s assistance) showed slides that illustrate what Freedom’s Frontier signs might look like once installed. If you have questions about signage, Doug can be reached at dpickert@freedomsfrontier.org.

Applications that will allow Doug and Julie to figure out what a site’s signage priorities are can be found on the webpage. Complete an application if you haven’t already.
Just prior to the meeting, staff got a first look at an Interpretive Grant Project. Michael Stubbs shared some mock-ups for panels for Mount Mitchell Heritage Prairie. Find out more about Interpretive Grants on our website. Grants are made for up to $5,000.

Pictured here are a few things that were on display in the room in which we met. Getting to visit five different museums or historic sites every year is one of the perks of coming to Partner Meetings!
One of the many ways in which your site can benefit from partnership with Freedom’s Frontier is through participating in the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) StEPs (Standards and Excellence Program) for history organizations. Our StEPs Grant pays for the enrollment once you are a member of AASLH. Cheryl Collins (pictured at right) and other Partners can provide information about their experiences with StEPs, as they did at this meeting. For more information about StEPs, contact Liz Hobson, Education and Interpretation Manager, at ehobson@freedomsfrontier.org.

Watch this AASLH webinar for more information, or read more about it on the AASLH website.

Advisory Committee Chair, and Riley County Historical Society Director, Cheryl Collins, gets our meetings started every other month (Partner meeting information is here.) In addition, she and other Advisory Committee members assist staff with various projects by providing a Partner prospective. They frequently review program descriptions and projects prior to staff presenting them to the Board of Trustees and rolling them out to the public. If you would like to serve in this capacity, contact Julie Mcpike at jmcpike@freedomsfrontier.org.
Freedom’s Frontier Board of Trustees member, and Director of the Franklin County, KS, Historical Society, Deb Barker talked about a conference she attended with Carol Bohl, and provided slides that showed the slave cabins and artifacts they saw. Deb is a proponent of life-long learning, and often spends her weekends on daytrips to historic places in and outside of the heritage area borders. (Sonia has been on a trip or two with her, when she worked for the Old Depot Museum in Ottawa, Kansas, where Deb is also the director.)

Former Cass County Historical Society Director, Carol Bohl, let the partnership know that she hasn’t forgotten us, nor is she sitting idle in Iowa. She is still working with historical organizations, and has been researching ways that people and places there connect to the Freedom’s Frontier stories. You can find her presentation here.

It is worth noting that both of these women have been honored as recipients of the (Judy) Billings MVP (Most Valuable Partner) Award.
And speaking of the Billings MVP Award, all four of the folks honored with that award were at this meeting. Kerry Altenbernd (aka around Kansas as a talented John Brown reenactor) is the bearded man on the right side of the photo. The woman in the center is Donna Lauffer, former Johnson County (KS) Librarian and sister of Carol Bohl. At left in the foreground is Doug Pickert.

And here’s Carol Bohl greeting Eileen Robertson, from Humboldt, KS. Both Carol and Eileen were recognized with the Billings MVP Award the first year it was given.

You probably know someone who should be recognized as a Most Valuable Partner, and you should go to the Freedom’s Frontier webpage and get an application to complete and return to the FFNHA staff to nominate that someone. You can get the application here.

Applications for the award, presented at the annual luncheon, are due on September 30, 2016.
Director Jim Ogle (in the white shirt, center left) reported on the non-competitive grants that Freedom’s Frontier is awarding as incentives to organizations and local government entities that assist with matching funds for the heritage area, by passing funding through Freedom’s Frontier. For more information about this program, please contact him at jogle@freedomsfrontier.org, or (785) 856-3635 | (785) 409-9943 (cell). He would be happy to meet with you about funding, and other concerns you may have. He is traveling all around the heritage area, and if he hasn’t yet visited your site, will soon!

Board of Trustees Chair Jody Craig’s (on the left, standing) big announcement was that the heritage area’s official name has changed to… **Freedom’s Frontier National Heritage Area**. Some federal documents still listed Freedom’s Frontier as **Territorial Kansas Heritage Alliance**, the working name of the organization in the early days. This means that prospective donors will have an easier time locating information about the heritage area, and there will be consistency in how we are recognized by other entities.
Managing Director, Julie McPike, shared that Congressman Sam Graves has signed on to H.R. 581 as a co-sponsor. This bill would make National Heritage Areas a program of the National Park Service. Currently Congressman Graves joins Congressman Cleaver and Congresswomen Hartzler and Jenkins as co-sponsors of this important piece of legislation. Julie also noted that a “Dear Colleague” letter was circulated in both the House and the Senate asking for the appropriations committees to provide robust funding for National Heritage Areas through the Heritage Partnership Program line item.

Julie also reminded attendees about the Photo Contest, 10th Anniversary Event support, and two open RFPs.

Education and Interpretation Manager Liz Hobson gave an update on Interpretive Grants and grant deadlines. She talked about Teaching with FFNHA Historic Places and the session (PDF: page 26) that she and Maureen Donegan (Olathe Public Schools) presented at this program at the National Council for History Education Conference at Niagara Falls in April. Other highlights of Liz’s report:

- Journey Through Hallowed Ground’s Living Legacy Project to provide a tree for every fallen Civil War soldier
- Honoring Tribal Legacies, a website developed to encourage educators to benefit from the collective wisdom that can be gained from a shared history that simultaneously embraces the past, present, and future.
- Civil War Trust’s Field Trip Fund (which provides up to $1,500 for field trips) and the Freedom’s Frontier Bus on Us program (provides up to 75% of field trip bus transportation costs)
Our Partners who provide us with meeting space, also are generous with allowing us to tour their museums and other facilities, and often we get to see what happens behind the scenes as well. Here are just a few exhibits that I (Sonia) found on my tour. I thought they were interesting and would be easy to replicate.

This was a magnetic board that had photos of people. Facts about the people were printed on magnets.

This exhibit explains deaccession, and gives museum patrons two objects – a dress and a book – that are collection duplicates, with descriptions of the items, why they are being considered for deaccession, and what could be done with them afterward. Patrons are asked which item they would vote to remove from the collection.
When was your community or organization born? Does it have a “birth certificate”? This one looks like it was also an admission ticket for Junction City’s 100th Birthday Party, May 1-2-3, 1955.

This was dessert at our meeting. Lunch at our meetings is $11. You can come to the meeting without purchasing lunch – bring your own, come for just a portion of the meeting, or stay for the whole meeting – whatever fits your schedule! Our next meeting is scheduled for July 14, 2016, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., in Humboldt, KS. If you are not receiving our Monday Minute newsletter, in which we share information about upcoming meetings and programs, and provide information that can be used at your site, please contact Sonia Smith at ssmith@freedomsfrontier.org, and ask that you be added to the email list.
**Save the Date**

**Monday, May 16** Deadline for Interpretive Grant Applications

**Wednesday, June 1** Deadline for submitting Historic Timeline Events for the FFNHA 2017 Promotional Calendar. This is our first ever printed calendar. Photos will be selected for the month pages from the submissions for the Photo Contest (see below). Contact Sonia at ssmith@freedomsfrontier.org for more details.

**Wednesday, June 8** Board of Trustees Meeting, Flint Hills Discovery Center, Manhattan KS

**Friday, July 1** Deadline for submitting Programs and Events for the FFNHA 2017 Promotional Calendar

**Thursday, July 14** Partner Meeting, Humboldt KS

**Wednesday, July 27** Deadline for submitting photos for the FFNHA 2017 Calendar Photo Contest

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**Contact Us**

**Elizabeth Hobson** chobson@freedomsfrontier.org
Education & Interpretation Manager (785) 856-2333

**Julie McPike** jmcpike@freedomsfrontier.org
Managing Director (785) 856-5283

**Jim Ogle** jogle@freedomsfrontier.org
Executive Director (785) 409-9943

**Doug Pickert** dpickert@freedomsfrontier.org
Signage Coordinator (913) 583-1370

**Sonia Smith** ssmith@freedomsfrontier.org
Marketing & Communications Manager (785) 856-5304