

Internet Technician Report VIII

On The Stevens County Crossroads on the Columbia Digital Archive

For October 2011

By Joseph Barreca

This is the 8th report in this series and the 12th month of archiving activity. This last month has been active indeed. (To read previous reports, visit <http://crossroadsarchive.org/about/documents/project-progress>.)

The following chart shows the status of **inventory and prioritization of material** from the primary organizations in the original grant.

Agency or Organization	Contacted	Inventoried	Prioritized	Agreement	Digitizing
City of Chewelah and Chewelah Historical Center	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
City of Colville	Yes	No	No	No	No
City of Kettle Falls (Library)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
City of Marcus	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Clayton Historical Society	Yes	No	No	No	No
Geronimo's Restaurant	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Hunters Museum	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Kettle Falls Historical Center	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Little Pend Oreille Wildlife Refuge	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Loon Lake Historical Society	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Northport Historical Society	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Spokane Tribe	Yes	No	No	No	No
Stevens County Historical Society	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Stevens County Library	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Stevens County Planning	Yes	No	No	No	No
Tiger Historical Center	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
US Forest Service	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
US Park Service	Yes	No	No	No	No
Private Collections	Yes	Partial	Partial	Partial	Partial
Northeast Wash. Genealogical Society	Yes	Partial	Partial	Partial	Partial
Valley Historical Society	Yes	No	No	No	No

All of the organizations envisioned in the original grant request have now been contacted and we have begun digitizing material from the majority of them. We want to start digitizing at the smaller museums before winter inhibits travel. To that end we have begun projects in Northport, Tiger and Loon Lake. Every community has its own unique character, materials, volunteers and objectives. A look at several of them will clarify those situations and explain the above chart somewhat.

- Northport: Tracey Rice and Joseph Barreca attended a “Soup and Games Night” event there on October 28th. It allowed us to meet a cross-section of the community and explain our project. There was quite a bit of interest in the Power Point presentation and we gathered names and information. Several more pieces need to be in place to begin work and more visits will be needed.
- Tiger Historical Center: Tiger has very organized files and material. Regrettably, quite a few oral histories have been lost before we could back them up. A unique breakthrough has been involving seniors from the local high school. They have an advisor and a minimum of 40 hours each to devote

to the project. The school is also able to provide a scanner. Work has just begun in Tiger but will be able to continue without everyday staff trips to the Historical Center.

- Loon Lake: The Loon Lake Historical Society has an extensive collection of material that is well-organized and digitized. The challenge there is to find the best material. Luckily, they also have been able to gather a corps of dedicated History Detectives who are looking over the material and finding the best stories. Sue Richart is busy digitizing which allows the volunteers to do more creative and interesting work.
- Chewelah: For the time being, work at Chewelah is complete. We have relinquished use of the spare room in City Hall. The biggest boost however has been the volunteer work on inventory at the Chewelah Museum. The donated hours there give us thousands of dollars in volunteer time to contribute back to the museums.
- Clayton: Staff at the Clayton Historical Society did not understand the financial benefits of participating in this project until recently. Clayton is close to Loon Lake, so material from both organizations can be digitized at the Loon Lake location. We are expecting to be processing Clayton material in the near future.
- The Kettle Falls Historical Center: The work at this museum has involved creating a digital inventory of their material from scratch. We are using Musarch, a free archiving database, for this job. It has appropriate fields for metadata and can retain images of every item. It can also export that information in formats that we can use building our own archive. Since the most efficient plan is to get all the material into the Musarch database before exporting and building ours, there is little to show yet on our websites. They also need better computer equipment to use Musarch. These last steps are just about in place.
- Springdale: The material at the small museum attached to a restaurant in Springdale is not a good fit with this project. Springdale is however an important town in Stevens County History. More good material is available through the city and the school. We are working on getting access to it.
- City of Colville: The city has some good material especially on historic buildings. We have participated in joint exhibits with the city and are expecting to get digital copies of their material.
- Spokane Tribe: We have some good contacts with the Spokane Tribe. Their material is more sensitive than most but they have an interest in participating in the project.
- Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area (LARO): We have a close working relationship with the Archeology staff at LARO. We have scanned several large maps using their equipment and they have helped develop local oral histories. These contributions don't show up in our volunteer time because Federal staff time is not considered a matching contribution.

Power Points Presentations are an important part of our outreach program. Recently we have generated several of these and been given several others. We are able to export these as web pages and post them to our site. There are still some technological hurdles to jump before they are as clean as we would like, but being able to use the same material in presentations and on the Internet will be a big bonus for us. Early in the project, we identified Internet material that works well on smart phones as a priority. The use of images and slides, especially if we can move them even further to video with sound, makes our material much more accessible for the average user. Although this work is more interpretation than preservation, we want to keep it moving forward.

Another way to leverage our material is to create articles from it to promote interest and participation in **local publications**. Although we have not made much progress in that direction, our presentation in Northport will generate a story in the local paper. We have plans for more combined uses of the material in the near future. It helps to have already generated a critical mass of information in the archive itself.

The varied material that we already have has also lent itself to developing online **exhibits** with a wide variety of themes.

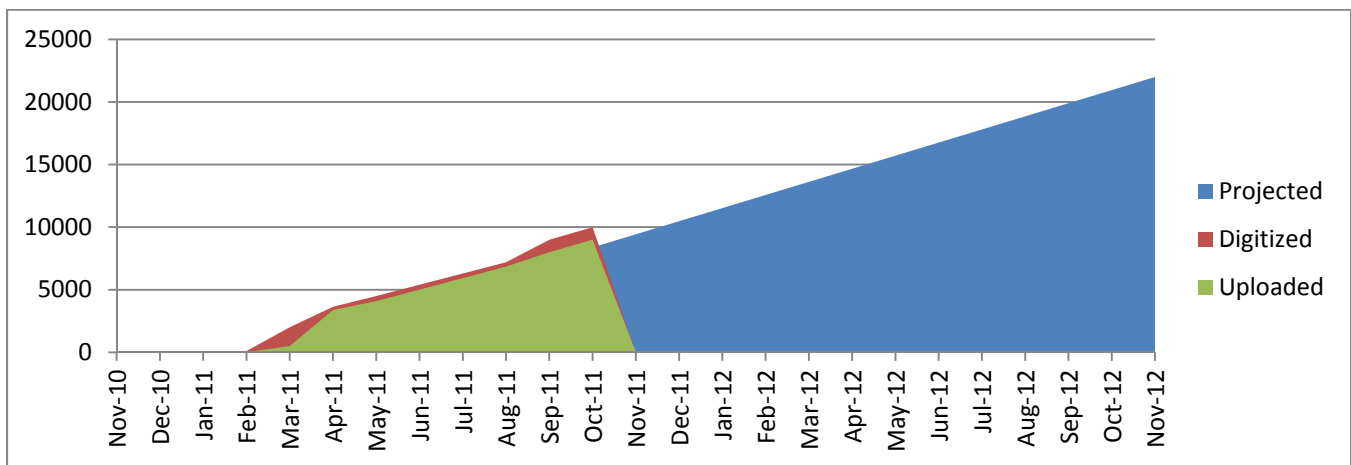
Medical	We have birth and death records plus proceedings of the medical society.
School Annuals	School annuals provide a snapshot of the entire community.
Roads	We now have an Internet slide show that fits with the Crossroads structure.

Schools	We have complete lists of the local schools and maps to compliment them
Jenkins	Col. Jenkins was a key citizen for Chewelah.
Directories	Polk and Telephone Directories provide a wealth of information for genealogists.
Thomas Brown	Thomas Brown is the father of Chewelah.
Service Star Legion	One of many civic organizations providing services to the community.
Pioneers	We have material from the Pioneer Association.
Railroads	Another of our crossroads themes with enough material for a growing exhibit.
Voting	Voting records in our archive show the progress of women gaining the right to vote.
Military	Military enlistment records and material from several wars.

We have come across a search problem on the Omeka site. It will not return items for search terms of less than 4 letters. We are working on ways to work around the problem including a separate name index.

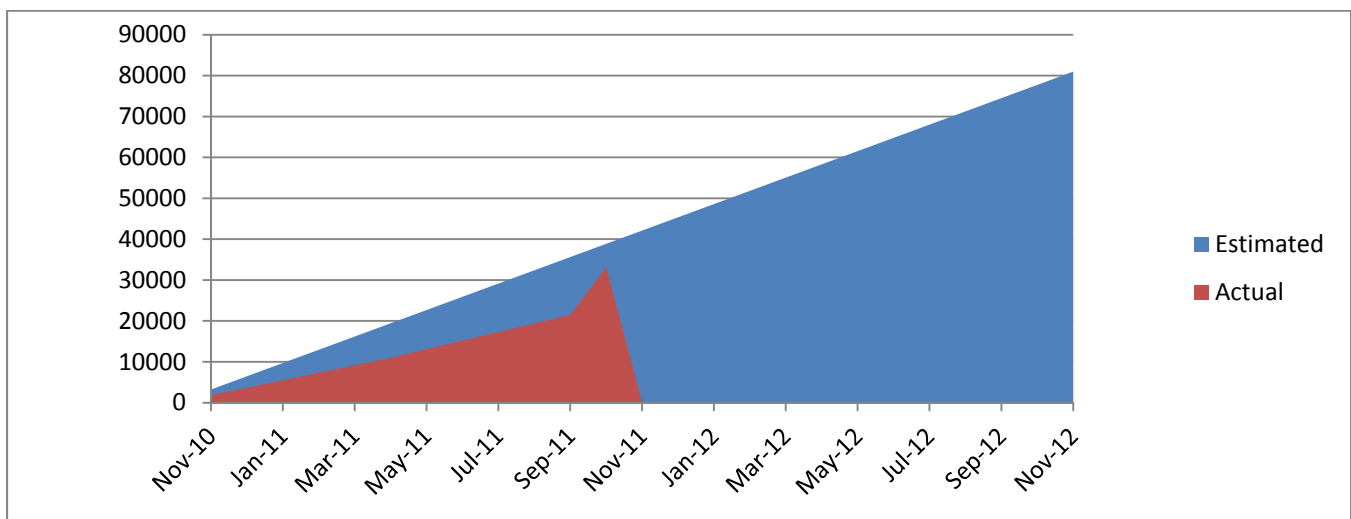
We have been granted an extended period of time to complete the project to compensate for the late start in actual hiring and implementation of the project timeline after its official first date of April 2010.

Figure 1: Items in the Archive



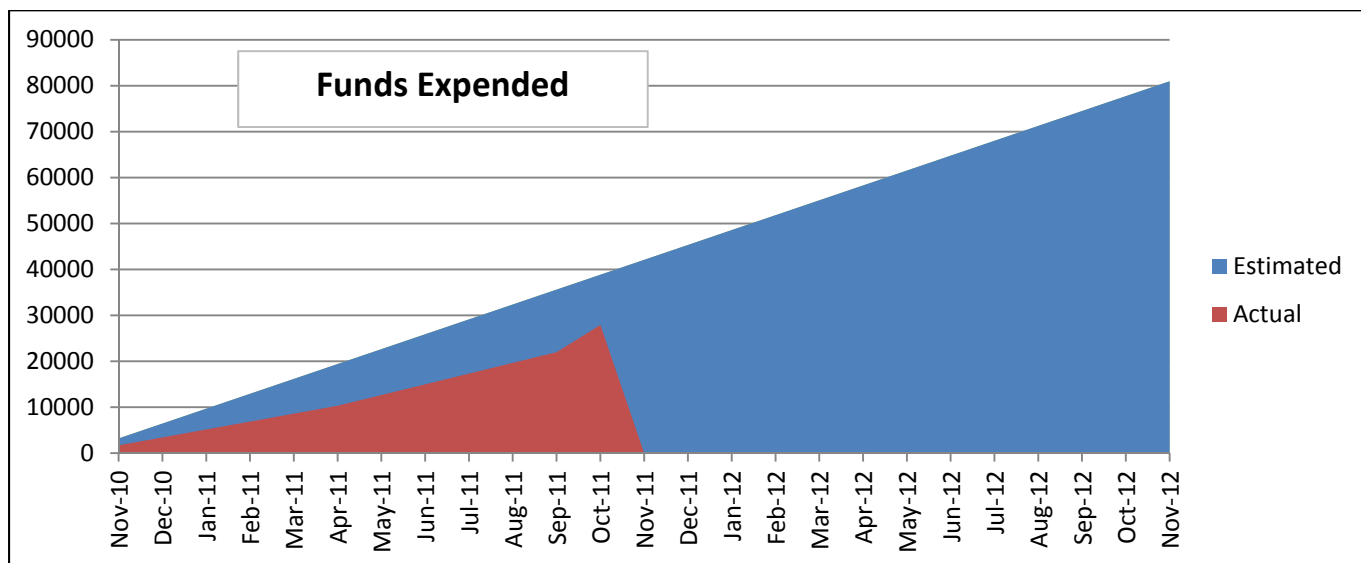
The amount of material in the archive continues to outstrip projections.

Figure 2: Matching Contributions



Large additions to the contribution category from inventory time at Chewelah put us nearly back on track to meet expected goals there. We hope that more publicity and presentations will keep this tracking category close to or above target.

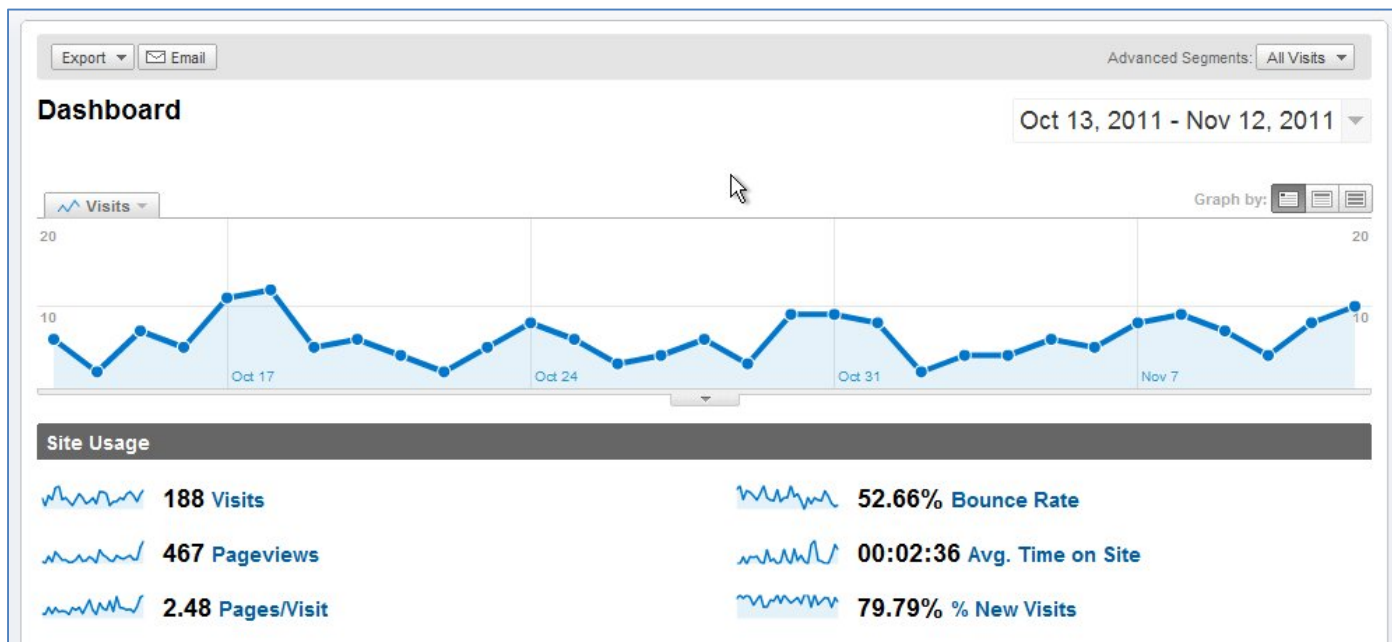
Figure 3: Funds Expended to Date



Funds Expended continues to be below estimates but does not reflect staff time charges that have not been made and payments to museums that are pending. We have reserves of contributed time right now which will give more confidence to the parties involved.

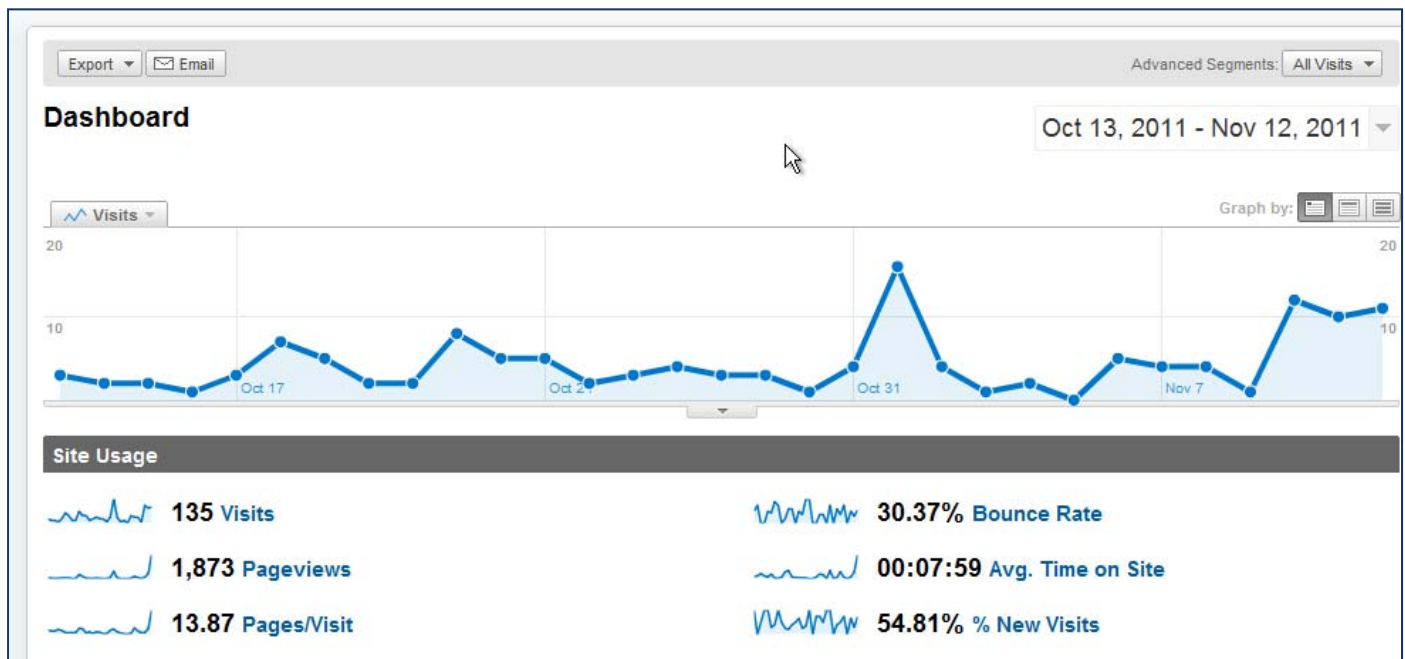
Website Tracking:

Figure 4: CrossroadsArchive.org Activity



The interpretation and business site for the Crossroads archive continues to have a large percentage of new visits and below 10 visits per day. There are peak days on October 17-18 after the presentation at the Panorama Gem and Mineral Club and October 29-Nov. 1 after the presentation at Northport. There is also a rise after Sue announced new material to Washington, Stevens and Spokane genealogy lists on November 11th. Our efforts have been modestly successful in raising awareness.

Figure 5: Crossroads.net Activity



Although overall visits are slightly down for the Omeka Archive site, the number of page views per visit is up as well as the bounce rate and the time spent on the site. This reflects having more content for the period. The biggest jumps in these indicators took place immediately after the announcement on to the genealogy lists. This is a good indication that content counts and we are gaining in that area. The spike on November 1st may be a reflection of more interest from the Loon Lake area.

Summary:

The numbers in this report are significantly better than the September report. We are making good progress in getting more museums and more volunteers involved. Of course with more activity comes more challenges. The Power Points, Indexes of Names and Maps – especially in a Google Map format will be big technological challenges for the current month. Coordinating these with more presentations and publications will also be a challenge. All of this happening during the Holiday Season adds another layer of complexity. The longer period for project completion relieves some of the stress.