

A Proposal

“Environmental Challenges”

A Joint Exhibit by the Severodvinsk, Russia History Museum
and the

Discover Portsmouth Center (Portsmouth Historical Society)

Note: The concept and most of the proposal details below came from Dimitri Ryzhikov, curator of the Severodvinsk History Museum which was visited by PSC group in Sept. 2010. Additional material was added by Alex Herlihy, director of Rye Town Museum and chair of the PSC.

Project: Severodvinsk Portsmouth Green Connection – a search for ideas and solutions to the environmental challenges that face both cities and their regions

Problem: It is difficult to get people’s attention and help them learn about real environmental problems and real solutions so they will become active in support of those solutions. Environmental problems in both regions are being addressed at a very slow rate. To draw citizen’s attention it is necessary to show these problems in a non –traditional and visual way that does not use just narrative and dry statistics. Accurate information is absolutely necessary to convey, but it must be done in a dramatic and dynamic context.

Idea: Create an exhibit using photography, painting, film and any other visual art form deemed appropriate; even special theater performances could address the issues. Images would be arranged in modules with brief use of captions, narrative and statistics; more substantial information would be contained in handouts that visitors could take with them to consider.

This exhibit would be mounted in the two museums at the same time; each Exhibit, while primarily focusing on the challenges in the immediate region, Would also include images and captions about eh challenges in the other city/region; grant money could be requested to help support the exhibits

Project Basics: images to be created and collected; contests could be set up for both citizens and students to determine by a panel of judges which images would be used. Perhaps professional photographers and other artists could participate on a designated part of the exhibit. Participants would be given a list of the most urgent environmental challenges to be addressed ie. in both cities the problem of sewage, solid waste and nuclear waste.

Exhibit designers would find creative way to dramatize the connection between the waste problem and its impact on people and to reveal hidden facts about the issue that are not commonly known.

Results/Outcome: The exhibit would help people to understand the problems and their backgrounds and provide real and understandable solutions which explain how citizens can participate in those solutions
Visitors to the exhibit must leave with some kind of lasting resolve to be further educated and then to act.

Tasks: form exhibit committees in both regions
Meet with environmentalists and identify issues
Prepare exhibit publicity and set up contests
Seek grant funding
Secure exhibit space and dates in museum
Design the exhibit modules
Create the exhibit
Create exhibit catalog
Create school curriculum material from the exhibit

The Portsmouth Severodvinsk Connection thinks that this exhibit proposal is the very tangible project that can galvanize people in both regions to participate and become part of this international Green Connection. The exhibit project can also enlarge participation in the Portsmouth Severodvinsk Connection which has united the two regions since 1994 .