

Planning for Gilbert's 125th Anniversary Celebration

The group of volunteers that is working on Gilbert's 125th anniversary celebration to be held on the weekend of July 31, 2004, has aptly named itself the G125 Group. That is a tentative name but is good enough shorthand for now. The G125 Group held meetings on March 6, March 25, April 14, and July 16 of 2003. A total of 15 persons have attended at least one of the G125 meetings: Mike Adams, Mary Dodds, Margot Eness, Helen Gunderson, Lynn Henn, Kurt Jensen Bob Jaquis, Danielle Kroehling, Jake Kroehling, Joy Leister, Gary Selof, Gwen Thompson, Randy Thompson. Cindy Wirth, and Greg Wirth. The following is a simplified list of the steps we have taken.

1. Recruited G125 members and built a team. Have kept the roster open so others could join us.
2. Envisioned what a successful event would look like and what qualities it would have.
3. Discussed whether this would be a small local event or widely publicized. The consensus was to have more of a local focus that encouraged Gilbert High School alumni to also be part of the festivities. However, we would also like some visitors from central Iowa to attend.
4. Discussed activities we would like to have to fulfill our vision..
 - a. Brainstormed activities.
 - b. Narrowed the brainstorm list.
 - c. Conducted research and are making contact regarding activities.
5. Talked with other major players who had the potential to give shape to the event:
 - a. The Gilbert High School all-class reunion committee.
 - b. The City of Gilbert.
6. Discussed organizational structure, including leadership and insurance.
7. The nine persons at the March 25 meeting all agreed to be on the core committee.
8. Set date:
 - a. Made a commitment to the high school reunion committee that the anniversary celebration would be held on the weekend of July 31 when it holds its all-class reunion. The G125 Group will not have any dinner hour events that compete with the high school banquet.
 - b. The G125 events will be mainly on Saturday. We will hold no Sunday events. There may be some Friday night events put on by other groups.
9. Established liaisons to other groups in the community. Some contact has been initiated.
10. Reported our progress regularly to G125 members, city leaders, and others through e-mail, postings on the Gilbert Gazette web site, and flyers at city hall, the co-op, and in person.
11. Our next meeting will be at 7:00 pm on Tuesday, September 23, 2003, at City Hall. Interested persons are welcome to join us.

The G125 process is a social one of getting people involved toward a common goal of celebrating the 125th anniversary of the town of Gilbert. A process such as this cannot be nor has it been a straight forward, linear one. Instead it is an upward spiral. We do have to revisit issues based on what we learn in the planning process, but we don't have to cycle back to ground zero. Instead, we have some factors firmly established and are moving ahead. It is like a dance. A lot depends on who is willing to partner with us on the project. We need to offer potential partners some sense of who we are but they also have to recognize that we are volunteers, working toward celebrating the town's birthday. The G125 group has not yet mastered all the dance steps and we haven't even decided what the entire dance menu will be. A lot depends on what other individuals and groups are willing to bring with them to the dance and how much we can trust each other and work together. Some groups have already stepped forward and made a commitment to work with us. We will continue to advise the community of our progress.