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## ***Kellogg's Cereal City USA Increases Attendance First Time in 3 Years***

The Battle Creek Cereal Museum, Kellogg's Cereal City USA, ended its 2004 tourist season with more than 10,000 additional guests over last year. "Many changes have taken place in the past 18 months and it's exciting to see them paying off," states Beth Turner, Executive Director of Kellogg's Cereal City USA.

In 2002 a Community Task Force was formed made up of community leaders to take a close look at the operation and give recommendations of repositioning the museum. The task force delivered these recommendations to the Heritage Center Foundation Board of Directors in January.

From the recommendations, KCCUSA hired Jon Schallert of The Schallert Group in January to create a Marketing Plan. This plan was implemented in full by June 2003, and includes marketing to a five-state area and maximizing public relations efforts. The marketing team will continue to implement this plan into 2005.

KCCUSA also restructured its Board of Directors in 2003. The new Board brings many community leaders with different perspectives to the table. "It is great to be a part of an enthusiastic team that is determined to help guide the facility in the right direction," said Charles D. Walker, a new member of the board in late 2003.

Some of the other changes Turner mentions include a new management structure showing stability and enthusiasm. "We have been able to trim our staff and utilize fewer people to greater capability. I couldn't ask for a better team to lead this facility."

In 2004 KCCUSA took an aggressive approach to eliminate retail merchandise purchased in 1998. The merchandise was purchased with overly optimistic attendance projections, prior to the facility opening. These efforts enabled the staff to refresh merchandise in the 4000 square foot retail *Factory Store*.

KCCUSA is continuing to move forward and constantly looking at new opportunities and programs. The Board is currently exploring a potential joint effort with Junior Achievement of South Central Michigan, planning to combine efforts to offer programming, as well as launching new curriculum for school groups with technical support provided by the Calhoun Intermediate School District. Says KCCUSA Board member Kathy Tarr, "We have been enormously pleased to have the cooperation and assistance of both Junior Achievement and the Intermediate School District as we seek to expand our outreach into our own community. Utilizing Cereal City USA as a teaching tool, we can broaden our base and enhance our efforts to live up to the original board's desire to create an educational venue that also has entertainment value for young people."

Kellogg's Cereal City USA continues to be a community venue, hosting such events as Holiday Balloon Fest, Human Race, Kid's Fest and many others.