All of us here at The Henry Ford reach out to all of you, our generous donors, members, and supporters, with the sincerest gratitude for making this institution not only a remarkable visitor destination but also a viable business with an established mission statement, strategic plan and core values, working continuously to serve the greater community in meaningful ways.

This concept is obvious to those of us inside our walls because we live it every day. But to the outside world, the notion of The Henry Ford as a sustainable business that can significantly benefit the global economy and local communities — even during uncertain times — may not be as apparent.

And that’s why we need your help.

In 2011, over 1.5 million visitors to The Henry Ford accounted for nearly $200 million of the Michigan economy, spending nearly $410 million in the Detroit area alone. Those impressive numbers are a testament to our lean and wonderfully talented staff, whose creative and innovative efforts — very much in the spirit of our founder — strike just the right balance between culture, commerce and community, and allow us to constantly figure out new ways of generating business. But the reality is, we are a private, educational 501(c)3 organization, and like all other cultural institutions, we rely on the generous and steady support of our stakeholders to sustain our budget goals every year and achieve our mission.

In these pages, you’ll learn about the contributions — both large and small — being made by folks just like you, from varying backgrounds and occupations, all of them with at least this much in common: a passion, dedication and commitment to The Henry Ford and all it stands for.

Your support has never been more vital or appreciated as the cultural sector nationwide continues to be impacted by our challenging economy. But we want everyone who visits The Henry Ford to know that 100 percent of what they give — whether in the form of dollars, precious time as a volunteer, or even the donation of priceless personal artifacts to our collection — will help make a difference in someone’s life.

The Henry Ford has always had a greater purpose, which is a commitment to education, a can-do culture and open, hands-on access to our collections that may well inspire the next Henry Ford or Thomas Edison or Steve Jobs to walk through our doors. And when he or she does arrive, we must be ready — to nurture any idea, stoke any fire and support the smallest spark of desire to innovate and create. That spirit is the essence, the very DNA of our existence.

Meanwhile, we are carefully navigating through these troubled times to maintain our business objectives, frugally controlling expenses while investing wisely in forward-thinking products, exhibits and educational resources.

Bolstered by your support and by our engaged and energetic board of trustees, The Henry Ford team has taken on the enormous task of digitizing our collection to create unprecedented online public access. We’re developing substantial educational resources for teachers across the country and have also been hard at work establishing business relationships with neighboring farmers and food distributors to spur local economic health. We’ve actively reached out to various partners to make possible special events such as our free viewing of the Emancipation Proclamation in 2011 and the new Driving America exhibition.

We sincerely hope this inaugural edition of our new biannual publication, The Henry Ford Effect, inspires you as much as you inspire us to drive harder to bring the past forward in relevant, useful ways that will shape a better future for all of us.

Patricia E. Mooradian
Bobby Unser at Pikes Peak, Colorado, July 1956. Right: Lisa and Bobby Unser pose with the Henry Ford's 1965 support the textile operations at Greenfield Village.

"Racing is all about innovation, and we are innovators. We think of better ways to do things." BOBBY UNSER

A priceless donation from the Unser family

"A planned gift from a generous couple

"You can decide where you’d like your money to go," Richard says, "and the staff helps you sort through the different options available." Chris, who has a background in library science, museums and publishing, says she and her husband have been avid volunteers at The Henry Ford since 2000 and spend a good deal of time helping with projects that best suit their skill sets. Chris works in the Registrar’s office, focusing on collection research; Richard is a weaver master in the weaving shop and also supported the development of the new Driving America exhibit.

"The Jeryans are wonderful people who have been extremely generous with The Henry Ford," says Tom Kavanagh, director of charitable gift and estate planning at The Henry Ford. "By making a deferred commitment, they have made an incredible difference in sustaining our great institution. The Jeryans have demonstrated how an estate gift at any level will have a lasting impact."

Unser’s lifetime of contributions to racing, on and off the track, is part of the reason why he and his wife, Lisa, are donating his personal archive to the collections of The Henry Ford. But Unser also feels a profoundly personal connection to the museums, one that began years ago, when he and Lisa were in the area for Bobby’s induction into the Motor Sports Hall of Fame in Novi, Michigan. They had a few spare hours on their hands, so they dropped by The Henry Ford. “We walked our tails off and didn’t have enough time to see everything,” Unser recalls. “So the next time we came to Detroit, we stayed all day at the museum.”

Fast forward to 2004. The Unsers were attending the Amelia Concours d’Elegance in Amelia Island, Florida, and they met Bob Casey, senior curator of transportation at The Henry Ford. “We were both interested in old cars and became friends,” says Unser.

When the time came to start The Henry Ford’s OnInnovation project, Unser was among those chosen to be featured. Christian Overland, executive vice president of The Henry Ford, traveled with his team to Unser’s Albuquerque, New Mexico, home and shop to interview Bobby for the OnInnovation website. “They looked at all the innovations my dad and I had done,” Unser says, “and thought it nearly exceeded what I had done with car racing. That led to Lisa and I giving the archives to The Henry Ford. It went from an idea to a giant project. We became committed.”

Unser’s archive includes the original walnut tires, family scrapbooks covering eight decades (1915 to 1981), a 1940s Champion Spark Plug tester, along with various helmets, driving boots and rings — even the monogrammed polo shirt Unser wore while serving as chief analyst for the Ford 500 telecasts on ABC Sports. There are some larger relics, too, including two interior doors from the race shop, a Sun Motor tester from the 1980s and a car from one of Bobby’s 13 wins in the Pikes Peak International Hill Climb, the second-oldest motor sports race in America (behind Indy), also known as the Race to the Clouds. The Unser archive will be featured in the upcoming Racing in America exhibition at The Henry Ford. Encompassing 22,000 square feet, the $15 million exhibit will chronicle the history of racing, from Indy to stock cars to off-road and drag racing. Other racers in the exhibit will include Jim Hall, Dan Gurney, Parnelli Jones and Lyn St. James. And one of its primary goals is to reinforce Henry Ford’s passion for innovation and achievement, especially among young people.

“And the Henry Ford gets over 1.5 million visitors a year,” says Unser, “so lots of kids are going to see our family’s archives and learn about us as innovators.”

And also let us know what is truly the essence of The Henry Ford experience: the joy of inspiration and the powerful impact a seemingly simple idea can have on the world.

To say Richard and Christine Jeryan hold a special place in their hearts for Greenfield Village and The Henry Ford is a bit of an understatement.

Chris was born and raised in the Detroit area and started visiting the museum as a child. Richard, now retired, enjoyed walking through the village at lunch during his career at Ford Motor Company, where he was an engineer specializing in lightweight vehicles and crash safety.

“We even got married there 25 years ago,” says Richard, “so we definitely have a long-term fondness for the place.”

And long before they officially retired from their day jobs, the couple, who live in nearby Beverly Hills, Michigan, knew they wanted to make a lasting contribution to the textile collection at The Henry Ford. “We wanted to help ensure these operations in Greenfield Village continue to thrive,” says Richard.

So they met with The Henry Ford’s Office of Institutional Advancement and made a bequest to support the textile operations at Greenfield Village.

“A planned gift from a generous couple

We wanted to help ensure these operations in Greenfield Village continue to thrive...”
Three prominent Detroit-area business leaders and board members of The Henry Ford — Evan Weiner, Gerard Anderson and Edsel B. Ford II — have led recent efforts to improve the campus infrastructure and develop a permanent new exhibition for Henry Ford Museum.

Weiner is chairman of the board of The Henry Ford and executive vice president and chief operating officer of Edward C. Levy Co., a concrete, asphalt and aggregate provider based in Dearborn, Michigan. Weiner played a major role in arranging for the reconstruction of the circular drive fronting the Clocktower entrance to Henry Ford Museum. Initially, the institution asked him to donate building materials for the project, but Weiner recognized an opportunity to make an even greater contribution. He arranged a meeting with the leaders of five companies — John Carlo Construction; Dass’ Excavating, Inc.; Soulliere Companies, Inc.; Oldcastle Materials, Inc.; and Angelo Iafrate Construction Co. — and mapped out a plan to rebuild the drive using donated concrete, aggregate and labor.

“Working together like it was a highway project,” Weiner says. “Just as we did with the restoration of Greenfield Village, this was another example of pulling together a group of contractors and community members to provide in-kind support to help rebuild a major cultural institution — and they did so during extremely adverse weather conditions. Everyone involved, from truck drivers to bricklayers to designers and engineers, was recognized for their contribution to the three-year project, and each has their name permanently listed on a raised plaque installed adjacent to the rebuilt drive.

“This was a truly innovative collaboration,” says Weiner, a veteran in the construction industry who would often stop by the site and deliver breakfast sandwiches to the construction workers. “I’d never before seen contractors who are fierce business competitors working side-by-side harmoniously as a team. It was a best-practice lesson in how to get things done.”

Meanwhile, Gerard Anderson, chairman, president and CEO of DTE Energy, assumed leadership for helping to raise funding for another critical infrastructure project at the institution — the upgrade and replacement of the electrical infrastructure serving all of Henry Ford Museum, plus feeders for Lottvet Hall and portions of Greenfield Village. Building on the initial leadership gifts made to the project by the Harvey Firestone Jr. Foundation, ITC Holdings Corp., Inc. and the Kresge Foundation, Anderson and his associates organized and implemented an unprecedented and highly successful effort to secure the remaining funding needed from DTE Energy’s roster of corporate partners, suppliers and other business contacts, many of which had no prior record of support for The Henry Ford.

Thanks to Anderson’s efforts, the electrical infrastructure provides better protection today both for visitors to The Henry Ford and for its artifacts, as well as its capacity to develop and deploy a new generation of visitor experiences — such as the Racing in America exhibition.

Edsel B. Ford II is leading the national fund-raising effort to support this unique and permanent exhibition, planned for Henry Ford Museum. It will be the nation’s first and only comprehensive, interactive exhibition to cover all forms of American auto racing, including stock and open-wheel cars, drag racers, winged sprinters and land-speed-record cars. Ford’s goal is to expose millions to the exciting spectacle of American auto racing while showcasing the many innovations that were developed throughout the sport’s history.

As one of the co-chairmen of Racing in America, along with Roger S. Penske, Jack Roush and Rick Hendrick, Ford has widespread, high-level connections in the racing world and an abiding passion for the sport. A board member at Ford Motor Company, Edsel is also the owner of several enterprises, including the aviation services provider Pentastar Aviation in suburban Detroit.

“We need this exhibition to show why racing is the catalyst for innovation that impacts our everyday life,” says Evan Weiner. “Edsel has tirelessly led this effort. People are coming to the table with major gifts so that we can show how American ingenuity and the spirit of innovation, evident in American auto racing, tie in with the rest of the experience at The Henry Ford. Edsel is driving the effort to build an educational experience of real-life stories to fuel the next generation of innovators and entrepreneurs.”

Through their vision, commitment, generosity and active leadership, these three dedicated trustees, along with the entire board of trustees, are making a lasting difference at The Henry Ford. Their respective and combined efforts are helping to secure The Henry Ford’s reputation as a point of pride for the nation and the center for the stories of American innovation.

When Michael Choffnes first walked through the doors of The Henry Ford in 1990, it was love at first sight.

The Chicago teacher was on a school-related business trip and was so inspired by all he saw that, in the fall of 1997, he began volunteering on a regular basis. One of his first projects involved the planning and manufacturing of the historically accurate light fixtures for the Armington & Sims Machine Shop and Foundry in Greenfield Village. His tireless efforts were also integral to the restoration of R. Buckminster Fuller’s Dymaxion House, as he participated in the painstaking process of clear-coating its multitude of aluminum panels.

Even though he was still teaching full time, Choffnes continued to visit The Henry Ford during the holidays, over spring breaks and in the summer, becoming a regular and welcome guest at his hotel of choice, the Dearborn Inn. He formally retired in 2000, giving him that much more free time to indulge his passion, and he now makes well over 20 trips a year to Dearborn, piling up the frequent flyer miles for his four-day excursions. Most of his time these days is spent in the Antique Vehicle Department, working on organizing the hardware that keeps the Model As and Ts in tip-top shape. But you get the feeling that Choffnes would happily go wherever he is needed.

“What they have here is very special,” says Choffnes, whose dedication to The Henry Ford goes way beyond volunteering roughly a thousand hours a year. He also gives to the Annual Fund to help pay for projects such as the restoration of the carousel, and for more than a dozen years, he has made gifts in kind, mainly technical reference and shop service manuals, along with tools and equipment.

“I don’t mind donating to projects that will make a difference over a long period of time,” he says. “There’s a tremendous amount of talented people here, and it’s a pleasure to work with them. I’ve visited museums and historic sites throughout the country and the world, and The Henry Ford is a unique experience.”

And one Michael Choffnes repeats every time he walks through its doors.
**Education a priority for two inspired donors**

Before there was a museum, there was a school. In September 1929, Greenfield Village opened as a campus for the private Edison Institute Schools. Thirty-two students began classes that fall, the earliest beneficiaries of Henry Ford’s unique educational vision, which emphasized the way of learning Ford had experienced during his own childhood. He was committed to “functional education,” which gave young people the opportunity to not only learn from books but also from objects and experiences, which Ford adamantely believed would provide them with multiple ways of making a living.

Today, that tradition lives on at Henry Ford Academy, a Wayne County charter school with a 510-member student body that is one of the most diverse in Michigan. Approximately 75 percent of the academy’s students are from Detroit; the remaining 25 percent come from nearly 30 communities in Wayne County. Over 90 percent of the senior class graduates, all of whom are accepted at a college, over two-thirds at a four-year college.

The impressive accomplishments of the students resulted in a donation of $100,000 from explore.org, a direct charitable activity of the Annenberg Foundation based in Los Angeles, California. And Meritor, the heavy-duty truck supplier, continued in long history of support for The Henry Ford with a $100,000 donation supporting education.

Meritor has been serving its customers for more than 100 years. The corporate headquarters is just down the road, in Troy, Michigan. “Our company has a strong belief in social responsibility,” says Jerry Rush, Meritor’s senior vice president of government and community relations, “and it is part of our culture of charitable giving globally.”

The Meritor gift was announced at the 2011 Mackinac Policy Conference. The donation will benefit the incubator program. The remaining $75,000 will fund a pilot program allowing the freshmen class of Henry Ford Academy to go on an extended tour of East Coast universities, including Georgetown, Howard and American University, to name a few. “We hope to catch them as freshmen and inspire them to stay in school and keep on track for attending college,” says Cora Christian, the principal of Henry Ford Academy. “It’s not good enough for a student to go to college. They have to complete it. Dedication, commitment, motivation and determination are key ingredients to their ultimate success.”

Henry Ford himself couldn’t have said it better.