

Sponsor-A-Log to Rebuild Fort Laurens

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BOLIVAR, OH— The Friends of Fort Laurens Foundation is seeking sponsors for various components and buildings that made up the wooden structure of Fort Laurens, Ohio's only American Revolutionary War fort.

"By sponsoring a particular piece of the fort, we hope to offer potential foundations, businesses and individual contributors an identifiable portion of the fort that they contributed to in the eventual rebuilding of Fort Laurens," said Foundation Trustee Scott Fisher.

The Foundation has set a goal of raising \$632,500 for the fort's eventual re-creation. Sponsorships range from a \$100 for log of the fort's stockade (outer wall) to \$125,000 for the soldier's barracks. An estimated 1800 logs are needed for the fort's stockade.

Fisher said several of the higher priced sponsorships, such as \$50,000 for the fort's blockhouse, can be paid for over a five-year time period. "We are attempting to offer as much flexibility as possible," said Fisher.

The Tuscarawas Valley Touring Club has already sponsored the fort's flagpole at a cost of \$2,500. The Northeast Chapter of the Ohio Society Sons of the American Revolution has contributed to a log sponsorship.

The Ohio Historical Society (OHS) has estimated the fort's re-creation to cost \$1.4 million. OHS and the state of Ohio normally require an 80%/20% split between public and private funding for projects such as these. The Friends of Fort Laurens, however, want to raise over \$600,000 from private sources to ensure Fort Laurens is built.

"Time and time again, the state has promised to rebuild Fort Laurens", said Fisher, "and time and time again it has failed to fulfill those promises. If the Foundation can raise over 50% of the estimated cost, we feel confident the state will come through with the remaining funds."

The Ohio General Assembly allocated \$100,000 toward the fort's re-creation in 1998. OHS has spent nearly \$40,000 of that amount on archaeological site investigations on the Fort Laurens grounds in October of 1999 and this past March.

Those interested in sponsoring a log or other parts of the fort should call the Friends of Fort Laurens Foundation at 330-874-2728. Contributions are tax deductible due to the Foundation's not-for-profit tax status.