

Capital Campaigns

Tom Moore

With the ongoing changes in Baptist life and relationships, it may well be prudent, if not necessary, to establish a means through which a resort and leisure ministry can assume greater responsibility for maintaining an effective ministry presence in its setting. In this article, Tom Moore shares some key lessons and insights from his ministry's capital campaign. —Editors

There is an adage I heard a university development officer say once, “If you are considering starting a capital campaign—plan, plan, plan, plan, plan, then campaign!” I would suggest a prayer being added every time you plan. Capital campaigns take much time and energy. The results are well worth the effort.

Members of the board of directors or deacon board react differently when faced with building, office, or facility needs. Some see it as an evil to be avoided at all costs. Others perceive it as the opportunity to make their church or community a better place to live. If it is good for their family, it will be good for their neighbors. This idea ultimately translates to the tourists and visitors we all hope to attract to our resort communities.

Resort Area Ministries (RAM) board of directors traditionally was made up of ministers with a few lay people. At a board retreat in 1994, they were challenged with the facilities and office needs of the organization. Suggestions were considered to restructure the board to include realtors, lawyers, accountants, business leaders, bankers, and university professors (Appalachian State University is Boone's largest employer). It was important these new recruits have strong name recognition in our community. Fortunately, RAM's board had the foresight to accept this needed restructuring and welcomed the changes from the way we had operated for many years.

After the new board members were recruited, a site-planning committee was formed. They looked at the rented offices and the thrift shop we had, and made some preliminary plans for RAM's future needs. As in most resort communities, property costs are usually skyrocketing. Land and buildings do not get cheaper to buy. Even in older business sections, property costs are very expensive. It is the prudent board of directors or deacon board that sets aside funds in annual budgets for building funds or facilities development funds. Boards should be one part of the fund-raising arm for any church or resort ministries organization.

Office and building rentals may be donated to some resort ministries through the goodness of an individual, church, association or convention relationship. This is a wonderful gift. Our resort ministries are also supported by a thrift shop we established in 1978 with a two-fold purpose:

1. Provide a source of used clothing, furniture, appliances, and household items at a small cost for those who can afford to pay, and find a way to assist those who cannot pay.
2. Provide financial underwriting for the resort ministries.

The thrift shop had grown and expanded and provided 80 percent of RAM's budget. However, with each expansion to a larger area, the rent also increased. The last year of rent for RAM was \$1,400 for 6,200 square feet of space. It was easy to convince board members with the rent getting higher that we needed to plan to change this. We decided to find a used facility or buy land and build a new one.

RAM's board determined we needed to double the space (from 6,000 to 12,000 sq. ft. A site planning committee was formed. They looked at 26 existing buildings and checked on the cost of buying land (1.4 acres for \$180,000) and erecting a 12,000 sq. ft. metal frame building (at \$54 per sq. ft.) for \$648,000. Add the land at \$180,000 and the total equaled \$828,000. We felt this was prohibitive, but donors tend to ask if you've thought of all the angles. Remember the "plan, plan, plan," adage.

While the site planning committee was finishing their work, RAM's board discussed whether to hire a fund raising council to assist with the organizational part of the campaign. Prior to an actual campaign, a feasibility study would need to be completed. This study was to see whether community and church leaders perceived your service and ministry as a good and necessary organization in our community. Would better offices and facilities enhance or hinder our work?

We asked for referrals from several churches that had used campaign counsels. Other similar organizations were polled. The consensus of most-if you are planning a campaign of more than \$150,000-was that they felt the benefits of hiring a professional were well worth the time and money. All suggested the counselors be licensed in our state, under the state's solicitation guidelines, and charge a fixed rate on a monthly basis (as opposed to a commission basis). RAM checked out three recommended by our North Carolina Center for Non-profits. We hired one of those. We feel this person enhanced the organizational part of the campaign and was worthy of the expenditure. Budgets were then established (see below).

Proposed Budgets

Purchase of identified facility	\$375,000
Renovations	30,000
Purchase of used truck	10,000
Campaign and counsel expenses	25,000
Reserve fund	<u>20,000</u>
Total needed	\$460,000
Less bank loan committed	- <u>150,000</u>
Proposed campaign goal	\$310,000

After the budgets were set, brochures were printed and we started a series of awareness sessions with community and church leaders. Restaurants hosted our 20-minute presentations about our plans. We held 18 such meetings. We wanted to know if our plans were feasible and understandable. Would you support this campaign? Do you know of others who would support it? We had 5"x 7" cards ready, and built our donor list from these ideas. Several steering committee members came from those who attended, along with our board members. Twenty-four made up the committee to be trained to do solicitations in our community. In the meantime, a realtor on our board assisted RAM in making a

purchase offer on our first choice of a building. The 20,000 sq. ft. facility for \$350,000, provided nearly twice the space we needed-for half the cost of a new facility.

The campaign fundraising counsel was hired in May of 1996, and the actual fundraising began in March of 1997-three years after the first site planning and the board of directors reorganization began. The goal of \$310,000 was surpassed in September 1998-more than one year after the campaign started-with more than \$338,355 in pledges and gifts!

Is it worth the time and energy? Absolutely! A word of caution, though. This was the most labor-intensive thing from the physical, spiritual, mental, and emotional aspects. It is like a second job for the staff. However, when I think of the possibilities of expanded ministries, the Lord led us through a good path.

We have enough space building inspection pending-to provide a place for a 12 to 15 student and adult work and resort ministries crews to stay in the basement of the thrift shop. Our summer college students will have their own small office, storage place, and a tool and workroom. We expected sales to increase by 40 percent in the expanded thrift shop. With the extra space for furniture, the sales increase has exceeded 70 percent!

Capital campaigns are a way the Lord provides blessings and affirmations for resort ministries. Not only were several foundations and individual pledges received, but my favorite story comes from the campaign's early stages. One of RAM's summer ministry programs involves work projects for the elderly and physically challenged on limited incomes. RAM church crews mow yards, paint houses, wash windows, and do carpentry repairs.

One elderly lady has been assisted several summers by RAM's work crews. She came in the RAM office and said she had been hearing and reading about RAM raising money to buy a building. She went on to say that RAM had really been a blessing to her over the past few years, and she didn't really have a church to tithe to anymore. She didn't have much, but she would like to give her tithe to help RAM buy a building. She then gave \$57.00, which represented a tenth of her income for the month. She said that she wouldn't always be able to give that much because of her medical expenses, but she would give. And she has continued to give, even after RAM met its goal simply because RAM has given to her. The window's mite is a wonderful story, especially when it actually happens to people of faith!

An article written by Tom Moore to help us move forward together! Used by permission.