

The Delaware County Historical Society has a new look. Actually, it has more than that. The colorful sign that was unveiled on Tuesday, Oct. 18, at the 157 E. William St. home of the organization represents a myriad of changes the society has undergone recently.

The most public of those changes, at least so far, is probably the donation by the Porter family of the historic Meeker homestead and Garth Oberlander barn to the DCHS.

These properties, owned for 30 years by Carolyn and the late Tom Porter, who operated Garth's Auctions and Appraisers until they turned over the business to Jeff and Amelia Jeffers, continue to be occupied by Garth's and will be until the auction company relocates to another Delaware County area location. When that happens, the DCHS will occupy the property at Stratford Road and U.S. 23 and a second sign, identical to the one on East William Street in all respects but size, will be erected. (The second sign is larger, so that it can be seen by U.S. 23 traffic.) Plans are to open the Meeker Homestead as a museum and education facility, and the Oberlander barn as a meeting place and as a rentable event space.

The sign's design is a replica of the society's new logo. Created by local artist Cindy Smith of Quickdraw Graphic Designs, the design depicts the 200-year-old historic Garth Oberlander barn and is currently in use on the society's website, www.delawareohiohistory.org, as well as on DCHS letterhead, its newly designed organizational brochure and other DCHS items, including t-shirts and mugs which are offered for sale at the East William Street location.

These changes and others were laid out in the society's new communication plan, which members drew up to provide guidelines for increased marketing and public relations efforts. Donna Meyer, a member of the DCHS board of trustees and chair of the newly formed communications committee, said the new marketing plan has addressed the need to establish, define and reinforce a strong, consistent and uniform branding system as well as to educate the community about activities of the Nash House Museum/Cryder Historical Center, and future plans for the Meeker House Museum, and the Garth Oberlander Barn.

Commenting about the choice for the barn as the new logo, Meyer commented that "the 200-year-old barn is an iconic local structure, and committee members felt its image was of utmost importance to use as a branding tool for the organization."