

Western Illinois Museum



2024 Annual Report

Overview

Visitors to the Museum: 4,630

Acquisitions: 55, adding 420 artifacts

Programs offered: 73

Volunteer Impact: 1,110 hours of service

Why we do what we do

The Western Illinois Museum cultivates a deeper understanding of history and culture, sparking curiosity that connects us to the past and each other.

Values

Cultivation: the act of assessing and preserving what our community values, for the benefit of others.

Curiosity: the act of seeking how the present reflects the past and how it can guide our future.

Connection: the act of creating and maintaining an inviting, dynamic environment that fosters a shared desire to learn.

Staff

Claire Happel-Ashe, Program Manager
Karen Mencil, Collection Manager
Sue Scott, Director

Board of Directors

2024: Jeff Kellogg, Dona Lantz, Gary Neuhardt, Sheila Nollen, Alice Trimmer, and Paul Trimmer

2025: Jeff Kellogg, Dona Lantz, Sheila Nollen, Ross Braun (To be confirmed)

Advisory Council

Stasia Bath, Ross Braun, Noralee Frankel, Dona Lantz, Ronda McKee, Susan Nash, Sheila Nollen, Margaret Ovitt, Brenda Sayre, Alice Trimmer, Paul Trimmer, and Tim Roberts

2024 Organizational Focus

1. The Museum's bylaws were thoroughly reviewed with legal counsel to ensure they comply with our nonprofit status.
2. A part-time program manager was hired to design programs aimed at engaging a broader audience.
3. Grant funding supported the development of a plan to redesign the parking lot, address pedestrian safety issues, and mitigate water runoff issues.
4. Two capital projects were completed this year: a new concrete floor with electrical service was installed in the east building, and the *Our Front Porch* addition was constructed.
5. Funding was secured to install an HVAC system in the east building.

2025 Organizational Focus

With the renovations of the east building coming to completion, the Board of Directors will create a new strategic plan.

Learning + Experiencing = Connecting

Collection

Cultivation

2024 Collection Focus

1. In 2024, the installation of a new floor marked the most disruptive phase of the renovation project. Volunteers and staff worked diligently to safely move and protect the collection during construction.
2. Among the 55 artifacts accessed this year, many included supplementary materials documenting their use and ownership. Highlights include archival records from the Pat Crane Community Theater, the Brickyard, and the traveling Vietnam Wall, as well as artifacts from the Wettengel family of Peonydale and agricultural items from the Kost family.
3. Volunteers contributed a total of 1,110 service hours this year. Of the 39 volunteers, seven maintain regular weekly schedules and dedicate 584 hours specifically to collection care.
4. Efforts to digitize aging or deteriorating media are underway, including the conversion of cassette tapes to digital formats.

2025 Collection Focus

1. We will enhance the storage and preservation of the print photography collection.
2. We will evaluate and adopt best practices for managing our digital collections.

Public Programs

Connection

2024 Public Program Focus

1. This year 73 programs were offered bringing 2,906 guests to the Museum.
2. Grant funds of \$7,985 helped support our programs. Revenue earned from programs was \$8,974 with expenses of \$15,286.
3. Developing and collaborating on programs this year included working with the City of Macomb to present a community conversation about the Willam Thorpe Memorial Park and offering our space as a rain location for the summer concert series. We presented three programs as part of the One Book One Community Festival.
4. The rebuilt *Our Front Porch*, funded by a grant from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity was completed.



2025 Public Program Focus

1. Nine hands-on, multiple-generational workshops were offered providing opportunities to learn and experience history and culture.
2. Develop innovative ways to share local history in educational programs at the Museum, in schools, and beyond.

Learning + Experiencing = Connecting

Exhibits

Curiosity

2024 Exhibit Focus

1. The *Prairie Voices* exhibit took a community-driven approach, inviting local organizations and community members to contribute. We collected oral histories about prairie restoration, featured artists from the Plein Air Painters, and shared information from conservation groups such as Prairieland Conservancy and the National Great Rivers Research and Education Center. A compass plant, loaned by the Northern Ohio Tallgrass Prairie Center, provided a fascinating live specimen for guests to observe.
2. Progress continues on the National Endowment for the Humanities-funded development of the *Changemaker* exhibit.
3. Open shelving in the collections area continues to be a popular spot where guests linger, engaging staff and volunteers in meaningful conversations. There is ongoing work to improve ways to view the collection.

2025 Exhibit Focus

1. Following the positive response to incorporating artwork in our exhibits, the walkways in the west building will this year showcase the work of local artists including photographers Bruce Morton and Ximena Baretto, both featuring area residents in their work.



Organizational

Growth

2024 Revenue & Expenses

Capital Revenue: \$194,488
Capital Expenses: \$278,606
(Funded, in part by 2023 capital revenue)

Operating Revenue: \$118,857
Operating Expenses: \$106,436

2024 Financial Report

The Museum is continuing to diversify and grow its revenue in anticipation of the expansion into the east building. Compared to the previous year, Operating revenue saw a 29.5% increase.

2024 Revenue Sources

1. **Fundraising revenue** of \$121,377 is directed to the Renovate to Innovate Capital Campaign which has received support from 243 contributors. At the end of the year, **Investment revenue** was \$37,980 and was re-invested. The total fluctuates with the market. These funds are allocated for capital improvements.
2. **Grant funding** totaling \$53,670 included general operating grants from the Illinois Arts Council and Humanities Council. Program support grants were awarded by the Library of Congress Midwest, Arts Midwest, the Two Rivers Arts Council, and the Uncle Gus Foundation. Capacity-building and capital campaign grants were provided by the Tracy Family Foundation and the Illinois Arts Council.

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Grants totaling \$35,131 for capital improvements were awarded by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.

3. **Contributed revenue** totaled \$102,737 and included 35 first-time donors and a 65% donor retention from the previous year.
4. **Earned income** of \$12,344 included money from the donation box and space rental.
5. **Operating expenses** were \$106,436 of which 68% was spent on staff wages.

Capital Campaign Overview

Number of Contributors to the Campaign: 243
Collected: \$194,488
2025 Pledges: \$27,000

1. In early 2024, we completed extensive repairs to the floor in the east building, including the addition of inlaid electric service. Funds collected over the past two years covered the \$153,600 cost.
2. A new "Our Front Porch" was constructed with grant funds and serves as a feature of the program and exhibit plan for the east building.
3. A grant award of \$130,000 is providing funding for the HVAC system, which requires a matching contribution. The total \$277,000 cost and to date, \$127,700 has been raised.

2025 Capital Campaign Focus

1. Laverdiere Construction is contracted to install a rooftop HVAC system. Preparation is underway, with progress dependent on improving weather conditions.

2. Fundraising efforts will continue to cover the remaining costs of the project.
3. Work will continue to tuckpoint and repair another section of the north facade.

2025 Projected Budget

Capital Revenue: \$210,000

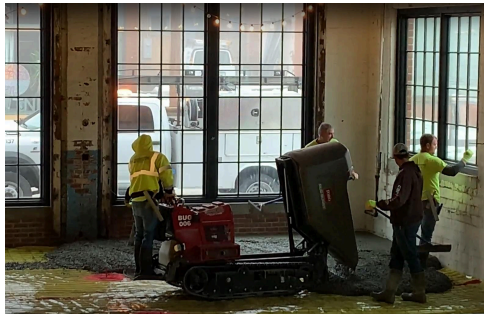
Capital Expenses: \$230,500

Operating Revenue: \$103,500

Operating Expenses: 98,8000

2025 Budget Focus

1. Building revenue to increase staff capacity remains a priority. Projections indicate that once the east building is accessible year-round, revenue from public programs and rentals will support an additional full-time staff member. In 2025, access to the space will expand to nine months, moving closer to a full year of programs and exhibits that will generate sustainable revenue.
2. Grant funds have become increasingly vital for capacity-building needs, renovations, staff and board training, and program development. Given the lengthy timeline of the grant process, it is essential to plan for the Museum's future needs proactively.
3. A new long-range plan will assess the financial resources needed to sustain the new space while also developing initiatives to advance the Museum's mission and effectively meet the needs of our community.
4. Find the Museum's 2024 and previous year's IRS filings at <http://guidestar.org>



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