



**STEARNS
HISTORY
MUSEUM**

*Minnesota's Secret Language
School exhibit, on loan from the
Twin Cities Chapter of the Japanese
American Citizens League.*

2020 ANNUAL REPORT



*The first COVID-19 vaccinations
were administered in Stearns
County on December 17, 2020.
Amy White, RN, receives the Pfizer
vaccine from Lynette Vanlonden,
RN. Photo courtesy of CentraCare.*

INCOME

County Appropriation	\$620,000
Admissions & Program Revenue	\$11,118
Memberships	\$40,051
Special Events	\$10,600
Annual Giving	\$58,917
Grant Revenue	\$73,638
Rental Income	\$3,320
Other Income	\$4,628
In-Kind Donations	\$182,909
Total Income	\$1,005,181
Gross Profit	\$1,005,181

EXPENSES

Museum Store	\$2,012
Exhibit Gallery	\$6,566
Program	\$7,972
Research & Archives	\$22,592
Collection & Preservation	\$1,714
Publications	\$12,756
Affiliate Funding	\$2,905
Membership & Donor Program	\$17,289
Marketing & Fundraising	\$20,896
Wage & Benefit Expenses	\$502,451
Insurance	\$17,174
Professional Fees	\$10,822
General Office Expenditures	\$198,704
Dues & Subscriptions	
Continuing Education, Travel	\$3,305
Equipment & Service Contracts	\$18,100
Equipment Purchases	\$5,762
Building Maintenance	\$55,787
Utilities	\$45,102
Total Expenses	\$951,908
Net Operating Income	\$53,273

OTHER INCOME

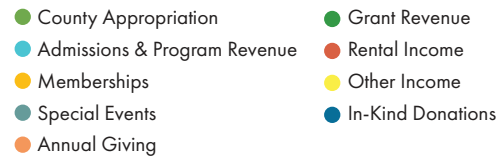
Unrealized Gain on Endowment	\$48,208
Total Other Income	\$48,208

OTHER EXPENSES

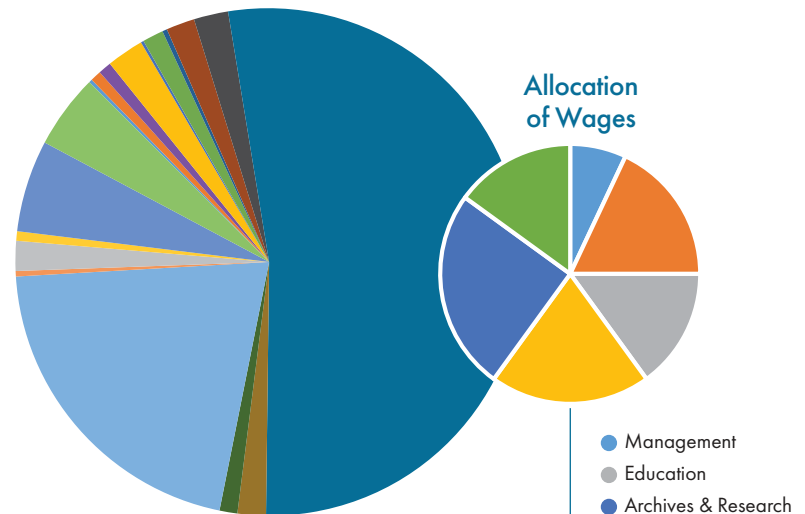
Depreciation Expense	\$86,813
Total Other Expenses	\$86,813
Net Other Income	\$38,605
Net Income	\$14,668

The Numbers

BEHIND MAKING HISTORY.



EXPENSES BY CATEGORY



2020 Financial statement is not audited. The 2020 audit and 990 will be available on our website Fall 2021.

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AS OF JANUARY 2020

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Transition:

A MOVEMENT, DEVELOPMENT, OR EVOLUTION FROM ONE STAGE TO ANOTHER.

While most of us will look back on 2020 as a difficult year, this unique time has been instrumental in helping the Stearns History Museum transition to an even better Museum. We have always sought to engage all in our community. The killing of George Floyd, and the stark societal, cultural, and economic cracks that his death exposed reminded us just how important it is to make sure that we are a museum for ALL and not only a few. We have always sought to provide our members and the residents of Stearns County with great programming, research, and experiences. The COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting closures and social distancing has pushed us to create wonderful digital offerings for adults and children and find new ways to engage our community. We have used the closures to improve and modify our space to enhance the museum experience.

These changes will not go away; rather, they are leading us on a path to provide even better service to our community in the future. When we look back at 2020, we are reminded that trying times can be the catalyst for positive change.

DORRAINE LARISON
SHM Board Chair

2020 Athena Award Winner,
Central Minnesota Community
Foundation Women's Fund



a message

FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Hello and Thank You!

I can't summarize 2020 in a single sentence or event. Wow! We are grateful to everyone who helped us through this momentous time.

A global health emergency set off a series of events that included a complete closure of the Museum building for almost 4 months and extremely limited attendance through summer. I am happy to report that the Stearns History Museum not only survived, it thrived during the pandemic!

Your creative and dedicated staff pivoted programs and service delivery to online, phone and email when we couldn't open the building. We worked tirelessly from home and in shifts at the Museum to serve all in Stearns County.

We accomplished several renovation projects, including new carpet in the lobby and meeting rooms. We planned renovations to the Exhibit galleries.

Thanks to generous donors and members, grant funding, and the annual financial support from Stearns County, we met our "pre-pandemic" revenue goals for the year.

Thank you to all who supported history through a historic moment!

CARIE ESSIG
Executive Director



“ WHAT DO YOU DO WITH A MUSEUM COLLECTION WHEN NO ONE CAN COME AND SEE IT? YOU BRING IT TO THEM! — ERIC CHEEVER, EXHIBITS & COLLECTIONS CURATOR ”

Video became the project du jour in 2020 and YouTube the empty canvas. *In the Victory Kitchen with Eric* was a hands-on series that brought 1940s ration and field cooking to life, with delicacies such as the Upside-Down Spam Pie making an appearance. Tasty! We told you the stories of places like Electrolux and began planning new exhibits for 2021, including 33rd & Cooper about that location.



- We continued to improve and streamline collections management and storage, not to mention the collection itself.



- Rather than bemoaning a year of lost opportunities, we picked up the baton and ran with it. The result is an exciting year of progress and new goals, with plans for large-scale gallery and facility renovations.



- In partnership with Programs, we laid the groundwork for some exciting events – A USO Variety Show and WWII Living History Weekend, which had to be postponed but are not forgotten! These revamped events will correspond to our new WWII exhibit, opening in June 2021, “Rising to the Crisis.”

3 NEW EXHIBITS IN 2020

- Minnesota’s Secret Language School
- Green Card Voices
- What I Fought For

245
NEW OBJECTS
PROCESSED



GALLERY UPDATES
HAPPENING NOW



f 5,594 FOLLOWERS

Top 3 Posts:

1. 'Python' Leigh Lenzmeier's World Record Car Jump
August 14, 2020 (reached 25,198)
2. Stearns County Spotlight: Murphy Ambulance
August 30, 2020 (reached 20,024)
3. Stearns County Spotlight: Cinema 70 Movie Theater
July 5, 2020 (reached 15,398)



VIRTUAL SUCCESS in Partnership with St. Cloud Area Genealogists

Family History Conference— Our first virtual event!

September 19, 2020 – 12 speakers and 60 participants
from as far as Arizona, California, and Oregon!

NEW ARCHIVAL CATALOG

Over the past six years, the Research Center have been preparing for a new catalog that will provide users improved access to thousands of photographs, family histories, and other Stearns County related materials. A recently completed archival inventory project recorded information using key words to describe content. In the fall of 2020, the process began to move the records — called migration — into the new catalog. This transition from the old system to the new one should be available to users by Fall 2021!

**87,979
RECORDS**
being migrated

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

In 2019, SHM staff and our partner Sonant History began a pilot oral history project to interview three individuals representing various aspects of Stearns County life. Selected professionals in agriculture, business, and recent immigration brought multiple perspectives to show how their lives are woven into the broader community story. The end result included an audio-visual production for each interview along with a searchable transcript interview.

A few months later, a generous gift by a Museum friend initiated the agriculture portion's first phase, Field to Table. Donated funds allowed for two

audio-visual interviews concentrating on locally-produced agricultural products and how they reach consumers. One interview highlighted a restaurant owner, the other a cheese producer. Both rely on local partners to fuel their businesses.

With Field to Table as a starting point, long-term plans by staff target specific agriculture components as funding becomes available. They include: dairy, Century Business/Farms, support industries, youth/adult organizations, and organic operations. Project goals range from documenting contemporary history to enhancing SHM's visibility in the community.

Programs



136
SUBSCRIBERS



840
FOLLOWERS



48
VIDEO PROGRAMS
WITHIN 8 SERIES:

- Whippersnapper Hour
 - A Little History
 - Stories of Our Stuff
 - In the Victory Kitchen
- Historic Cocktail Lessons
 - My New Old House
 - Stearns Stories
 - Harvest History



12,000+
VIEWS

“

**AS WE ALL KNOW, 2020
DID NOT GO AS PLANNED.**

— CAITLIN CARLSON, PROGRAM DIRECTOR

”

As we all know, 2020 did not go as planned. By March, the programming calendar we had worked so hard on was in the recycling bin. We quickly pivoted, started a YouTube channel, and began creating videos for our always-growing audience.

We took this as an exciting opportunity to show off some of the great artifacts in our collection, the ones hiding in the back or at the other building. That led to the creation of “Stories of our Stuff,” with our Exhibit and Collections Curator, Eric Cheever.

Since we lost our “Hops and History” program for the year, we decided to create a series about alcohol ... with a twist of history, of course. “Historic Cocktail Lessons with Caitlin” explored the history behind some of the most famous cocktails, while also instructing our viewers how to make their own version from the comfort of their own home!

2021 will hopefully bring us back to in-person programming, but our online presence will continue as well. We look forward to seeing you again!



Development this year equalled flexibility and thinking outside the box! All aspects of supporting members, donors, staff, and volunteers shifted to online and phone-based interaction. We focused on keeping the building open, securing funds to support our continued and future work, and building relationships one letter at a time! How and what did we do to keep our virtual and physical doors open, our collection safe, and our history accessible?

Development

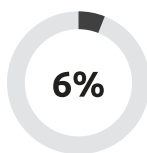
SUCCESS AGAINST ALL ODDS.

- Worked with Stearns County and the City of St. Cloud to access CARES Act funding for emergency support.
- Created and managed a new member campaign, which was revised to a member and donor retention effort after the onset of COVID-19, including cards, letters, and phone calls.
- Implemented a new Donor Management System (Neon) to help organize and streamline our membership and donation process to meet people where they were, which in 2020 was mostly online!
- Sent weekly e-blasts to members and subscribers to keep them updated on the latest news and programs.
- Secured sponsorships for our annual History Makers Celebration and then transitioned those sponsorships to general operating support with the onset of COVID-19.
- Continued to apply for grant funding to help history thrive in Stearns County!

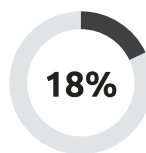
680
MEMBERS
and counting

A worker from Hansen Flooring Gallery lays new carpet in the lobby and Galleries II & III.

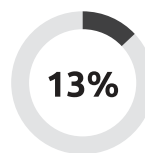
ALLOCATION OF BUILDING & INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS:



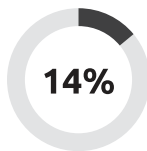
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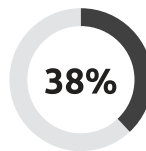
Fountain Repairs



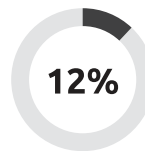
Landscaping



Ionizer on Air System



Carpet



Website

THESE EVENTS, EXHIBITS, PROGRAMS & MORE
were made possible by grants from the following:

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Archival catalog

CARES ACT for operating expenses with the help of Stearns County and the City of St. Cloud

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Regional Russian Culture Program Series

US BANK COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Family programming

NOON OPTIMIST CLUB

Whippersnapper Hour

MAX & VICTORIA DREYFUS FOUNDATION

Smithsonian "Righting a Wrong" exhibit

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Top left: UniteCloud's Green Card Voices exhibit. Top right: Archivist Jessie Storlien wears a mask at work.
Bottom left: Andrew and Kim Windschitl were married on the Museum plaza in November 2020.
Bottom right: Origami station in the Minnesota's Secret Language School exhibit.



Left: The SHM Victory Garden and scarecrow. Right: Board member Dan Tideman and Exhibit and Collections Curator Eric Cheever work to repair the granite around the plaza fountain.



Left: Zoey Degerstrom helps harvest the SHM Victory Garden. Right: Board member and 2020 Zapp Historian Award winner Annette Atkins leads the Missing Pieces walking tour of downtown St. Cloud.



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