



ANNUAL REPORT

2022



The Numbers

BEHIND MAKING HISTORY

INCOME

County Appropriation	\$638,600
Admissions & Program Revenue	\$25,562
Memberships	\$45,284
Special Events	\$24,916
Annual Giving	\$117,155
Grant Revenue	\$10,655
Rental Income	\$3,980
Other Income	\$8,580
In-Kind Donations	\$101,312

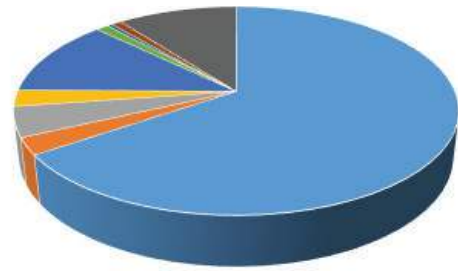
Total Income	\$976,045
Gross Profit	\$976,045

EXPENSES

Museum Store	\$1,662
Exhibit Gallery	\$1,974
Program	\$19,337
Research & Archives	\$11,829
Collection & Preservation	\$2,331
Publications	\$13,409
Affiliate Funding	\$2,350
Membership & Donor Program	\$14,600
Marketing & Fundraising	\$49,260
Grant Expenditures	\$988
Wage & Benefit Expenses	\$542,801
Insurance	\$18,611
Professional Fees	\$29,022
General Office Expenditures	\$111,362
Dues & Subscriptions	
Continuing Education, Travel	\$3,702
Equipment & Service Contracts	\$19,924
Building Maintenance	\$57,455
Utilities	\$67,716

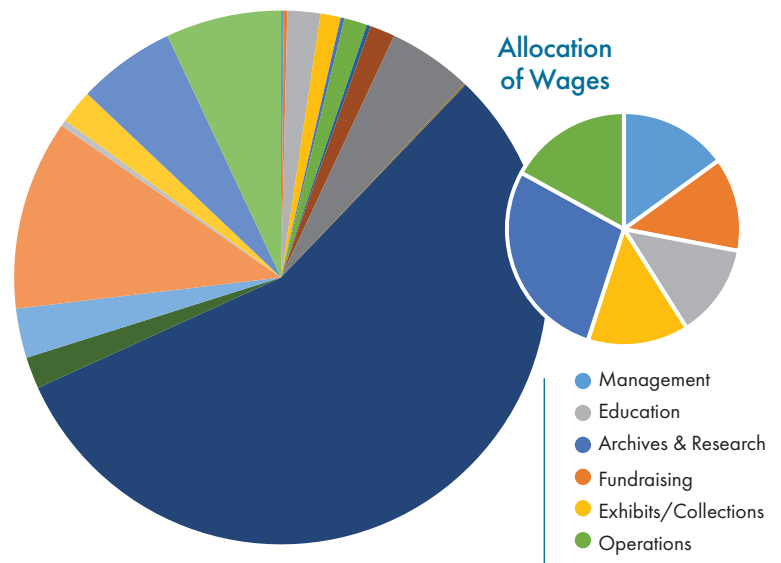
Total Expenses	\$968,331
Net Operating Income	\$7,714

INCOME BY SOURCE



- County Appropriation
- Admissions & Program Revenue
- Memberships
- Special Events
- Annual Giving
- Grant Revenue
- Rental Income
- Other Income
- In-Kind Donations

EXPENSES BY CATEGORY



- Museum Store
- Exhibit Gallery
- Program
- Research & Archives
- Collection & Preservation
- Publications
- Affiliate Funding
- Membership & Donor Program
- Marketing & Fundraising
- Grant Expenditures
- Wage and Benefit Expenses
- Insurance
- Professional Fees
- General Office Expenditures
- Dues & Subscriptions, Continuing Education, Travel
- Equipment & Service Contracts
- Building Maintenance
- Utilities

2022 Financial statement is not audited. The 2022 audit and 990 will be available on our website Fall 2023.

2022 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Susan Palmer, treasurer
Derek Larson, secretary

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Doraine Larison
Christopher Lehman

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Jo McMullen-Boyer
Elizabeth Reisinger
Chuck Rau
Jim Schlenner

Dan Tideman
Patricia "Pat" Webber
Andrew Windschitl
EX-OFFICIO
Jeff Mergen

BACK TO THE *Future*

In 2019, the Stearns History Museum's Board of Directors established a clear path of goals and objectives designed to bring our museum into a dynamic future. We hoped to evolve rapidly into an organization equipped with all the necessary tools to become one of the marquee landmarks of our community.

In an instant, the COVID 19 pandemic put all these ambitious plans on hold. We were in "survival" mode, along with countless other non-profit organizations throughout the country. We have good news! By the end of 2022, the Stearns History Museum is again thriving—thanks to the leadership of our Board, the perseverance of our staff, and the remarkable response of our community.

Now, we are starting to implement those lofty goals set by our Board back in 2019. A sampling of how we addressed some of these include:

- **COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

Our Board established a pattern of meeting at least twice a year in a community outside St. Cloud. This past year, the SHM Board met and toured the prestigious Haehn Museum at the College of St. Benedict in St. Joseph and the History Museum of Paynesville. The staff and the Board of Directors at each location gave us great insight into these unique and significant museums.

- **IMPROVE FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITIES**

Our Museum staff and Board hosted a fundraiser at the Cold Spring Ballpark to celebrate our county's amateur baseball heritage and to recognize Cold Spring native John Decker, who served on our staff for many decades. The event and the game itself was a huge success in gaining new friends and raising funds for the Museum.

- **PROGRAM FOCUS**

We continue to offer program favorites, such as our Hops and History, Whippersnapper Hour, Memory Writers, and Breakfast Club. However, we've added other programs to meet the interests of our community, such as the Sweetheart and Hangar Dance, Cemetery Tour, and Heritage circle tours. We also are partnering with other organizations to bring new perspectives to the museum. Our recent partnership with the Hmong Cultural Center is an example of this effort.

- **CAPITAL PROJECTS**

We are in the early stages of a building project that will ultimately transform the profile and status of our museum. This ambitious project envisions major upgrades to our current space to improve our storage capacity, meeting rooms, and exhibit space, as well as to provide better access to archives. Also, we are working with several partners to re-design our surroundings, Heritage Park, into a must-visit destination. These plans will require much Board discussion, community input, help from new and current partners, and, of course, hard work and perseverance.

The future and potential of the Stearns History Museum is starting to take shape. We continue to search for new ways to fulfill our mission to **Preserve, Engage, Inspire, and Thrive**. Please continue to support us and provide us with your input as we move forward. Your involvement is essential to our success. Thank you.

GEORGE RINDELAUB
2022 BOARD CHAIR



ACCREDITATION & PLANNING FOR THE *Future*

Where did 2022 go?

I heard this from so many museum friends, partners and supporters. Days seemed to disappear in a blink, months flew by and when the year ended, we all wondered what happened! I hope you made memories, did things that made you happy and that you remembered to share your stories with us!

Many of you already know that we're the only accredited county history museum in Minnesota. Most of you probably didn't know that the Museum staff and board spent most of 2022 preparing for an early 2023 site visit from an American Alliance of Museums Accreditation Team. The work went on behind the scenes while we continued to offer programs, experiences, and research opportunities to thousands of visitors. What does accreditation mean? It means that we meet the highest standards for Museums in the United States.

From AAM's website:

ACCREDITATION: As the museum field's mark of distinction, accreditation offers high profile, peer-based validation of your museum's operations and impact. Accreditation increases your museum's credibility and value.

For more than 50 years, the Accreditation Program has been recognized as the gold standard of museum excellence. With its mix of self-assessment, peer review, and public recognition, AAM Accreditation helps to ensure the integrity and accessibility of museum collections, reinforce the education and public service roles of museums and promote good governance practices and ethical behavior.

We are proud to be an accredited museum and you should share in that pride as members and friends of the Museum. Thank you for all you do to support our county's history.

In addition to completing the accreditation process, Stearns History Museum Building Task Force completed its recommendations to the Board for the future of the Museum. Did you know that in 2024 the Museum building will turn 40? Do you remember where you were summer 1984? We're going to take a trip back in time to celebrate and kick off the planning for the next generation of museum visitors. The task force addressed the future of the museum building, reinforced our cooperation with the City of St. Cloud's Heritage Park, and evaluated the needs for program, exhibit, research and collections space to serve 21st century audiences. We are looking forward to sharing our plans and ideas with the community in 2023.

What I love most leading this organization is the opportunity to share our county's history with our community. Whether you're participating in a meeting, hosting an event, entertaining out of town guests, or just looking for something new to explore, the museum is your space!

Please join us again in 2023.

CARIE ESSIG
Executive Director



4 POP-UP/LOBBY EXHIBITS

- Sinclair Lewis
- Stearns County Baseball
- Crazy Quilts
- Lion Man literacy project



117
NEW OBJECTS
PROCESSED

**“ WE WILL NOW
AND IN THE
FUTURE VALUE
QUALITY OVER
QUANTITY.**

— ERIC CHEEVER

”

Collections & Exhibits

If 2021 witnessed the rearrangement of pieces, both societal and institutional, then 2022 saw the beginnings of the pieces being put back in place, albeit not in necessarily the same order as before.

Here in collections and exhibits we began to prepare for the coming re-accreditation process and began to focus once again on getting people in the door and engaged with the museum. Re-accreditation gave us the opportunity to address space and storage issues that have been long standing. We cleaned and culled damaged or duplicate items and became very judicious in our collecting strategy. We will now and in the future value quality over quantity.

- In 2022 we added 117 new items to the collection from 19 different donors.
- In the same timeframe we deaccessioned 285 items thereby creating valuable space.
- We released several new videos over the year including 'Now and Then, The Guy House: Art Deco in Stearns County', and 'The Whitney Airport'.
- We partnered with Programs on several really successful events over the year including At War

and At Home, a WWII Living History Event, our first ever hangar dance, a very successful cemetery tour, and a history themed escape room to cap the year.

- We undertook the task of creating a brand-new collections policy manual and disaster response manual.
- Collection staff attended a two-day disaster response training program.
- Several lobby and pop up exhibits appeared throughout the year including Sinclair Lewis, Stearns County Baseball, Crazy Quilts, and the Lion Man literacy project.
- We ensured that the cows were fashionably attired at all times. You can find their latest adventures on social media.

Looking forward to 2023 when we dive into a large grant funded project to organize and streamline our collection.

ERIC CHEEVER
Exhibits & Collections Curator





6,689 FOLLOWERS
6,196 LIKES



1,087 FOLLOWERS



271 SUBSCRIBERS



705 SUBSCRIBERS
ALL IN 2022!



1,451 SUBSCRIBERS



1,889 SUBSCRIBERS

mailchimp



*All data is as of 12.31.2022

TOP 3 FACEBOOK POSTS



#1 SEPT. 27, 2022 TWO HEADED CALF JOINING THE TWO HEADED PIG

"We switched up the galleries a bit! Special thanks to Liz from Sunny Mary Meadow for letting us borrow her two-headed calf to display alongside the two-headed pig. Thanks Liz for allowing us to share this interesting creature with others! Come visit the Museum to check it out!"

9,100 impressions | **1,000+** reactions, comments, & shares | **8,277** total reach



#2 AUG 18, 2022 Mexican Village Then & Now

"Mexican Village Downtown then (1980) and now (2022) First established in 1978. #StCloudShines #ThrowbackThursday"

4,993 impressions | **1050+** reactions, comments, & shares | **4,859** total reach



#3 NOV 11, 2022 Veterans Day Parade

"We were honored to be a part of the 2022 Veterans Day parade in downtown St. Cloud. Special thanks to the reenactor crew that joined us!"

3,709 impressions | **870+** reactions, comments, & shares | **3,630** total reach

PICKING UP THE PACE!

In 2022, we picked up the pace for programming and did not look back. We presented a stacked slate of programs, both old and new, and were delighted to find enthusiastic engagement all around.

- This year, we added a Hangar Dance to our annual World War II Living History event, and were thrilled with the number of swing dancers who made it out! The Rock City Big Band provided the music, along with featured singers Seams Like Swing and Janelle Kendall. Look for it again in 2023!
- We had wonderful engagement with our Whippersnapper Hour and History Outdoors programs, where children ages 7-13 did everything from mastering espionage with our "Spy School" program, to learning the tools of the Archaeology trade with "Dig Like Archaeologists."
- This year, we finally put the idea of an Escape Room, which has been floating around the museum for a few years now, into action. We chose the Prohibition era and called it "Mission Moonshine," and it was a blast! We ran it on Thursday evenings in December, and despite a few weather disruptions, we sold out every session! We had over 70 participants, and are already in the early stages of planning next year's room.
- We were awarded a small research grant from the Minnesota Historical Society (\$10,000), which has allowed us to dig deeper into understanding the history of the Dakota and Ojibwe in Stearns County. We are looking forward to delving into the results, and finding new and engaging ways of presenting that information to our members and patrons.
- Regular programs like Breakfast Club and Hops and History returned, and covered topics ranging from Prairie Madness to the St. John's Bible. Whether it's with coffee or beer, it's been rewarding to see our loyal members and new faces turn up at these always fascinating discussions about local history.

We can't wait to see more of you all in 2023! There is always something new and exciting on the horizon, so stay tuned!

CAITLIN CARLSON
Program Director



Programs



Visitors check out vehicles at the annual WWII weekend event; Eric Cheever and Caitlin Carlson have fun building the Mission Moonshine Escape Room.

“ THERE IS ALWAYS SOMETHING NEW AND EXCITING ON THE HORIZON, SO STAY TUNED!

— CAITLIN CARLSON

”



HISTORY Outdoors

Ages
7-12



Live with the Land



August 3 and 10

10am-1130am

Stearns History Museum

\$5/child

Free for members!

Come to the Stearns History Museum and learn how to live with the land! In this program, students ages 7-12 will explore the natural world around us and how to bring it into everyday life. We will go on a nature walk in Heritage Park, learn how to identify wild edible plants and different animals, and learn how to navigate in nature with a compass. Students will also create and take home a craft using found nature!



HISTORIC HARVEST FEST



CELEBRATING THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE PIONEER SETTLERS ASSOCIATION

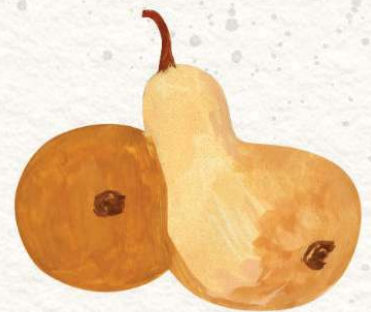
SEPTEMBER 23, 10-1PM

FEATURING

- Vintage Style Carnival Games
- Cake Walk
- 4H Club and FFA Displays
- Petting Zoo
- Harvest Scavenger Hunt
- And More!

Free for
everyone!

Generously sponsored by:





Research Center LIBRARY & ARCHIVES, 2022

2022 brought big changes to the archives at SHM, with a completed online catalog and the establishment of the John W. Decker Archival Endowment Fund. This fund will help to support the long-term success of the archives via direct dollars for conservation, preservation, and staffing. We are grateful for all of the donors that made it possible.

Some highlights of new collections taken into the archives this year include:

- Peter J. Westergard Collection, Belgrade. The collection contains unique community school/church programs and a rare Belgrade commercial business district map spanning the years, 1877 – 1900. There are also some correspondence and documents from a county ditch court case from 1916 – 1920.
- St Cloud Arts and Theater Steven Eckblad/Beverly Williams Collection, St. Cloud.
- The collection broadly covers the St. Cloud theater activities and choir groups from the early 1980's through the 2000's. Both Eckblad and Williams had various roles in them, especially with St. Cloud School District #742. Materials from the school district highlight the collection with programs, lesson plans, correspondence, and other miscellaneous documents.
- Koetter Family Farm Collection, Richmond. Collection highlights include photographs, correspondence, business receipts, and ledgers that document a Stearns County farm operation in the 20th century. Materials range from 1920 – 1990.
- Cold Spring Maennerchor (men's choir) digital images, Cold Spring. Includes several hundred digital images capturing concerts, practice sessions, and associated choir events, 2005 – 2015.
- Stearns County Federation of Women's Clubs, 6th District. Of interest are the Club's Annual Meeting and Convention documents, beginning in 1924 and ending by 1975. Programs and meeting summaries cover the many events. Included in the collection is a 6th District History, a compilation of several authors writing about Club projects, activities, and membership over the decades.
- St. Cloud Opportunities Collection, St. Cloud. The bulk of the materials span 30 years from 1960 – 1990, covering different aspects of the St. Cloud business community. Collection concentrations include industrial parks and businesses that located there such as Fingerhut, Eye Craft, among others.

STEVE PENICK
Director of Archives
& Research



Thank You **STEVE PENICK FOR YOUR 32 YEARS OF SERVICE!**

Development

As supporters of the Stearns History Museum, you know the basic benefits of membership. Members get free admission for the year, free or reduced rates for programs and events, a discount in the museum store, a discount on research fees and copies, and reciprocal or reduced admission via the Time Traveler program. Membership is the easiest way to support our daily operations to help make history accessible to all. However, there are so many other ways that people benefit from membership here at SHM.

IN 2022, MEMBERSHIP SUPPORTED:

- **4,300** electronic research requests
- **721** walk-in patrons in the library
- **120** electronic orders for family and business photos, records, and ephemera
- An annual subscription to Ancestry.com that is accessible to all members on site **free of charge** (a \$1200 value)

- **An online catalog** for the library and archives, allowing members to search more than **20,000** records here or from home (a \$2,000 value)

- More than **50** in person and online programs, events, and videos that reached over **5,000** people
- School tours and family programs for more than **2,000** Stearns County children
- Traveling and changing exhibits like The Lewis Project, Lion Man Literacy Project, and Why Treaties Matter
- Preservation of **30,000** three-dimensional artifacts and **700,000** photographs
- The creation of the new John W. Decker Archival Endowment and a great game of baseball at the Cold Spring Baseball Park
- The revival of the pollinator and native grasses gardens as well as a robust harvest from the Victory Garden

Your membership brings history to life in a rich and diverse way throughout the county. Why not share it with others? Membership to SHM is a great gift for any occasion and will help us all connect people through the power of history and culture now and help it thrive for the next generation. Go to stearnshistorymuseum.org/join/ to share your love of history with others today!

AMY DEGERSTROM
Development Director



“

YOUR MEMBERSHIP BRINGS HISTORY TO LIFE IN A RICH AND DIVERSE WAY THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY.

— AMY DEGERSTROM

”



Our Donors

THANK YOU FOR HELPING PRESERVE OUR FUTURE

\$5,000+

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\$1,000-\$4,999

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