

# Strategic Plan

2023 - 2024



# Mission

The Lindsborg Old Mill & Swedish Heritage Museum celebrates and preserves the pioneering spirit of the Smoky Valley by educating, entertaining, and building community across generations so that history comes to life.

# Vision

Those who support the Lindsborg Old Mill & Swedish Heritage Museum value not only the cultural legacy of the Smoky Valley area, but the significance of Swedish culture over time.

The museum's historic buildings and inviting green spaces showcase the artifacts, exhibits, and stories that reflect the rich tapestry of life in the Lindsborg area and the region.

# Museum Complex



- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Main Museum Building               | 10. Academy Building (Not open to public) |
| 2. Smoky Valley Roller Mill           | 11. Lindsborg Union Pacific Depot         |
| 3. Powerhouse (Not open to public)    | 12. Santa Fe Steam Engine #735            |
| 4. Homestead Log Cabin                | 13. Blacksmith Shop                       |
| 5. West Kentuck School                | 14. Erickson Brothers Workshop            |
| 6. Heritage Center                    | 15. Sweadal                               |
| 7. Chapel                             | 16. Picnic Area                           |
| 8. 1904 World's Fair Swedish Pavilion | 17. Old Mill Campground                   |
| 9. Music Room                         |   |

# Executive Summary

THE LINDSBORG OLD MILL & SWEDISH HERITAGE MUSEUM celebrated its 60th anniversary in 2022. Maybe more importantly, it celebrated its first year anniversary as a private nonprofit organization that same year. As the museum reinvents itself and grows into its full potential, it continues to take seriously the need to fulfill a mission that serves the people of Lindsborg, the Smoky Valley, McPherson and Saline counties, and Kansas at large. It is committed to contribute to the social, cultural, and economic wellbeing of the region and state.

The Lindsborg Old Mill & Swedish Heritage Museum welcomes 6,000 visitors on average each year (6,008 in 2022, 6,336 in 2019). It also hosts several major community events: Millfest the first weekend of May, Midsummer in June, and Heritage Christmas the second weekend of December. Every other year, the museum hosts parts of Hyllningsfest. The Lindsborg Museum currently offers 4 permanent exhibitions (around milling, farm machinery, immigration, and heritage buildings) and 4 genealogy workshops (online and in person) annually.

In 2021, the Lindsborg Old Mill & Swedish Heritage Museum underwent a change in ownership and became its own private nonprofit organization. The newly formed entity faces a considerable yet exciting challenge: the development of a strategic plan and establishment of a clear vision for the future. This is a future that holds broadening objectives and continues to expand the community it serves. This is a future that increases the sense of belonging and pride over the cultural heritage and accomplishments of the people in the region over the years.

**The Museum has the potential to strengthen significantly its value to County residents, the Little Sweden reputation, and the visitor experience. Folks are rooting for that to happen. (Stephen Elliott)**

The Lindsborg Old Mill & Swedish Heritage Museum started this planning journey in 2019 when it welcomed Stephen Elliott to report on what was known as the McPherson County Old Mill Museum, and again in 2022 when it collaborated with the Wichita State University to build the strategic objectives of the museum complex under its new leadership. Both instances involved a large number of participants issued from the Lindsborg community. The studies can be summarized around six aspects to focus on: community (local and extended), maintenance (Old Mill and Swedish Pavilion), cultural preservation (history, heritage and genealogy), programming (exhibitions, events and tourism), cultural hub (arts and education), and financial stability.

For the last couple of years, the museum revised its overarching goals and committed to: (1) Preserve the cultural heritage of the Smoky Valley through a museum complex that is relevant to the general population. (2) Help strengthen the economy and contribute to cultural and heritage tourism within Lindsborg and McPherson County. (3) Exercise all powers incidental to its new private nonprofit status.



# Executive Summary

Building on the results of the studies and previous objectives, the Lindsborg Old Mill & Swedish Heritage Museum has identified five strategic goals to guide its work over the next two years:

1. Community building
2. Buildings prioritization
3. Cultural heritage
4. Diversified programming
5. Organizational stability

These goals are meant to capture the ongoing work made by the staff, gather the support of the board of directors, the museum's partners, as well as current and potential benefactors. The next two years will be critical for the development of a long term strategic plan, the development of new or renewed partnerships, and the longevity of the museum. This strategic plan is limited to 2023-2024 to allow for great flexibility moving forward. A lot of work will be done in the meantime to develop the next strategic plan which will cover five years (2025-2030) and an 'Objective 2050' vision.

**Preserve the cultural heritage of the Smoky Valley through a museum complex that is relevant to the general population.** As the Lindsborg, Kansas Comprehensive Plan highlights: "[p]assing down our history to the generations of tomorrow will help ensure continuity in community identity, resulting in community pride and high quality of life." It goes on quoting the 2017 National Trust for Historic Preservation Survey, indicating that "one in two millennials views historic preservation as important through the lens of engaging in authentic experiences, preserving a sense of community, and creatively reusing structures." Ongoing conversations with the community of Lindsborg show the vivid interest of the population in seeing the museum complex thrive.

**Help strengthen the economy and contribute to cultural and heritage tourism within Lindsborg and McPherson County.** As the 2019 report from Stephen Elliott mentions, events at the museum should "enrich community life, strengthen Lindsborg's reputation and attractiveness as a destination, and in turn strengthen McPherson County as a stopping-point for travelers and as a place to live." The museum looks after more than 3% of the total city's area and welcomes thousands of visitors each year. It is an important economic asset to the community. Tourism in Kansas supports on average 5% of all employment in the state, which represents more than 80,000 jobs. It is inevitably of importance in Lindsborg, where the community attracts visitors not only as "Little Sweden USA" but is also "known for its artistic life and resources" (Stephen Elliott) including its cultural background. Visitors often inquire about the cultural heritage of the town, the significance of Swedish culture over time, the arts, and increasingly more so, show interest in Native history.

# Strategic Goals

## 1. Community building

The museum seeks to foster community support by developing a strong identity and by being of service to a growing community in Lindsborg and the Smoky Valley. To that end, the museum wants to strengthen its image, reinvent itself as a **historical and cultural hub**, and ultimately increase the size and involvement of the community.

1. Develop community support by developing a strong identity
  - a. Strengthen our reputation by reviewing the museum's history
  - b. Strengthen our image by developing a communication-marketing strategy
2. Develop community support by being of service to a growing community
  - a. Better understand and better respond to the needs of our current communities
  - b. Increase our community by developing as a cultural hub through the arts and education
  - c. Increase the size of our community base

## 2. Buildings prioritization

The museum is actively **reconsidering the ownership** and management of the land and buildings. Hence doing, the museum will **prioritize** and address necessary maintenance projects in a timely manner.

1. Identify and prioritize projects to achieve built excellence
  - a. Address deferred maintenance
  - b. Work towards built excellence
2. Reconsider ownership
  - a. Reconsider the ownership of land and buildings

## 3. Cultural heritage

The museum develops historical and cultural preservation through storytelling and genealogy. It is honoring the past while fostering inclusivity and education.

1. Develop historical and cultural preservation through storytelling
  - a. Honor the Swedish heritage of Little Sweden USA
  - b. Develop the inclusive story of Lindsborg and the Smoky Valley
  - c. Educate on farming practices, the wheat and milling industries, and engineering

# Strategic Goals

2. Develop historical and cultural preservation through genealogy

- a. Develop genealogy education and workshops
- b. Facilitate access to the archives

## 4. Diversified programming

The museum diversifies its offerings by continuously hosting **temporary exhibitions and events** developed in coordination with the community. It serves the local communities and increases tourism in the region.

- 1. Develop exhibitions that make the museum a must see
  - a. Review and update current exhibitions to develop a more appealing and supported programing
  - b. Expand programming with new exhibitions to become a sought-after touristic attraction
- 2. Foster events that make the museum complex a key community space
  - a. Review existing events organized by the museum
  - b. Review opportunities to host or co-host community events
- 3. Contribute to the efforts made to increase tourism in the region
  - a. Strengthen the reputation of the region and develop programming as a cornerstone of our success

## 5. Organizational stability

The museum achieves **financial stability** through partnerships and an active development plan established by a strong professional team.

- 1. Work towards financial stability by increasing and diversifying revenue
  - a. Increase sales through admissions, gift shop, workshops, campground, and facility rental
  - b. Diversify income by increasing awareness, transparency, and partnerships
- 2. Work towards financial stability by decreasing expenditure wherever possible
  - a. Decrease expenditures by reviewing expenses, contracts, and energy use
- 3. Build organizational capacity by investing in human resources
  - a. Clarify the roles and needs for human resources

# Resources & Success

## Current resources

The Lindsborg Old Mill & Swedish Heritage Museum has an operating budget averaging \$274,000 per year. As of 2022, the current resources include \$173,000 of public funding to which an additional \$23,000 is provided for the archives the museum holds, \$14,000 of endowment, \$61,000 of active income, and approximately \$90,000 fundraised this last quarter that has not been calculated into the budget yet.

## Resources needed

The resources that will be needed in the next 2 years focus on significantly increasing the active income (by 63% by 2025), endowment (the increase expected is currently at 14% by 2025 but plans are being made to increase the endowment by 260% by 2025), and fundraising (by 11% by 2025).

## Measures of success

The overarching benchmarks are as follow:

- Attendance increase by 50% by 2025
- Income stability by 2025 despite major shifts in the origins of the museum's income
  - Including an increase of active income by 63% by 2025 achieved by both increasing the admission prices and the number of visitors
  - Grow our membership 58% by 2025 from 126 members in 2022 to 200 in 2025
- Complete 6 critical facilities maintenance projects by 2025
- Develop the number of new exhibitions
  - Develop and install 6 to 8 temporary exhibitions by 2025
  - Update 2 to 4 permanent exhibitions by 2025
- Increase the number of events organized and hosted from 4 in 2022 to 11 by 2025
- Develop the museum's position as a cultural hub and community center





# Phasing

## 2023

- Increase the admission price from \$5 to \$10 and include different categories (eg. students) by end Q1
- Increase attendance by 66% from 6,000 to 10,000 guests by end 2023
- Increase our exhibition offerings by end of 2023
  - Update 1 permanent exhibition by Summer 2023
  - Develop and install 3-4 temporary exhibitions by end of 2023
- Increase our events offering by 150% from 4 to 8 events by end of 2023
  - Invite 3-4 guest speakers by end of 2023
  - Develop 2 fundraising events in Spring and Fall 2023
  - Organize 2 community events in Spring and Winter 2023
  - Host 1 community event in Fall 2023
  - Organize 1 donor reception in February 2023
- Launch endowment campaign by end Q2 to raise \$1 Million for our endowment funds by 2025
- Publish 1 annual report by end Q1
- Update our memberships software and automate renewals early 2023
- Grow our memberships 19% from 126 in Q1 to 150 by Q4
- Complete 4 critical maintenance projects by end 2023
  - Old Mill: Upper walls repointing by Fall 2023
  - Swedish Pavilion: Windows repair by Fall 2023; Repainting by Fall 2023; Porch repair by Fall 2023

## 2024

- Increase attendance by 40% from 10,000 to 14,000 guests by end of 2024
- Maintain our exhibition offerings by end of 2024 (including 1 permanent exhibition update)
- Increase our event offerings by 37% from 8 to 11 events by end of 2024
- Raise \$1 million for our endowment campaign by 2025
- Publish 1 annual report early Q1
- Grow our memberships 33% from 150 to 200 members by end of 2024
- Complete 2 critical maintenance projects by end 2024: climate control in the Swedish Pavilion and tuck pointing in the Old Mill
- Publish 1 strategic plan (2025-2030) by 2025

# Lindsborg Old Mill & Swedish Heritage Museum

## Staff

- **Executive Director: Lenora Lynam**  
• lenora.lynam@oldmillmuseum.org | 785-227-3595
- **Community Development Director: Caroline de Filippis**  
• caroline.defilippis@oldmillmuseum.org | 785-227-3595
- **Marketing and Communication Director: Adam Pracht**  
• adam.pracht@oldmillmuseum.org | 789-227-3595

## Board of Directors

- |  |                           |
|--|---------------------------|
| • <b>Kirsten Bruce</b> (chair)               | • <b>Rachel Norlin</b>    |
| • <b>Michael Chambers</b> (co-chair)         | • <b>Trevor Whittaker</b> |
| • <b>Anna Hultquist-Erickson</b> (treasurer) | • <b>Holly Malm</b>       |
| • <b>Collin Carlson</b>                      | • <b>Becky Anderson</b>   |
| • <b>Les Sperling</b>                        | • <b>Andrea Swisher</b>   |

## Committees

- **Personnel:** Michael Chambers, Kirsten Bruce, Les Sperling
- **Events:** Andrea Swisher, Holly Malm
- **Finance:** Anna Erickson, Trevor Whittaker
- **Collection:** Collin Carlson, Tom & Marlysue Holmquist
- **Exhibition:** Becky Anderson, Eric Lundstrom, Tim Stewart
- **Marketing:** Becky Anderson, Michael Chambers
- **Buildings & Grounds:** Les Sperling
- **Campgrounds:** Rachel Norlin