

The Museum Messenger

Spring 2023

www.oldmillmuseum.org

Marking the Old Mill's 125th Year

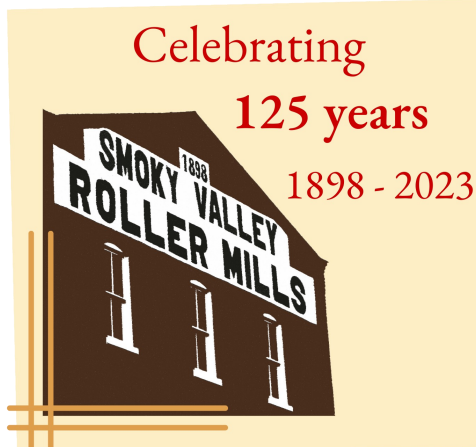
As Smoky Valley Roller Mills Marks a Century and a Quarter in 2023, Museum Honors History

Travel back in time to the banks of the Smoky Hill River on October 14, 1897. Look up and you'll see the critical moment, as the first flames start to lick out of the Smoky Valley Roller Mill's upper story. You see the sparks catch in the corn field nearby by, watch the alarm spread as strong south winds threaten the town, see the entire community come together to fight the fire. At the end of the day, the mill is a smoking ruin, but the town is saved. Move forward a week, and owner Theodore Teichgraber is already planning to rebuild. By November the work is underway, and in early December two floors are built before the cold weather sets in. Now go to sometime around May 1898 and the three floors of brick, wood, steel and stone rise above the river again in a new Smoky Valley Roller Mills turning wheat into flour.

Now back to today, in 2023 - 125 years since that triumphant rebuilding. The same beloved mill still stands strong. It still runs.

With the amazing milestone of the 125th anniversary of the mill landing this year, Lindsborg Old Mill & Swedish Heritage Museum is taking the opportunity to celebrate - where we've been, where we are today, and the possibilities of where we can go.

Most of the planned events related to anniversary celebrations are scheduled for this year's Millfest on May 6. In addition to the typical music, food, artistic demonstrations, and tours of the *running* Old Mill, this year will also bring a special recognition ceremony, prominent special guests, and more fun activities.



Millfest will also serve as the kickoff of a special temporary exhibition in the main museum building - "The Old Mill Through the Years" - which will feature rare photos, stories of the role of the Smoky Valley Roller Mills in the cultural and business life in the Lindsborg community, and possibly even historical artifacts from the museum archives. The special exhibition will run through the summer until July 31.

To commemorate the event, several special 125th anniversary products are in development as well - a special wood ornament expected for a summer release, a coffee mug, and a 125th history book. Pre-orders will be available by Millfest, with the finished book expected by fall 2023. Museum staff are also looking for pictures, stories about the mill, and other historic items to include. Send these to info@oldmillmuseum.org.

Finally, the museum will host 125th-related events as part of Svensk Hyllningsfest 2023 October 13 and 14, which may include a beer garden, games such as cornhole and kubb, and more! We hope you can join us!



Coming Events

- **Through March 30:** "Theodore: Roosevelt's Life Story in His Written Words" (temporary exhibition in Swedish Pavilion)
- **March 30:** Tom Prasch guest speaker - "World's Fair Remnants in Kansas"
- **May 5:** Millfest for Kids
- **May 6:** Millfest - featuring 125th anniversary celebrations
- **May 6 - July 31:** "Old Mill Memories" (temporary exhibition)
- **May (Date TBA):** Guest Speaker
- **June 17:** Midsummer's Festival
- **June (Date TBA):** Virtual Swedish Genealogy Workshop
- **July (Date TBA):** Guest Speaker
- **September 8 - November 31:** "Svensk Hyllningsfest History" (temporary exhibition)
- **September (Date TBA):** Virtual Swedish Genealogy Workshop

Check for updates and details at www.oldmillmuseum.org/events.

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Osher Foundation Awards \$20K Grant to Restore Pavilion Porch

During the museum's last community volunteer day in October, Kim Colby was trying to help paint the porch of the Swedish Pavilion at the Lindsborg Old Mill and Swedish Heritage Museum.

He couldn't.

It wasn't for lack of trying, but as Colby tried to apply a fresh coat of paint, the boards turned to splinters beneath his brush.

"The porch is totally gone as far as decay," he said later on in January 2023. "Even if you paint the top part, it's pretty much a waste of money until you get in the foundation boards because of the rot."

Fortunately, the Barbro Osher Pro Suecia Foundation of San Francisco, Calif., has announced a new \$20,000 grant to the museum, earmarked for a full repair of the badly deteriorating porch.

Barbro Sachs-Osher, chair of the foundation, said that on the occasions she has visited Lindsborg, it felt like visiting Sweden itself.

She said the museum had an important role in keeping Swedish traditions alive in the region, which is why they selected it for the grant.

"There is a Swedish legacy in Kansas and in Lindsborg in particular," she said.

"Without history, we are nowhere and this is an important legacy in the Midwest. When we were there, we were deeply touched by how you keep the Swedish history and legacy up to date."

Colby said it was great to know that the porch will be repaired with the grant. The next time he volunteers to paint on the pavilion, it should be to porch boards that are again strong, solid, and safer.

"You'd hate to have to tear it down because you can't afford to keep it up in good condition," he said.

Established in 1996, the Barbro Osher Pro Suecia Foundation provides support "to nonprofit organizations that benefit Swedish education, culture, and arts." Sachs-Osher and her husband, Bernard, created the foundation. She is the Consul General for Sweden in San Francisco and is the former owner and publisher of "Vestkusten" – one of the few U.S.-based Swedish-American newspapers.

Secured Grants! Mill Receiving Repairs Off \$87K Competitive Grant

The Heritage Trust Fund (HTF) is sending a grant of \$87,350 to fund critical restoration to the 1898 Smoky Valley Roller Mills.

Lenora Lynam, Executive Director of the museum, said the grant comes at the perfect time.

"With 2023 marking the 125th anniversary of the construction of the mill, this is a wonderful recognition of the Old Mill's historical value," Lynam said. "These funds provide essential support and will allow us to make important repairs to preserve this treasure on the Smoky Hill River."

The state program under the Kansas Historical Society provides matching grants to help preserve historic locations in the state listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The grant for the Old Mill was one of just seven selected in the highly competitive 2023 annual awards. The HTF reimburses expenses for projects that preserve or restore historic properties. Qualifying expenses include professional fees and construction costs. Individual grant awards may not exceed \$100,000 and must be matched at 20% by

the grant recipient. For the museum, this match has already been secured as of early November 2022, with \$20,000 of grants awarded through the McPherson County Community Foundation.

"I think the community foundation grants were really important in us being able to secure the Heritage Trust Fund grants named last weekend," Lynam said. "It demonstrated to the HTF decision committee just how much local support is behind the museum."

Together, the HTF grant and community fund grants will cover more than \$100,000 in estimated repairs to the roller mills. The work includes repair to the mill's upper exterior walls and the stone framing – called a "lintel" – along the top of the mill's windows and one of its doors. Any necessary repainting of the words "1898 Smoky Valley Roller Mills" on the top of the building's front face will also be covered.

"This is a great day for the mill," Lynam said. "We can't thank the trust fund enough for this vote of support and confidence in our work."



December "Match Challenge"

Brings in About \$100,000



Celebrate the Mill's
125th Year
\$50,000
Match Challenge!

It all started thanks to an anonymous donor and Smoky Valley resident, who approached museum staff in late November.

They had seen more - and more prominent - positive stories about the museum in 2022, and it had been stirring their own positive memories of the museum. They wanted to help with some of their available funds, and so presented a special challenge to take place in December.

To encourage new

memberships and end-of-year giving, the donor put up \$50,000, but in a very savvy and intelligent way - with a Match Challenge that would require the participation and support of many to succeed!

The donor offered a two-to-one match to all one-time gifts made before the end of 2022 and a three-to-one match to new and renewing individual and family annual 2023 memberships.

Memberships - since they provide a consistent baseline

of support from year to year, were a particularly important goal.

After the initial challenge was met - **nine days early on December 22!** - the donor put up another \$5,000 challenge matching one-to-one individual and family memberships purchased after the initial challenge was met!

The results: Nearly six figures in total giving in a single month with \$98,750.61 by the end of the year!

It was an amazing and unexpected show of support and encouragement for Lindsborg Old Mill & Swedish Heritage Museum that has provided great momentum into 2023. The museum staff and board of directors are extending their heartfelt thanks to all who dug deep and helped in the year-end campaign!

Overall Results

123 Individuals, families, and organizations gave in challenges

\$1,160 In individual memberships

\$3,420 In family memberships

\$39,170.61 One-time donations

\$55,000 Total match challenge funds

Total from Challenges

\$98,750.61!

Become a Member

Visit www.oldmillmuseum.org/members to fill out the electronic form and read about member benefits or complete the information below and send to: Lindsborg Old Mill & Swedish Heritage Museum, 120 E. Mill St., Lindsborg, KS 67456.

Select your membership level:

☐ Individual (\$40) ☐ Family (\$60) ☐ Business (\$125)

Give a gift membership!

Recipient name: _____

Recipient Address: _____

Ways to pay for your membership or donation (select one): ☐ Cash (in-person) ☐ Check ☐ Card (fill in box) ☐ Paypal ☐ Venmo

Your full name: _____

Phone #: _____

Street address: _____

Email: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Preferred way to receive newsletter: ☐ Email ☐ Mail ☐ I do not wish to receive.

Make a Larger Donation

Visit www.oldmillmuseum.org/donations to read details about the benefits of larger donation levels and to give online, or fill out the information below and mail to the museum.

One-time donations at *Friend* level or above also come with a corresponding annual museum membership, as listed at left.

Donation Amount: \$ _____

Donation Levels

Friend (\$40-\$199) • **Supporter** (\$200-\$499)

Benefactor (\$500-\$4,999) • **Sustainer** (\$5,000-\$19,999)

Ambassador (\$20,000+)

Planned Giving Assistance available. (☐ Check for staff to contact.)

Card #: _____

Exp: _____ CVV: _____

Museum's Next Major Goal: Adding \$1 Million to Endowment Before 2025

To the ensure the future of Lindsborg Old Mill & Swedish Heritage Museum, the next major milestone to reach will be ambitious, challenging, and absolutely essential.

As part of its 2023-2024 Strategic Plan, the Board of Directors has approved a campaign goal of bringing in an additional \$1,000,000 to the endowment fund before the year turns over to 2025.

Caroline de Filippis, Community Development Director, has been the lead staff member on distilling public input on the museum's future from several sources and bringing together ideas from various individuals and groups into a coherent strategic plan.

"By no means is it going to be easy," de Filippis said of the \$1 million *Endowment Drive 2025* campaign, "But as we're developing our annual budget plans and

understanding that the future of receiving any public funds will be out of our direct control, increasing the endowment by this much is really the minimum amount we need to achieve financial stability and ensure the museum's future."

Stage one of the strategic plan is the current two-year plan, to allow for the most flexibility. In addition to the endowment increase campaign, other goals as part of the 2023-2024 plan to achieve before 2025 include:

- Increasing attendance to 14,000 guest annually.
- Planning at least 11 annual events.
- Growing museum membership to 200.
- Completing six critical maintenance projects to essential historic buildings.
- Updating and refreshing permanent exhibitions.



- Bringing 3-4 guest speakers to the museum annually.

The full strategic plan is available for public viewing at www.oldmillmuseum.org/news/#StrategicPlan23-24.

As the strategy enters 2025 and the path forward becomes clearer, the museum staff will develop a five-year 2025-2030 plan and then a "Vision 2050" plan.

As for the largest task currently in front of the museum and its supporters,

Lenora Lynam, Executive Director, said that while the goal of adding \$1 million to the endowment might seem a distant peak, it's a mountain the Lindsborg museum community will have to climb together.

"There's much that we can do from grants to restore and preserve our historic buildings and artifacts," she said. "But the cost of the day-to-day operating budget can't come from grants. For that, we need reliable payments from a larger endowment."