



Lindsborg Old Mill
& Swedish Heritage Museum

Annual Report

2023

A Milestone Year of Successes & Growth

In May 2023, we celebrated a once-in-a-generation milestone at Millfest as we marked **125 years** since the construction of the current Smoky Valley Roller Mills in 1898 with a special ceremony. Looking forward, in 2024 we mark 120 years of the 1904 World's Fair Swedish Pavilion. In the year gone by we had remarkable success and recognition, even as we said farewell to a member of our staff. We took significant strides to maintain what we have - both in our physical buildings and financially - but the work that needs to be completed on both counts is far from over.

Preserving Our Heritage

We took pride in 2023 with all the work to preserve our historic buildings. This included tuckpointing to preserve the Old Mill exterior, rebuilding the mill walkway, guttering and drainage projects, repair and restoration of the Swedish Pavilion porch, and full repainting of the Pavilion exterior. With 10 historic buildings and 15 acres, there's more that needs preservation, but these were among the most critical needs.

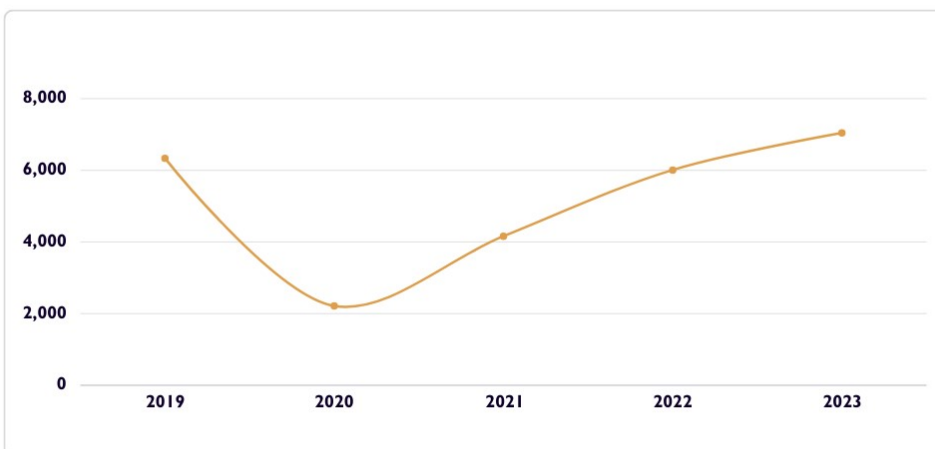
Stable Membership

In 2022, a renewed museum membership program with more member benefits more than doubled membership to **149**. In



2023, the increase wasn't as dramatic - going to **157** - but still represents steady growth in museum support.

Annual Visitors



Strong 2023 Attendance!

With **7,043 visitors in 2023**, we now **EXCEED** pre-pandemic attendance, which is **up more than 17%** over 2022. This success came even as adult admission cost increased to \$10 per person.

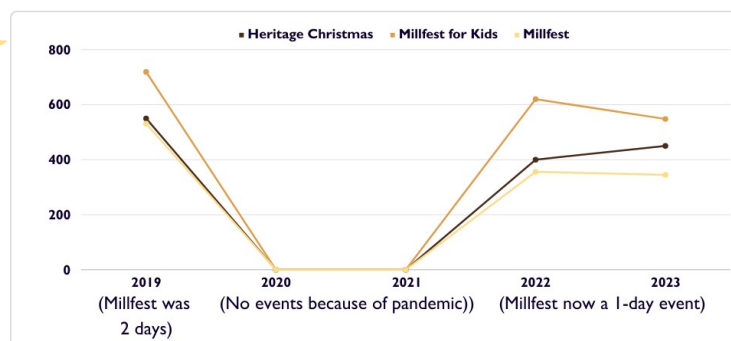
By the Numbers...

While not fully recovered after pandemic-related cancellation in 2020 and 2021, Millfest for Kids, Millfest, and Heritage Christmas are showing stable numbers the last two years and the potential for stronger growth and recovery going forward.

Quarter-Million Grant and More!

One of the most notable “feathers” in the cap of the museum in 2023 was securing a **\$250,000 SPRINT grant**, which distributed federal COVID relief money through a the Kansas Department of Commerce. We received half of the grant - \$125,000 - in 2023 and are expecting the balance in 2024. In total, the museum received **\$377,416.41** into our accounts last year from successful grants! This has gone to exterior paint, windows, and the front porch on the Swedish Pavilion, Old Mill tuckpointing and repainting, museum guttering, and an upgraded security system to protect it all.

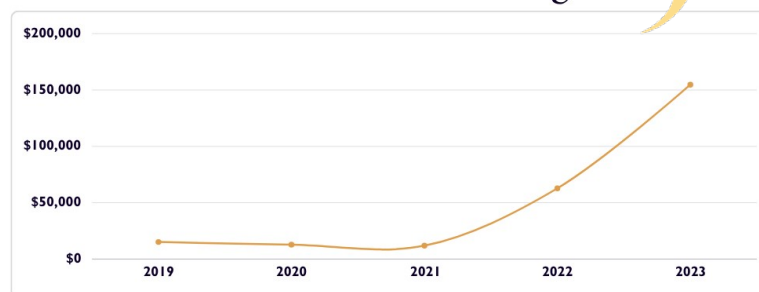
Event Attendance



2023 Fundraising Grows

Donations and memberships to the museum last year hit **\$162,477.64** - as support has continued to grow in 2023 for the museum. In 2022, this total was \$62,738.28.

Annual Fundraising



Points of Success...

- **Special Events!** 125th Old Mill anniversary celebration, an alternate stargazing location for “Starry, Starry Night,” and a new Mayor’s Christmas Kaffe during Heritage Christmas.
- Secured special **125th ceremonial resolutions or declarations** from the Lindsborg mayor, both houses of the Kansas legislature and the Kansas governor.
- The new **Historic Image Database** at oldmillmuseum.org/historic-image-database.
- Our first **Kansas Museums Association award** for our **virtual tour** at oldmillmuseum.org/virtual-tour.
- **Museums for All** participation, providing admission of just \$3 to families receiving SNAP benefits.
- A better **Square cash register** at the front desk!
- Indigo Moo’d creating an “**Old Mill Mint**” Ice Cream flavor in our honor.
- **Expanded genealogy course** offerings.
- New attractive museum **wayfinding signage**.
- **Expanded audio tour** with stops about the Swedish Pavilion.
- **Kubb** (Swedish lawn game) play with admission.
- New high-quality **tourist brochures**.
- Establishment of the weekly **Museum Handy Crew** group, which has helped us significantly with a variety of tasks on our infrastructure.
- **Kid’s Corner** - featuring coloring pages, games, and a scavenger hunt. More is coming!

Here’s just a few of the indicators from 2023 that demonstrate the year’s achievements at the museum.

The 2024 Path Ahead...

Last year we marked the major milestone of 125 years of the Old Mill, and we're pleased to be able to mark another milestone of 120 years since the construction of the World's Fair Swedish Pavilion.

Even as we mark this anniversary, we note that the Pavilion's structure itself is under threat. An engineer's report in 2023 discovered that essential repairs need to be made as soon as possible to save this remarkable treasure. We are hopeful that grants will cover the cost, but we have yet to hear back. Meanwhile, the balance remaining on our SPRINT Grant will be spent in 2024, with our focus on building preservation, better ADA accessibility, and exhibition renewal. As excited as we are at all that our grant success will make possible, we still need to recognize that none of them can go to the annual operational budget. At the same time, a current major funder of our operational budget has informed us that they will be significantly reducing their contribution in 2025. Given this, even though our fundraising has been notably strong the last two years, redoubling our efforts in 2024 to meet our \$1 million endowment goal is more important than ever.

In more exciting and positive areas of our 2024 outlook, we are adding great new ways to experience the museum. Our exhibition updates will make visits more engaging and relevant to our guests, while we are also working to become more friendly to school groups and families with more children's activities and better educational programming. Finally, watch for our new augmented reality tour to come in 2024, allowing visitors to see the mill in motion any day of the year, see historic photos laid over modern locations, and hear from a virtual tour guide. Stay with us; the best is yet to come!



Thank you to our major 2023 donors!

Ambassador

- One anonymous
- Julie Ann Neywick

Sustainer

- Debra Farmer

Benefactor

- One anonymous
- Karl & Wanda Esping
- Maleta Forsberg
- Jim Gallagher
- Einar & Kristin Johnson
- Hank & Hannah Kummer
- Joyce Pigge
- John & Margaret Presley
- Larry & Rebecca Van Der Wege

From the Director's Desk...

Dear Friends,

As I look back on 2023, I can't help but feel a sense of pride in what we've accomplished. Looking forward, I can't wait to see all that we're going to achieve. Being one of only a few Kansas organizations to secure a SPRINT grant (for \$250,000!) alone is a remarkable achievement. It's allowing us to upgrade and improve a multitude of important needs.

Even as I write this letter, it's admittedly bittersweet. This the last letter for an annual report you'll have from me as Executive Director. While I will be staying on in a support role as Mission Director for at least a year to ensure a smooth and seamless transition, I plan to step down from the chief position as soon as my successor is hired. Even after that, I won't be going anywhere; I'll still be found as a volunteer and support of this place I love so much.

We also, unfortunately, had to bid farewell to the awesome Caroline de Filippis - who spearheaded our grant application efforts and community relations in 2023 - as she moved with her young family to Kansas City and accepted a prestigious FUSE Fellowship to advance equity in local governments. We were so sorry to lose her, but wish her all the best.

Even in the midst of these staff transitions, one truth remains unwavering - the commitment by this museum staff and board to the sustainable future of the museum and its vital role in history and community.

Sincerely,

-Lenora Lynam, Executive Director

Membership Match Challenge...



\$50,000
Museum
Membership
Match
Challenge!

For the second year in a row, we had a generous donor step forward and put **\$50,000** on the line to challenge our museum family to step up in 2023 to renew memberships and make one-time donations.

Longtime museum volunteer **Julie Ann Neywick** put up the 2023 year-end goal that she would triple-match all new and renewing memberships. One-time donations during the challenge went to fund free family museum memberships for those with financial need.

Particularly notable among supporters who answered the call was a one-time anonymous donation of \$20,000! This generosity propelled us to easily meet the ambitious goal before the end of 2023.

Our thanks to everyone who helped us achieve this remarkable fundraising success!

Overall Results

138 Individuals, families, and organizations donated

\$30,365 One-time donations

\$2,380 In individual memberships

\$50,000 Total match challenge funds

\$4,200 In family memberships

Total from Challenge

\$1,000 In business memberships

\$87,945!

Telling Our Story...

16 News releases

58 Pieces on or including the museum

28,479 Website visitors

Key Coverage: MSN.com; Milling & Baking News; KMUW's "Hidden Kansas"; KWCH - "Where's Shane?"; WIBW-TV; KSN "Good Day Kansas"; KSAL Radio; Postcard Jar; Ad Astra Radio.

In 2023, we added a museum YouTube page (at www.youtube.com/@LindsborgMill) for sharing video content. Facebook continued to grow, with more than **2,400** followers and annual reach of more than **423,000**. News coverage was strong, including on radio and TV. We also added a weekly update blog and an electronic version of the twice-annual museum newsletter.

Growth in Facebook Reach

