



Annual Report

2024

A Year of Preservation and Transition

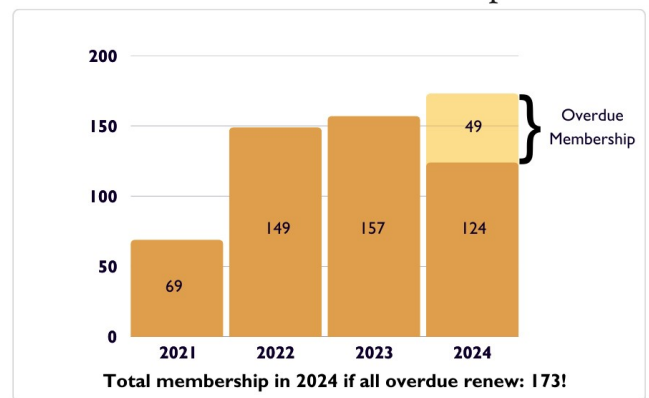
Last year was a significant milestone for the Swedish Pavilion—120 years since it was erected at the 1904 St. Louis World’s Fair! It also was a year of great risk, as an assessment determined it could collapse under the wrong set of circumstances. Fortunately, with help from the Community Service Program tax credits, we raised more than enough for the repairs, slated for Spring 2025. Of course, the other big news for the museum in 2024 was hiring Aubrey Wheeler as new Executive Director, starting last August! Lenora Lynam still serves as Collections Manager during this transition.

Please Renew Memberships!

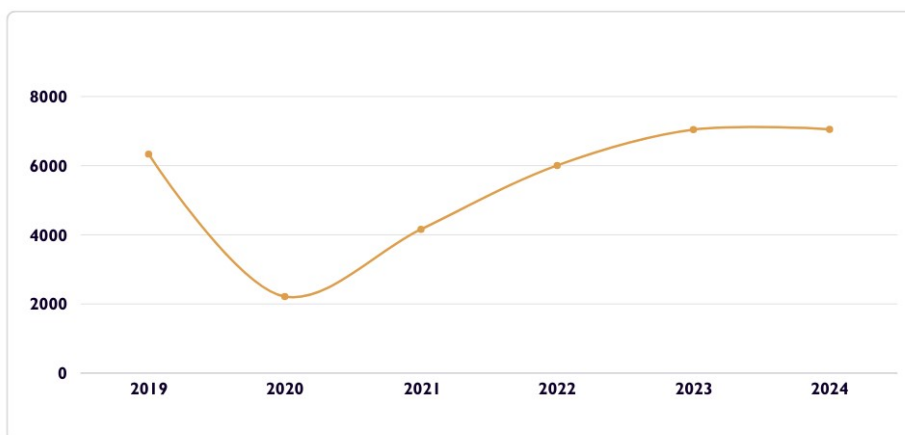
Since revamping the museum membership program in 2022 with more benefits, the rolls have steadily grown - peaking at 164 in the last quarter of 2024. Now, however, the total has fallen back to 124 - a decrease of 24.4%. The main issue is that we currently have 49 overdue memberships. If all of

those were to renew, we’d actually be standing at 173 members - a 9.2% increase! This has really emphasized how important renewals are. Renewing is quick and easy at oldmillmuseum.org/members or calling 785-227-3595.

Museum Membership



Annual Visitors



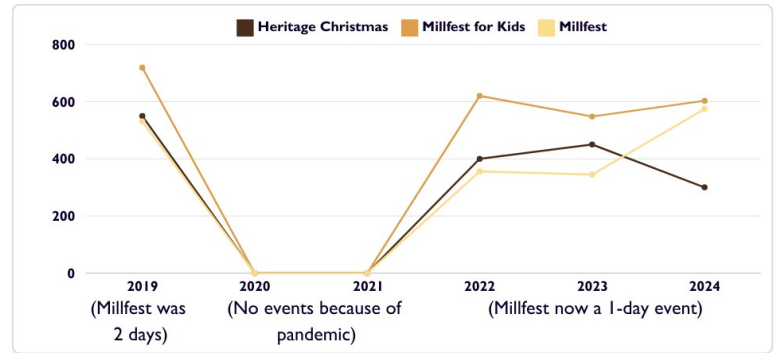
Steady Attendance

With **7,052 visitors in 2024**, we are consistently above pre-pandemic attendance and are regularly hitting above 7,000 visitors annually (We had 7,043 visitors in 2023.) We are now working on growing these numbers.

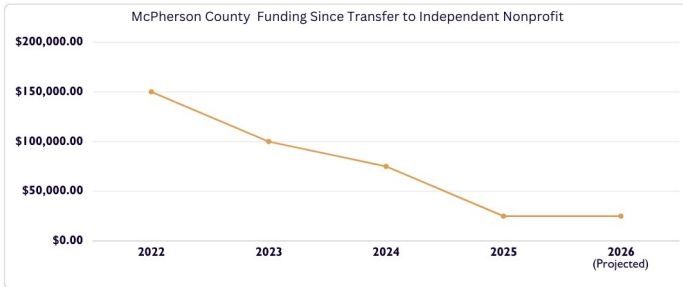
By the Numbers...

While still not as large as pre-pandemic, Millfest for Kids, and Heritage Christmas are still showing stable numbers across the last three years. Millfest, meanwhile, is now larger in 2024 than it was before cancellations in 2020 and 2021 for the pandemic. Event attendance is solid and will grow!

Event Attendance



County Funding Disappearing

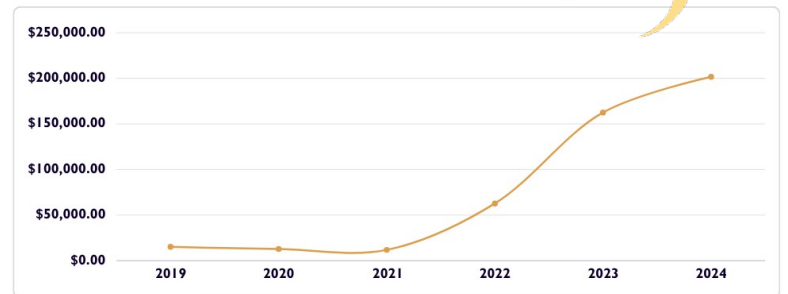


As we enter our fourth year since McPherson County gave up museum ownership, the public funding situation has grown worse. Providing nearly half of our funding the year after the transfer to private nonprofit (in 2022), in 2025 they now represent only 9% of the budget. New fund sources must be secured.

2024 Fundraising

Donations and memberships to the museum last year hit a new record **\$201,636.95!** However, because most of this went to Pavilion repairs, we still need operational funds to finish out 2025.

Annual Fundraising



Points of Success...

- In partnership with local theater company Broadway RFD, brought back a tradition of performing **“The Legend of Sleepy Hollow”** (complete with a live horse for the Headless Horseman) on Heritage Square. It will continue in even-numbered years in October, so as not to interfere with Svensk Hyllningsfest in odd-numbered years.
- Introduced **Magic at the Mill** last September - a collectible card game tournament held at the museum in partnership with local game store Spelbok.
- Added programmable **thermostats** and expanded **WiFi access** in the Old Mill.
- Debuted a new, FREE online **Historical Speaker Series** about historical Smoky Valley figures.
- Installed an **ADA-compliant walkway** to the main museum entrance to increase accessibility for all.
- Held a **Solar Eclipse Viewing Party** on April 8.
- A grant from Humanities Kansas allowed us to embark on a project to **save images, multimedia and artifacts from Svensk Hyllningsfest History.**
- Hosted the **annual meeting of the Kansas Anthropological Association** in April.
- Upgraded the **Old Mill Campground electric outlets** to add six 50-amp service sites.
- Added a **3D stereogram** area of the website at oldmillmuseum.org/3d-image-gallery. We also hosted visitors as part of **3D Con 2024**.
- Held our first **Museum Media Day** for journalists on August 8.
- The **Historic Image Database** at oldmillmuseum.org/historic-image-database has grown substantially—now presenting nearly 7,500 images and garnering more than 304,000 views. **Historic films** are also now on our YouTube page.

These are just a few of the indicators from 2024 that demonstrate the year's achievements at the museum.

The 2025 Path Ahead...

This is shaping up to be a “make or break” year in the history of the Lindsborg Old Mill & Swedish Heritage Museum. Between McPherson County continuing to reduce their financial support and our year-end Match Challenge being a tenth the size of each of the two years previous, we are currently looking at needing to resolve a nearly \$100K operational fund gap. We are now in a “Zap the Gap” campaign to ensure our funding is sufficient to finish out the year. We had a \$10,000 donation early in 2025 and have requested another \$20,000 donation to get this operational campaign started, but we will need more at www.oldmillmuseum.org/donations or by calling 785-227-3595 to keep the museum running. This need may be nerve-wracking, but we have every confidence our community of support will come through.

The year ahead will also bring exciting milestones and accomplishments. With Phase 1 of the “Save the Pavilion” campaign successfully completed, the structural repairs to the 1904 World’s Fair Swedish Pavillion are slated to begin at the end of March and should be completed in six to eight weeks. This means repairs will be in progress during Millfest, but should be completed by Midsummer’s Festival! In Phase 2, our “Raise the Roof” initiative will raise funds to replace the Pavilion’s aging 30-year-old roof with a more durable material with a more historically accurate look.

Finally, we are redoing our immigration exhibit this year to tell the story of Lindsborg in a more complete and engaging way. Our main gallery is also being reworked to focus more on Lindsborg and allow more flexibility for rotating and temporary exhibits.



Lindsborg Museum Needs \$100K for 2025

Thank you to our major
2024 donors!

Ambassador

- Two anonymous
- Jane and Barry Murphy

Sustainer

- Debra Farmer
- Nancy Fredrickson
- Carol and Bill Gusenius
- Hank and Hannah Kummer
- Corey and Denise Peterson
- Michelle and Kenneth Roberts
- Larry and Rebecca Van Der Wege

Benefactor

- Two anonymous
- Cathy Ahlstedt
- Betty Amos
- Steve and Marilyn Borell
- Mim Carlson
- CKA Consulting
- Thomas and LeAnna DeWitt

- Thomas and Carla Dill
- Karl and Wanda Esping
- Maleta Forsberg
- Grain Craft
- Jim and LeAnn Hicks
- Gregory and Andrea Henne
- Timothy and Lynn Henry
- Verne and Linda Hubalek
- Einar and Kristin Johnson
- Liz Johnson
- Robert and Mary Johnson
- Kansas Wheat
- Bob Kohrs
- Cathy Jo and Ronald Lucas
- Betty Ludwig
- Lenora and Mike Lynam
- John and Darlene Magnuson
- Kelly McNichols and Rebecca Johnson-McNichols
- Julie Ann Neywick
- Randy and Gretchen Norland
- Janis Oriente
- Nancy Peterson
- John Presley
- Radio Kansas
- Donald Shields and Sharron Mayer-Shields
- Les and Jerry Sperling
- Mike and Rose Marie Wallen
- White Peacock

From the Director’s Desk...

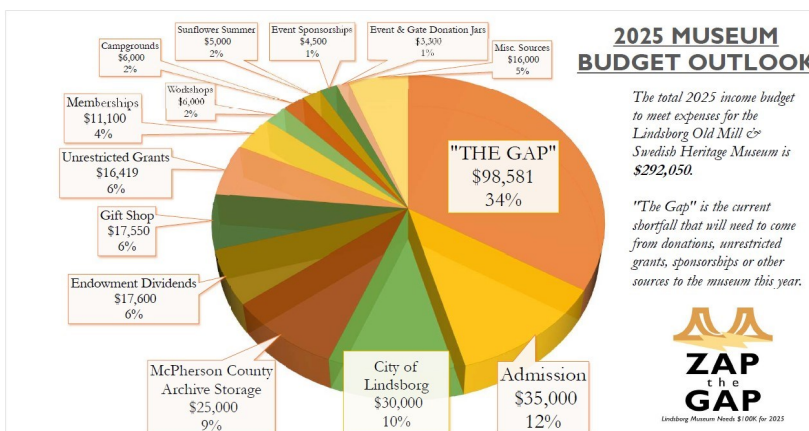
Dear Museum Friends,

As we wrap up 2024, I am grateful for the community’s support as we continue to grow as a nonprofit. We have seen some remarkable updates to the museum grounds and have raised the funds to repair the Swedish Pavillion. We will continue this growth in 2025 with the completion of the Swedish Pavillion structural repairs, our new campaign called “Raise the Roof” - which will fund a new roof for the Pavillion, and updates to multiple exhibits.

I am excited for my new position as the Executive Director (I started August 2024), and I look forward to working with the Old Mill staff, volunteers, and the Lindsborg community.

Tack så mycket,

-Aubrey Wheeler, Executive Director



Saving the Swedish Pavilion...

A great irony of 2024 was that even as we celebrated 120 years of the Swedish Pavilion, it was at real risk of collapse and permanent loss from structural failure. We closed the inside for safety and endeavored to secure the funding for repairs. Rescue came in the form of Community Service Program tax credits from Kansas Commerce. The grant encourages donations by giving a 70% Kansas tax credit to those who qualify. With this support, we raised more than the \$151,000 needed for the repair before the end of 2024. At time of publication, we have **\$178,451.40** raised; the additional balance will be a solid base to fund restoring the Pavilion's roof. The grant still has capacity for another **\$60,689.75** of donations in 2025; learn more at oldmillmuseum.org/save-the-pavilion.

Preserving Smoky Valley History

In 2024, we continued extensive efforts of the last few years to preserve museum buildings. This included **new roofing** on the Academy and one-room schoolhouse as well as **repainting** the schoolhouse, Academy, and Train Depot. The Swedish Pavilion got beautifully **restored, historically accurate windows**. We also **repaired the front porch** of the main museum building, fixed the **roof and guttering** of the Mill powerhouse, and placed a **“parapet cap” on the Old Mill**, which will help preserve the exterior masonry. Even as we progress, there is more that needs to happen, including restoring the Homestead cabin, repainting and restoring Heritage Square buildings, and new roofs to several places.

Telling Our Story...

9 News releases

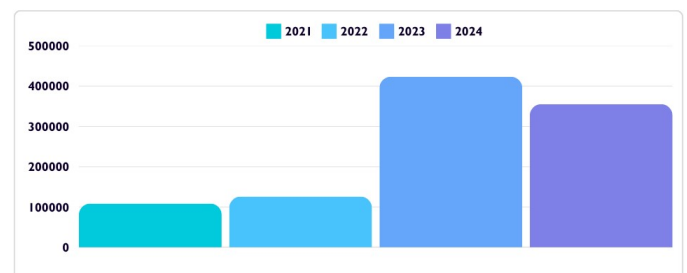
95 Pieces on or including the museum (Up from 58).

41,311 Website visitors (Up from 28,479).

Key News Coverage: MSN.com; AOL.com; Atlas Obscura; *World's Fair Bulletin*; KSN-TV; Good Day Kansas; KAKE-TV; *The Travel*.

Key Advertising: Google AdWords (via \$10,000/month grant), KC Studio Magazine (Cultural Committee), KSN Summer Road Trip.

Facebook Reach



Instagram Reach

