

# The Museum Messenger

Winter 2026 [www.oldmillmuseum.org](http://www.oldmillmuseum.org) 785-227-3595

## Millfest 2026 to Celebrate Local History

*Sponsorships Going Fast for Unique Annual Event on May 2*

Millfest 2026 - the Museum's biggest event of the year - is shaping up to be a huge celebration of local history, agricultural heritage, and exciting experiences!

Set for Saturday, May 2, the 42nd annual Millfest will be the one time in 2026 that people can see the fully restored 1898 Smoky Valley Roller Mills in action! It's a rare experience, as the Old Mill is the only flour mill of its kind in the Midwest.

In addition to the main attraction of Old Mill tours while it runs, Millfest also includes intimate music performances, arts and crafts vendors, and awesome food options. We're also bringing back two popular attractions introduced in 2025 - free face painting in the afternoon from "Just Face It" out of Wichita and an expansion of the Antique Tractor Show!

We are also looking forward to having a lot of new faces attend in 2026, given that we have recently signed an advertising agreement with the International Association of Operative Millers (IAOM). We expect this investment to bring attention to this historic, working mill for the thousands of individuals working in the modern flour milling industry today. The unique experience will forge important new connections with milling experts.

If you (or a business or person you know) would be interested in supporting Millfest and the Museum, there are many affordable levels. Event sponsorship details are available at [www.oldmillmuseum.org/events/#Millfest](http://www.oldmillmuseum.org/events/#Millfest). Sponsorship is open to businesses, individuals, and families alike!



The Museum partners with students and professors in the Kansas State University milling program to provide guided tours of the Old Mill in operation.

Sponsorship starts at just \$25 to have the sponsor's name in the event program. Increasing levels add benefits. At \$100, the sponsor also gets a logo in the program; and \$250 adds being listed in news releases. With \$1,000 sponsorship, you'll also get your logo on prominently displayed physical yard signs at Millfest, while \$5,000 or more secures topline "Brought to you by..." overall event sponsorship. You can also select to sponsor a specific attraction, but these are being filled quickly.

Sponsorship of the Antique Tractor Show is full, but there's one available sponsorship for face painting, as well as sponsorship of mill tours or music performances. In-kind contributions are also welcome! Act quickly, sponsorships need to be received by Saturday, March 7 to secure inclusion in the program.



### Early 2026 Workshops

#### Offer Brand New Formats

With a new year, at the museum we are also excited to broaden our Virtual Genealogy Workshop Series to appeal to more people and diversify the available topics.

On Jan. 31, we are offering the first full-day "Discover Your Past" workshop, with sessions that can apply to ancestral backgrounds of any kind. Then on Feb. 21, we will offer a half-day "Beginning Swedish Research" workshop. Regular full-day workshops return in March.

Members: look for discount codes in your email or call us!

## Coming Events

- **January 31:** "Discover Your Past" - Genealogy Workshop
- **February 6:** Cultural Crawl featured event - Bill Brock of Smoky Hills Audubon Society
- **February 21:** "Beginning Swedish Research" - Genealogy Workshop
- **March 21:** "Digging Deeper in Your Swedish Research" - Genealogy Workshop
- **March 21:** Våffeldagen waffle festival (Museum to release new related product TBA)
- **May 1:** Millfest for Kids
- **May 2:** Millfest
- **June 20:** Lindsborg Midsummer's Festival

Check for updates and details at [www.oldmillmuseum.org/events](http://www.oldmillmuseum.org/events).

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# 'A Day With the Birds' Exhibit Brings Award-Winning Content

On Christmas Day 125 years ago in 1900, an early leader of the Audubon Society established what today is one of the longest-running examples of high-quality citizen science: The Christmas Bird Count, or CBC.

Starting in late January, the Lindsborg Museum is hosting "A Day with the Birds" - a traveling exhibit celebrating the CBC and participatory citizen science.

"With the 125th anniversary of the CBC being celebrated this Christmas, it seems like a perfect time to bring in this special exhibit," said Interim Executive Director Lenora Lynam. "It's a fascinating story that all ages will connect to."

The exhibit will be installed

in the main gallery of the Museum building starting January 27 and running through March 7.

Developed by the Kauffman Museum in Newton, Kansas, the traveling exhibit includes taxidermized birds, informational panels (in both English and Spanish) and many hands-on interactive elements. The birds in the display vary widely - from a Black-capped Chickadee (weighing in at just half an ounce) to the Lesser Prairie Chicken (with a more than two-foot wingspan).

The large exhibit includes 10 modules across 1,000 square feet (about the size of six standard parking spaces.)

Topics include displays on the Christmas Bird Count, how one can define a "rare bird," the process of becoming a birder, and the concept of a "spark bird" - the bird that first

generates interest in bird watching - and much more! The exhibit received a 2025 Award of Excellence by the American Association of State and Local History (AASLH).

Best of all, the temporary exhibit will be included with regular admission, another good reason for guests to make a return visit.

Also as part of the exhibition, the Museum is pleased to host a presentation by Bill Brock of the Smoky Hills Audubon Society on birdwatching in the Smoky Valley and the Christmas Bird Count. His presentation will be held at the museum at 2 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 6 as part of the collaborative Lindsborg Cultural Crawl. Learn more about how to fill out your Cultural Crawl passport and the potential to win *prizes* as a result, visit [www.smokyvalleyartsandfolkcenter.org/events/cultural-crawl](http://www.smokyvalleyartsandfolkcenter.org/events/cultural-crawl). Five other organizations are also participating.



## Museum Seeking Connections for Financial Support

**The Museum is needing connections to larger and longer-term financial support for general operations to continue in 2026, and museum staff are asking for your help in making those contacts.**

A major source of public funding has gone from half our budget to just 8% since the Museum became a private nonprofit. So far, a reliable, long-term replacement has yet to be secured.

You can help change that:

- Ensure your membership is current and consider an additional donation. See if your employer has a match benefit! Spread the word about the Museum and encourage others to join in supporting the Museum.

- Introduce us to businesses, organizations, and people you know who can make a larger contribution.

- Consider renting space at the Museum for your next event or gathering. Many options are available for a variety of group sizes.

- Contact your local, state, and federal political leaders and voice your support for the Museum, and especially Kansas Sunflower Summer.

- Include the Museum in your estate plans.

- Make a required minimum distribution from your IRA tax-free.

Contact us at [oldmillmuseum@gmail.com](mailto:oldmillmuseum@gmail.com) or 785-227-3595 to discuss details or bring our attention to promising opportunities and contacts.

# Tax Credits Grant for Pavilion Wraps Up: Saving Historic Structure, Raising \$257K+

An unprecedented tax credit grant through the State of Kansas in 2024 and 2025 encouraged hundreds of thousands of dollars in donations to repair the 1904 World's Fair Swedish Pavilion.

Across nearly 100 separate credit-qualifying private donations - plus another 10 donations not eligible for tax credits - the campaign brought in a total of \$257,931.15. Contributions ranged from \$50 to nearly \$53,000! This generosity enabled us to make the necessary repairs to bring the Pavilion back from the brink of structural collapse - costing \$151,500 - and reopen the historic structure in summer 2025. It also brought in more than half of the estimated cost we will need to restore the roof in a more durable and historically accurate way. Read more about finishing this Phase 2 at [www.oldmillmuseum.org/raise-the-roof](http://www.oldmillmuseum.org/raise-the-roof). Sincere thanks to all who donated!



Top left: Perfect Blend Construction added braces and metal straps in the rafter area of the Pavilion. Top right: Installation of shear walls on the north and south side now prevent the dangerous "racking." Bottom: Structural repairs were complete by Midsummer's Festival in June 2025.

## By The Numbers...

- Separate Donors: 57

- Repeat Donors: 40
- Total: \$257,931.15
- Raised for New Roof: \$106,431.15

## Membership

Visit [www.oldmillmuseum.org/members](http://www.oldmillmuseum.org/members) to fill out the electronic form and see member benefits or complete the info below and send to: Lindsborg Museum, PO Box 94, Lindsborg, KS 67456.

Select your membership level:  Individual (\$50)

Family (\$70)  Business (\$135)

**NEW! Lifetime Club:**  Individual (\$800)

Family (\$1,200)  Business (\$2,500)

### 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: \_\_\_\_\_

## From the Director's Desk:

### Importance of Membership

Dear Museum Family,

What a year of huge milestones, capped off by the repair and reopening of the 1904 World's Fair Swedish Pavilion! We also closed out the \$250K SPRINT Grant from the Kansas Department of Commerce, which had an amazing transformative effect across the Museum campus with multiple projects.

Now our challenge is finding and securing significant long-term financial commitments for operational funding at the Museum. It's what we need to keep the doors open in 2026, so please send us your suggestions, introductions, and referrals for funding prospects.

That also brings me to the membership fee increase you may notice below, raising the membership fee by \$10 at each level. Increasing prices is never really what we want, but our research showed we were low compared to peer independently-owned nonprofit museums. At the same time, you may notice an **exciting new option - lifetime membership!** At these levels, you become a permanent member of the Museum, plus enjoy "Lifetime Club" exclusive events.

Thank you for your support!



Lenora Lynam, Interim Executive Director

## Make a Donation

Visit [www.oldmillmuseum.org/donations](http://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** (\$50-\$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.)*



Lindsborg Old Mill &  
Swedish Heritage Museum  
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## New Booklet in Gift Shop Includes Local Smoky Valley Fishing Wisdom 70 Years Old

An exciting donation to the Museum at the end of 2025 now means the Museum family can benefit from Smoky Valley fishing wisdom written down in the mid-1950s!

The 15 handwritten pages have been dated to 1955 or 1956 thanks to the "Smoky Valley Best Bait Co." invoices included with them. It appears to be a side venture

of the Runbeck Brothers during the last days of the Old Mill being in business.

Staff have carefully transcribed and added useful notes to this rare piece of written ephemera and included it along with scans of the original pages for purchase. It is available for \$5 plus shipping at [www.oldmillmuseum.org/gift-shop/old-fishermans-bait-recipes](http://www.oldmillmuseum.org/gift-shop/old-fishermans-bait-recipes).

