

Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan
Executive Director Report for Board of Trustees Meeting
May/June 2025

DATA SUMMERY OF ACTIVITIES IN MAY

Collections Management

| Major Activities | Number |
|-----------------------|------------|
| New Accessions | 0 |
| Artifacts cataloged | 926 |
| Artifacts inventoried | 792 |
| Inquiries handled | 5 |

Attendance May

| | 2025 | 2024 |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| Adult | 190 | 140 |
| Senior | 136 | 95 |
| Child | 69 | 42 |
| Free | 218 | 157 |
| TOTAL | 613 | 434 |

Museum Memberships

May

| | |
|---------------------|-----------|
| Membership Renewals | 23 |
| New Memberships | 5 |

Planetarium

2025

2024

| | | |
|-------|-----------|-----------|
| Adult | 89 | 92 |
| Child | 36 | 34 |

School Field Trips: April 2025 – June 2025

1. This was a very busy couple of weeks for staff and volunteers. We had 19 different schools from across Northeast Michigan visit with a total of **932** students on site. That does not include the parent chaperones and teachers that accompanied them. **April – June 2024**, we had 21 schools visit with a total of **820** students.

GOVERNANCE: June 17th is the Membership Meeting and election of new Board Members.

1. June will be the last meeting for Claudia Chapman (10yrs), Tuffy Cross (10yrs), Michelle Miller (10yrs), Janet Young (9yrs) and Jim Johnson (9yrs). Jim will opt to stay on another year if the board chooses according to the bylaws.
2. Incumbent members up for reelection:
 - a. Sue Stender for a third – three-year term 2025 – 2028.
 - b. Dan Florip for a second - three-year term 2025 – 2028
3. Candidates up for election for a three-year term 2025 – 2028.
 - a. Lind Baker
 - b. Beach Hall
 - c. Ann Diamond. Ann previously served nine years on the Board of Trustees, two of which she served as president.

FACILITY:

1. Currently, Matt Klimczak is the one staff member in the Facility Department. We lost our part-time facility assistant, Nate Teachout, this year and we do not have it in the operating budget to hire another staff member right now.
 - a. Since that time, Matt has had minimal assistance from volunteers helping with yard clean up. Bruch Honeycutt and Nicole Page helped clean up the debris left from the ice storm. Matt performs all regular lawn maintenance on his own. The garden volunteers water the flowers

and bushes. Nicole Page helped plant some of the perennials I purchased up at Walmart. Marilyn Bloomberg planted some others and replaced some rose bushes.

- b. During May and June, we hosted several field trips with over 900 students, plus their teachers and chaperones visiting the museum. Field trips create a lot of wear and tear on the building. I came into work around 6:30 a.m. several times during field trip season to assist with cleaning bathrooms and mopping floors to prepare the facility for the next field trip.
2. Facility Manager Matt Klimczak received an estimate from John's Home maintenance of \$9,095 to put a new roof on the Spratt Church. The estimate is posted on the website on the Board page.
 - a. The church windows still need some repairs. Estimate will be sought.
 - b. The exterior of the building needs to be painted. Estimates will be sought.
3. Matt is seeking an estimate from TRC roofing for the museum roof over the Trelfa Gallery. We have had issues with water draining off that corner of the roof in the past. We are experiencing this again. The water is washing away the earth in front of the concrete flowerbeds. When we had the roof repaired over the new history exhibit due to leaks, TRC we had a couple more years before the entire roof will need to be replaced.
4. Matt reached out to Lakeshore Plumbing to move forward with the boiler pump.
5. The side parking lot needs to have the cracks filled in with blacktop filler.

EUDCATION:

1. **Alpena Public School Summer Program:** received a grant to run their summer enrichment programs again this year. I will be running four programs, two in July and two in August. The Besser Museum will receive \$2,520 for the four sessions
2. **4-H Summer Program:** are planning on bringing two groups to the museum sometime this summer. Dates need to be confirmed.

HISTORY EXHIBIT:

1. **Alpena Flyer Exhibit:**
 - a. The new reader rails for the Alpena Flyer exhibit are scheduled to arrive on June 13. Matt will be installing them.
2. **PHASE 2:**
 - a. Split Rock Studios submitted a contract for phase 1 schematic design. This SD1 contract is \$45,000. The SD1 phase will produce the graphic design images needed for the fundraising campaign. The SD1 contract is on the web site on the Board page.
 - b. Unfortunately, we did not receive grant funding from the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity Community Museum Grant Program to be announced sometime in May.
 - c. An interpretative concept for the lower-level exhibit was drafted.
 - i. I meet with Tim Kent to discuss the exhibit concept and talk about the potential use of space for this French, British, and Early Colonial Period exhibits that will be displayed in the lower level.
 - ii. I met with John Schmitz from the Conservation District. John agreed to serve on the exhibit committee. John has years of experience in environmental education and developing curriculum. At one point in his career, John was part of the team that built a very large exhibit at the Neale Woods Nature Reserve, Fontenelle Forest in Omaha, Nebraska. There are other employees at the Conservation District who could also provide valuable information and help vet content.
 - iii. Brad Jensen, Executive Director of Huron Pines, said their organization could be of help in some areas of content development and vet information.

GREAT LAKES FISHERIES HERITAGE EXHIBIT:

- **Chinook:**

- Jim Johnson is putting in an enormous amount of time and energy working on the interpretation panels for the Chinook exhibit.
- Good Design Group is continuing to refine the schematic design and secure bids from subcontractors for the fabrication and installation. They have projected that the installation will occur by August/September.
- We received an extension on our grant deadline. We now have until April 30, 2026, to complete this grant funded project.
- We received an advancement on the DNR grant in the amount of \$151,079. This money was electronically deposited into the museum's Nicolet bank account and will help cover for the expenses on going expenses.

Planetarium:

- The planetarium is still operating with one projector.
 - a. Norbert Vance from Eastern Michigan University visited the Besser Museum May 30 and was able to share some ideas with Mike Beaulac, John Heath, and myself about our current situation in the planetarium.
 - b. Eastern Michigan University recently installed a Digitalis Education Solutions "Digitalium Lambda" which comes in at around \$100,000 versus \$300,000 and up. For more information on this system: https://www.digitaliseducation.com/products-digitalium_lambda_fixed.html
- **Planet/History Walk:**
 - Gary Goren is putting in a lot of time and energy in the planet walk project.
 - Gary Goren submitted a grant Youth and Rec grant. \$34,479. He will be presenting his grant proposal to the Youth and Rec committee on June 23.
 - Gary has also been in contact with Fossil Inc. This company designs and fabricated durable outside signage for exhibit like this.
 - Angela Addington will work with Gary on graphic design for the signs. One side will be planetarium information, and the other side will be Alpena history information. Sarah will be able to provide photos and information of the history.

Misc.

- June 28th is the annual Log Cabin Day event from 12pm to 4pm.
- Sarah Honeycutt and Angela Addington will be working on creating a special exhibit for Dinosaurs Gardens. They are celebrating 90 years of business. The exhibit will be on display June 28th through October 30, 2025.
- Juried Art Exhibit will open to the public August 2nd.