

Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan  
Executive Director Report for Board of Trustees Meeting  
February/March 2025

**DATA SUMMERY OF ACTIVITIES IN FEBRUARY**

**Collections Management February**

Major Activities	Number
New Accessions	<b>8</b>
Artifacts cataloged	<b>712</b>
Artifacts inventoried	<b>933</b>
Inquiries handled	<b>5</b>

**Attendance February 2025 2024**

Adult	<b>226</b>	<b>127</b>
Senior	<b>136</b>	<b>41</b>
Child	<b>79</b>	<b>46</b>
Free	<b>401</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>842</b>	<b>307</b>

**Museum Memberships February**

Membership Renewals	<b>17</b>
New Memberships	<b>6</b>

**Planetarium February 2025 2024**

Adult	<b>86</b>	<b>100</b>
Child	<b>60</b>	<b>33</b>

**HISTORY EXHIBIT:**

**1. PHASE 2:**

- a. Waiting on the million-dollar grant proposal for the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity Community Museum Grant Program to be announced sometime in May.
- b. An interpretative concept for the lower-level exhibit has been drafted and ready for review.
  - i. Next steps will be to invite community content experts to join an exhibit committee. Any board member is welcome to participate in this committee.
  - ii. After the concept is finalized, the museum will work with Spilt Rock Studios to get a schematic design developed.
  - iii. Once the museum has a schematic design, a fundraising campaign can be launched.
2. Still waiting on Omega to redo the donor wall.
  - a. We have not received an estimate for this project.
3. Progress is being made with Split Rock Studios on the Alpena Flyer exhibit reader rails.
4. **Working on Summer Tourist Marketing Campaign**
  - a. A new ad was created with help from Carol Bobolts and others that will go in the Viking Cruise Ship tourist booklet published by Alpena News. This ad was sponsored by an anonymous donor.

- b. This same ad will go into the Alpena News Tourist Guide. The Guide will go out to the MDOT rest stops and be inserted into the Alpena News. The cost is \$800 for 10,000 guides.
- c. I met with Lamar sales representative, Paul Baldwin, to discuss a proposal to rent five billboards for four months across Northern Michigan. The total cost will be \$12,800. (Proposal attached to online Board packet.)
- d. Besser Museum continues to run ads on WATZ, HITS FM, Bay108, and The Bird. We also run a monthly ad in the Presque Isle Advance, Alcona News, and Good Times paper.

### **EUDCATION:**

1. I met with Sara Winter to discuss reestablishing an Education Community. The committee would help create lesson plans that align with Michigan State benchmarks and core curriculum standards.
  - a. A letter was drafted inviting retired teachers/educators to join this committee.
  - b. Once we set a date and time for the first meeting, we will send out invitations.
2. I hosted a meeting with Leslie Schmanski and a few Besser Elementary teachers who toured the new exhibit and discussed educational experiences in the new gallery.
  - a. Currently, elementary teachers do not have a set history curriculum or textbook. They are drawing from several sources. It would be great if the Besser Museum could create a curriculum that could be used in the classroom.
  - b. APS students are scoring low in vocabulary and language arts. Creating educational experiences that strengthens vocabulary would be helpful.
3. I hosted a meeting with Shellie Gohl and educators from AMA/ESD to discuss development museum education experiences that aligns with the social studies/history curriculum and supports teachers in the classroom. Another meeting will be held May 29.
4. I reached out to Laurie Nugent, the volunteer coordinator for early college, to discuss a possible partnership for students needing to serve 100 hours in community service. My main objective was to find students willing to volunteer a couple of hours on Saturday. They would spend time in the new exhibit gallery when we have lots of visitors, or they can help with cleaning and dusting museum displays. Matt Klimczak has one volunteer coming in a couple times a week to help with cleaning.
5. Teachers are starting to book field trips for April, May and June.
  - a. I have been working on lesson plans and rotation schedules for field trips.
  - b. I will be reaching out to past volunteers with field trip schedules soon,

### **STAFF:**

- Isabel Rudy, a graduate from CMU with a Major in Anthropology and a Minor in Museum Studies, started March 3 as a Museum Assistant. Isabel's duties will include collections care and front desk reception.
- Matt Wieschowski has been working part-time, mostly in the collections department since March of 2022. Matt will be leaving the museum March 21.
- **Staffing needs:**
  - Facility Assistant
  - Education Coordinator: possibly a seasonal position during April, May and June,

- Marketing/Communication: possibly hiring a full-time employee to manage the website, Facebook page, Instagram, graphic design promotional pieces for all exhibits and programming, newspaper ads and museum newsletter. This individual would help with designing outdoor signage for historic buildings.

### **GREAT LAKES FISHERIES HERITAGE EXHIBIT:**

- **Chinook:**
  - Good Design Group is currently working on the schematic design for the new exhibit.
  - Jim Johnson is having people at the DNR vet his interpretative text for the new exhibit.
  - The Michigan Great Lakes Fisheries Heritage Consortium Conference will be held in South Haven this spring. May 21/22 are the tentative dates.

### **Planetarium:**

- The planetarium is still operating with one projector. John Heath presents shows on Friday and Saturdays.
  - John has asked if we can look into adding some new videos to our library.
- **Planet/History Walk:**
  - We have approximately \$7,000 for this project from Giving Tuesday.
  - Gary Goren is applying for a Youth and Rec grant.
  - Gary has also been in contact with Fossil Inc. This company designs and fabricated durable outside signage for exhibit like this.
    - We meet with Carol Bobolts to discuss the possibility of her designing the layout of each Planet Walk sign using Gary's outline and information.

### **Misc.**

- We have had many inquiries about purchasing prints of the Native American artwork on display. I have contacted the artists, Anny Hubbard, David Dutcher and Catherine Migwans, Peter Wigwans wife. They all gave permission to make and sell prints of their artwork with the proceeds benefiting the Besser Museum.
  - Joe Donna took photos of the artworks and will provide a digital copy for reproduction.
  - I still need to research the cost of getting prints made. We are looking into both prints and postcards.