

Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan
Executive Director Report for Board of Trustees Meeting
July/August 2025

DATA SUMMERY OF ACTIVITIES IN MAY

Collections Management

Major Activities	Number
New Accessions	1
Artifacts cataloged	820
Artifacts inventoried	0
Inquiries handled	11

Attendance July

	2025	2024
Adult	484	421
Senior	379	284
Child	303	263
Free	357	247
TOTAL	1523	1215

Museum Memberships

July

Membership Renewals	10
New Memberships	3

Planetarium

2025

2024

Adult	130	221
Child	55	122

EUDCATION: July 2025 – August 2025

1. We hosted four programs in partnership with Alpena Public Schools grant funded program MI KIDS BACK ON TRACK. The programs were free to APS students going into 4th, 5th, and 6th grades. We averaged between 8 to 10 students at each session. The Besser Museum will receive \$2,520 for the four sessions.

FACILITY:

1. The contract has been signed with Control Solutions to replace the faulty valves and actuators on the HVAC system. The parts are being ordered, and the installation will be scheduled soon.
2. Jon Benson visited this month to discuss the idea of adding on room for a reception/meeting hall. This is something he has mentioned in the past. It is a much-needed space for the museum to host events and would be a revenue stream for the museum. More to come on this idea.

HISTORY EXHIBIT:

1. PHASE 2:

- a. Split Rock Studios team arrived in Alpena on August 6th. We have three new members for Phase 2: Carrie Paulsen, Project Manager; Cathan Murray, Exhibit Designer; Margaret Le, PhD, Exhibit Developer.
- b. They meet with Tim Kent on August 6 to discuss his portion of the exhibit displays.
- c. On August 7, we held a full day meeting. Attendees included: Board members, Mike Beaulac, Jim Johnson, Linda Baker, and Jim Johnson; Staff members, Chris Witulski, Matt Klimczak, Sarah Honeycutt, and Angela Addington; Committee members, John Schmitz (Conservation District), Maddie Khuri (Huron Pines), and Kara LeMonds (Community representative).
- d. The SRS Team will take all the information gathered from this meeting and produce a schematic design for the lower-level exhibit space. We should have these drawings sometime in November.
- e. Below is a reminder of the interpretative concept for the lower-level exhibit that was drafted.
 - i. Tim Kent has his exhibit layout and interpretation of the French, British, and Early Colonial Period exhibits completed.
 - ii. John Schmitz and Maddie Khuri are both environmental educators and provided some good insight and information for content development. Jim Johnson added insight and information for content development for the fish exhibit in the lower level.

GREAT LAKES FISHERIES HERITAGE EXHIBIT:

1. Chinook:

- Jim Johnson and Lauren Holbrook from Hammond Bay Biological Research Station are 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 in April on the DNR grant in the amount of \$156,079. This money was electronically deposited into the museum's Nicolet bank account and will help cover for the expenses on going expenses.

Planetarium:

- Mike Beaulac and I will travel to Eastern Michigan University to meet with Norbert Vance and see how the Digitalis Education equipment works and if it will be a good fit for the Besser Museum.
 - a. Norbert Vance is the planetarium director/educator at Eastern Michigan University.
 - b. Eastern Michigan University recently installed a Digitalis Education Solutions “Digitalium Lambda” which comes in at around \$100,000 verse \$300,000 and up. For more information on this system:
https://www.digitaliseducation.com/products-digitalium_lambda_fixed.html
- **Planet/History Walk:**
 - We are waiting to hear word on the Youth and Recreation Grant application.
 - When awarded, 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.

- Creative Media Specialist, Angela Addington continues to make updates to the museum’s website. She is also actively posting on Facebook and creating ads for print. Angela will also start working on creating a digital membership newsletter.
- We have three exhibits up through October 30.
 - Juried Art, Chuck Schroeder’s Solor Exhibit, and Dinosaur Gardens.
- Plans for this year’s Season of Light Exhibit is underway.
 - The Members Only Gala is scheduled for **Sunday, November 16.**
- Fall Harvest Fossil Fest plans are underway. The event is **Saturday, October 4.**
 - Gennie Morgan from the Sault Ste. Marie Chippewa Tribe will be participating at Fall Harvest Day. She and possibly other members will be presenting drumming circle teachings.
 - Stephanie Detloff from Family Child Services will be participating with old fashion carnival game booths.
 - Janet Young will be here to host in the new exhibit.
 - Tim Kent is planning on helping host in the French Fur Trade area.
 - We will be having a pumpkin patch for young kids again this year.
 - Jim and Tuffy will be hosting the Great Lakes Fisheries Exhibit.
- I will be on vacation **Monday, September 22 through Monday October 6.** I will be traveling to Switzerland September with the Chamber of Commerce group.
- Michigan Historical Society State Conference in being held in Alpena **September 26 and 27.** The Besser Museum is cohosting and has been working with the Historical Society to plan this event. . Janet Young will be one of the presenters at this event. The main event will be held at ACC. The Besser Museum will be hosting a meet and greet reception Friday, **September 26.** Sarah Honeycutt, Isabel, and Nicole will be hosting the museum.