

**Besser Museum for Northeast Michigan
Executive Director Report for Board of Trustees Meeting
November/December 2025**

Season of Light events:

- The museum was closed October 31 through November 16 in preparation for the Season of Light exhibit. Staff and community volunteers worked to transform
- Season of Light exhibit opened with a very successful members only gala on Sunday, November 16.
- 221 members attended at \$10 each for a total of \$2,210.
- The raffle items brought in \$545 and the silent auction items brought in \$1,730.
- Catering: After Jon Benson’s \$2,000 donation, the catering was \$2,643.
- Other Season of Light events include:
 - Two private Christmas parties rentals at \$500 each, Hospice of Michigan and Assured Partners. Both groups loved their experiences.
 - We partnered with Thunder Bay Arts Council to host Yuletide on November 29. That free event was sponsored by donations from Alpena Power and Real Estate One - \$1,000 each. That sponsored helped cover marketing costs and admissions.
 - Five elementary school field trips
 - A Kids Story and Craft event on Saturday, December 13
 - On December 22 at 3pm, local author Gail Heath will read her new Christmas book and talk about writing and publishing books.
- Below is the admissions and memberships report from November 17 through December 13.

Product name	Quantity	Gross Sales
Adult	124	\$ 620.20
Child	33	\$ 99.00
Free Adult	285	\$ 3.75
Free Child	205	\$ 2.05
Free member	48	\$ 0.48
Free Senior	119	\$ 1.19
Senior	74	\$ 222.00
Adult Planetarium	17	\$ 51.00
Child Planetarium	1	\$ 3.00
Free Adult Planetarium	3	\$ 0.03
Free Child Planetarium	5	\$ 0.05
Rebate	1	\$ 25.54
Rentals	1	\$ 500.00
School Group	117	\$ 593.20
Membership Family	3	\$ 121.60
Membership Friend	2	\$ 200.00
Membership Leader	2	\$ 2,000.00
Membership Patron	1	\$ 500.00
Membership Senior	5	\$ 100.00
Membership Senior Couple	7	\$ 245.00
Membership Supporter	1	\$ 250.00

Admission and Membership Rates:

- The Board approved increasing the admission rates and members rates in 2026.
- Angela Addington and I have been working on the proposed new membership brochure which includes new membership categories, fees, and benefits. This membership structure was modeled after a combination of several different museum membership programs.
- A press release has been prepared to announce these changes. This will also be posted to our website.
- The prices will go into effect sometime in January – after we get the public announcement out in the press.

FACILITY:

1. Control Solutions continues to work on replacing all the control valves. They hope to finish this project up soon.

HISTORY EXHIBIT:

1. PHASE 2:

- a. Split Rock Studios SD1 design phase is complete. The cost was \$45,500.
 - i. The committee submitted our response to the SD1 design.
 - ii. SRS has not had any additional questions about our comments.
- b. SRS is asking when Besser Museum would like to move into SDII. Cost \$45,500.
- c. We currently have **\$113,533** available for DNEMH Phase 2:
 - i. Nicolet Bank: **\$39,882**
 - ii. CFNEM – DNEMH Exhibit Fund: **\$44,147**
 - iii. Fidelity Fund: **\$29,504**

GREAT LAKES FISHERIES HERITAGE EXHIBIT:

1. Chinook:

- Good Design Group has placed an order to print and fabricate all of the exhibit panels. They should be shipped to the museum the first of December. Omega Electric will install all the signage.
- The water lines to the boats finish installing lights and outlets in the exhibit areas will have to wait until spring.

PLANETARIUM:

- We are still currently using the Spitz ball for planetarium shows on Friday and Saturday. The planetarium was closed the last two weekends because John Heath was unable to do presentation and we have no one else that knows how to run the Spitz Ball.
- Wolfpack is currently going through the digital planetarium system to see if they can pinpoint the issue. It may be a few months before we know if the problem can be resolved.

- In the meantime, we have the Digitalis Education Solutions “Digitrium” on the backburner. We have not discussed or pursued funding for new equipment. This conversation will be part of the Board strategic planning process.
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- **Planet/History Walk:**
 - Besser Museum was awarded the Youth and Recreation Grant application.
 - 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.

- In January, we will be displaying the Salvador Dali’s illustrations of Dante’s Divine Comedy. The exhibit will be on display from January through July. I have been working on additional educational programming for this exhibit.
 - A presentation on the cultural influence of Dante the Italian identity and the Renaissance movement. We will also highlight the influential connection that historical writers, Virgil and Homer, had on Dante’s writing
 - A presentation from members of the Susan Lane Foundation/Poetry Club.
 - We are discussing putting a writing nook in the gallery as part of the exhibit.
 - An art history presentation talking about Dali’s influence of modern art.
 - A woodblock demonstration and workshop.
- Working with Judy Dawley on a new fundraising event for 2026. More information to come.
- Still working on audit for FY 2024/2025. We are also working with Marie Williams to make changes to our bookkeeping process.
- Cherie Honeycutt will be volunteering to host a children’s story and craft time program at the museum. The programs will take place one Saturday a month.
- I will be on vacation/out of town December 28 through January 5th.