



**DOUGLAS
COUNTY
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**

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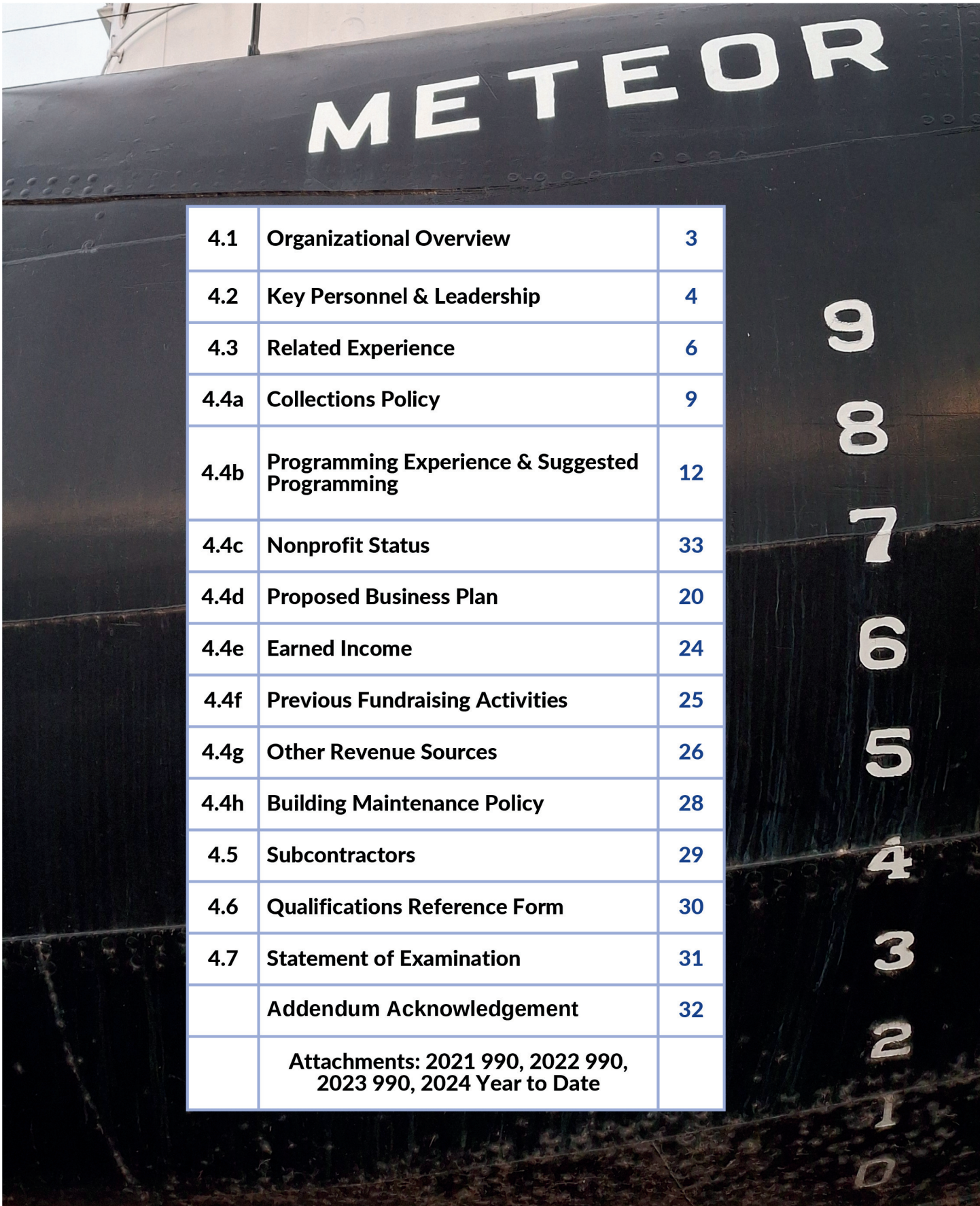
DECEMBER 2024

BID #24-49-FIN

Museum Management & Operating Services Proposal



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4.1 Douglas County Historical Society (DCHS, the society) Overview

The Board

DCHS is a 501(c)(3) organization with a board of trustees of 13 current members, including one selected by the City of Superior and one selected by Douglas County. (See Proposal: 4.4d)

The Staff

The society currently has two part-time staff members (Business Manager and Museums Assistant) which would move into subordinate positions of the new executive director (ED) position.

The Facility

The society purchased the historic Vasa Temple in 2002. The 40 by 60-foot Great Hall serves as the primary exhibit room and also hosts meetings, community events, musicals, theatrical productions, films, and more. The facility also has a gift shop, offices, & houses the society's comprehensive collection and archive.

Did You Know?

The Wisconsin Historical Society has over 326 affiliates that specifically use the term "historical society" in their name. These organizations are defined and granted rights specifically in state statutes.



4.2 Leadership & Key Personnel

Board of Directors



Garner Moffat

PRESIDENT, CITY REPRESENTATIVE
Garner has over 20 years of administrative and management experience, holds a BA in Organizational Leadership, has taken many courses in historic preservation, and serves on the Plan Commission, Library Board, etc.



Erin Hicks

VICE PRESIDENT
Erin holds a master's degree in museum studies and has 20 years of experience working in museum roles including collections, education, and administration. Erin is the Registrar at the Tweed Museum and previously served as Curator at the St. Louis County Historical Society.



Kristen Haux

TREASURER
Kristen holds a B.S. from the U of WI in Accounting, an MBA from the U of MN and has 30 years of experience in financial project management. Kristen also serves as the Nemadji Cemetery Association President.



Valerie Burke

PAST PRESIDENT, SECRETARY
Valerie has served more than 20 years as a volunteer at DCHS, chairs the collections committee and works as an administrative professional and sometimes tour guide at Superior Public Museums' Fairlawn Museum site.



Lee Sandok Baker

BOARD MEMBER, COUNTY REPRESENTATIVE
Lee serves on the Douglas County Board, as Superior's code compliance officer, and previously served as past co-president of the League of Women Voters. Lee earned an MBA in Leadership and Change from The College of Saint Scholastica.



Milissa Brooks-Ojibway

BOARD MEMBER
Milissa has over 20 years of professional experience in collections management including 15 years at St. Louis County Historical Society and currently over nine years at Glensheen Mansion as Collections Manager.



Jeff Dorfman

BOARD MEMBER
Jeff works as a General Contractor and Owner of Dorfman Company, President of Superior Craft School, woodworker, and Rotarian. Jeff chairs the society's facility committee and helps lead the annual golf tournament.



Beatrice Dornfeld

BOARD MEMBER
Beatrice holds a degree in anthropology and has worked as a archaeological field tech in TX, at the St. Louis County Historical Society, and as Program Manager for Northern Bedrock Historic Preservation Corps. Beatrice works at UWS's Center for Continuing Education.

Leadership & Key Personnel

Board of Directors



Brian Finstad

BOARD MEMBER

Brian has many years of experience with local history, preservation, and advocacy. Brian works as a property appraiser and serves on the Superior Plan Commission, Gordon Historical Society, and served on the city's HPC.



Sharon Kotter

BOARD MEMBER

Sharon has lived in the city for over 40 years, is the owner and operator of Harmony House LLC, a former Superior City Council Member, Council President, and former Mayor of Superior.



Clint Mattson

BOARD MEMBER

Clint is a US Army veteran and retired nurse. Clint regularly volunteers with the Bong Veterans Historical Center and the American Legion as well as the society's events committee.



Robert-Jan Quene

BOARD MEMBER

Robert is founder and owner of Clearwater Orchid Laboratory, and a former collections and administrative professional at Superior Public Museums, and St. Louis County Historical Society. Robert also has many years of home restoration experience.



Brenda Uotinen

BOARD MEMBER

Brenda has lived over 40 years here as a Douglas County resident and has 35+ years in Superior Real Estate experience. Brenda is a licensed broker.

Staff Members



Jon Winter

BUSINESS MANAGER

Jon is the founder and owner of Winter Systems Computers since 1988. Jon formerly served as a board member of the society and is an active member of the Superior/Douglas County Chamber of Commerce.



AJ Mullozzi

MUSEUM ASSISTANT

AJ joined the society about two years ago with a bachelor's in history and a minor in gender, women, and sexuality studies from University of Minnesota. AJ formerly worked at Glensheen.

4.3 Related Experience

Established September 1854

The Douglas County Historical Society can trace its roots back to September of 1854. At that time it operated under the name of the **Superior Historical Society** and its president was Colonel R. P. Carlton, the oldest resident of the area. By 1902, the Superior Historical Society still had no collection and was holding meetings only once every four years. The meetings were then discontinued due to lack of interest until October of 1931 when, under the leadership of John A. Bardon, a collection was developed that included photographs, objects and documents.

A. A. Roth Home

In 1934 the group's name and mission was changed to include all of Douglas County. The new Douglas County Historical Society was offered the home of the A. A. Roth family to use as their museum in 1938. After remodeling the building, the collection was moved to this location in 1939. It wasn't long, however, before the Historical Society began to outgrow this home.

Superior Children's Home

By the 1960s they were looking for a larger space to house their ever-increasing collection. An old armory at 16th Street and John Avenue was considered in 1961, but then they received news that the Superior Children's Home was closing and an even grander scheme developed. Yet even this would have its hurdles to overcome.

The Superior Children's Home had been in service for 42 years, since the Victorian-era mansion that housed it had been left to the Children's Home and Refuge Association by its owner, Grace Pattison, when she left Superior in 1920. Built by her husband Martin Pattison in the late 1800s, it was Mrs. Pattison's wish that the Children's Home Board destroy the building and sell the property rather than use it for something other than a children's home.

At first it seemed unlikely that anyone would be able to convince them otherwise, but City Attorney Marcovich pointed out that Mrs. Pattison had left an alternative: let the title to the home revert to the Pattison heirs for disposition. The Pattison heirs, it turned out, felt that the home should be preserved and then turned the title for it over to the City of Superior.



A. A. Roth Home

The Douglas County Historical Society moved its collection into this grand home in May of 1963. The home, known as “Fairlawn,” served as its headquarters for many years. In later years, gala events, such as Victorian teas and murder mystery dinner theaters, were held on Fairlawn’s grounds by the Historical Society, making their name and that of Fairlawn nearly synonymous. In 1999, however, the lease for this property was lost as the mission at Fairlawn turned to that of a house museum telling its place in Superior history. The organization again went in search of a place to call “home.”

Post Office Building

For two years, the Historical Society was located in the lower level of 1401 Tower Avenue, in the heart of Superior’s old downtown business district. The building, known as the “Old Post Office,” dates to around 1905 and once served as the city’s post office and federal building. Today it has been renovated and restored to its original grandeur and contains the offices of a number of local businesses. The available space however, simply could not house the society’s large collection and so the search for permanent headquarters continued.



Vasa Temple



In November 2002, The Douglas County Historical Society was pleased to announce that the search was finally over. The organization had purchased and moved into another historic building in Superior. Located at 1101 John Avenue, it was built in 1925 for \$35,000 and was known as the Vasa Temple.

Newspaper articles of the time inform us that it was erected by the Svea and the Freja lodges of the Vasa Order of America, which was a Swedish American organization. Lidgerwood-Mundy bought the building in 1948 and had been there until recently, when they moved their engineering and accounting divisions to their main headquarters.

Mission and Vision

Mission

"Preserving the history of Douglas County and sharing our stories"

Vision

Our vision is to be the premier sustainable local history public resource

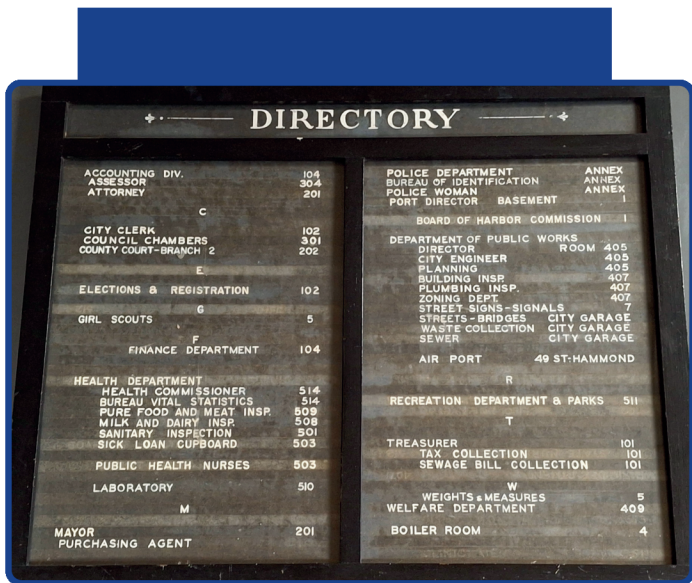
2024 Board Goals

- Explore Partnership Opportunities
- Develop & Implement a Strategic Plan
- Develop & Implement a Fund Development Plan
- Optimize the Collection to Best Serve Our Community
- Enhance Community Perception
- Enhance History Education Opportunities

The society's board holds annual planning workshops each January. Through this process and with a professional facilitator, the board worked to redesign a modern simple and practical mission statement that drives all of the work of the board and the greater organization. Decisions can now be filtered through this mission when weighing each possible choice. Does the possible outcome directly preserve our shared history or does the choice help us share our stories? On some occasions, the link is less direct: for example, fundraising, which indirectly helps us achieve our mission by providing financial resources to enact mission work.

The decision to apply for this process originated through the context of this planning process and the open board brainstorming allowed the group to imagine how the mission can better be achieved through collaboration with others. Earlier this year, as the organization was working through an analysis to prepare for hiring an executive director, Superior Public Museum's director resigned. It was no stretch of the imagination to realize:

- The three museum sites fall completely and directly within the society's mission.
- Both organizations have redundant labor (accounting, HR, curator, maintenance, administrative work, researchers, executive director position, etc.) This creates financial challenges and a competition for the limited pool of local museum and nonprofit professionals. Smaller staffed organizations also don't have the luxury of professional specialists and instead operate with more generalized positions. Combining teams allows staff to specialize and train more for specific tasks and organizational needs, moving the organization to the next professional level.
- Both organizations also compete for board members, and a series of also redundant committees, meetings, and volunteer tasks.
- Separate organizations stretch the community financial resources and creates constant competitions for grants, city funding, business sponsorships, and community (resident) memberships.



Superior City Hall Directory, Society Permanent Collection.

4.4a Collections

Preservation

The society is dedicated to the preservation of local historical collections that include objects/artifacts, documents/photographs, and structures/sites through publicly accessible historical object-based learning. As an organization engaged in the preservation of collections held in the public trust, the society ascribes to the principle that certain cultural resources are preserved for public benefit which enables the “sharing of our stories” to ideally continue in perpetuity. For museums, a collections management policy is the foundation of its commitment to preservation.

The society’s collections committee has been working recently to revise our Collections Management Policy, but finalizing was put on hold while we consider shifts in operations and additions of collections and sites. The committee recognizes that a new long-term policy would be developed in partnership with the City of Superior and a new Collections Committee would be formed to write that policy to reflect separate owners for separate collections.

Collections management includes everything that is done to document, care for, and develop museum objects and archives and make them available for use. Fundamental principles form the basis for an effective management policy and will be the foundation of a new policy for operating city-owned collections and sites.

Society Archives



Principles

- Each object entering the museum must be documented.
- Collections should be stabilized for long-term preservation and housed in a proper storage environment. The Vasa Temple facility is equipped with redundant heating and cooling systems and has humidity control systems. Current city storage areas lack adequate temperature and humidity control.
- The collections must be regularly inventoried and monitored.
- The collections storage environment must be regularly monitored.
- All collections activities and monitoring must be documented.



Society Archives

Collection Composition

Today, the society's permanent collection consists of historical artifacts, fine art, Native American objects of cultural significance, archival documents, photographs, and a burgeoning digital asset repository. The society understands stewardship and the responsibility of being a collecting institution and recognizes the scope and size of the City-owned collections. The Fairlawn Mansion's collection encompasses the residential structure itself, Pattison family documents, decorative arts and artifacts illustrating the Victorian era, and the Superior Children's Home and Refuge Association Collection. The Old Firehouse and Police Museum's collection consists of the firehall structure itself, five restored fire rigs, fire-fighting equipment, and police memorabilia. Lastly, the SS Meteor's collection includes a whaleback ship itself but also notable historical maritime artifacts that weave into a fuller story of Great Lakes shipping, lighthouses, and shipwrecks.



Framed painting, part of the society's expansive art collection

Management and Record Keeping

With the preservation principles listed in place, it is possible to manage two separate existing collections. The society would employ the standard museum practice of establishing a clear numbering system that assigns a unique identifying number to each object. Museum, Library, and Archival collections numbering systems can differ while also tracking information simultaneously with the use of current collections management software. The society intends to implement a full inventory of both collections, employ a system of numbering based on nomenclature, and update collections management software to maintain clear tracking of care and ownership. The position of Curator and/or Collections Manager is tasked with this work and is responsible for the care of all collections.



This dugout canoe has been estimated by carbon dating to be about 300 years old.

Accessioning & Deaccessioning Overview

Accessioning and Deaccessioning are both standard museum practices. As listed in the society's current collections management policy, ultimate responsibility for the acquisition and maintenance of collections rests with the Board of Trustees which is the governing body of the society. The board reviews and approves that collections management policy and delegates authority for implementation to the Collection Committee. The committee assists and advises the board and staff in matters of accessioning and deaccessioning, and produces reports which are submitted to the Board of Trustees.

Acquisition & Accessioning

- Purchased or donated items to the society shall be approved and accepted if they meet the acquisition criteria to acquire and maintain a collection of items of the past, present, and future historical interest which are relevant to the society's mission and reflect the background and development of Douglas County and the county seat, Superior.
- Consideration is taken that the item supports the society's mission, attains historical relevance, is educational in nature, and has research value is taken very seriously.



The Society is currently working on digitizing local newspapers starting with the oldest issues from the 1890s. It is a project goal to make all of these available without charge for city residents.

Regarding Deaccessioning & Disposal

Deaccessioning can only occur after the following steps are taken:

- Collections Manager (staff) makes recommendation to Collections Committee based on item(s) meeting established criteria which include:
 - Object(s) does not support the mission
 - Duplication or over abundance of an object
 - Presents a burden or exists a lack of resources to care for object, object endangers other objects (mold, bug, etc.)
 - Poor physical condition, lost integrity, or poses a hazard
 - Lack of provenance or found to be not genuine
 - Unclarified legal restrictions
- Collections Committee reviews and recommendation is either denied or approved and presentation is made to the Board based on meeting criteria
- Board approves or denies recommendation

The mission of the society is to retain accessioned items permanently but periodic review is necessary for the continual care of museum collections. In stewarding city owned collections, no deaccession would be made or action taken without a transparent presentation to and the direct consultation and written approval by appropriate city representatives including the Mayor, designated preservation officer, or the HPC.

4.4b Recent Programming Experience

We Will Always Be Here: WI's LGBTQ+ Historymakers

This exhibit from the WI Historical Society was enhanced with items donated by former Main Club owner Bob Jansen, they helped create a new specialized permanent collection at the museum.



We Stand on Their Shoulders: A History of WI Women and Voting

This exhibit for women's history month from the WI Historical Society was enhanced with a visit from the Douglas County League of Women Voters and local displays on impressive women of Superior's past.

Roosevelt Home Tours

This program, coordinated by local student and Superior Public Museums employee Callie Augesen, offered tours through three National Register Homes in Superior built by James Roosevelt in 1890. The event quickly sold out.



Living Cemetery Walk at Greenwood

Northern Spotlight Theater partnered with the society to offer walking tours of Greenwood with actors portraying notable deceased residents of Superior's past.

4.4b Recent Programming Experience

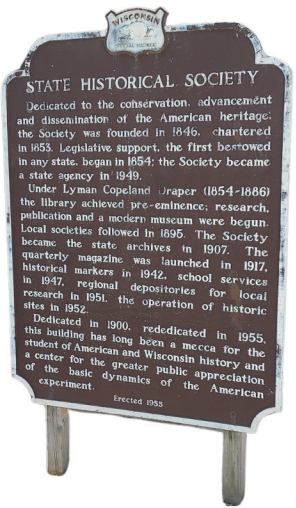
City of Superior

- The society hosted the 2024 State of the City Address.
- The society is archiving materials from the city clerk and tourism commission for the archives.
- The Society is digitizing the Superior Public Library's card catalog for research with easily searchable pdfs.
- The Mayor's office features, on loan from the society, a Webster Factory (Superior) chair set with table that used to belong to County Commissioner Doug Finn.
- The society supports economic development efforts with collaboration for Historic Tax Credit projects.



Douglas County

- Douglas County partners with the society to offer additional display space at the courthouse.
- The society helped plan and host Leadership Superior Douglas County's History Day.



State of Wisconsin

- The society attends history conferences including the 2023 and 2022 State Historical Society Conferences.
- The society met with the state society leadership while attending Superior Days in early 2024.
- Local liaison Janet Seymour works with the society as a link for state resources.

4.4b Recent Programming Experience

Theater and Live Music



DOUGLAS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY PRESENTS

CHAMPAGNE SERENADE

A NOSTALGIC THEATRICAL JOURNEY BACK TO MIDCENTURY TELEVISION VARIETY SHOWS!

LIVE MUSIC - COMEDY - DANCE!

\$15 A TICKET OCT 25TH, 26TH, AND 27TH

SPECIAL GUESTS:
STEVEN SOLKELLA, THE MAXI CHILD'S TRIO, JEREMY LEPAK, AND OTHER LOCAL TALENT!

TICKETS: booeko.com/dchswi | 1101 John Ave, Superior, WI



A DOUGLAS COUNTY CHRISTMAS WITH STEVE SOLKELA

THE "OVERPOPULATED" ONE MAN BAND

Saturday 12/21
Sunday 12/22

ho ho ho, buttercup!

2pm both days!

Skits! Music! Comedy! SHENANIGANS!

\$15 - Adults
\$5 - 12 & under

Douglas County Historical Society
1101 John Ave
Superior, WI 54880
715-392-8449
booeko.com/dchswi



2025 Society Programming

Edmund Fitzgerald

The 50th anniversary of the loss is approaching, and the society is already acting as a partner for the new state historical society marker sign that will be on Barker's Island and acting as the fundraising fiscal agent for the Friends of the Fitz group of volunteers. The next item is a step towards doing more regional collaboration:



Regional Museums

A Twin Ports Regional Museums coalition coffee talk is planned for January or February to bring in museums and archive professional from the area to see how we can better coordinate around exhibits and events scheduling.

Virtual Tours

The society is already working with a private vendor to experiment with virtual tour tech. Although the Vasa Temple already has an elevator which helps with mobility issues, some residents can more easily access exhibits and archives online. This also make things more accessible to those with time conflicts.

History Sunday

History Sunday is in development to return with history related authors, historians, & local tours.



Androy Hotel

2025 marks the 100th anniversary of the Androy Hotel in Superior. This 1925 landmark is an essential part of the city's history, downtown skyline, and tourism community. The society is in the early stages of planning to recognize this important building as it turns 100.

2025 Society Programming

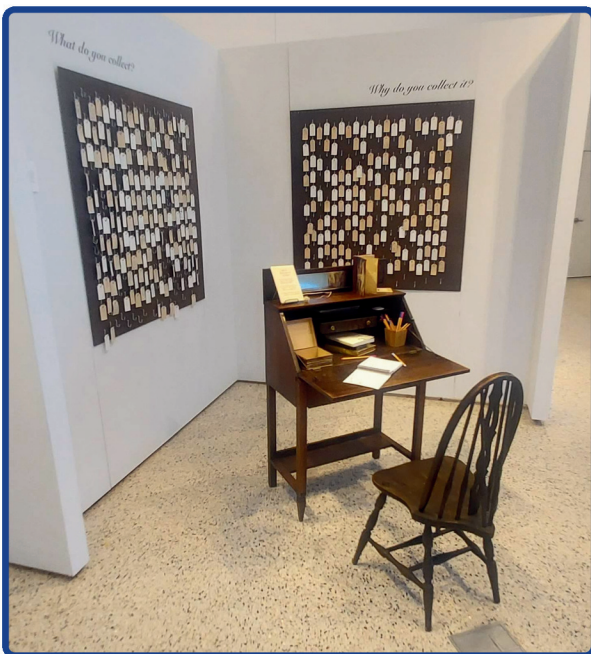
Public Art Grant for Mural

The Palace Theater Mural located on the back of the Vasa Temple, one of the largest murals in the region, is in need of restoration. The society is working on finding qualified artists to complete this delicate work before re-applying for a Superior Public Art Grant.



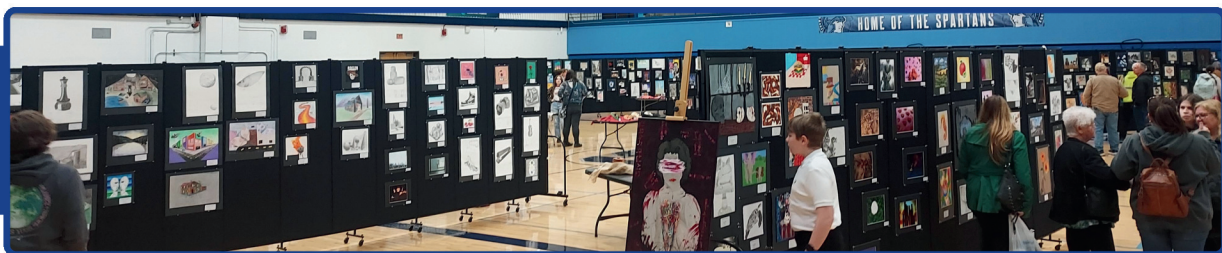
(Re)Collect

The society is proud to be partnering with regional artist Susanna Gaunt who will install a modified version of an exhibit that focuses on collections this Spring. This large modern art installation will feature interactive elements and ask attendees to think critically about what they collect and why. Susanna will also help facilitate a free community workshop about collecting and how that looks within the context of a local museum. Community feedback will help guide our new collections policy and help us determine what items we may be missing from our accessions now to tell diverse local stories in the future.



Superior High School

The society is interested in having a history-themed art contest as part of the Superior High School's art department's end of the year exhibition. Potentially, students could choose to enter a piece and a society panel would choose a winner whose piece would be purchased from the student for the society's permanent collection or the student could receive a scholarship. This would help support and encourage artists while helping further build the museum's collection of local art. The society also wants to improve relationships to bring history exhibits and speakers into the Superior School District spaces for students.



2025 Society Programming

NAGPRA

The society, like many other small museums is working on a full review of items in the collection previously belonging to Native Americans. While this process has already occurred in the past, updates to NAGPRA have created new guidelines for museums to follow. The society has already hosted the Tribal Preservation Officer from the Fond Du Lac Band and will work with them to study each item and determine acceptable use. The society is committed to doing this project with a spirit of collaboration and respect. Our hope is that this will lead to new connections for the society and experts we may hire to help us tell the stories of the Ojibwe people that lived in this region and other pre-European area residents in new exhibits.



The concept for the new Wisconsin Historical Society

WI Historical Society

The Wisconsin Historical Society is in the process of building a new state history center. During the construction period, more display items will be out for tours around the state and the society is partnering to bring these resources to residents in Superior in 2025. Exact details are still in development (meeting this week), but should be ready for public release early in the year.

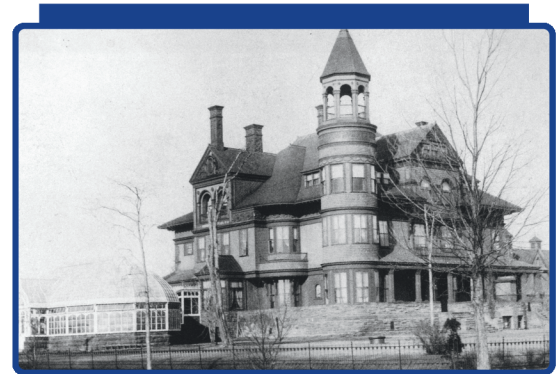
Potential Programming

Splitting the society from the city at the turn of the century caused operational challenges for both organizations by creating separate collection locations and lessening resources for both the city and the society. While the city owns the historic sites and the objects within, the society also owns objects and has the archive that helps tell the stories of these significant local landmarks as well as the telling of other diverse local stories.

It is not the goal of the society to undo the work of the current museum workers at the sites, but to enhance their current activities and programming with a skilled and engaged board to increase the effectiveness of programming goals. The society also recognizes the community love for existing events like the annual ice cream social and the holiday sampler (two events that DCHS started during the society's time at Fairlawn).

Accessibility

New initiatives following the hiring of an executive director could be premium tour options and developing a facilities plan to better use spaces for additional exhibits and address accessibility issues. The society is also already working with a private sector partner to offer 3D virtual tours to increase access for people with mobility issues. This could be groundbreaking for the city-owned sites, none of which currently offer accessibility to any above ground floors or spaces. Professional videography should also be explored with grant resources to develop more easily shared information media. Working with the Commission on Disabilities, the board would also like to develop small models and other “touchable” resources for the visually-impaired and tactile learners. The society is also already working to make research materials available online for the public. With the city’s permission, each of these museums have significant opportunities for online exhibits as well.



Fairlawn: part of the popular David Barry Photography exhibit

Fairlawn and The Children’s Home

While the Pattison family restored sections of the museum provide a significant interest and draw, an untapped additional resource is the stories of what became of the children who grew up in the home during its years after the Pattison Family. The children who lived in the home were diverse and led many different lives, allowing the museum to tap into other topic such as, did some of children serve during WWII or Vietnam. Did some become area business leaders? Serve as area teachers? And what was the social context for so many children in need of the Superior Children’s Home? And in a more expansive way, you can tap into exhibits like “Early Children's Toys”, “Children’s Literature of the Early 1900s”, “Schools of Superior” (the society’s Pattison School display board is already up on Fairlawn’s third floor, on a no-cost loan) and as the new curator moves through the collection, staff will have many more ideas to add to the potential projects list.

Old Firehall & Police Museum

This museum is currently underutilized and programming could be expanded to include significantly more interactive features, like trying on gear and lifting equipment. For displays designed for multiple ages, the exhibit could walk through the work life of firefighters through the decades, the creation of public fire fighting departments, the relation to labor history in WI and the United States, and exhibits could talk about fire fighting strategies through the years. Dave Johnson, local retired firefighter, has also presented on local fires at the Vasa Temple and his displays could add a layer of excitement and engagement.

Similar opportunities exist for the police sections as well in regards to law enforcement history, gear exploration, labor history and how a modern police department is organized. Examining the social contexts for which police operate throughout difficult cultural and political environments could allow displays to touch on other community issues and stories. Anonymous police and fire surveys could allow the public to start collecting data over time about these large city departments and changes in operation. It is absolutely essential that this museum have an active advisory board to help guide new exhibits and programming, a large component being current and former department members.



A Fairlawn photo, part of the popular David Barry Photography exhibit



SS Meteor & Maritime Museum

While the current management has deaccessioned significant maritime items owned by the city, the society would work to build stronger connections to the WI State Historical Society and their desire to create a shipwrecks museum, research center, and scuba expedition launching center. Coordination with the St Louis River Estuary and other local groups is also vital.

The Meteor currently faces decades of deferred maintenance and a facility study in coordination with Superior's Facilities Manager should help determine how the ship can be stabilized for long term preservation, how to deal with hazardous conditions on the ship such as lead paint, asbestos, and exposed oil, and how to make the ship safer for visitors including narrow steep stairs and trip and fall hazards through raised threshold doorways.

Partnering with the existing spring work weekend crew, the maritime museums in Duluth and Manitowoc should help provide insight into this specialized museum environment. The society does have items related to local maritime history that can enhance the items that the city already owns and tell broader stories of Superior's harbor history.



4.4 The Proposal Overview

Organization

- The society signs a one-year contract for management with the City of Superior
- The society assumes management of Fairlawn, SS Meteor, Old Firehouse & Police Museum, as well as continues to manage their current Vasa Temple facility.
- The historic museum suite will operate under the existing DCHS 501(c)(3) designation/EIN.
- The society proposes filing a “Doing Business As” to publicly operate as “Superior Douglas County Historical Society” OR “Superior Area Historical Society” upon signing a contract with the City of Superior. The exact operating name may be agreed upon by the city and the society and designated within the contract.

Board Composition

- The Board of Directors will be reduced from a limit of 15 members to 13 members consisting of:
 - eight members selected by the society membership (currently 13)
 - one by the county (existing)
 - four selected by the city (currently one)
- These four appointed members (at the discretion of the city) could include:
 - a city council representative
 - buildings and grounds manager
 - the finance director
 - an HPC designee that could help with advocating for stories that reflect our diverse community.
- Other possible appointment options could include a public librarian or clerk’s office representative. These four positions would give the city a stronger overview of operations and monthly professional insight into the maintenance of the city-owned assets as well as a direct tie back into city operations, This also recognizes that the society’s independently owned collection, donated over the last hundred years, and its property should be protected from future political unknowns. An eight to five (including the county) composition maintains this delicate balance of oversight and protecting private and public historic resources for their separate owners.

Staffing

- An executive director will be recruited and hired through a public process to oversee the operations of the facilities, programming, and staff. The city is encouraged to participate in the hiring process of this key position. No government appointed liaisons to the society board are eligible to apply or accept employment.
- The new executive director will oversee the hiring process for a curator / collections manager.
- All existing museum employees will retain employment at or above their current wages and will earn sick and safe time. Full time staff will get health insurance assistance.
- The Executive Director will allow the organization to create internship opportunities to supplement the team.

Finances

- The society is requesting a contract in the amount of \$205,000 which includes a much needed increase for wages (the current base wage of \$11 an hour is unacceptable) and some benefits (next page).
- Any existing funding from the three museums will be dedicated solely to City-owned assets (Fairlawn Mansion, Fire Museum & Meteor) as it was intended.
- Funds will be used for operational expenses laid out in the contract. No city funds in this contract will be used for Vasa Temple facility improvements, or be applied to the society’s endowment fund without specific advance written approval of the city.
- The City of Superior and the society each retain total ownership of their existing respective assets.

Project Approach

Running a successful business is a lot of work, and like a three-legged stool, no business is successful without balancing the needs of the owner, the needs of its employees, and the needs of its customers. The society has several local business founders and owners on the board that have the experience to help make the museums more successful and more sustainable for the long term.

For the Visitors

- Increased resident access with free weekly basic admission for city residents
- Increased coordination with the tourism development commission and marketing
- Broader stories that reflect more of Superior's history, both in facing challenges and rising to successes. (The Communities of Color Commission and the Commission on Disabilities would be important partners)
- More exhibit space at Fairlawn and the Meteor. Some of the current office and storage uses can be moved to the Vasa Temple, freeing up rooms for new changing exhibits and enhanced tour options.



For the Staff

- Optimize all staff placement by matching employees with updated job descriptions
- Collaborate on personalized and specialized professional development plans.
- Create a positive staff environment with an active board that engages and supports staff activities
- Executive Director support from a board with significant history, museum, collections, and management experience.
- More competitive wages including a significant increase for the base pay (currently \$11 an hour).
- Earned sick and safe time, already offered to society employees
- Funds for healthcare plans for full-time staff.

For the City

- Better Preservation: professional collections management support, regular building maintenance and capital improvement plans, with an experienced facilities committee and preservation experts that can partner with the city's Buildings & Grounds Manager
- Better Partnership: A stronger partnership to include appointment of 1/3rd of the board seats, and flexibility to partner on other projects like digitization of city records (Clerk's Office), research for property registries (Economic Development Historic Tax Credits), and coordination with the HPC & Superior Public Library.
- Stronger Fiscal Management:
 - Better cash flow management: large sums of cash not depreciating in a savings account
 - Stronger board leadership and involvement on fundraisers that bring in real financial support
 - A new combined sustaining membership program to help build a consistent volunteer support system and help facilitate stronger direct financial support by the community.
 - A strong track record with grant writing and project management.

Opportunity Areas and Solutions through City / Society Synergy

Opportunity: City owned museums have minimal formal collections storage; nearly all of it is not climate or humidity controlled well, and pests have been a problem.

Solution: The society has climate-controlled storage with brand new mini-splits, complete back-up heating and cooling systems, and humidity monitoring and control. The society is working with Belknap Heating & Cooling on developing additional mechanical automation.

Opportunity: The society has limited exhibit space that also functions as meeting and event space.

Solution: All three city-owned sites have abundant potential exhibit space being used for storage and offices.

Opportunity: The society's physical location is more difficult to find with limited parking.

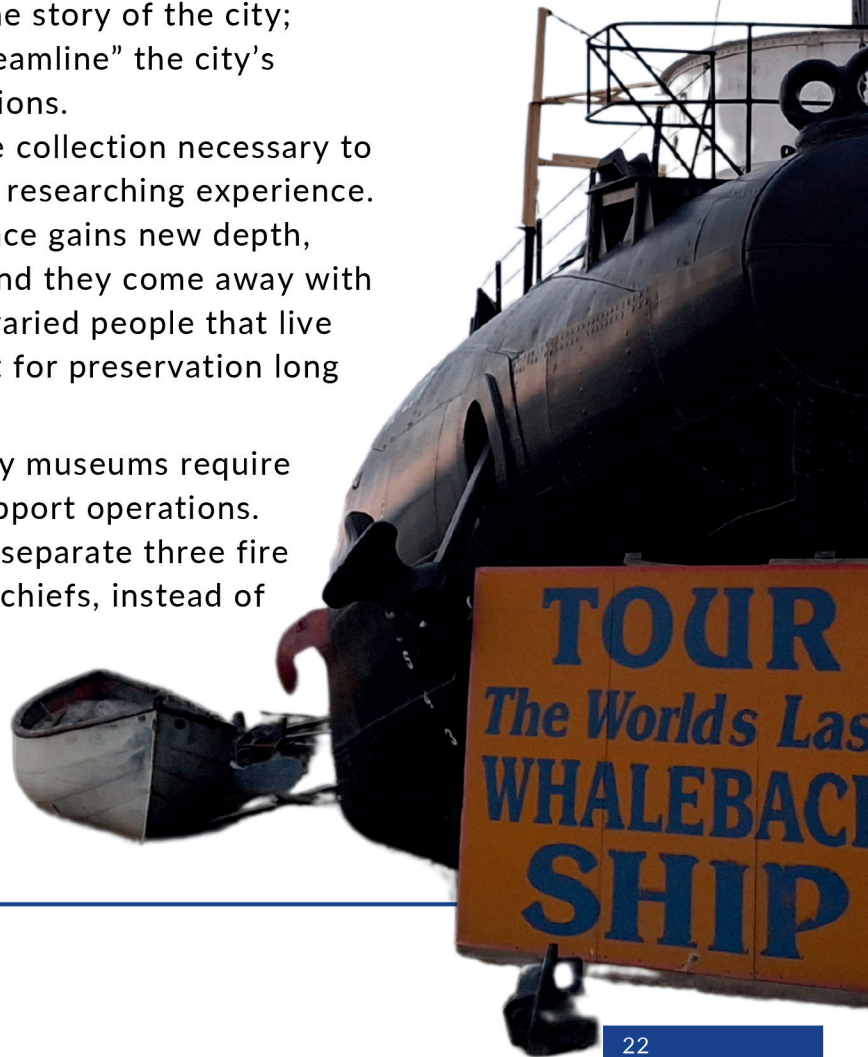
Solution: Fairlawn and the Meteor are located on a highly trafficked & visible corridor with ample parking.

Opportunity: City-owned museum system lacks the collection and archive necessary to comprehensively tell the story of the city; current management has been proud to "streamline" the city's collection without city approval of deaccessions.

Solution: The society owns a comprehensive collection necessary to tell the whole story of the city and in-house researching experience. When visitors relate to history; the experience gains new depth, visitors learn through others' experiences, and they come away with a deeper appreciation for Superior and the varied people that live and have lived here. This also builds support for preservation long term.

Opportunity: Separately, the society and city museums require a redundant minimum level of staffing to support operations. The current system is comparable to having separate three fire departments in the city run by separate fire chiefs, instead of one combined system.

Solution: A common leadership team ensures operations are scalable. (example: newsletters, maintenance, marketing, exhibits, grant writing, etc.)



Opportunity: The city currently pays a higher contribution percentage toward operating costs at city museums. Because current city-owned facility fund development efforts are driven by paid staff labor, current fundraising efforts are not generating meaningful revenue. According to the most recent report included in the RFP, “Fundraising Income (Net): \$1,667 (Rev: \$16,030 Exp: \$14,363) Consisting of 9 Events”.

Solution: The society flips this model over by having board-driven and managed fundraisers and activities so staff can focus on daily operating fundamentals. The society’s active board is diverse and robust, bringing financial acumen that supports operational expenses by generating real financial resources for the organization.

Opportunity: Future growth of either entity requires physical building construction or acquisition to meet needs (storage, offices for city and exhibit space for the society)

Solution: Optimizing use of each entity’s building assets postpones the need for future construction or acquisition

Opportunity: The city museums and the society are both in current need of executive directors and professional staff collections management.

Solution: A common leadership team reduces this need by half. Professional curation of the collection enhances accessibility to the public and preserves the resources for the future.

Opportunity: Both City Museums and DCHS are competing for the same resources (people, financial, etc.)

Solution: A common management team and staff creates a strategy centered on organizational mission and cooperation to achieve the mission, not competition. Business sponsors, individual members, grantors, and the general public all benefit.

Opportunity: Strategic planning is completed without regard for each entity’s separate needs.

Solution: A common leadership team optimizes the strategic planning process through mutually beneficial solutions
A common leadership team removes competition for members, event audience, fundraising, grants, etc.

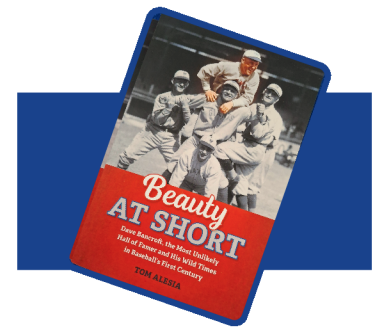
4.4e Earned Income

Admissions

In order to better meet it's mission, the society switched the Vasa Temple to a no admission fee model because a person's financial status should not prevent access to our community's history. Our visitors agreed, and optional donations quickly exceeded the previous earned income from admissions while creating a more welcoming culture and shared dedication to being a mission driven organization. To this end, the major history educational events were also public receptions offered to the community without charge or donation expectation including the traveling Wisconsin Historical Society Exhibits and the Annual Meeting. Roosevelt Home Tours were a paid fundraiser, but tickets were also offered for no charge (with no explanation needed) to those who wished to attend.

Gift Shop

Gift shop revenue is limited, under \$2000, but expanding. The society has focused on other sources and hopes to expand shop offerings in the near future, although website sales have helped move books by local authors especially.



Great Hall Rentals

The society rents space for a variety of events. The rental fee is reasonable and the society often sells concessions at events. 2024 income to date for these events is about \$9,000.

- Live theater
- Music & Piano Recitals
- Craft Shows
- the 1959 Class Reunion (pictured)
- Douglas County Genealogy Club

Research Requests

The society provides basic searches for walk in visitors without charge, but does suggest a fee based on the time it takes staff for more significant projects. Many local businesses also purchase digital copies of historic images for their customer facing areas.



4.4f Previous Fundraising

History Classic Golf Tournament

The society board now has two successful years of the golf tournament under it's belt. The 2024 tournament, run mostly by board efforts pulled in \$16,950. As we continue to search for process improvements, this second year was substantially less work and generated better revenue than the first year. The 2025 tournament is scheduled.



Memberships

The society is made up of members from Superior and across the country. Former Superior residents often belong to the society to support historic preservation of the community and to support efforts to tell stories of their proud hometown. Membership income this year so far is just over \$7000. The society is nearly completed with a membership comp study and a new rates proposal to increase this line item in 2025.



The Psychograph

Individual Donations

Donations from other individuals outside the membership program so far this year are at \$11,372.40. This amount includes donations from boxes in the Vasa Temple that offset our no cost admissions policy for that space. It is our goal to sustain these donations in 2025 while also increasing revenue from other diverse sources.
(see the next page)

Make Music Day

The society was pleased to be able to support their downtown neighbors and Leadership Superior Douglas County by stepping in to serve beer and other cold beverages at Make Music Day at The Lot in place of Earth Rider, which due to permit process changes, was unable to participate. The event was fun and a good revenue source for the society.



4.4g Experience with other Revenue

In order to successfully run an organization with the scope like the society, diversification of revenue is absolutely critical. And while offering memberships and selling things in the giftshop have real value towards building a shared ownership in the mission, these other revenue areas have been a major focus of the staff and leadership to build in long term sustainability for the next 150 years of Superior history work.

Investment Funds

The society has a local brokerage account, invested in a broad range of conservative funds. While this account had been tapped in the past, the current board has focused on building this resource for long term growth and no withdrawals have occurred in 2024. The account has taken in nearly \$20,000 in 2024 in gains, roughly equal to the support granted by the city in the same year. From another viewpoint, Superior Public Museums has sat on a checking/savings balance of over \$300,000 which if invested in FCIC insured CD's would have returned roughly the society's entire allocation by the city this year alone with no risk.

Grants

The society now has several experienced grant writers and is working on managing a series of successfully grant funded projects as well as developing proposals for the Superior Public Art Commission (page 16), and a new proposal for the National Endowment for the Humanities. The society's work in this area could be greatly expanded with the assistance of an Executive Director to implement and track project progress on a daily basis.

Pattison Trust

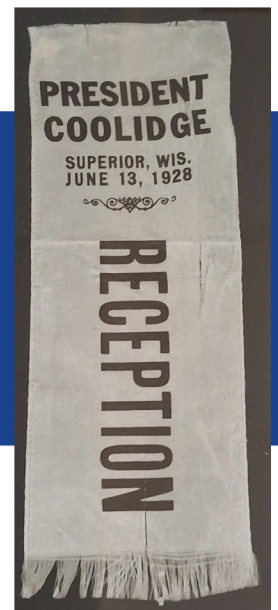
A gift of the family, the society is one of the largest share holders in the trust which holds a small cash balance and land holdings in Minnesota's Iron Range and in Canada. These sites were selected based on timber and mining rights and the society does not have active management responsibilities. Recently, a land sale approved by trust members netted the society nearly \$30,000 which is temporarily in a CD earning just over 5%. These funds have been mostly dedicated by the board for the next project, the creation of an endowment.

Endowment

Part of preservation work is understanding the long game and sustainability. The society has been researching and interviewing potential endowment management partners to create a new way to sustain this work into the future. None of us can predict future government spending, a drop off in donations, or other potential disasters, but creating this fund will help the organization have a backup plan that can eventually use some of the annual appreciation to come back as sustainable financial support. The society has narrowed management partners to either the Wisconsin Historical Society Foundation or The Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation, each with unique benefits. A community match challenge will be issued to kickoff the fund in 2025, with the board offering to match the community's goal of \$25,000 to start the fund at a total balance of \$50,000.

Financial Projections

INCOME:	2025	2026	2027
Grants & Hotel Tax	\$ 260,237	\$ 265,871	\$ 272,633
Admissions & Memberships	\$ 97,155	\$ 107,245	\$ 118,495
Museum Store (Net of CoGS)	\$ 11,806	\$ 14,167	\$ 15,584
Fundraising & Events	\$ 21,123	\$ 23,599	\$ 26,668
Investment Income *NEW*	\$ 10,846	\$ 8,846	\$ 4,846
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 401,166	\$ 419,729	\$ 438,225
EXPENSES:			
Wages & PR Taxes	\$ 233,156	\$ 240,151	\$ 247,355
Professional Staff Benefits *NEW*	\$ 24,000	\$ 25,200	\$ 26,400
Operating & Occupancy Expenses	\$ 104,975	\$ 105,314	\$ 106,832
Depreciation & Amortization	\$ 9,656	\$ 9,656	\$ 9,656
Legal	\$ 8,088	\$ 8,249	\$ 8,414
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 379,875	\$ 388,570	\$ 398,658
NET INCOME	\$ 21,291	\$ 31,159	\$ 39,568



Calvin Coolidge's Summer White House Collection Items

4.4h Maintenance



The society has an experienced facilities committee, with several National Register Home owners and restorers on the board as well as a licensed general contractor, a former property manager, a real estate broker, and property appraiser. The Vasa Temple receives regular maintenance, has a one year-old roof, and new heating and cooling mini-splits that provide redundant service to the building. The society also gratefully hosts volunteers from the Carpenters Union Unit 361 who have helped build shelving and repair floors. The society was very excited to write and receive a nonprofits grant from the city last year; projects underway with those funds include front step masonry, new doors, great hall painting, and basement LED lighting upgrades to cut electricity usage and better protect the collection from UV damage.

The society is ready to review the city owned museums' condition in cooperation with the city's new facilities manager and create a comprehensive program for long-term stability, restoration, and preservation of the city-owned historic landmarks. The society will work in collaboration with the city's Heritage Preservation Committee for all relevant project work.



**Pictures from the
SS Meteor Museum**

4.5 Subcontractors Listing

7. Subcontractors Listing (Must be submitted with proposal.) Museum Management and Operating Services

The undersigned agrees to employ the following listed subcontractors for the following enumerated classes of work and not to alter or add to such list without the written consent of the City of Superior, WI. Use separate sheet as necessary.

SUBCONTRACTOR CLASS OF WORK

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

Not Applicable, DCHS will not use subcontractors

Submitted by: COMPANY

ADDRESS _____
COMPANY REPRESENTATIVE



**Three Views of Knutsen Brothers Shipbuilding.
C. Roy McLean 1956**

4.6 Statement of Qualifications Reference Form

Indemnify and Hold Harmless:

Douglas County Historical Society (DCHS) agrees to indemnify and hold harmless these stated references from any and all third party claims by the Douglas County Historical Society, which may arise out of and in the course of their statements, written or verbal, as a reference in this process.

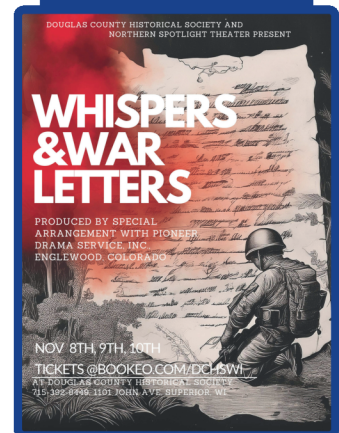
9. Statement of Qualifications Reference Form

Applicant Firm Name: Douglas County Historical Society
Contact Person: Jon Winter, Business Manager
Address: 1101 John Ave
City, State, and Zip Code: Superior, WI 54880
Telephone: 715-392-8449

Reference #1 mark.hubbard@empireblockllc.com
Owner or Company Name: Empire Block LLC
Contact Person: Mark Hubbard
Type of Service(s) Provided: Tax Credits for Empire Block Restoration
Calendar Year(s) of Service(s) Provided: 2017-2018
City, State, and Zip Code: Superior WI 54880
Telephone: 715-395-0706 or 218-393-9785

Reference #2 Janet.Seymour@wisconsinhistory.org
Owner or Company Name: Wisconsin Historical Society
Contact Person: Janet Seymour
Type of Service(s) Provided: Advisor / Liaison to DCHS
Calendar Year(s) of Service(s) Provided: Many Years-Current
City, State, and Zip Code: Eau Claire WI 54701
Telephone: 715-836-2250

Reference #3 northernspotlighttheater@gmail.com
Owner or Company Name: Northern Spotlight Theater
Contact Person: Miranda Stachowicz
Type of Service(s) Provided: Production Partner for Plays, Cemetery Walk.
Calendar Year(s) of Service(s) Provided: 2022-Current
City, State, and Zip Code: _____
Telephone: 360-359-3816



4.7 Statement of Examination

Douglas County Historical Society (Proposer) has made an examination, investigation, and research to the best of their ability regarding the method of doing the work, all conditions affecting the work to be done, the labor, equipment and materials, and the quantity of the work to be performed. The Proposer agrees that it has satisfied itself by Proposer's own investigation and research regarding all of such conditions, and that Proposer's conclusion to enter into the Service Agreement and based upon such investigation and research, and that Proposer shall make no claim against the City because of any of the estimates, statements or interpretations made by any officer or agent of the City which may prove to be erroneous in any respect.



Hester Grant – Citizen of the Old East End

Hester came to Superior in the fall of 1858. She was described as a woman of much intelligence and considerable culture. She was born in Geneva, New York about 1822. Her parents were considered "well-off" and well-educated. Her father, Aaron Lucius, was a minister and owned several pieces of property in New York.

Hester received her early education in the public schools of Geneva and claims the distinction of being the first black girl to have been admitted to the well known Chapin Seminary. It was reported to have caused a sensation among some of the wealthier classes. The president of the seminary announced that she was there to stay and if any of the parents had an objection, "they were at liberty to withdraw their children". She graduated after three years with some of the highest standings.

Hester learned to play the piano, violin, and banjo. She was also an accomplished vocalist. An early part of her life was spent with a traveling vaudeville group. Another part of her early education was in nursing. During her time in Superior, her nursing skills were highly regarded. She was often called upon to care for individuals in their homes and often took on the most dire cases.

During most of her time in Superior, she lived on what is now East 4th Street between 22nd Avenue East and Stinson Avenue. She would often sit in her home with a window open and sing for her own enjoyment and the enjoyment of whoever happened to be passing by on the street.

Hester was not known to drink hard spirits; however, she was known to have her growler filled with beer. The photo at the right shows Hester carrying her little tin pail growler.



Hester's home was described as having many doors leading to small rooms and a great number of windows. Many of the rooms were filled with shelves of books and newspapers. Hester loved to read and was known for her knowledge of early Superior history. She also spoke several languages including French, German, and Ojibwe.

Late in life Hester, fell on hard times; however, it did not seem to trouble her. She was quoted in the newspaper as "I came to Superior with hardly a cent, and I guess I shall die without a cent...I had full and plenty, but now it is all gone. But what do I care? People cannot take their wealth with them into the grave and if they could it would do them no good."

From the 2024
Women's
History Month
Display

Addendum Acknowledgement

Organization

8. **Addenda Acknowledgement** (Must be submitted with Proposal)

Museum Management and Operating Services

I/we hereby acknowledge receipt of the following addenda(s):

Addendum No. 1 Dated Dec 11, 2024
Addendum No. _____ Dated _____
Addendum No. _____ Dated _____
Addendum No. _____ Dated _____

I/we further certify that no agreement has been entered into to prevent competition for said work and that I/we carefully examined the site where the work is to take place, and the plans, specifications, form of contract and all other contract documents.

I/we further agree to enter into the contract, as provided in the contract documents, under all the terms, conditions and requirements of those documents.

* If no addenda were issued, the consultant/firm shall so indicate and sign this document.

Douglas County Historical Society
Company

[Signature]
Representative Signature

Nonprofit Status

EIN: 23-7396460

The Douglas County Historical Society is a registered 501(c)(3) Organization.

Address any reply to: Federal Building and U. S. Court House, 316 North Robert Street, St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

Department of the Treasury

*File under Tax Exempt with
Wis. no.*

SEP 28 1974

District Director

Internal Revenue Service



Date: *Mrs. Labey*
612-725-7344
September 24, 1974 *StP:EO:74-1096:DBL:pg*

Douglas County Historical Society, Inc.
900 East Second Street
Superior, Wisconsin 54880

Accounting Period Ending: March 31
Purpose: Educational

Gentlemen:

Based on information supplied, and assuming your operations will be as stated in your application for recognition of exemption, we have determined you are exempt from Federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

We have further determined you are not a private foundation within the meaning of section 509(a) of the Code, because you are an organization described in section 509(a)(1) and 170(b)(1)(A)(vi).

You are not liable for social security (FICA) taxes unless you file a waiver of exemption certificate as provided in the Federal Insurance Contributions Act. You are not liable for the taxes imposed under the Federal Unemployment Tax Act (FUTA).

Since you are not a private foundation, you are not subject to the excise taxes under Chapter 42 of the Code. However, you are not automatically exempt from other Federal excise taxes.

Donors may deduct contributions to you as provided in section 170 of the Code. Bequests, legacies, devises, transfers, or gifts to you or for your use are deductible for Federal estate and gift tax purposes under sections 2055, 2106, and 2522 of the Code.

If your purposes, character, or method of operation is changed, you must let us know so we can consider the effect of the change on your exempt status. Also, you must inform us of all changes in your name or address.

If your gross receipts each year are normally more than \$5,000, you are required to file Form 990, Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax, by the 15th day of the fifth month after the end of your annual accounting period. The law imposes a penalty of \$10 a day, up to a maximum of \$5,000, for failure to file a return on time.

You are not required to file Federal income tax returns unless you are subject to the tax on unrelated business income under section 511 of the Code. If you are subject to this tax, you must file an income tax return on Form 990-T. In this letter we are not determining whether any of your present or proposed activities are unrelated trade or business as defined in section 513 of the Code.

You need an employer identification number even if you have no employees. If an employer identification number was not entered on your application, a number will be assigned to you and you will be advised of it. Please use that number on all returns you file and in all correspondence with the Internal Revenue Service.

Please keep this determination letter in your permanent records.

Sincerely yours,

C. D. Switzer
C. D. Switzer
District Director

Form L-178 (Rev. 7-71)



**DOUGLAS
COUNTY
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**

**1101 John Ave
Superior WI 54880**

www.douglashistory.org

dchs@douglashistory.org

715-392-8449



Old Firehouse and Police Museum, Dec 2024