



Accredited by the American Alliance of Museums

Only 3.3% of the nation's 33,000 museums are accredited

The McLean County Museum of History is an independent 501(c)3 nonprofit dedicated to...

**PRESERVING,
EDUCATING,
& COLLABORATING**

in sharing the diverse stories of the people of McLean County.

We are **YOUR MUSEUM**, preserving and sharing **YOUR HISTORY**, with award winning exhibits and educational programs for all ages.

THE MUSEUM BY THE NUMBERS

- Serves **40,000+** people annually
- Preserves over **18,000** objects, **15,000** rare books on local history, and over **2,000** linear feet of archival documents
- Features **9** award-winning exhibit galleries
- Operates with over **70%** private funding from individual donors
- Ranks among the top **3%** of museums nationwide which are accredited
- Hosts over **100** free programs annually

Our mission is timeless! Since 1892 we have been educating and collaborating with the community to preserve and share the diverse history of the people of McLean County. Located on the Museum Square in downtown Bloomington, **we rely on the generosity of the community to support our work and free programming.** Seventy percent of our operating budget comes from private donations, including contributions, sponsorships, and memberships from our business community.

We serve over 40,000 patrons annually with guests from 48 U.S. states and countries abroad. We will be celebrating America 250 and the Centennial of Route 66 with special programming throughout 2026. In July we will open a new exhibit exploring history through the lens of sport – *More Than a Game: A Community History of Baseball & Softball.*

We appreciate your consideration for funding support this year and welcome the opportunity to discuss the details. To maintain the services of a nationally accredited museum we need the help of the business community. We are Your Museum, preserving and sharing Your History. **We invite you to contact us to schedule a personal behind the scenes tour of the Museum.**

Julie Emig

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Norris Porter

Director of Development
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501c3

Annual Report: bit.ly/MCMH_AR

McLean County Museum of History, 200 North Main Street, Bloomington, Illinois 61701
Voice: 309-827-0428 * Fax 309-827-0100 * www.mchistory.org





2025
by the
NUMBERS



14,000
Social Media
Followers



60,000
Visitors



730
Members



20,089
Program
Participants



\$1,840,000
Estimated
Economic Impact



Invest in Your Museum Preserve Your History

200 N. Main Street
Bloomington, IL 61701

Yes! I would like to support local history and the Museum's free education programs. Choose an individual sponsorship investment or participate in our Corporate Alliance program to bundle sponsorship options for increased benefits. Membership and sponsorship are for a twelve-month period.

Category One: Corporate Museum Membership (FREE Museum entry for any employee and their household)

- \$5,000 – for businesses with 1,000+ employees
- \$2,500 – for businesses with 250 to 999 employees
- \$1,000 – for businesses with under 250 employees

Category Two: History Makers Gala

- \$5,000 Dome; \$2,500 Rotunda; \$1,500 Gallery; \$750 Exhibit

Category Three: Individual Program Sponsorship

- **School Institute Day Camp:** \$1,000 Premium; \$500 Basic
- **Christmas Under the Dome:** \$1,000 Premium; \$500 Basic

Category Four: Title Sponsor Opportunities (highlighted options are already taken)

Exclusive Annual recognition as "Presented by" Sponsor

- **\$2,500 – Gold** (Live Stream Events, Free Tuesdays at the Museum, **Members & Friends Eblasts**, Special Event Speaker Series, **Senior Reminiscence Program**, College Intern Program, School Institute Day Camp, **Christmas Under the Dome**, **Pantagraph Negatives Display**)
- **\$1,500 – Silver** (**Speakers Bureau**, Collection Preservation (artifact supplies), Archival Preservation, **Museum at the Farmer's Market**, Spanish Language Mobile Walking Tour, Looking for Lincoln Mobile Walking Tour, Architecture Mobile Walking Tour, Route 66 Mobile Tour, Rotunda Displays, Museum in the Classroom Loan Kits,)
- **\$1,000 – Bronze** (Local Authors Acquisition Fund, **MCMH Volunteers**, MCMH Public Wi-Fi Splash Page, **School/Youth Field Trips**, Knit-in)

Category Five: Exhibit Sponsorship – More Than a Game: A Community History of Baseball & Softball

- \$10,000 Major Support; \$5,000 Additional Contributions; \$2,000 Special Donations

Corporate Alliance Program (Bundled sponsorship to include multiple events, programs, or title opportunities)

Contact Norris Porter to confirm your sponsorship choices for each level. We will mail an invoice for your payment.

- \$10,000 **Partner** (choose from 2 or more categories above not to exceed \$12,000 value)
- \$5,000 **Colleague** (choose from 2 or more categories above not to exceed \$8,000 value)
- \$3,000 **Ally** (choose from 2 or more categories above not to exceed \$5,000 value)
- \$1,500 **Friend** (choose from 2 or more categories above not to exceed \$2,500 value)
- \$_____ General Gift of any level to the highest priorities of the Museum

Contact Norris Porter, Assistant Executive Director & Development Director for more information and to confirm your level of support – (309) 827-0428 ext. 104, cell (309) 706-9242, development@mchistory.org. Invoices will be sent electronically for payment and to confirm details.



Sponsorable and Presented by Opportunities

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Sponsor Opportunities are for a Twelve-month Period of Time

Special Event/Activity Sponsorship

History Makers Gala

Annual gala event honoring History Makers from within our community. These are individuals who have dedicated their lives to the betterment of their neighbors and McLean County as a whole. Over 450 people gather to celebrate, enjoy cocktails and a delicious dinner, and experience professional video montages highlighting the impact of our History Makers. **The event will be held on the evening of June 17, 2026, in the Brown Ballroom on the campus of Illinois State University.** The audience for this event is educated, affluent, and deeply involved in making our local area a better place to live and work. The 2025 Class of History Makers will be announced on April 1st. Sponsor levels include: \$5,000, \$2,500, \$1,500, and \$750 levels. \$1,500 - \$5,000 include 8-person table along with other recognition perks, while the \$750 level includes 4 seats for a half-table. Contact development@mchistory.org for additional information.

OnTheSquare Museum Magazine

The Museum magazine is published three times annually in the summer, winter, and spring. Readership is approximately 1,500 households. The cost is based on the estimated annual expense of production and mailing.

Iconic Livingston Santas (Jeffrey Alans and the Wandell Family)

The Livingston Santas were restored during 2024 and are now put up annually in Bloomington on the Museum Square and in Normal. The Santas are 14 ft. tall and are reminiscent of the popular Rt. 66 muffler men. Sponsorship is currently \$4,000 annually with a multi-year commitment required.

Livingston Santa Reindeer (Ace World Wide Moving)

This sponsorship requires covering the cost and service of delivering the Livingston Santas to and from their storage location.

Senior Reminiscence Program (Bloomington Township & Normal Township)

Brings Museum educators to senior living facilities at no cost to help older adults engage and reconnect with their past. Using authentic objects, photographs, and inquiry-based facilitation, we encourage older adults to recall memories, tell stories, and connect with others through shared history. Annually reaching 1,500 seniors in 25-30 senior living communities. Sponsor recognized on our website and during events.

More Than a Game: A Community History of Baseball & Softball

This new temporary exhibit will be opened in July of 2026 and will remain up for five years. Visitors will explore 150 years of history through the lens of sport. This will be our most multi-sensory exhibit yet. Sponsorship levels include \$30,000 Presented By; \$10,000 Major Support; \$5,000 Additional Contributions; and \$2,000 Special Donations. Additional information available online at bit.ly/sponsor-mtag.



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“Presented by” - Gold Level - \$2,500

Live Stream Events

The live stream sponsor’s logo is included in the viewing design online and a statement is read prior to each event. Streamed videos remain online and are searchable and viewable via the Museum’s YouTube channel.

Pantagraph Negatives Display (The Pantagraph)

The collection contains images donated to the Museum from The Pantagraph, dating from the 1930s through the early 2000s. Hard copy negatives are stored securely within the Museum and digitization of the collection continues through several grants received from IMLS, the Illinois State Library, the Illinois State Archives, Museum Donors, and most recently the National Historical Publications and Records Commission with the National Archives. Currently archivists are digitizing the 1960s. The display of enlarged images is on the third-floor rotunda of the Museum and changes regularly throughout the year.

Free Tuesdays at the Museum

Normal operating hours for the Museum are Monday through Saturday 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. with extended hours until 8:00 p.m. on Tuesday evenings. The Museum charges a nominal admission fee and is free to the Public all day Tuesday. Free Tuesdays are a service to the community. Sponsor support would provide great visibility as Tuesdays are typically a busier day of the week and sponsor recognition would be provided at our entry reception desk and Museum website.

Members & Friends E-blast (LAMAR)

The Museum communicates with 2,500 members and friends over 26 times per year via an electronic email news and updates message. The sponsor would be listed as the “Presented By” sponsor in each message. Our open rate averages 51% with a click rate of 3%. The industry average is 22%.

College Intern Program (MCK CPAs & Advisors)

The Museum hosts on average fifteen interns per academic year. Interns come locally from Illinois State University, Heartland, and Illinois Wesleyan. Occasionally, native McLean County students studying at other Universities will seek internship opportunities during the summer. Interns include those interested in Museum studies, collections, exhibits, library & archives, education, marketing, and design.

School Institute Day Camp

New this year our camp program will be offered throughout the academic year, offered on days when schools are not in session due to teacher institute day training. Topics will change each term with two days of 15 campers offered in the fall and two in the spring. Sponsor levels include \$1,000 and \$500, in addition to the “Presented by” sponsor. “Presented by” sponsor included in all event marketing and during camp.



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Christmas Under the Dome (Cumulus Radio Bloomington)

A festive family celebration Under the Dome at the McLean County Museum of History. Coordinated with the annual Bloomington-Normal Jaycees Christmas Parade. Festivities include music, crafts, performances, and visits with Santa. Annual attendance of approximately 1,500. Sponsor levels include \$1,000 and \$500, in addition to the “Presented by” sponsor. “Presented by” sponsor included in all event marketing.

“Presented by” - Silver Level - \$1,500

Social Justice On-line Walking Tour

On this website you will find stories of events and people in and around Downtown Bloomington, Illinois that illustrate the evolution of our city over time. As people have worked and struggled to build a more caring, just, and equitable society, stories of their experiences unfolded not only nationally, but also in the local community. Our popular walking tour was made available virtually during 2023, allowing visitors to participate virtually, or utilize the online materials to take their own walk via car, bus, walk, or bicycle. Over 1,000 individual users utilized the new offering during the first year. Sponsor included on website and all marketing efforts. Found online at <https://bit.ly/SJWT>.

Looking for Lincoln On-Line Walking Tour

The online mobile audio walking tour or auto tour takes visitors on a journey through Bloomington and Normal exploring the thirteen Looking for Lincoln Wayside Exhibits that share the story of Lincoln and his connection to Bloomington-Normal. A fourteenth exhibit will be added in July and a Downtown Bloomington, docent guided tour, will take place in July, August, and September. The sponsor will be included on the mobile platform page and some social media. Found online at <https://bit.ly/LFL-WT>.

Downtown Bloomington Architecture On-Line Walking Tour

Over time, buildings have been constructed, renovated, destroyed, and replaced... but what remains represents the dense history of the city of Bloomington. Unlock the past in this tour! The sponsor will be included on the mobile platform page and some social media. Found online at <https://bit.ly/DBA-WT>.

McLean County Route 66 Mobile Tour

We will add a Route 66 tour in the spring of 2026 for the Centennial of the “Mother Road.” Learn about the County’s unique connection to Route 66. The sponsor will be included on the mobile platform page and some social media.

Spanish Language Mobile Tour

During 2024 the Museum launched a Spanish Language tour as part of its *Making a Home Gallery*. This initiative was made possible through a grant from Illinois Humanities. Patrons access the interactive web experience via their smartphones. Through a bilingual platform, we hope to build creative interactivity that grows our Latino Audience. Our sponsor will be acknowledged on the audio tour platform.

Speakers Bureau (Anonymous Sponsor)

Thirty-to-sixty-minute presentations by Museum staff or expert volunteers on topics related to McLean County history. From people and culture, to labor, farming, industry, architecture, Abraham Lincoln, and



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more, we offer something of local interest to civic, higher education, and school groups through curated lectures and walking tours. We conduct over 75 of these programs annually. Sponsor recognized on website and in all event marketing.

Collection Preservation

The Museum has 18,000+ objects in its permanent collection. We are a steward of McLean County history—discovering, researching, and sharing the tangible evidence of the past. Maintaining our collection requires materials and supplies to ensure the safe storage and preservation of objects that tell the story of McLean County's rich history. Sponsor recognized on website and at the Museum.

Archival Preservation

Our Stevenson-Ives library and archives houses over two thousand linear feet of historical papers and images and 15,000 rare books. Preservation requires a temperature-controlled environment with limited access to ultraviolet rays. Fragile documents may require encapsulation, and larger maps & posters must be stored flat. Thousands of items are accessioned into our collection each year, with hundreds needing special attention and care for preservation. Sponsor recognized on our website and in the library.

Museum at the Farmer's Market (Illinois Farm Bureau)

The Museum is open during the Farmer's Market and provides its bathroom for public use. We also occasionally host special activities, such as book signings near our entrance on the Museum Square. Sponsor is recognized on the Museum Square and via our social media streams.

Rotunda Displays

The Museum's rotunda spans from our first-floor exhibit galleries 100 feet upward to the artwork adorning the inside top of the dome. Quarterly displays feature historically relevant activities. Displays suspend within the rotunda between the first and second floors and sometimes include floor space physical displays. Sponsor recognized as part of each display throughout the year and in social media.

Museum-in-Classroom Loan Kits

Interactive learning activity kits to enhance classroom curriculum for teachers. Think of a loan kit as a museum in a box. Each thematic kit contains relevant artifacts and reproductions, as well as suggested activities for classroom use. Serving 15 - 30 classrooms annually. Sponsor is recognized on website, within loan kits, and school applications.

Bronze Level - \$1,000

Local Author Acquisition Fund

McLean County has a rich history of local authors who have published everything from sci-fi novels to comic books, and historical fiction to scholarly publications. We maintain the most robust collection of local authors to be found, but do not have dedicated funds each year to purchase new items for the collection. We rely largely on donations. Sponsorship would provide needed funds to accelerate the growth of this collection. Sponsor recognized in the library and in announcements of all new acquisitions.



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Museum Volunteers (Avanti's)

Critical to our ability to achieve our mission are over a hundred volunteers who help in critical operational ways like assisting with reception desk duties and helping patrons in our library – to work on special events like Christmas Under the Dome, work in collections, and special research projects. The vast array of Museum activities would not be possible without gifted volunteers. Support helps our staff make the volunteer experience more enriching and productive. Sponsor recognized online and in volunteer communications.

Public Wi-Fi Splash Page

The Museum offers free wi-fi for visitors to the Museum. Our cost for all things technology exceeds \$100,000 annually and sponsorship for the wi-fi page would allow for a sponsor logo to appear that visitors would see as they access their wi-fi connection.

Fieldtrips and Onsite Tours/Programs (Anonymous Sponsor)

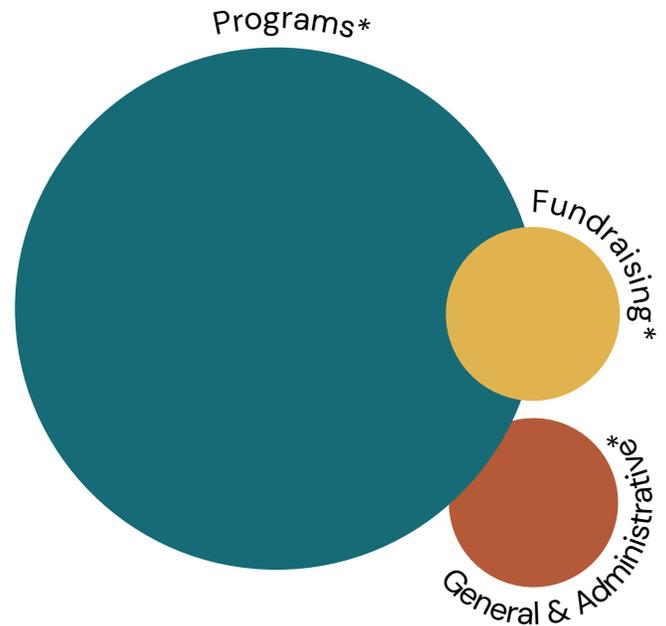
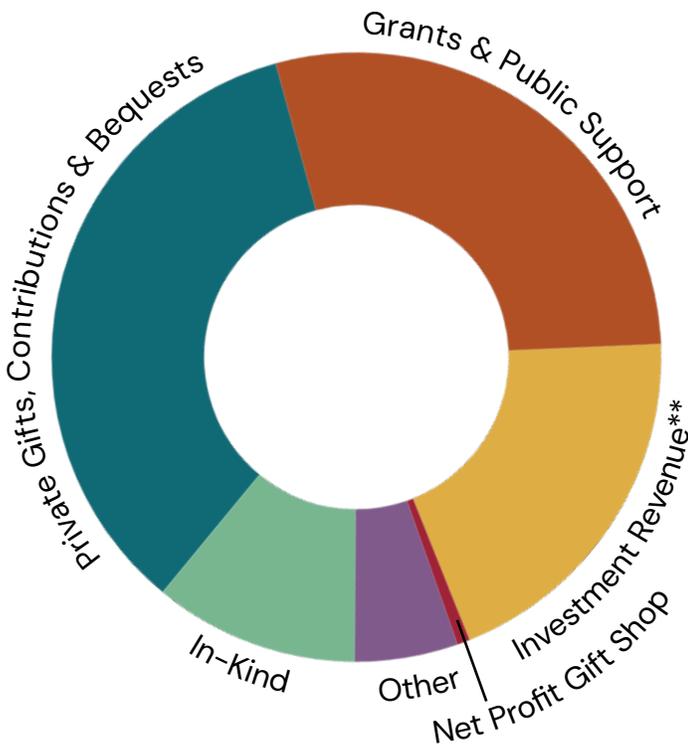
We host approximately 75 to 100 groups annually for school programs and other educational tours/programs onsite at the Museum. These additive programs engage students and adults with the physical space of the Museum through exhibit exploration and immersive hands-on activities. Themes include im/migration, farming, Native lifeways, museum literacy, civic engagement, social justice, and more. These programs reach approximately 2,500 individuals annually. Sponsor recognized on website and during tours.

Knit In

Quarterly gathering of knitters and crocheters who gather to create charity items or work on their own projects. A partnership with Bloomington Public Library and Illinois Art Station. Sponsor to be recognized online and during events.

Fiscal Year 2025 Financial Snapshot

April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025



OPERATING REVENUE

Private Gifts, Contributions & Bequests	.....	\$629,150
Grants & Public Support	.....	\$517,329
Investment Revenue**	.....	\$355,319
Net Profit Gift Shop	.....	\$12,093
Other Income	.....	\$99,112
In-Kind	.....	\$196,674
Total Revenue	.....	\$1,809,860

EXPENSES

Programs*	.....	\$1,972,543
General & Administrative*	.....	\$210,525
Fundraising*	.....	\$214,935
Total Expenses	.....	\$2,398,003

Moving forward, private support, including estate gifts, will continue to be critical to the Museum's financial stability. Growing the pool of invested assets to offset economic instability is a long-term priority.

** Much of the fluctuation in operating revenue from year to year is driven by investment revenue and grants. This includes changes in the market value of our endowments. Timing of our fiscal end of year in 2025 resulted in a subpar return on our invested assets. The first quarter of calendar year 2025 was marked with the worst monthly return of the S&P 500 since December of 2022. This economic contraction was driven by tariff fears, an AI bubble burst, a market correction, and a defensive shift by investors. Markets rebounded later in the calendar year resulting in improved earnings by mid-fiscal year 2026.

* Includes associated staff salaries



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In 2025, we accomplished many goals aligned with our strategic plan and mission.

We increased the accessibility of our **20,000+** object collection and welcomed over **60,000** visitors.

We created new ways to engage with local history, partnered with an increased number of community organizations, and served over **20,000** people through experience based programming.

In 2026, with continued community support, we look forward to advancing our mission, creating new ways for people to engage with local history, and celebrating two historic milestones: the Route 66 Centennial and the Semiquincentennial of the Signing of the Declaration of Independence.

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McLean County Museum of History

200 North Main Street, Bloomington, IL 61701

mchistory.org | 309-827-0428 | [@mchistorymuseum](https://www.instagram.com/mchistorymuseum)

