The Mining & Rollo Jamison Museums
PLATTEVILLE
WISCONSIN

Newsletter

Fall 2024

Looking Forward

To prepare for 2025 and beyond, the museum board and staff have been assessing who we are and what we do. In other words, we have been creating a strategic plan to help guide us through the next five years. This has been an exciting process that has brought inspiration and hope to us and we hope by sharing a glimpse of it with you, it will inspire you too! Below are our five biggest goals with a little insight on how we plan to meet those goals.

Improve Visitation and Repeat Visitors
While speaking with many of our community members I have heard that there are few reasons to come back to the museum because they have already seen the exhibits and heard the tour. That is why our priority is to create more reasons to revisit. One approach to this problem is initiating a process of rotating exhibits that will be created by our staff and visiting curators. Two larger themes to look forward to will be the 250th anniversary of 1776 (2026) and the 200th anniversary of Platteville (2027).

Build and Retain Partnerships while being a Community Leader
While we already partner with local businesses and cultural institutions, we see opportunities for growth. Collaborating with more organizations will help us reach wider audiences, support our community, and create engaging activities. This may include expanded programming on our campus that features local partners. We aim to align our initiatives with our mission while fostering diverse partnerships to engage the entire community and maximise the use of our space.

Improve Marketing and Our Overall Identity
Many museums are reevaluating their marketing approaches. A focus of our evolving approach is to share more of the behind the scenes work that we as museum staff perform on a daily basis. The hope is that this will help better explain the value our museum has for our local community and tourists alike.

Gain Institutional Control and Knowledge over the Collections while Improving Our Care of the Collections
One of our biggest assets might also be our biggest challenge. Our collection is vast and impressive but also daunting. Museums use the stories that are tied to artifacts to better relate our history to our present. The nature of our collection is unique in the fact that many pieces do not have provenance so we do not have those specific stories of the people who owned them. Therefore, one solution to this problem is to grow our collections in areas that we are lacking in and find ways to communicating broader themes like change over.

Build and Nurture Financial and Institutional Stability
While our museums are in good standing financially, we want to make sure that we are taking every step we can to ensure that it is around for another 60 years. This means we strive to prioritize impactful programming, amplifying our grant awards, and focusing on preventative maintenance of our campus to avoid costly maintenance crises.

Upcoming Events

Friends Annual Meeting - Nov. 9
"Using the Past to Move into the Future"

This year's Annual Meeting and Program will be held at the museum on Saturday, November 9, from 4:00–6:00 p.m. During the meeting you can expect an annual report from museum leadership, programing featuring our staff and their use of the past to move our museum into the future, and of course pie and ice cream!

The event is free for 2024 members of the Friends of the Museums and donors over $35, and serves as a fundraiser encouraging visitors to join, renew, or make their annual gift. We also use it to thank volunteers, donors, and board members. To accompany the programming, we will serve delicious homemade pies of all sorts with ice cream made by UW-P's Pioneer Sweets. Be ready to make your bid to take a homemade pie or two home with our silent pie auction – an excellent way to have delicious pies for the holidays and donate to a great cause at the same time!

Holiday at the Museum - Dec. 13

Our model trains will be back on display for this year's winter event taking place December 13! In coordination with Holiday Magic on Main, the museum is planning a fun day for everyone. If the model trains don't catch your attention, hands-on crafts, outdoor activities, and holiday themed displays will help you imagine the lives of those who called this area home decades and even centuries ago.

More information will be available on our website and in our monthly updates as details for the event are solidified.

Winter Speaker Series - Feb.-March

This year's speaker series will focus on early 19th century life and trades. In an effort to provide a picture of what those living in the mining district experienced, we will have speakers who will share their expertise on numerous perspectives.

More information will be available on our website and in our monthly updates as details for the event are solidified.

Historic Re-enactment

On September 6th through the 8th, dozens of re-enactors gathered to share their stories of history with people of all ages! This was the 26th annual re-enactment and over 2,500 people were able to interact with our knowledgeable reenactors! This event is possible because of our numerous community supporters listed below.

Thanks to our Sponsors

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Empower the Future

I am happy to report that there are a lot of new young faces gracing our exhibit spaces lately. This is something you do not hear at many museums. In fact, many history museums are grappling with how to gain and keep the attention of younger generations. We on the other hand are excited to see more and more interested in what we are doing. One reason we have more young visitors is thanks to a growing partnership with the history program at the University of Wisconsin Platteville. This semester a public history class is being offered and that group asked to be a part of some of our projects. Therefore, a group of twenty-four passionate students are helping us to update, add to, and reorganize our 1st floor exhibit panels.

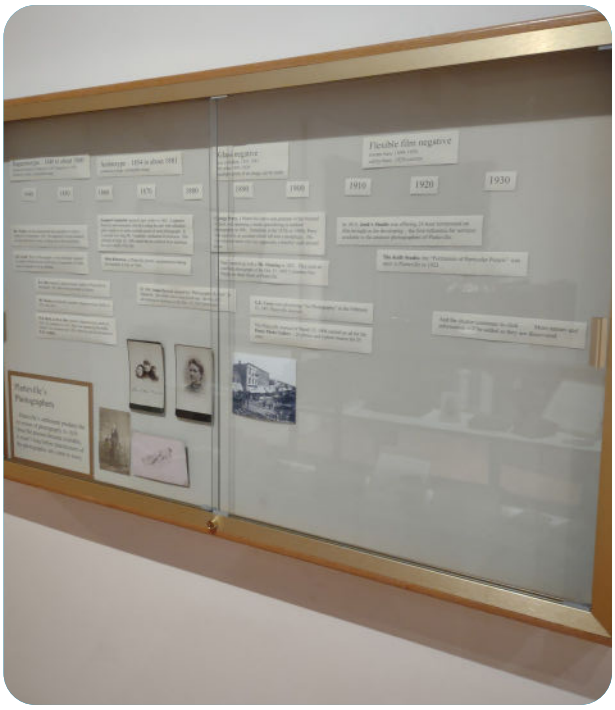
While college students can often be overlooked when it comes to asking for help, it is important for us to recognize that they can be some of the best people to work with because of their passion.While many museums offer internships to students that are beneficial to both the institution and the student, there are so many more opportunities to work with students in one-on-one situtations and classroom situations. We are seeing the fruits of opening up to those other opportunities such as classroom participation and individual research projects. Therefore, we plan to keep offering internships at the museum while also making an effort to find other ways to work with college students.

Much like we are expanding on the ways we work with college students, we are also trying to expand on the different departments that we partner with such as biology, art, agriculture, and english. Museums often only work with those students who study the same topic as the museum's focus. For example, history museums work with history students. However, we can also draw on the knowledge of students who are studying biology, art, agriculture, english, and all other disciplines. These passionate students who may not often think about working with a history museum can be encouraged to explore how their studies can be talked about in a historical context.

These types of explorations lead to new ideas on how we can improve the way we preserve and share our history with our community.

While we do plan to invite students from all sorts of degree programs, we are a history museum so there are of course specific benefits of working with history students. First and foremost, we are always excited to work with others who are just as passionate as us about history. An extra bonus though is that we get to gather and hear from a group of people who are learning about the newest studies in the field. They can use this opportunity to bridge that gap between academic history and public history to explain how new research could be used in our exhibits. Similarly, they can share the ways they like to learn about history so that we as a museum can learn how to connect better with younger generations.

At this point it might be clear that there are many benefits for the museum with classroom partnerships. However, it is our hope as a staff that the students are the ones who receive the biggest benefit. These students are looking to absorb as much information as they can and experience the world of museums. So, we hope to share our knowledge and give them the opportunity to gain unique hands-on experience. When they visited the museum in late October, they received a thorough introduction to museum work in regard to collections management and museum leadership. Collections Manager Christina Grev showed them some of the tasks she conducts on a regular basis and explained the thought process that goes into collections management and growth. By pulling back the curtain to see what we do and bringing their knowledge from the classroom, they are able to develop their skills as aspiring museums professionsal. Furthermore, by helping to update, add to, and reogranize the exhibit labels in our exhibit spaces, they are gaining unique hands-on experience to put on their resume. That is something that many other undergraduate students do not have the chance to do.



We hope to empower these students and listen to what they have to say. This is just one way that we can meet our younger visitors where they are and it excites our whole museum staff and board to have the opportunity! We can't wait to share more about this project and our work with the next generation of museum professionals. We hope it inspires you to see young people passionate about history and our community museum!

A series of Grants

Wisconsin Federation of Museums Mini-Grant

In late September museum staff were invited to attend the Wisconsin Federation of Museums' Annual Conference to receive their Mini-Grant. The theme for 2024 is "Preserving the Past, Inspiring the Future; Navigating Change in Museums" and they believe that our project to work with college students to update our museum's exhibit panels fit that theme. The Mining and Rollo Jamison was one of two organizations who received this grant and we are so grateful for the support.

Platteville Community Fund

We are excited to announce that once again we have received funding from the Platteville Community Fund! This grant will be used to fund our Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Response Planning at the Museums. Having a disaster prepardness kit and emergency response plan will allow our museum to function within museum standards and ensure that our collections and all of the valuable artifacts will be safe for future generations.

IMLS Grant (2022-2024)

This September our collections team finished work on a grant that we had received for 2022-2024 through the Institute of Museums and Library Services. One project that was a part of this was the installation of protective splints on our newspaper collection. This practice ensures that the newspapers do not lose integrity in their spines. It also helps to keep UV levels and any other natural wear over time as low as possible. Now, thanks to this grant, our newspaper collection is properly and safely stored for future generations to learn from.

Wisconsin Science Fest

Wisconsin Science Fest is a statewide celebration that takes place over an entire week during October. This year's theme was agriculture, which allowed us to highlight the traditions of farmers from Grant County and to discuss the innovations and changes in technology over time. Additionally, the programs we created are tied to pedology, geology, and geography. This is our third year participating in and hosting an event. Additionally, we partnered with the Platteville Public Library to create a program for students that included two science activities.

Our library event involved having students learn about and make their own aquifers to take home! This activity was originally created by Tammy Enz, a civil engineer and author, and her video is still available on our YouTube channel, and books can be found in our gift shop. The students used pop bottles, layered sand, and different gravel sizes to create aquifers. Then, they watched as we filtered out muddy water to get clear water. Additionally, we concluded the program by making edible dirt cups and talking about the different layers of dirt around us and how they affect farming.

Then, on Friday, October 18th, the museum hosted the Platteville 5th grade class to visit for a Science Fest field trip. We had a game where students were given products created by crops and livestock and had to make a giant web with clothespins and the "farm" in the center to showcase how agriculture is a staple in things we use and eat in our everyday lives. Then, we broke up into groups and discussed contour farming and how it relates to the geography of the Driftless Area. Finally, students created soil horizons with double-sided tape and colored sand.

At the museum, we put placards with QR codes out by our outside agricultural equipment, which allowed guests to take a self-guided tour and explore the museum campus. The research was done by Garrison Ledbury, a previous museum intern/ tour guide. We are working towards permanently affixing posts and QR codes outside the museum and the backyard to give guests additional information about the museum and the mine.

Year in Review

School Field Trips

2024 was an amazing year for field trips! Our museum staff welcomed over 1,200 students and they were able to experience both the museum and the mine. We served 24 different schools, which is down from previous years. Through the implementation of teacher groups and teacher evenings at the museum in years to come, we hope to increase the number of schools and students we see in our museum for field trips.

Tours and Programming

Our general visitation for the museum and mine increased this year! We welcomed 3,751 visitors to the museum in addition to the 1,200 students for field trips. We were also able to interact with 2,500 people during our 26th annual Historic Re-enactment event. All in all, we wer able to share our history with so many people from near and far.

Grant Funding

Our staff is excited to announce that we had another successful year for grant funding. Our total Grant funding for this year was $32,776. We began the year with our IMLS grant for $26,502 and we built on that through the year with a $1,000 grant from the Wisconsin Federation of Museums, three grants from the Platteville Community fund totalling $4,074, a grant from the Gies Fund for $700, and a grant from the Optimist Club for $500.

Volunteer Efforts

As always, our volunteers are to thank for many of the achievements we have here at the museum. This year we logged hundreds of volunteer hours from long time supporters and new volunteers. Many of our volunteers from the past have continued to offer their time and expertise to help organize events and build props used during those events. We have also gained new volunteers through the fraternities on campus who helped us this year to move large items and reorganize.

Collections Corner

What is in the Collection?

Museums have far more in their collections than they can ever imagine displaying. Our museum is not an exception to that rule. That is why we will be using this space in our newsletter to highlight different artifacts that are either new to the collections or have an interesting story behind them.

Plaster Mask

In 1971, the Mining Museum opened to the public at the historic Rock School. In the basement of that building, there is a general workspace and storage in addition to a darkroom that was used to develop photographs. Some of the equipment is still in this room, and chemical equations for developing photos are scratched onto the cabinets. Throughout the past couple of years, we have been finding and relocating items that have been left in the basement. While exploring the darkroom, we found a plaster face mask lying on a shelf. From talking with previous museum staff, we know that Tom Hendrickson Jr., one of the previous directors, had an artistic background, and we assumed he had made the mask. We were also curious to figure out if the face on the mask would match any of the mannequins we have on display and in the mine. Unfortunately, no name was attached to the mask, which prevented us from putting a name to the face.
Then, as if summoned, Frank Byrne stopped by the museum to visit and introduce himself. Frank was a tour guide when the Mining Museum first opened, and while visiting, he happened to mention that the previous director, Tom Hendrickson Jr., had made a plaster cast of his face. Although the mannequins with Frank's face are no longer down in the mine, we are happy to know the story and face behind the mask and to gain further insight into the first years of the Mining Museum and our mine.

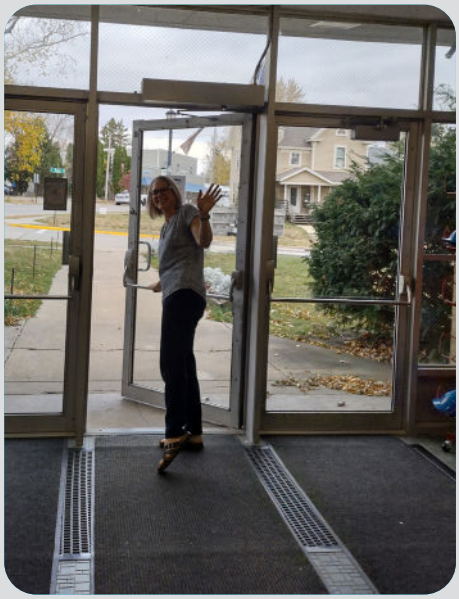
Broughton Quilt

Over the past couple of months, we have not had one, but two quilts donated to our permanent collection. Bill Broughton had previously donated a miner's coat and overalls that he wore as a child visiting the Blackstone Mine with his father and had brought in another donation item. This quilt was handmade by Bill's wife, Jacalyn Broughton, and was a gift to his father, W.A., a geology professor at the Platteville School of Mines. This black and red checkered quilt has the logo for the Wisconsin Mining School on the front and the initials of Bill and Jacalyn's sons embroidered on the back with the message, "Love and warmth to Dad 1985."

A Farewell and Hello!

Farewell and best wishes to Angie Wright

Angie, who has served as our communications specialist and administrator for the last five years, is stepping down from her roll to pursue her consulting business. In her five years, her contributions to the museum are numerous. We are thankful for the great work she has done to move our museum into the future and hope for the best with her future endeavours!



Hello to Summer Hamille

We are excited to introduce Summer who is taking over the Museum Specialist Administration position. She brings years of experience thanks to her endeavours as the founder and director of both the Southwest Academy of Ballet Arts, LLC. and Theater of Ballet Arts, Inc. She will be working in the office with the rest of the team looking for ways to keep the museum moving forward. We are excited to have her and her expertise on the staff.

Museum Leadership

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Garrett Jones, Secretary
Lawrence Bowden
Kathy Connett
Tom Nall
Deb Jenny

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Kendall Miller, Visitor Services Specialist
Heidi Dyas-McBeth, Collections Assistant
Christina Grev, Collections Management and Education Specialist
Emma Larson, Facilities Maintenance Technician
Sharon Trentz, Museum Custodial Technician
Summer Hamille, Administration Specialist
Tour Guides: Bruce Flesch, Ashten Wilson, Lily Simon, and Taylor Beck

Behind the Scenes

As always the staff have worked hard to provide a wonderful experience at the museum this year. I would like to personally thank them for all they do.

Our recent pasty sale was a huge success and we want to thank everyone who participated. We also appreciated the nice weather for pasty pick-up day!

Next up is the Friends of the Mining and Rollo Jamison Museums Annual Meeting and Program to be held November 9th starting at 4:00 p.m., at the museum. The theme this year is "Using The Past to Move Into The Future". Museum leaders will give an update on what has been accomplished this past year and the program will feature the staff who will talk about their vision for moving into the future. There will be time to get to know the staff, enjoy some homemade pie and ice cream, and bid for your favorite pie during our silent auction. You'll be surprised at how well our Board members can bake! The annual meeting is open to all members and is a great time to renew your membership or become a member for only a $35.00 donation. Join us – we'd love to have you!

Don't miss the Miners Ball scheduled for February 15, 2025. This is our largest fund raiser and held in partnership with the University of Wisconsin - Platteville. Enjoy a wonderful meal, music by the Ken Kilian Orchestra, both a silent and live auction, and great company. Come for the dinner or just the dance. Tickets are available on line now at www.mining.jamison.museum or you can call the museum at 608-348-3301. With a Valentine's Day Theme, it's a special night for all. Don't miss it!
A new event in the planning stages is Miniature Golf in the Museum to be held in the early Spring. Stay tuned for more information!

Please consider joining us as a member, become a volunteer, a donor, or join us on the board. Understanding the past helps create better paths for the future. Only through your support can we keep the mission and vision alive. Thank you.

Deb Jenny, President

Yes, I Wish to Support the 2023 Annual Fund!

The Annual Fund directly supports Museum operations, key public programs and initiatives.

- The Friends are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, EIN 39-1363989.
- Gifts are tax deductible to the limits of the law.
- You can give conveniently online: **www.mining.jamison.museum/donate**
- Please consider the Museums in your estate plans.

Please return this form and make checks payable to:

The Friends of the Mining
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P.O. Box 780
Platteville, WI 53818

Contact Cody Grabhorn at (608) 348-3301 or museumdirector@platteville.org with questions.

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This sustaining gift will be ongoing until I contact the museum to change it or cancel.

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Rediscover the Joy of Learning At Our Historic Museum Campus

All ages are invited to rediscover through hands-on activities and unique programming. We encourage you to encounter our past in numerous ways in the museum, in our 1845 lead mine, and around our campus.

Join us for seasonal festivals, guided tours, changing galleries, underground programs, and of course our famous Boxing Squirrels!

www.mining.jamison.museum

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Contact Us!

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