

WASECA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY | MUSEUM & HISTORY LIBRARY



LOOKING UP | HOW IS WCHS FUNDED?

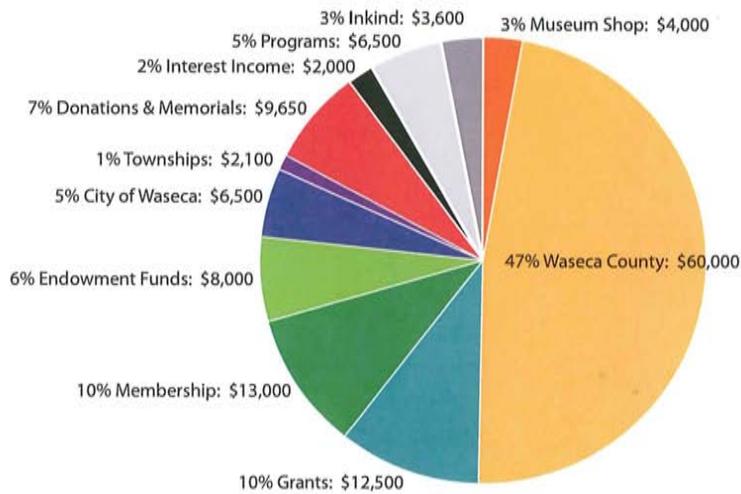


Waseca County Museum exterior and banners—Look Forward to Our Past!

It is important for members, donors, community leaders and residents of the Waseca County community to understand how WCHS is funded. As a non-profit, it must rely on a *balance of funding* that shows broad community support.

WCHS is a non-profit (501c3) organization that relies on several areas of potential funding. *Potential* is a key word here as most of the income WCHS receives is unknown at the beginning of each fiscal year. Most non-profits rely on a broad base of support that inter-relates and maintains the organization. Our basic resources in order of amounts are: 1) Appropriations (Waseca County, City of Waseca, City of Janesville, City of Waldorf, and Township Boards); 2) Membership, Donations and Memorials; 3) Endowments (WCHS has seven endowment funds established with the Waseca Area Foundation.), 4) Grants (Not for Operations); 5) Program & Gift Shop Sales; and 6) Fundraisers.

FUNDING SOURCES: 2011 BUDGET \$127,850



APPROPRIATIONS

Appropriations are the mainstay for WCHS. Public funding of non-profit organizations began in order to ensure and to serve the public good. In 2008 WCHS received funding from every entity including Waseca County, City of Waseca, City of Waldorf, and all of our Township Boards. The amounts vary from year to year. We go before each of these governmental bodies to request funds to state our case for continuing support every year. The county is our most dependable and largest funder, although none of these appropriations resources are guaranteed! WCHS earns that support in terms of financial accountability, growth of vision, and people served. It is uniquely capable of maintaining the history of the entire county. **Appropriations are needed for operations**—to keep the doors open and staff secured to do the work of the organization—and that includes the programming, event promotion, membership promotion, library services and grant-writing—the actions that bring in the other portions of funding. Project grants do not support operations. And most granting foundations do not support operations.

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MEMBERSHIP

We have a faithful base of members from all over. There are approximately 550 WCHS members. It literally fluctuates daily, because of our online capability. Members sign up online from anywhere. Many are past residents, some are journalists doing research, many are genealogists who find links to Waseca County. We require membership online to view research results. This is true of most research websites now. We believe that researchers *outside of Waseca County* should join in supporting the website that serves them also. And they are from all over the country and many parts of the world. Memberships are renewed to the member's anniversary of joining, not to January, and not to an annual membership drive.

MEMORIALS/HONORARIUMS

These donations are the most heartfelt and appreciated. Every donation is noted in our Memorial/Honorarium Book with the name of the honored person and the contributor(s). We also list these names in our quarterly newsletter and in the Annual Report.



Promoting WCHS membership at the Early Childhood Fair.

ENDOWMENT FUNDS

These SEVEN endowment funds are part of the WAF (Waseca Area Foundation) Family of Funds, and are administered/invested by the Minnesota Community Foundation. Interest earnings are available to WCHS annually.

Edgar F. and Ethel Johnson Fund:

WCHS's first endowment fund initiated by the creators of the E.F. Johnson Co.

Frank and Barbara Goodspeed Memorial Fund:

Initiated by a generous donation by their niece Dorothy Moriarty.

Phil Allen Memorial Fund: *Benefits the Bailey-Lever Research Library only*

Jerry and Linda Rutledge Heritage Fund:

A very generous fund created in 2007 donated by the retired CEO of Waseca Mutual

Waseca County Historical Society Endowment Fund:

Initiated with anonymous funds by then Executive Director Margaret Sinn.

Wes and Carol Rethwill History Fund: *Created during the 150th Capital Campaign*

Waseca County Historical Society Lifetime Endowment Fund:

Created and maintained with Lifetime (\$1,000) Memberships

These endowments will go on forever. The principal is never touched. Interest earnings are available to WCHS annually. We can choose to use the distribution or leave it in the fund, to let it build. This is where we have our most potential, in that, with the growth of these funds, WCHS can become self sustaining eventually. This means WCHS relies less on the unknowns. It frees staff and board to plan for growth and to make sure WCHS continues. The bottom line is—if a county historical society ever loses its viability, its collection of artifacts and archives would all be absorbed by the Minnesota Historical Society. The past and present WCHS Board of Directors, and Executive Directors have worked, and are working to prevent that from happening. This is *your* historical society, your museum, your research library, your collection. Your sustaining membership, donations, memorials, program and event support, and attention to city, county and township support—all go to maintaining the future for WCHS and keeping your history local.

GRANTS

The world of project grant-writing is a huge potential resource, but again, writing for a grant is very speculative. There is no guarantee of success, and it is increasingly competitive. It involves time researching the particular resource, learning about its mission and guidelines, gathering information, and then writing the actual grant request. This should be a very efficient process, but more times than not, its details and reporting, accountability and documentation take up a great deal of time. This kind of commitment must be the responsibility of staff. This is where the Appropriations portion of funding is crucial, keeping staff in place to bring in the grant monies necessary to accomplish the programs, exhibits, and other interpretation. One can't write a grant to cover writing grants! Also grant missions are specific. A project must be defined, scoped, and cost estimates gathered and included in the grant request. So we are constantly looking at needs and setting them aside for potential grant funding.

PROGRAMS & GIFT SHOP

WCHS is still a FREE museum. There is no charge to see the exhibits. We charge for the Spring Luncheon-Lecture Series, but grants are sought through the Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council and/or the Waseca Area Foundation to support the Series and keep it affordable. WCHS Members pay reduced ticket prices. Each luncheon/lecture brings in visitors to browse the Museum Gift Shop and tour the exhibits. Other programs in the museum or off-site are usually free or reduced to members.



The 1868 Bailey-Lever House History Library is located across 4th Street from the museum. Its heritage gardens are maintained every year.

ABOUT THE COVER: The Waseca County Museum's colorful dome was painted in 2002 by Mark Barens, a volunteer who applied the design based on the stained glass windows of the building. It's exciting to "look up" when you visit WCHS.



The WCHS holiday open house presented the Doll House Walk in December 2010

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FUNDRAISERS

WCHS income must be supplemented with fundraisers wherever and however possible. The most successful fundraiser to date was the 150th Birthday Gift Capital Campaign that celebrated the 150th birthday of Waseca County in 2007—a unique and auspicious occasion. It raised significant funds for immediate needs (new furnaces, technology, and printer/copier), to help WCHS move toward that goal of **self-sustainability** with additions to endowment funds, and to provide for future maintenance, and an operations reserve fund. At the end of the campaign, on December 31, 2009, the total amount raised was just over \$168,000. Thanks to the over 200 donors, individuals and corporations who believe in the mission and importance of the Waseca County Historical Society.



Members of the WCHS Board of Directors celebrate the completion of the 2007-2009 Capital Campaign.

Other successful fundraising occurred with the Mystery Night events, Cemetery Walks, and the Used Book Sales during the Waseca County Fair. The WCHS Board of Directors and staff strive to find new fundraising ideas.

IN CONCLUSION

And so, are you able to understand the *balance of funding* that is necessary to maintain a non-profit, cultural institution like the Waseca County Historical Society? Take away any leg of support, and the balance is gone. Please continue to learn about and support your local history. It belongs to you—it's your museum, your history library, your Waseca County Historical Society—past, present and future.



WCHS presents the Annual Chautauqua at historic Maplewood Park every July.