



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 New Richland, City of Waldorf, and Township Boards); 2) Membership, Donations, Memorials and Honorariums; 3) Endowments; 4) Grants (Not for Operations); 5) Programs & Gift Shop Sales; and 6) Fundraisers.

APPROPRIATIONS

Appropriations are the mainstay for WCHS. Public funding of non-profit organizations began in order to ensure and to serve the public good. The amounts and the participation from the county, cities and townships 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.

MEMBERSHIP

We have a faithful base of nearly 250 members from all over the United States. Many are past residents, some are journalists doing research, many are genealogists who discovered family ties to Waseca County. Memberships are renewed to the member's anniversary of joining, not to January, and not to an annual membership drive. All memberships receive an online or printed quarterly newsletter, History Notes; free or reduced rates for exhibits, education and cultural programs; a 10% discount in the Museum Gift Shop; access to high-resolution images of every photographed item in our collection and free access to the Bailey-Lewer Research Center which includes access to microfilm viewers/printers, maps, books, LDS records and other genealogy resources.

DONATIONS

Toward the end of every year we send out our Annual Fund Letter. This is sent to our membership and local business community. Between October and the end of December we receive about 10% of our budget in generous donations. We are so very grateful for loyal members and donors!

MEMORIALS AND HONORARIUMS

These donations are the most heartfelt and appreciated. Every donation is noted in our quarterly newsletter and in the Annual Report.



The Bailey-Lewer Research Library
The research center is the primary steward of Waseca County's historical records, archives, microfilm, library, and other data accessible on our website or by visiting the Bailey/Lewer Research Library.

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.

ENDOWMENT FUNDS

These SEVEN endowment funds are part of the Waseca Area Foundation's Family of Funds, and are administered/ invested by the Minnesota Philanthropy Partners, formerly the Minnesota Community Foundation. Interest earnings are distributed 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.

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

Marvin and Ardis Sutter Family Fund:

Created in 2014 by a pioneer farm family of Blooming Grove Township

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 could 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 work to keep this collection here in Waseca County. This is *your* historical society, your museum, your research library, your collection. Your sustaining membership, donations, memorials, program 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 that 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 support necessary to accomplish the programs, exhibits, and other interpretation. Grant missions are specific, a project must be defined, scoped, and cost estimates gathered and included in the grant request. We are constantly looking at needs, framing grant requests, and finding match funds.

PROGRAMS & GIFT SHOP

WCHS is still a FREE museum. There is no charge to see the exhibits. We offer many educational and cultural programs throughout the year and many are free or offered at a reduced rate to our membership. The museum gift shop has many unique items for sale and all memberships receive a 10% discount on all items.



The 1868 Bailey-Lewer Research Library heritage gardens are maintained every year.



The Hofmann Apiaries exhibit at the Waseca County Fair.



A Walk To Palmer
One of our very fun programs - walking the Palmer railbed.



Chautauqua at Trowbridge Park.

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FUNDRAISERS

WCCHS 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 WCCHS 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.

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



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

IN CONCLUSION

We hope that you now 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 - Waseca County Historical Society - past, present and future.

On October 8, 2015 the long-awaited "Timeline of Unique Stories—Where the Big Woods Meet the Prairie" exhibit opened to the Waseca County community. After decades of researching, planning, fundraising, and grant-writing, the permanent exhibit on the balcony, complete with lift, was finally a reality. It was designed and produced by Museology, LLC. In 2016 it won the MALHM History Award.

