

2025 Conference

Quad Cities

# cross currents cross currents

**Virtual:** July 23

**In-Person:**  
July 30–August 2



#Crosscurrents

#AMM\_2025

#MidwestMuseums

#IllinoisMuseums

#IowaMuseums

# Welcome

## letter from our Co-Chairs

**Welcome to the AMM & IAM 2025 Conference: Crosscurrents and to the Quad Cities!** On behalf of all our conference partners, sponsors, and contributors, we are grateful that you have joined us for this year's conference and made time to reconnect, reboot, and recenter as museum leaders.

We promise that you are in for an incredible experience over the coming days. Between 40+ sessions, 14 amazing museums, and a chance for 300+ peer connections, our conference program includes an array of inspiring speakers, learning and networking opportunities, tours, and much more.

Above all, we offer you this: an opportunity to fully engage with a community of supportive colleagues to fortify us all for the work ahead.

Museums have a pivotal role to play in their communities and, as stewards of history and culture, this means that the work is never easy. When conflicting viewpoints, changes in staff or leadership, or external pressures disrupt the process, any effort to strengthen our organizations and support a thriving community can feel even more daunting.

**This year's theme acknowledges the reality of this moment, along with this simple truth: *there may be turbulence, but we must never stop rowing.*** Now more than ever, our communities, visitors and learners depend upon museums for crucial context, varied perspectives, and accurate information that support the foundation of a democratic society and nation. As inclusive community spaces and public commons, we know that museums also have a vital role to play in furthering civic engagement and civil discourse and fostering diverse cultural expression.

Let us all take advantage of the opportunity afforded by this convening and do our part to ensure it is a catalyst to a shared sense of renewed commitment to the work ahead.

### 2025 Conference Co-Chairs



**Betsy Matt Turner**  
Putnam Museum and Science Center

**Board Member**  
Association of Midwest Museums



**Sara Phalen**  
West Chicago City Museum and  
Warrenville Historical Society

**Board Member**  
Illinois Association of Museums



**David Schmitz**  
Iowa Arts Council

**Board Member**  
Association of Midwest Museums



**Jeanne Schultz Angel**  
Napier Settlement

**Board Member**  
Illinois Association of Museums



# Thank You

our 2025 sponsors



## Supported By



## Organizational Champions + Team Builders



## Museums Partners



# Thank You

hosts, committee members, volunteers, & staff

We are grateful to the organizations, community members and many volunteers who contributed their time, talent, and energy to make this year's conference a success. Thank you!

## Association of Midwest Museums

Charity Counts, Executive Director  
Cassie Sacotte, Volunteer Coordinator  
Maren Nelson, Graphic Designer  
Betsy Matt Turner, AMM Board Member  
David Schmitz, AMM Board Member

## Illinois Association of Museums

Jeanne Schultz Angel, President  
Sara Phalen, Vice President

## Iowa Museum Association

Teresa Stenstrup, Executive Director

## Program Committee

Heidi Lung, Western Illinois University – Quad Cities  
Brian Allen, Quad City Arts  
Brandon Jens, John Deere  
Caroline O'Sullivan-Jens, Family Museum  
Elly Gerdtz, Family Museum  
Vanessa Sage, Figge Art Museum  
Kelly Lao, Putnam Museum and Science Center  
Jocelyn Krueger, Grinnell College Museum of Art

## Volunteers

Sunita Anand  
Cassandra Chapman  
Nicole Collings  
Claire Eagle  
Diego Fajardo  
Kylie Foss  
Aaron Glavas  
Selena Gonzalez

Julie Govert  
Bryanna Harmel  
Sarah Humes  
Grace Johnson  
Lindsay Keast  
Christy Kincaid  
Micaela Knox  
Ashley LaVigne

Allison Love  
Bill Lynerd  
Darren Macfee  
Nora Moriarty  
Enya Moyer  
Sydney O'Neal  
Larissa Pothoven  
Sarah Richardt

Jennifer Rigsby  
Salem Shinn  
Makenzie Skinner  
Marissa Ulie  
Emily VanWaardhuizen

**Get your 2025 limited  
edition Proud Museum  
Person shirt at registration!**

Sponsored by Museum EXP

Bring your favorite Proud Museum Person  
shirt and join us Thursday, July 31, at 5:30  
PM in the RiverCenter Lower Concourse  
for the **biggest Midwest museums group  
photo ever taken!**



## 2025 Solid Light Scholar

Trey Whitted, IN

## 2025 Exhibit Professionals Conference Fellows

Megan Londo, IA  
Saulaman Schlegel, MN

Special thank you to **Edwards Creative** for providing in-kind graphics and display services!



# Thank You

AMM Annual Fund Donors 2024–2025

Thank you to our generous patrons, George R. Fox Donor Society members, and Leadership Circle members!



## **\$2,500 or more**

Ellen Censky, Milwaukee, WI  
Charles Katzenmeyer, Chicago, IL

## **\$1,000–\$2,499**

Cheryl Darr, MO  
Joy DeFrance, MI  
Katie Van Allen, St. Louis, MO

## **\$500–\$999**

Erin Carlson Mast, IL  
John Herbst, MI  
Bruce Karstadt, MN  
Dr. William McNiece, IN  
Billy Ocasio, IL  
Brenda Raney, MN  
John Shannon, WI  
Monica Walker, MI

## **\$100–\$499**

Ben Barbera, WI  
Bob Beatty, TN  
Alison Brown, MN  
Jody Chastain, NY  
Mike Day, MN  
Rich Faron, IL  
Ben Garcia, NY  
Danny Gonzales, IN  
Kaman Hillenburg, IN  
Joe Imholte, MN  
Elizabeth Kryder-Reid, IN  
De'Andrea Matthews, MI  
Betsy Matt Turner, IA  
Whitney Owens, OH  
Monica Ramsey, IN  
Chad Roberts, MN  
Donna Sack, IL  
Cassie Sacotte, WI  
Brian Statz, IN  
Ida Tomlin, MS  
Karen Witter, IL  
Gregory Wittkopp, MI  
Lesley Wright, IA  
Erich Zuern, MI

## **Institutional Partner — \$3,500**

Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, IL

## **Stanfield Institutional Leadership Circle Plus — \$1500**

Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History Detroit MI

## **Stanfield Institutional Leadership Circle — \$1,000**

Detroit Zoological Society, MI  
The Children's Museum of Indianapolis, IN  
The Magic House St. Louis Children's Museum, MO  
Milwaukee Public Museum, WI  
Minnesota Historical Society, MN  
Missouri Historical Society, MO  
The National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture, IL

## **In-Kind Partner**

Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, IN

## **Brigham Corporate Leadership Circle — \$500**

Angle Park, Inc.  
Artpack Services, Inc.  
Distinguished Fine Art & Collectibles  
HUB International  
Kraemer Design + Production, Inc.  
Solid Light Inc.

# Virtual Sessions & Events



Wednesday, July 23

## AMM Annual Business Meeting

8:30 AM – 9:00 AM CT (9:30 AM – 10:00 AM ET)

Prior to our opening sessions, AMM members are invited to join us live for our 2025 Annual Business Meeting for board election advance voting results and other announcements. (You don't have to be a member to tune in. All are welcome!)



## Opening Session

9:30 AM – 10:30 AM CT (10:30 AM – 11:30 AM ET)

### Jane Wales

Vice President, Aspen Institute

Co-Chair, The Generosity Commission

We're kicking off Virtual Day programming with a presentation by Jane Wales, Co-Chair of the Generosity Commission, a blue ribbon panel of social sector leaders **exploring the decline in the number of everyday givers and volunteers**, illuminating their role in building a resilient society, and making recommendations for increasing their numbers.

Jane Wales is Vice President of the **Aspen Institute** and Executive Director of its Program on Philanthropy and Social Innovation. She is the founder of the Global Philanthropy Forum and its regional affiliates in Africa and Brazil, and the former host of the nationally syndicated National Public Radio interview show WorldAffairs. Previously, Jane served in the Clinton Administration as Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director of the National Security Council. She simultaneously served as Associate Director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy. In the Carter Administration, Jane served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State. In 2016, she received the inaugural Department of Defense Nunn-Lugar Trailblazer Award, presented by then-Defense Secretary Ashton Carter.

In the philanthropic sector, Jane chaired international security programs at the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the W. Alton Jones Foundation, and she directed the Project on World Security at the Rockefeller Brothers Fund. From 2007 to 2008, she served as acting CEO of The Elders, a network of former leaders engaged in the resolution of intrastate conflicts, founded by Nelson Mandela and chaired by Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Jane is a member of the board of directors for the Center for a New American Security. She is Co-Chair of the Generosity Commission.



# Virtual Sessions & Events

**V** Wednesday, July 23 — continued

## Virtual Networking

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM CT (12:00 PM – 1:00 PM ET)

### Navigating Crosscurrents: Let's Reflect and Regroup!

Sponsor: Winkler Group

Come as you are and connect with your peers across the region! Join your peers from similar organization types and sizes in a conversation about the ripples our organizations are experiencing as a result of internal and external “crosscurrents” – our challenges and opportunities of the moment. Then, we’ll sort into breakout rooms to regroup and do a little brainstorming around the common threads. What solutions have we already tried that worked? What are ways to reframe or adapt our plans to meet these challenges?

## Concurrent Sessions

12:30 PM – 1:30 PM CT (1:30 PM – 2:30 PM ET)

### “Well, You’re the Expert!”: Sharing Knowledge with the Public

Track: Museums 101

As you gain increasing knowledge about your museum and your work, you might be asked to share that knowledge with the public. In this session, experienced museum professional Donna Braden shares tips and strategies for how to successfully communicate with the public, focusing upon online content and media interviews.

*Presenter: Donna R Braden, The Henry Ford*

### At the Helm: Guiding Museum-Goers to Expansive Experiences and Diverse Voices in Inland America

Track: Exhibitions

Hear museum workers discuss their ongoing projects that speak to a need for diverse perspectives and stories. Trials and successes will be shared, alongside tips to finding the currents that allow museums to reach out to the overlooked diversity of our publics.

*Presenters: Willow Gritmaker, Toledo Museum of Art;  
Steph Adams, Erie Canal Museum*

## Virtual Tour

2:00 PM – 2:30 PM CT (3:00 PM – 3:30 PM ET)

### Davenport School Museum

Sponsor: Gaylord Archival

Establishing a museum for Davenport Schools was the vision of school administrators in 1960, and collecting began almost immediately. It wasn’t until 2002 that the vast collection of school memorabilia and archival records had a physical home. Join us for a virtual glimpse into the **Davenport School Museum**, view their unique collection, and meet the dedicated volunteers who make this slice of local history accessible for student tours, genealogical research, and more!

# Virtual Sessions & Events



Wednesday, July 23 — continued

## Concurrent Sessions

3:00 PM - 4:00 PM CT (4:00 PM - 5:00 PM ET)

### Beyond the Walls: Fostering Museum-Community Collaborations for Lasting Impact

Track: Education & Programs

Unity in Community! Museums have the power to be more than custodians of the past, they can be catalysts for community-driven education and empowerment. This session explores how the Field Museum's Connections: AANHPI Stories & the TEAACH Act project amplifies AANHPI voices by co-creating PreK-12 learning experiences with local organizations.

Presenters: Ria Pretekin, Field Museum; Jamie Kelly, Field Museum; Sam Chapleau, Field Museum; Ginger Leopoldo, Circa Pintig / Center for Immigrant Resources and Community Arts (CIRCA)

### Staff Up! Leveraging the skills of part-time employees to meet the needs of multiple departments

Track: Leadership & Operations

Non-profits do more with less staff all the time. What if we could utilize the skills of part-time employees to help fulfill our mission while mentoring them and creating an atmosphere of inclusion? The Figge Art Museum is doing this. We'll show you how to achieve success following our blueprint..

Presenters: *Pamela Crouch, Figge Art Museum;*  
*Kili Alexander, Figge Art Museum*

## Virtual Tour

4:30 PM - 5:00 PM CT (5:30 PM - 6:00 PM ET)

### Bix Beiderbecke Museum and Archives

Sponsor: Gaylord Archival

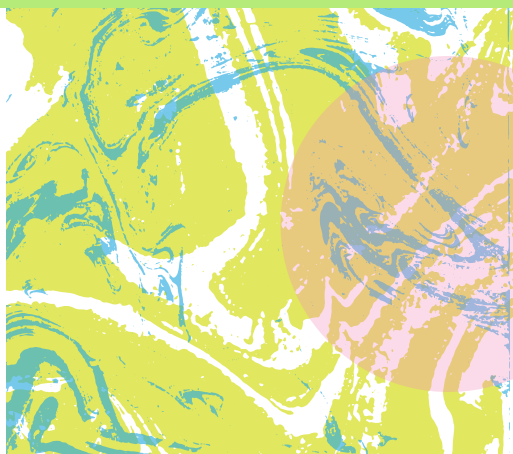
**The Bix Beiderbecke Museum and Archives** is dedicated to collecting, preserving, and displaying material related to the life and musical legacy of Bix Beiderbecke, an icon of the jazz age. Their exhibits and programs share the stories of Bix and his colleagues, and their vital contributions to American music. Join us for a virtual walkthrough of the museum's fan-favorite displays and get a first look at their new permanent space in downtown Davenport.





# Virtual Sessions & Events

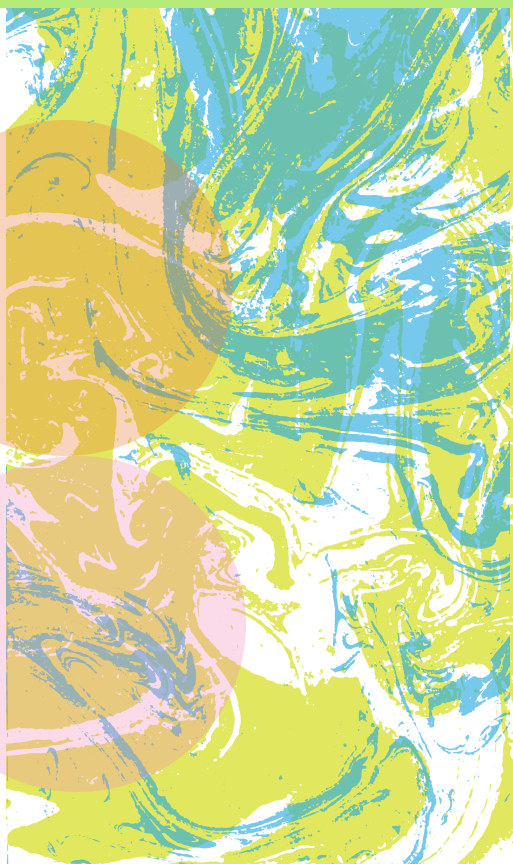
**V** Thursday, July 24



## Pre-Recorded Sessions Q&A

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM CT (12:00 PM – 1:00 PM ET)

Whether you've had a chance to watch the sessions or not, this is a great opportunity to connect with presenters of pre-recorded sessions. Panelists will be available for questions or conversation in Zoom breakout rooms. Attendees will have their choice of rooms to visit over the course of the hour.



## Pre-Recorded Sessions

A handful of additional sessions will be made available as recordings for access on-demand, when it is convenient for you.

### “More than Not Urban”: Commemorating Rural America over 250 Years

Track: Education & Programs

More than a date on the calendar, 1776 represents a launching point of American democracy. While not always perfect, communities of all sizes have drawn inspiration from these qualities to contribute to the American experiment. Join us to explore how your museum can support rural communities in telling these stories.

*Presenter: Andy Mink, Smithsonian Institution*

### The Power of ‘We’: Community Centered Practices at the Neville Public Museum

Track: Exhibitions

Engage in a cross-departmental discussion with Neville Public Museum staff about their work with a variety of community partners in the creation and implementation of exhibits, programming, and collections care. This session showcases how museums can change through community engagement while maintaining their roles as educational institutions and collections stewards.

*Presenters: Ali Smurawa, Neville Public Museum; Dani Fulwiler, Neville Public Museum; James Peth, Neville Public Museum*

### Beyond the Story: Creating a Trauma-Informed Storytelling Practice for Social Good

Track: Development & Outreach

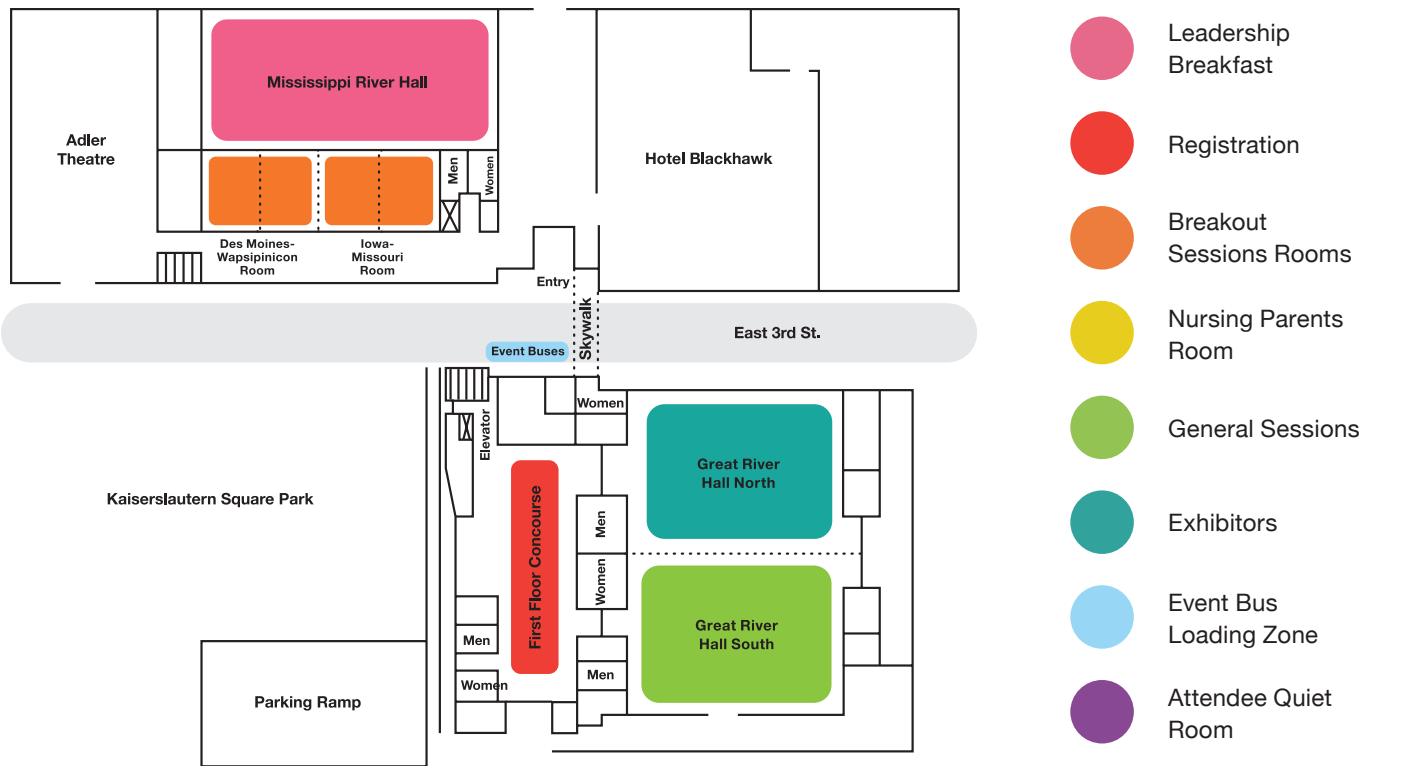
Storytelling has the profound capacity to move your mission. Yet, traditional narratives can reinforce the systems of harm we seek to dismantle. We'll explore trauma-informed storytelling, which promotes safety while resisting harm. Attendees will be equipped with actionable insights and tools to tell trauma-informed stories that have a huge impact.

*Presenter: Maria Bryan, Maria Bryan Creative*

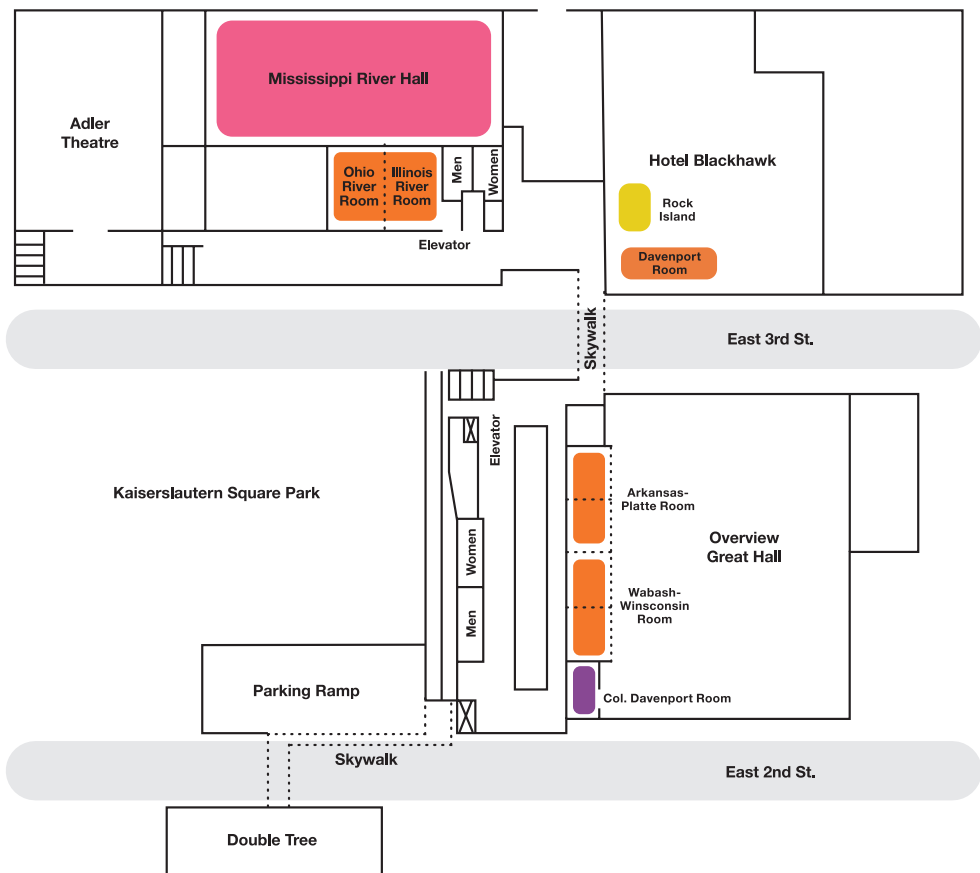
# Map

conference locations

## First Floor



## Second Floor





# Exhibitors

directory + map

## Great Hall North

**Minnesota Children's Museum**  
Michelle Wright  
mcm.org  
Booth: 100

**Church Mutual Insurance**  
Tyler Krombholz  
churchmutual.com  
Booth: 101

**Bluewater Studio**  
Erich Zuern  
Bluewater.Studio  
Booth: 102

**Museum EXP**  
Cynthia Brown  
museumexp.com  
Booth: 103

**Angle Park, Inc**  
Martin Baumgaertner  
anglepark.com  
Booth: 104

**CatalogIt**  
Dan Rael  
catalogit.app  
Booth: 105

**Asgaard Systems**  
Ben Adamitus  
asgaard-systems.com  
Booth: 106

**Dorfman Museum Figures, Inc.**  
Tim Clifton  
museumfigures.com  
Booth: 107

**culturenut**  
Jessica Grandbois  
culturenut.com  
Booth: 108

**Wastyn & Associates, Inc.**  
Linda Wastyn  
wastynassoc.com  
Booth: 109

**Vuseum Interactive**  
Mark Blanton  
vuseuminteractive.com  
Booth: 110

**Jackson's International Auctioneers & Appraisers**  
Elizabeth Krambeer  
jacksonsauction.com  
Booth: 111

**Association of Midwest Museums**  
Charity Counts  
midwestmuseums.org  
Booth: 112

**Center for Collections Care, Beloit College**  
Nikita Werner  
beloit.edu  
Booth: 200

**Universal Fiber Optic Lighting USA**  
Patric Dietrich  
fiberopticlighting.com  
Booth: 201

**Guardian Fine Art Services**  
Lydelle Abbott Janes  
guardianfineart.com  
Booth: 202

**art2art Circulating Exhibitions**  
Lindsay Peyton  
art2art.org  
Booth: 203

**Kraemer Design + Production**  
Jackie Holthaus  
kd-p.com  
Booth: 204

**Art Display Essentials, a 10-31 Company**  
William Stender  
artdisplay.com  
Booth: 205

**MBA Design and Display**  
John Peterson  
mba-usa.com  
Booth: 300

**Iowa Museum Association**  
Teresa Stenstrup  
iowamuseums.org  
Booth: 301

**Roto**  
Rachel Escusa  
roto.com  
Booth: 302

**Benchmark Imaging & Displays**  
Jim Parsze  
benchmarkimaging.com  
Booth: 303

**Collector Systems**  
Eric Kahan  
collectorsystems.com  
Booth: 304

**Flying Fish**  
Anna Clark  
flyingfishexhibits.com  
Booth: 305

**Midwest Registrars Committee**  
Sarah Humes  
midwestregistrars.org  
Booth: 306

**Historic Voices**  
Laura Keyes  
historicvoices.info  
Booth: 307

**Illinois Association of Museums**  
Sara Phalen  
Jeanne Schultz Angel  
Illinoismuseums.org  
Booth: 400

**Fleming Museum Consulting**  
Bethany Fleming  
flemingmuseumconsulting.com  
Booth: 401

**Taylor Studios, Inc.**  
Joe Reynoso  
taylorstudios.com  
Booth: 402

**McCullough Creative**  
Pat McCullough  
shootforthemoon.com  
Booth: 403

**Museable**  
Wided Khadraoui  
museable.com  
Booth: 404

**Heartland Scenic Studio**  
Todd Rumbaugh  
heartlandscenic.com  
Booth: 405

**Midwest Storage Solutions, Inc.**  
Kyle Roloff  
midweststoragesolutions.com  
Booth: 406

**Donning Company Publishers**  
Jeanie Akins  
donning.com  
Booth: 407

**Edwards Creative**  
Tim Wren  
edwardsideas.com  
Booths: 500 + 501

**Split Rock Studios**  
James Tordoff  
splitrockstudios.com  
Booth: 502

**Upland Exhibits**  
Joel Gaeddert  
uplandexhibits.com  
Booth: 503

# Exhibitors

directory + map — continued

Distinguished Fine Art & Collectibles and HUB International  
Stacy Button  
distinguished.com  
hubinternational.com  
Booth: 504

SAQA Global Exhibitions  
William Reker  
saqa.art  
Booth: 505

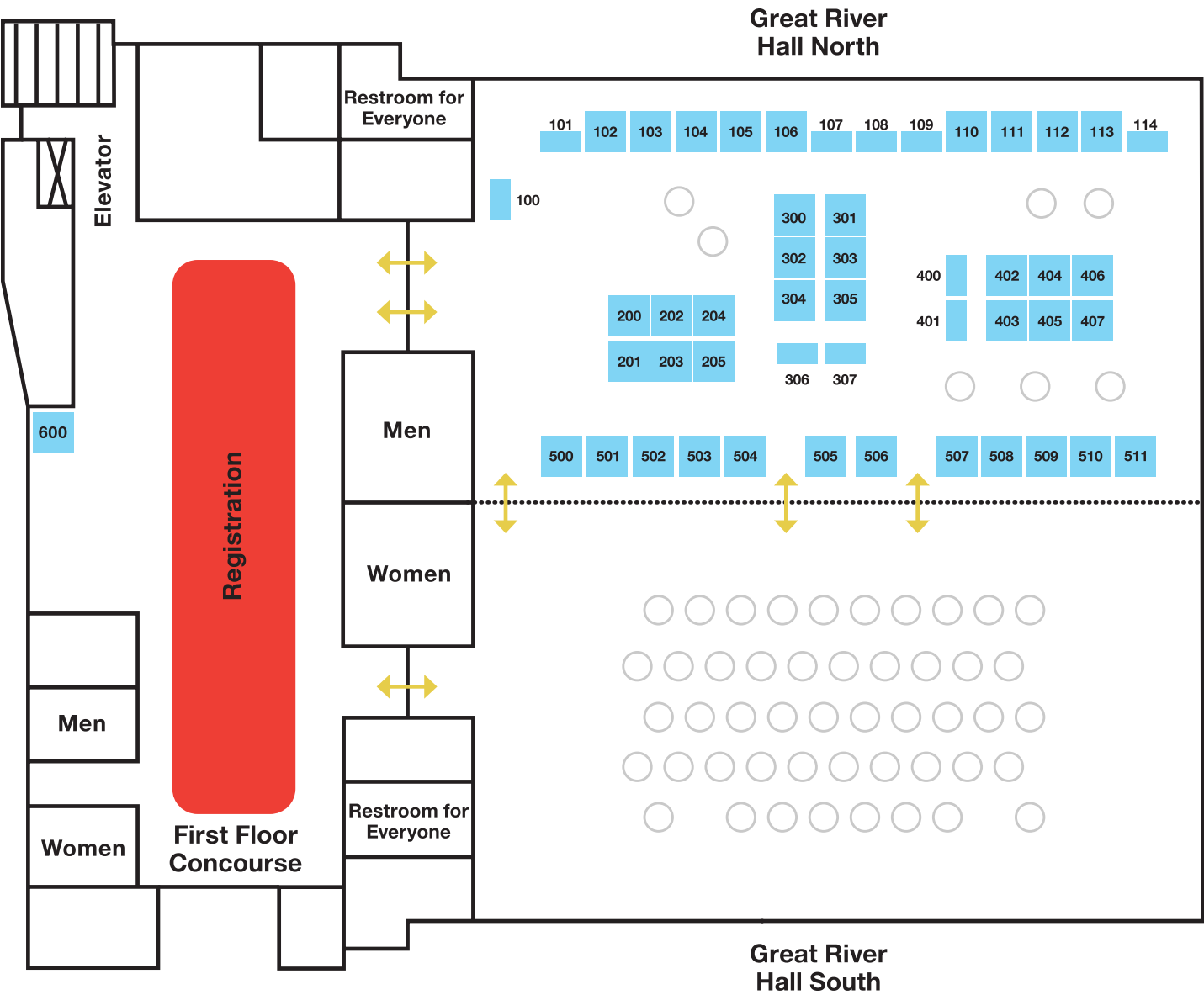
History is My Playground  
Jeanette Watts  
Dancingthruhistory.com  
Booth: 506

Tour-Mate Systems Ltd.  
Aaron Cincinatus  
tourmate.com  
Booth: 507

Great American Songbook Foundation  
Micaela Knox  
thesongbook.org  
Booth: 508

## Lower Concourse

The Storyteller Studios, Inc.  
Josh Hester  
thestorytellerstudios.com  
Booth: 600



# Pre-Conference Tours + Workshops

W

Wednesday, July 30

Capacity is limited. Pre-registration required for all tours.

## Buffalo Bill Museum & Lone Star Steamboat

Guided Tour

2:00 PM – 4:00 PM

SOLD OUT

William F. Cody, or “Buffalo Bill,” was born and raised in LeClaire, IA. An early career as a frontiersman and US Army Scout led him to a flourishing late calling into showmanship with popular tours all throughout the United States and Europe. Established in 1957 in a storefront and now located on the bank of the Mississippi River, **The Buffalo Bill Museum** brings to life the history of its namesake alongside local history for 20,000+ visitors a year. Join staff on a guided tour of their most iconic artifact, the The Lone Star steamboat, and newest exhibits for kids, followed by free time to explore the rest of this museum on your own.

### Location:

Buffalo Bill Museum LeClaire  
199 Front St, Le Claire, IA

## Disruption by Design: Rethinking Workplace Culture

Workshop

2:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Discover how to transform your workplace culture with expert insights, interactive tools, and collaborative activities. Explore equity-focused practices, assess organizational readiness for change, and engage in the dynamic Disruption Bingo game. Leave with actionable strategies and resources to build a more human-centered, inclusive, and purpose-driven organization.

*Presenters: Hillary Spencer, Agency; Jennifer Foley, Horizon Insights; Edward Rodley, The Experience Alchemists*

### Location:

German American Heritage Center and Museum  
712 W 2nd St, Davenport, IA



## John Deere Archives

Guided Tour

2:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Join **Neil Dahlstrom**, Manager of Branded Properties, Heritage, and Library at John Deere, on a tour of their corporate archives in East Moline, Illinois. The John Deere Archives is home to more than 500 pieces of equipment and thousands of records and artifacts – from mechanical designs and commercial film to toy tractors and the plows that started it all.

### Location:

John Deere Archives  
1400 13th Street, East Moline, IL

SOLD OUT



# Pre-Conference Tours + Workshops

**W** Wednesday, July 30 — continued

Capacity is limited. Pre-registration required for all tours.

## Hero Street, U.S.A., + Railroading Heritage of Midwest America

Guided Tour  
2:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Spend your afternoon in Silvis, Illinois, at two heritage sites central to the Quad Cities immigrant story. **Hero Street, U.S.A.** is a memorial park built by a proud Mexican community to honor friends and relatives who served in World War II and the Korean War. A nearby nonprofit organization **Railroading Heritage of Midwest America** preserves, restores, operates, and interprets historic locomotives and rail cars at the site where the first Mexican immigrants arrived in the area to work with the railroad. This pre-conference tour will start at Hero Street and, due to the active railroad between them, attendees will need to drive separately or carpool to the Railroading Heritage site for the second part of the tour.

**Location:**  
Railroading Heritage of Midwest America  
1101 N 2nd Ave, Silvis, IL

Hero Street Memorial Park, Silvis, IL



## Butterworth Center & Deere-Wiman House

Guided Tour + Open House  
3:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Discover the historical charm and community spirit of Butterworth Center & Deere-Wiman House. Enjoy a behind-the-scenes tour of Deere-Wiman House, highlighting its 150 years of technological innovation. Conclude your visit with refreshments and exploration at historic Butterworth Center where we'll share about our unique balance of historic site and community center.

**Location:**  
Butterworth Center & Deere-Wiman House  
1105 8th St, Moline, IL 6126





# Speakers

**Th** keynote / Thursday, July 31, 9:15 AM / Q&A during lunch, 12:00 PM

Sponsor: Roto

Museums have a pivotal role to play in their communities and, as stewards of history and culture, this means that the work is never “easy.” When conflicting viewpoints, changes in staff or leadership, or external pressures disrupt the process, any effort to strengthen our organizations and support a thriving community can feel even more daunting.

There may be turbulence, but we don’t have to stop rowing!

We’re bringing two bright minds to the conversation during the Crosscurrents keynote session to offer insights from their work and provide real world case studies to help you build the case internally for keeping the paddle in the water.

## Bonnie McDonald

President & CEO, Landmarks Illinois

Bonnie McDonald has served as the President and CEO of statewide preservation nonprofit Landmarks Illinois since 2012. Her 23-year career leading placekeeping nonprofits has focused on transformational change to realize relevant community impact.

Bonnie is reframing preservation as a solution for society’s critical needs including climate change mitigation, public health, housing and social justice. She is a thought leader and national voice for evolving preservation at its current inflection point. The James Marston Fitch Charitable Foundation awarded Bonnie its 2020 Mid-Career Fellowship supporting a four-year research initiative culminating in **The Relevancy Guidebook: How We Can Transform the Future of Preservation**, published in 2023. She continues to publish and speak nationally about her findings.

Bonnie chaired the National Preservation Partners Network, co-chaired the Chicago Monuments Project Advisory Committee, and sits on the State of Illinois Route 66 Centennial Commission and National Council on Public History Labor Task Force. She has a Historic Preservation Planning Master’s Degree from Cornell University and an Art History Bachelor’s Degree, Summa Cum Laude, from the University of Minnesota.



## Mark Treskon

Principal Research Associate, Housing and Communities Division, Community and Economic Development, Urban Institute

Mark Treskon, Ph.D., is a principal research associate in the Housing and Communities Division at the Urban Institute. His work focuses on place-based equitable community development, civic assets and the cultural economy, affordable and subsidized housing, and financial capability interventions. Recent projects on civic assets and the arts have included **research to support** the Institute of Museum and Library Services on the design and implementation of the American Latino History and Culture grant program, and a **study of the impacts** on artists and organizations participating in the Creatives Rebuild New York artist employment program. He has published peer-reviewed articles and book chapters on federally-subsidized housing programs, community-based planning, home lending policy advocacy, and the arts economy.

Treskon has a PhD in Sociology from New York University, a Master’s in Urban Planning from the University of Toronto, and a Bachelor’s in Geography from the University of Chicago.

# Speakers

**F** leadership breakfast / Friday, August 1, 8:30 AM

Sponsor: Distinguished Fine Art & Collectibles and HUB International

## Sea Change: Participation, Philanthropy, and Volunteerism Today

Join us for a continental buffet breakfast and a special program designed for directors, CEOs, and leaders at any level and career stage. During a 45-minute talk show style conversation with local leaders, we'll gain a local perspective on a national trend – shifts in participation, philanthropy, and volunteerism. They will share their observations about the sea change underway, how today's political climate may have an impact, and how they are adapting to find stability despite the crosscurrents. Hear their perspectives and bring your own burning questions to the conversation!



Moderator:  
**Dave Herrell**  
President and CEO,  
Visit Quad Cities



**Jen Lewis-Snyder**  
Executive Director,  
The Cultural Trust

Panelists



**Betsy Matt Turner**  
Putnam Museum and  
Science Center

**Kaleigh Trammell**  
Quad Cities Community  
Foundation

**Ryan Wille**  
Quad City Botanical  
Center



# Speakers

**F** flash talks / Friday, August 1, 9:30 AM

Sponsor: Visit Quad Cities

## Samuel McCullum

Director, STEAM On Wheels

Samuel McCullum, originally from Chicago, is a distinguished innovator and committed community advocate. Holding a bachelor's degree in engineering technology and a master's in community and economic development, Samuel is driven by his passion for education and effecting positive change. He has made a significant impact through mentoring in robotics programs for youth. His dedication also permeates the cultural sphere, where he serves as a respected board member, enhancing initiatives related to the arts and community connectivity.

Since its inception in 2018, **STEAM on Wheels** has evolved from an all-volunteer effort to a staff-led organization over the past year. This period has witnessed significant growth, reaching a current total of 3,200 students and expanding community support, as demonstrated by an increase in partnerships and fundraising.



## Ann McGlynn

Executive Director, Tapestry Farms

Ann McGlynn is the founder and executive director of **Tapestry Farms**, a nonprofit urban farm system that invests in refugees who live in the Quad Cities. She grew up on a small family farm in Clinton County, Iowa. She has a bachelor's degree in journalism and a master's degree in business administration from the University of Iowa. Ann lives in Davenport with her family, which includes her husband, two college-age sons, and two cats.

Tapestry Farms' work involves social services support for refugee families, growing food using traditional and hydroponic methods at 10 sites in the Quad-Cities, and improving the Quad-Cities' welcoming infrastructure so that all can engage fully in what our community has to offer. We work with families who come from Syria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Afghanistan, and Haiti.





# Speakers

**F** flash talks / Friday, August 1, 9:30 AM — continued

Sponsor: Visit Quad Cities

## Maria Ontiveros

Cofounder and President, Mercado on Fifth

Maria Ontiveros is the Corporate Community Liaison for Illinois Quad Cities-based Group O, one of the largest Hispanic-owned companies in the U.S. She is also Cofounder and President of **Mercado on Fifth**, a nonprofit organization that hosts a weekly Hispanic night market featuring food trucks, vendor booths, Latin entertainment and activities for kids. Ontiveros helped launch the organization in 2016 and soon after started the Spanish language Food Sanitation Management program at Black Hawk College, helping Spanish speakers become certified to open food service businesses. Mercado has since helped create and/or provided a platform for over 70 new minority-owned businesses in the Quad Cities.

Ontiveros, a 2008 graduate of Bettendorf High School and a 2012 graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, also serves as a board member of the Rock Island County Metropolitan Mass Transit District (MetroLINK) and Visit Quad Cities.



## Gaye Shannon Burnett

Artist, Activist, Cultural Leader

Cofounder, Azubuike African American Council for the Arts

Gaye Shannon Burnett is a dedicated artist, community activist, and cultural leader from Rock Island, Illinois, whose work has profoundly shaped the Quad Cities through decades of artistic engagement and community building. She co-founded the **Azubuike African American Council for the Arts**, an organization devoted to bridging racial divides by empowering at-risk youth through the arts and sparking broader conversations about race relations.

For over 25 years, Gaye has been a driving force in the region, creating transformative experiences in drama, art, and Black History education through after-school programs, summer camps, and youth-centered initiatives. The Ubuntu philosophy and the healing power of Restorative Practices deeply inspire her work. As a certified Circle Keeper, she has helped to facilitate community dialogue and healing circles, including Azubuike's Ubuntu Project.

Throughout her multifaceted career, Gaye has used the arts as a powerful catalyst for healing, education, and social change. Her enduring commitment to cultural equity, creative expression, and youth empowerment continues to leave a lasting impact on her community and beyond.





# In-Person Sessions

**Th** Thursday, July 31

This year's conference takes place virtually on Wednesday, July 23, and in-person in the Quad Cities on July 30-August 2.

In-person sessions will take place at RiverCenter in downtown Davenport, IA.

## Session Tracks

The conference has curated tracks to help you plan your conference experience.

The tracks for this year include:

- Collections Stewardship
- Development & Outreach
- Education & Programs
- Exhibitions
- Leadership & Operations  
Sponsor: BNIM
- Museums 101

## 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

### Collections Activation Policies That Work

Track: Collections Stewardship

Location: Ohio River Room, RiverCenter North

Traditionally, museum collections have existed within a binary, characterized by either permanent collections or those with a temporary designation, such as a study or education status. What if there were additional options? This session examines strategies for navigating the tensions between activating collections and historic spaces while managing both responsibly.

*Presenters: Christine McNulty, Naper Settlement; Leslie Mio, Cranbrook Center for Collections and Research; Will Buhlig, McCormick House at Cantigny*

### Leveraging the Deere Effect

Track: Development & Outreach

Leadership & Operations

Location: Wabash-Wisconsin Room, RiverCenter South

Recently, Visit Quad Cities, the Figge Art Museum, and John Deere have collaborated on several exhibitions and experiences for visitors and residents. How did these public-private partnerships come to be, how is it going, and what's next? Discover early lessons learned from each organization, and their plans for what's next.

*Presenters: Neil Dahlstrom, John Deere; Brandon Jens, John Deere; Dave Herrell, Visit Quad Cities; Melissa Mohr, Figge Art Museum*

### The Mobile Museum: Building Community Without a Building

Track: Education & Programs

Location: Des Moines-Wapsipinicon Room,  
RiverCenter North

Bring the museum to the community when they can't come to you. Learn how the Illinois State Museum's On the Road programming showed up for the public at a time when the museum's building was inaccessible. Reevaluate your programming, consider alternative venues, and dive deep into your community..

*Presenters: Corinne Claycomb, Illinois State Museum; Alex Ruger, Illinois State Museum*

# In-Person Sessions

**Th** Thursday, July 31

## History Happens Now: Collaborative Exhibitions in Small Museums

Track: Exhibitions

Location: Iowa-Missouri Room, RiverCenter North

In this session, learn how the German American Heritage Center and Museum is prioritizing collaborations with other institutions and integrating projects like exhibitions, programming, and events to attract new and more diverse visitors. Participants will gain comprehensive insights into crafting compelling in-house exhibitions and thematic programming.

*Presenters: Clare Tobin, German American Heritage Center; Victoria Thaw, World Relief Quad Cities*

## Strategic Planning Trends: How a Museum Can Build Inclusion, Financial Sustainability, and a Successful Capital Campaign

Track: Development & Outreach

Location: Arkansas-Platte Room

Join Rebekah Beaulieu, Taft Museum President & CEO, and Jim Bush, Winkler Group CEO, to explore strategic planning trends and what's working for museums. Using case studies, they'll identify a process that leads to greater impact, more community inclusion, sustainable revenue, and a museum positioned for a successful capital campaign.

*Presenters: Jim Bush, Winkler Consulting Group Inc; Rebekah Beaulieu, Taft Museum of Art*

## 1:30 PM – 2:30 PM

## Navigating Turbulent Times: Minimizing Losses from Flood and Water Damage Events

Track: Collections Stewardship

Location: Ohio River Room, RiverCenter North

In these turbulent times, museums and institutions face unprecedented challenges in safeguarding their invaluable collections. This session will provide you with strategic insights and practical tips for loss prevention and risk preparedness, focusing on common insurance losses such as floods and water damage to collections.

*Presenters: Eric Dougal, HUB International Limited; Erika Witler, Distinguished, Fine Art & Collectibles; Brianna Kim, African American Museum of Iowa*

## Failing to Plan is Planning to Fail: Successfully Planning a Museum Capital Project

Track: Development & Outreach

Location: Wabash-Wisconsin Room, RiverCenter South

Anticipating or beginning a building project, or even dreaming of the future? Join this crash course in successfully planning for a capital project led by a panel of multi-disciplinary museum planning, design, and construction experts. Learn where to begin and how to plan for funding and managing costs.

*Presenters: Sara Urizar, SmithGroup; Rodrigo Manriquez, SmithGroup; Etienne Nel, Cumming Group; Wes Mosman Block, Wisconsin Historical Society*

# In-Person Sessions

**Th** Thursday, July 31

## Navigating Crosscurrents in Education: School Engagement In and Out of the Museum

Track: Education & Programs

Location: Des Moines-Wapsipinicon Room,  
RiverCenter North

This session will discuss how one museum supports art education by navigating connections with local schools among changing populations and trends. The presentation and discussion will focus on serving the needs of multiple school districts and our community through outreach and integrated school programming that generate annual events and exhibitions.

*Presenters: Heather Aaronson Martin, Figge Art Museum; Laura Wriedt, Figge Art Museum; Kelsey Vandercoy, Figge Art Museum*

## Lincoln's Springfield: Connection Over Convention

Track: Exhibitions

Location: Iowa-Missouri Room, RiverCenter North

Join Greg Dietzenbach at AMM 2025 for a lively and enlightening presentation on crafting exhibits that connect with young audiences and leave a lasting impression. He'll explore these lessons by highlighting Lincoln's Springfield, an immersive exhibit that aimed to reach the notoriously elusive 10-to-14-year-old demographic.

*Presenter: Greg Dietzenbach, McCullough Creative*

## Navigating the Turbulent Waters of DEIA

Track: Leadership & Operations

Location: Arkansas-Platte Room, RiverCenter South

"Navigating the Turbulent Waters of DEIA" will delve into how politics impact the policies at museums and cultural institutions. We cannot ignore the laws and regulations that impact the livelihood of our communities, staff and volunteers. Let's learn how to advocate for a workplace where everyone feels they belong!

*Presenter: Dr. De'Andrea Matthews, Detroit Zoological Society*

## Navigating Crosscurrents: Building Strategic Museum Operations That Deliver Exceptional Experiences

Track: Museums 101 / Leadership & Operations

Location: Illinois River Room, RiverCenter North

Learn how to navigate the "crosscurrents" of museum operations to create exceptional experiences for all. This session offers scalable strategies for optimizing operations, engaging communities, and enhancing guest satisfaction, with practical tools and examples for institutions of any size.

*Presenter: Chris Morehead, Newfields*

## 3:00 PM – 4:00 PM

## Ask the Registrar: An Open Roundtable to Discuss Collection Conundrums, Quandaries & Questions

Track: Collections Stewardship

Location: Ohio River Room, RiverCenter North

Navigating the 'Crosscurrents' of the museum collections profession? Join our 'Ask the Registrar' roundtable! Share your challenges, learn from diverse colleagues, and gain practical solutions for collection care. Our expert panelists will guide open dialogue, fostering a supportive network and empowering you to navigate the future with confidence.

*Presenters: Christy Kincaid, Kalamazoo Valley Museum; Marina Mayne, The Raupp Museum; Jennifer Rigsby, Newfields; Sarah Humes, Grand Rapids Public Museum*

## The Magic and Mysteries of Planned Giving

Track: Development & Outreach

Location: Wabash-Wisconsin Room, RiverCenter South

Even if your role in the museum doesn't involve planned giving, you will benefit from thoughtful insights about the field and how planned giving should be a part of every advancement program.

*Presenters: Bill Lynerd, The Field Museum; Jacob Masters, Stan Hywet Hall & Gardens*

# In-Person Sessions

**Th** Thursday, July 31

## **From the Museum to the Classroom: A Case Study on Cultivating Unique Community Collaborations**

Track: Education & Programs

Location: Des Moines-Wapsipinicon Room, RiverCenter North

Unleash Creativity: Discover a dynamic model for museum-school collaboration. Learn how the German American Heritage Center + Museum partners with a local school and a design firm to provide students with unique, real-world learning experiences. Explore innovative approaches to engage students and enhance your museum's community impact.

*Presenters: Aaron Baker, German American Heritage Center and Museum; Colleen McCarty-Tomlinson, Creative Arts Academy (Sudlow Middle School); Tim Wren, Edwards Creative*

## **Seeing the Forest for the Trees: Increasing Inclusivity and Accessibility in Black Earth/Big River**

Track: Exhibitions

Location: Iowa-Missouri Room, RiverCenter North

Black Earth/Big River, an immersive natural history exhibit at the Putnam Museum and Science Center, was recently updated to introduce the scientific knowledge of Native Americans (Traditional Ecological Knowledge/TEK). Learn the benefits of integrating cultural content into science galleries, and the challenges of accessibility in a 25-year-old exhibit.

*Presenters: Christine Chandler, Putnam Museum and Science Center; Nora Moriarty, Putnam Museum & Science Center; Matt Pulford, Putnam Museum & Science Center*

## **Paddling your own kayak? How to get your teams into the same boat for more efficiency and impact.**

Track: Leadership & Operations

Location: Arkansas-Platte Room, RiverCenter South

We are perfectly efficient and relevant - said no museum leader ever! If capacity constraints and siloed mentalities are keeping you from operating at what you KNOW could be a higher level, come join us for examples and ideas about aligning your organization's work for greater impact and mission achievement.

*Presenters: Brenda Raney, Minnesota Historical Society; Sam Moore, Missouri Historical Society*

## **Maximizing Your Resources: How to Harness the Power of RFPs**

Track: Museums 101

Location: Illinois River Room, RiverCenter North

RFPs get a bad rap—but RFPs can be a game-changer in how you run projects of any size, making strong choices for your organization and the financial bottom line. We will leverage case studies to showcase the roles that RFPs play in projects ranging from gallery renovations to new museums.

*Presenters: Cynthia Brown, Museum EXP LLC; Jesse Kramer, Conner Prairie Museum; Brant Hendricks, Taylor Studios; Sarah Lima, Roto*



# In-Person Sessions

**Th** Thursday, July 31

**4:00 PM – 5:00 PM**

## Posters + Conversation Stations

Posters and Conversation Stations can be found in Grand Hall and Grand Hall South during the afternoon reception.

### Authoritarianism vs The Arts: A Historiography of Regime Attacks Against Arts & How Others Fixed it

Track: Collections Stewardship

“Authoritarianism vs The Arts” is a presentation discussing trends of suppression by authoritarian regimes with methods historically used & the ways that the intellectual & arts communities have rebelled against them, with mention of ways nation-states have insured the future safety of the Arts via legislative changes following regime collapse.

*Presenter: Charlotte Drennen-Wherry*

### Building Resilient Organizations Article Discussion

Track: Leadership & Operations

In this session/conversation participants will engage with Maurice Mitchell's article Building Resilient Organizations, which participants will read before the conversation. The article argues that individuals engaged in social justice work need to intentionally explore tensions within their movements. Participants will grapple with complex issues and sit in the uncomfortable both/and space.

*Presenter: Joe Imholte, American Swedish Institute*

### Creating Inclusive Children's Activities at the Anderson Museum of Art

Track: Education & Programs

This project explores how creating activities aligned with exhibit themes and academic standards helped engage children at the Anderson Museum of Art.

*Presenter: Trey Whitted*

### Curriculum meets collections: Crosscurrents of Education and Curatorial

Track: Museums 101

Explore collaborative approaches to exhibit and program design that connect curatorial expertise with educational strategies. This session demonstrates how museums can create engaging experiences for diverse audiences by integrating historical scholarship and educational methods. Presenters share practical insights from projects that balance storytelling, interactivity, and inclusivity.

*Presenters: Jessica Toran, Naper Settlement; Andrea Field, Naper Settlement*

### Deconstructing and Rethinking Origin Stories in Northern Illinois

Track: Education & Programs

Most of the communities in northern Illinois share a similar origin story that includes a simplified history prior to the community's founding year or early establishment. In reflection of the nation's 250 commemoration, discover ways to rethink how we tell our founding stories for a more whole history.

*Presenter: Jeanne Schultz Angel, Illinois Association of Museums*

### Diversifying Collections

Track: Collections Stewardship

Join the Diversifying Collections Conversation Station to explore how museums expand representation, engage communities in acquisitions, and transform exhibitions and programming. Discover the challenges and opportunities of building a more inclusive collection and shaping the future of cultural stewardship. Don't miss this insightful discussion!

*Presenters: Joshua Johnson, Figge Art Museum; Vanessa Sage, Figge Art Museum*

# In-Person Sessions

**Th** Thursday, July 31

## Food and Family History: Emerging Possibilities

Track: Exhibitions

When the Angel left the hearth and created the community cookbook, she created a wealth of documentation of culinary history, civic organizations and the women who led them. As the genre expands, country fair heirloom recipes collections and global tools like the Sifter present and preserve family and food history.

*Presenters: Catherine Lambrecht, Highland Park Historical Society; Nancy Webster, Highland Park Historical Society*

## Haunts and Happenings: Holistic Approaches to Community Ghostlore and Public History

Track: Education & Programs

Is your museum haunted? Learn strategies to engage the folk beliefs of visitors without compromising the stewardship of your mission.

*Presenter: Devin Payne, Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites*

## Historic Homes Programs: Honorary Landmarking for communities with deep roots. Who? What? When? Why? How?

Track: Education & Programs

Join the Downers Grove Museum as we share the ins and outs of creating an honorary Historic Home Program. We will share how our program developed through the years, including challenges we've faced, partnerships developed, as well as how to continue gaining traction in your community.

*Presenters: Nina Fuscaldo, Downers Grove Museum; Charlotte Holtzen, Downers Grove Museum*

## Joseph Moore Museum and Earlham College: Partners for the Next Generation of Museum Professionals

Track: Leadership & Operations

Earlham College's Museum Studies Program and Joseph Moore Museum share a vision for training museum professionals combining classroom and hands-on museum experiences for high school students through post-baccalaureates. We'll share insights from 15 years of training undergraduates and facilitate discussion with the professional community on the expectations of new employees.

*Presenters: Ann-Eliza Lewis, PhD, Joseph Moore Museum Earlham College; Heather Lerner, PhD, Joseph Moore Museum Earlham College*

## Labeling with Purpose: Crafting Labels That Engage and Inform

Track: Exhibitions

Effective exhibit labels can enhance visitor experience—but only if they're concise and purposeful. Join us for an interactive session where you'll learn to refine labels, understand interpretive hierarchy, and apply best practices to create clear, engaging text that draws visitors in.

*Presenters: Ryley Lamb, Edwards Creative; Sydney Ion, Edwards Creative*

## Leading Through Change: A CEO Transition Amid a Major Museum Transformation

Track: Leadership & Operations

Learn how to navigate leadership transitions during pivotal moments of organizational change. This dynamic panel will share real-world strategies for maintaining momentum, aligning stakeholders, and fostering trust during major initiatives. Gain practical tools and insights to ensure smooth transitions while driving innovation, growth, and long-term success for your institution.

*Presenters: Cindy Diehl Yang, Putnam Museum & Science Center; Kelly Lao, Putnam Museum & Science Center; Betsy Matt Turner, Putnam Museum & Science Center; ScottPeake, Putnam Museum & Science Center*

# In-Person Sessions

**Th** Thursday, July 31

## Let's Pretend: Helping Museums Use Play to Support Learning and Foster Resilience

Track: Museums 101

This session will illuminate the science behind pretend play and highlight its potential to support learning and resilience at museums. Attendees will have an opportunity to create and workshop ideas for incorporating this flexible, low-cost activity into new or existing exhibits and programs for any age group and any topic.

*Presenter: Alaina Dooley*

## Managing Blurred lines in Museum Roles

Track: Leadership & Operations

You are not alone! Discover how to navigate blurred professional roles in museums. Transform staffing challenges into collaborative opportunities for a vibrant, efficient museum environment.

*Presenters: Caroline O'Sullivan-Jens, Family Museum; Kim Kidwell, Family Museum*

## Museum Travel Program Case Study: Egypt

Track: Education & Programs

Museums bring people to the world through their collections - what if they could also do it through travel programs? Learn about a recent Egypt travel program experience organized for the Putnam Museum.

*Presenter: Onnica Marquez, St. Ambrose University Library*

## Somebody Call 9-1-1: Preparing for the Inevitable Emergency at your Museum

Track: Leadership & Operations

Emergencies in public places are inevitable. How we prepare for and manage these emergencies sets us apart as we navigate the crosscurrents of the museum profession in 2025.

*Presenter: James Sturgill*

## Strengthening Museum Education through Curriculum Guides at the Anderson Museum of Art

Track: Education & Programs

This session offers practical strategies to strengthen connections between museum education and formal education within communities. Using the Anderson Museum of Art as a case study, the presenter will demonstrate how curriculum guides enhanced both the museum's offerings and community engagement while providing step-by-step guidance for creating effective educator materials.

*Presenter: Trey Whitted*

## Uphill Battles in Visitor Services, how the Putnam Museum successfully handled challenges from COVID to Construction

Track: Development & Outreach

If you think you have problems in your museum, learn how the Putnam Museum faced 5 years of difficulties from COVID closure and museum revitalization construction, with a CEO change in midstream! Hear how the Putnam Museum Visitor Services staff kept their sanity and provided great experiences for their guests.

*Presenters: Emily VanWaardhuizen, Putnam Museum and Science Center; Amanda Crosby, Putnam Museum and Science Center; Chelesy Wolf, Putnam Museum and Science Center; Christie Mosier, Putnam Museum and Science Center*

## Voices of the Past: High School Historians Bring Stories to Life

Track: Education & Programs

This presentation will demonstrate the power of collaborative oral history projects to inspire young historians, enrich museum collections, and connect communities through shared storytelling. By the end of the session, attendees will feel equipped to foster similar partnerships that bring history to life for the next generation.

*Presenter: Stephanie Shelton, Hinckley Historical Society*

# In-Person Sessions



Friday, August 1

## 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

### One Size Doesn't Fit All: A Continuous Life of a Collections Management Policy

Track: Collections Stewardship

Location: Ohio River Room, RiverCenter North

A good Collections Management Policy (CMP) guides the life of a collection responsibly and consistently. Updates are inevitable and necessary to reflect current best practices and institutional needs. We will offer insights on how we navigated, negotiated and compromised to upgrade or create a CMP that fits our institution.

*Presenters: Kaman Hillenburg, Evansville Museum of Arts, History & Science; Amanda Bryden, Illinois State Museum; Cassie Sacotte, Jewish Museum Milwaukee*

### Concierge Content: An Innovative Visitor-First Marketing Strategy

Track: Development & Outreach

Location: Wabash-Wisconsin Room, RiverCenter South

Increase attendance by removing your audiences' perceived barriers. It can be as simple as reminding them how easy and fun it is to visit. Your visitors will feel like they have a personal concierge and your visitation numbers will show it! In this 60-minute workshop you'll learn how to create a content-focused marketing plan with a service mindset designed to engage audiences and boost visitation.

*Presenter: Despi Mayes*

### Building Navigation Technology and Other Free Ways to Increase Accessibility

Track: Exhibitions

Location: Iowa-Missouri Room, RiverCenter North

The State Historical Museum of Iowa has recently made significant advances in the accessibility of exhibits for people with disabilities. Lindsay Keast and Bettina Dolinsek will share their successes and challenges with various building navigation technologies. They will also discuss other free ways to make museums more accessible.

*Presenters: Lindsay Keast, State Historical Society of Iowa; Bettina Dolinsek, Iowa Council of the United Blind*

### Steering the Ship or Rocking the Boat?: How to Navigate the Choppy Waters of Museum Boards

Track: Leadership & Operations

Location: Arkansas-Platte Room, RiverCenter South

Turn your museum board into your secret weapon! Your board can be your greatest asset—boosting engagement, financial sustainability, and advocacy—but it also comes with challenges that test even seasoned leaders. Join this lively session to tackle the good, bad, and messy, and leave ready to build a high-performing, collaborative board.

*Presenters: Brian Failing, Aurora Regional Fire Museum; Sarah Richardt, Grover Center Museum and Historical Society*

### Building Belonging: A Midwest Museum for All

Track: Leadership & Operations

Location: Des Moines-Wapsipinicon Room, RiverCenter North

How can museums create trusted spaces through the built environment when capital projects often lag behind the pace of societal change? The Springfield Art Museum (MO) expansion and renovation project serves as a case study for navigating various crosscurrents while staying true to a vision of a museum for all.

*Presenters: Hans Nettelblad, BNIM; Nick Nelson, Springfield Art Museum*

### Museums Advancing Racial Justice: A Case Study from the 2024 Convening

Track: Museums 101

Location: Illinois River Room, RiverCenter North

Interested in learning how your museum can be racially inclusive in your programming and beyond? This session will provide insights into creating diverse community connections that bring relevance to your museum.

*Presenters: Kelly Lao, Putnam Museum & Science Center; Christina Kastell, Putnam Museum & Science Center; Scott Peake, Putnam Museum & Science Center; Robby Callahan Schreiber, Science Museum of Minnesota (virtual)*



# In-Person Sessions

**F** Friday, August 1

## 2:30 PM - 3:30 PM

### Working with Art Shippers: How to get the most out of your dollar

Track: Collections Stewardship

Location: Ohio River Room, RiverCenter North

Museum funding is at an especially turbulent time. Registrars are expected to stretch budgets further. This session will speak directly to those museum professionals that handle loans and acquisitions by covering what art shippers do, when it is appropriate to use an art shipper, and suggesting ideas for reducing cost.

*Presenters: Katie Steffan, Guardian Fine Art Services; Katy Berggruen, Milwaukee Art Museum*

### Power of Partnership

Track: Development & Outreach

Location: Wabash-Wisconsin Room, RiverCenter South

Unlock the power of partnerships with the Putnam Museum, Quad Cities Cultural Trust, West Chicago City Museum, and Arts DuPage! Explore inspiring case studies, discover practical strategies for collaboration, and learn how to strengthen your institution's impact. Engage in interactive discussions and leave with tools to create innovative, sustainable partnerships in your own community.

*Presenters: Cindy Diehl Yang, Putnam Museum & Science Center; Jen Lewis-Snyder, Quad City Cultural Trust; Sara Phalen, West Chicago City Museum and Arts DuPage*

### Navigating the Partnership Waters: Keeping a Steady Partnership in the Midst of Changes

Track: Education & Programs

Location: Des Moines-Wapsipinicon Room, RiverCenter North

Explore a case study of one museum's sustained and multi-faceted relationship with a local school district. Discover the STEAM learning programs created through listening and learning, and participate in one of the activities yourself! Discuss what strategies you can use to sustain a partnership that can thrive through difficult changes.

*Presenters: Peyton Reicherts, DuPage Children's Museum; Jessie Janik, DuPage Children's Museum*

### Revitalizing on a Dime: Low-Budget Strategies for Museum Renovations

Track: Exhibitions

Location: Iowa-Missouri Room, RiverCenter North

Your exhibit is demanding a refresh and major experiences are failing—but lack the resources to completely redevelop it. We've all been there. Let's get scrappy! Through this interactive session, you will learn through the case studies of seasoned exhibitions professionals of how they flexed their creativity to retool their exhibits.

*Presenters: Cynthia Brown, Museum EXP; John Shaw, Museum EXP*

### The Good, The Bad, and The Scary: Scalable Examples of AI in Museums

Track: Leadership & Operations

Location: Arkansas-Platte Room, RiverCenter South

There are numerous ways AI applications integrate themselves into workflows and content development at museums. From the helpful and harmless applications, to the bold and transformative, this session will discuss real-world examples of the good, the bad, and the scary of incorporating AI at your museum.

*Presenters: Jeanne Schultz Angel, Naper Settlement; Kelly Klobucher, Joliet Area Historical Museums; Nicole Collings, Grover Center Museum and Historical Society*

### Testing...Testing...Is this thing on?: Podcasting 101

Track: Museums 101

Location: Illinois River Room, RiverCenter North

Learn from the hosts of Unbound: A Collection of Indiana Stories, a podcast from the Indiana Historical Society, about their podcasting journey and the steps you should consider for starting your own.

*Presenters: Casey Terry, Indiana Historical Society; Regan Steimel-Alveal, Indiana Historical Society*

# In-Person Sessions

**F** Friday, August 1

**4:00 PM - 5:00 PM**

## Renovating for the Future: Works on Paper Collection Stewardship in the Twenty-First Century

Track: Collections Stewardship

Location: Ohio River Room, RiverCenter North

Join the Detroit Institute of Arts and SmithGroup to explore the challenges, opportunities, and processes associated with leveraging infrastructure upgrades to modernize storage and gallery spaces of a works-on-paper collection. The presentation will address environmental control considerations, strategic energy conservation measures, and design opportunities and solutions.

*Presenters: Nancy Barr, Nancy Barr/Detroit Institute of Arts; Jessica Chesu, SmithGroup; Megan Major, Detroit Institute of Arts; Brian Noonan, SmithGroup*

## Rivers of Discovery: Navigating Learning Through Play in Museum Spaces

Track: Education & Programs

Location: Des Moines-Wapsipinicon Room, RiverCenter North

Discover how hands-on, play-based learning in museums nurtures children's cognitive, social, and emotional growth. Learn from experts across science, history, and art museums as they share interactive strategies that foster critical thinking, empathy, and resilience. Don't miss this opportunity to transform your approach to engaging young learners!

*Presenters: Brian Allen, Quad City Arts; Heather Aaronson Martin, Figge Art Museum; Lakin Sheeder, Putnam Museum and Science Center*

## Navigating Collaborative Exhibit Development

Track: Exhibitions

Location: Iowa-Missouri Room, RiverCenter North

Navigating Collaborative Exhibit Development tackles the intricacies of creating meaningful exhibits today. This session provides tangible resources for working with varied communities and stakeholders; creating easy to use documents to guide planning, writing, and oversight; and creatively addressing design, budget, and schedule constraints that embrace varied perspectives, goals, and outcomes.

*Presenters: Bethany Fleming, Fleming Museum Consulting; Geoff Woodcox, Ruth Mott Foundation; Peter Hyde, Peter Hyde Design*

## Ready, Set, Succeed: Gallery Renovations and New Exhibit Project Prep Done Right

Track: Exhibitions

Location: Wabash-Wisconsin Room, RiverCenter South

Preparing for a new project can be daunting, but with the right strategy and internal preparation, your museum can set the stage for success. This engaging panel brings together a seasoned museum professional and an exhibit design expert to share practical insights, lessons learned, and proven approaches to ensure your project runs smoothly from concept to completion. Attendees will gain a roadmap for aligning stakeholder goals, assembling a team of staff and contractors, managing budgets and timelines, and avoiding common pitfalls—all while keeping mission and visitor experience at the forefront. Whether you're embarking on a new building, a major renovation, or an exhibit overhaul, this session will equip you with the tools to start strong and finish even stronger.

*Presenters: Elizabeth Fleming, Roto; Lana Paris, Discovery Center Museum; Andy Allison, National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium*



AMM

# In-Person Sessions

**F** Friday, August 1

## Congratulations! You're a Museum Director! Now what?

Track: Leadership & Operations

Location: Arkansas-Platte Room, RiverCenter South

This panel discussion helps museum directors and CEOs continue their professional growth by exploring advanced leadership development opportunities, emerging trends and technologies, and strategies for ongoing learning. Experts will provide practical tools and insights to help directors refine their leadership skills, innovate, and ensure long-term success for their institutions.

*Presenters: Matthew Toland, Museum Consultant; Charity Counts, Association of Midwest Museums; Jeff Capps, Iowa Children's Museum; Darren Macfee, Nonprofit Wizards*

## Learning Our ABC's Again: Accessibility, Belonging, and Community

Track: Museum 101

Education & Programs

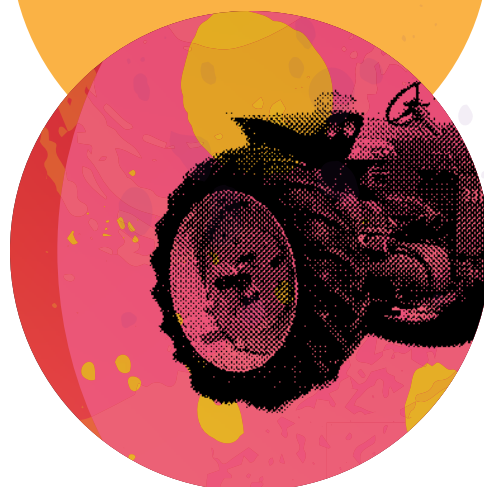
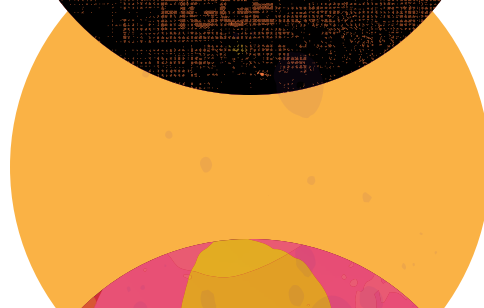
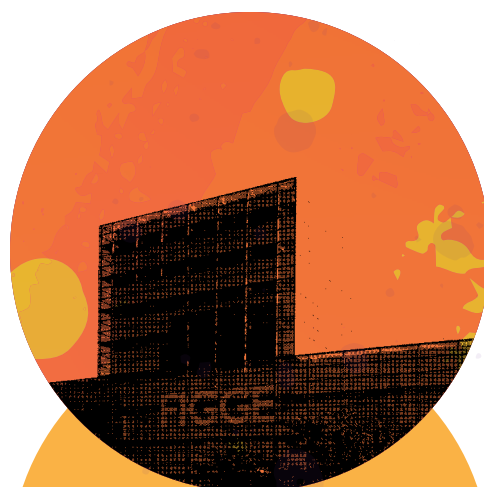
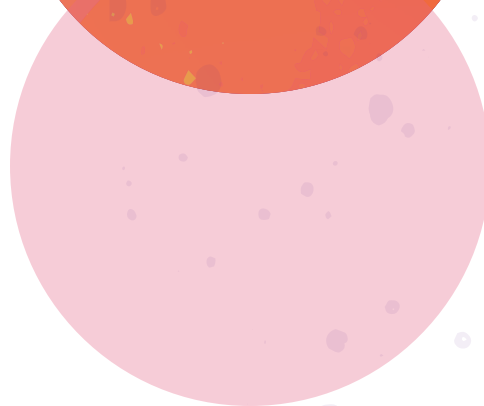
Location: Illinois River Room, RiverCenter North

Let's re-learn our ABC's!

- A: Why do some people feel they have "A"ccess?
- B: How do we make museums places for others to feel they "B"elong?
- C: Should we create "C"ommunity content?

We'll deep-dive into practical applications! Bring ideas & stories of access, a sense of belonging, and inclusion.

*Presenters: Kara Fedje, Freelance Researcher; Monae Verbeke, Institute For Learning Innovation*





# In-Person Events

SOLD OUT

W

## Quad Cities West End Museum Hop

Wednesday, July 30

6:00–9:00 PM (5:30–9:30 PM, including travel time)

Featuring:

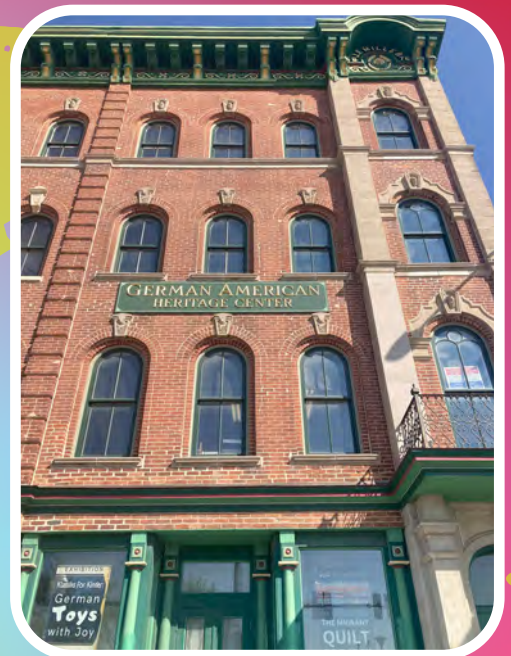
- > German-American Heritage Center and Museum, Davenport
- > Putnam Museum and Science Center, Davenport
- > Quad City Botanical Center, Rock Island

Build your own adventure on opening night during the West End Museum Hop! Catch a ride with AMM to explore three awesome museums in the western Quad Cities.

Enjoy guided or self-guided tours of the German-American Heritage Center and Museum's new *All Aboard! Children's Activity Space*, the *German Immigrant Experience* gallery, and a print exhibition featuring masterworks of German Expressionists. Sample 5 styles of German beer and shop unique German crafts and gifts in the museum's shop.

During your stop at the Putnam Museum & Science Center, join staff on behind-the-scenes tours of their weird and wonderful collection, check out the brand new Vault visible collection, and explore any of their nine indoor and outdoor gallery spaces – from the *Common Ground: Our Voice, Our Stories* regional history exhibit and Quad City Innovators to the recently enhanced natural history exhibit *Black Earth | Big River* and the Putnam's *Pollinator Garden*.

Explore the Quad City Botanical Center gardens and around 300 pieces of hand blown glass in their Hot Glass exhibit. Take a tour of the *Tropical Sun Garden* or *Children's Garden*, featuring a mini version of the Mississippi River (just longer than a football field!) surrounded by native plants. While onsite, you can also check out the Botanical Center's new mobile program, the *Plant Discovery Bus*, and the Freight Farm Hydroponics container, a partnership with Flash Talks featured organization, Tapestry Farms.



German-American Heritage Center and Museum



Quad City Botanical Center



Putnam Museum and Science Center



# In-Person Events

Th

## Light up the Night! An Evening at Figge Art Museum

Thursday, July 31  
6:00–8:30 PM

Sponsor: Flying Fish

SOLD OUT

Featuring:

Figge Art Museum, Davenport

This community-centered museum is a gathering place for residents and visitors alike to experience and enjoy the visual arts. The Figge's landmark glass building, designed by British architect David Chipperfield, is home to one of the Midwest's finest art collections and presents world-class exhibitions, art classes, lectures and special events that attract visitors of all ages.

During Light up the Night!, we will celebrate the Figge's 100th anniversary in a private reception overlooking Davenport's Mississippi Riverfront. Feast your eyes on the dazzling *Evanescent Field* installation by internationally acclaimed light artist Leo Villareal that will illuminate the four exterior walls of the museum, explore the summer exhibition *Future Now: Virtual Sneakers to Cutting-Edge Kicks*, and view Modern and American works on display from a major donation received in 2024. Take part in behind-the-scenes tours of the *Evanescent Field* installation, Studio School, and of course the museum Vault!

A TASK party will take place in the museum lobby for all to enjoy. Inspired by New-York based artist Oliver Herring, a TASK party is an event in which party members draw tasks from a bucket, perform the task, write a new one for the next person, and continue. This encourages participatory, open-ended fun where creativity rules!

The Figge Art Museum will be open to the public for free from 5-8 PM for those who prefer to pop in on their own time. Tickets are required for accessing the reception and behind-the-scenes tours. The TASK party will be open to all.





# In-Person Events

F

## Home Grown Fun! Quad Cities East End Event

Friday, August 1

6:00–9:30 PM (5:30–10:30 PM, maximum, including travel time)

Featuring:

- > Family Museum, Bettendorf
- > John Deere Pavilion, Moline
- > Mercado on Fifth, Moline

SOLD OUT

Join us for a night of food and fun at the Family Museum and John Deere Pavilion, plus a bonus opportunity to check out the popular night market Mercado on Fifth! During this progressive evening event, we'll traverse the eastern Quad Cities, from Bettendorf, Iowa, to Moline, Illinois.

Be a kid again at the Family Museum and have some Home Grown Fun! Enjoy a performance by the Family Museum Youth Dance Company, make and toss your own parachute over the balcony, see how far you can launch items with our mini catapults, and try your hand at our most popular Inertia experiments, including the magic tablecloth trick!

Join us at the John Deere Pavilion for Home Grown MOLINE Fun! Moline is the location of the John Deere world headquarters, where John Deere himself relocated his company from Grand Detour, IL in 1848. The Pavilion showcases the past, present, and future of the company. Discover 100 Years of John Deere toys, see vintage equipment and sit in and on current machines. Learn about how John Deere equipment simplifies the lives of four customers in the Building for Generations room, and test your dance moves on 'Stomp the Weeds'.

A short walk from John Deere Pavilion along 5th Avenue is Mercado on Fifth. This outdoor, summer night market features taco trucks, live Latin music, local craft boutiques, and retailers. Attendees are invited to take part in the fiesta at any point before 10:00 PM, when the final bus will depart John Deere Pavilion and return to conference hotels.





# Saturday Retreat

**S** Saturday, August 2 / 8:30 AM – 12:30 PM (including travel time)

## Saturday Retreat at Rock Island Arsenal

Saturday, August 2  
8:30 AM–12:30 PM (including travel time)

For this year's Saturday Retreat, we're going to cross the bridge to **Rock Island Arsenal**, an active U.S. Army facility, headquarters of the First Army, and located on a 946-acre island on the Mississippi River between the Quad Cities. The island features many historical attractions including the Rock Island Arsenal Museum, Colonel Davenport House, Memorial Park, Mississippi River Visitors Center, Rock Island National Cemetery and a Confederate Cemetery.

Our first stop on this charter bus tour of the island will be the Rock Island Arsenal Museum, the Army's second oldest museum (c. 1905). Their exhibits tell the story of how diverse people, innovative manufacturing processes, and the production of cutting-edge military equipment have shaped the Island's past, present, and future.

We'll take in views of this base, its historic military quarters, the Arsenal factory, and the mighty Mississippi on our way to the **Mississippi River Visitors Center** and the **historic clock tower**, operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Observe navigation through Lock & Dam 15 from their viewing windows and, weather permitting, step out onto the locks during a guided tour with a ranger.



# AMM Awards

congratulations to the 2025 AMM Awards recipients!

## Best Practices Award

Naper Settlement, Naperville, IL

How do you get visitors to understand a century-old piece of technology that you can't turn on?

This question vexed Naper Settlement, an outdoor history museum on 13 acres in Naperville, IL, with their c. 1912 Wood Bros. threshing machine. The thresher is a macro artifact from one of the most significant events in human history—the mechanical revolution in agriculture.

Naper Settlement sought to use innovative technologies to bring this machine to life. Projection mapping was used to animate the workings of the machine, while a short film shares the story of the impact of this piece of equipment on the way people ate, worked, and lived. The team developed interactive “holographic” characters using artificial intelligence (AI) to offer museum visitors a first-person perspective on farming and life in Naperville through time.

AMM looks forward to celebrating Naper Settlement, the Naper Heritage Society, and the whole Thresher Experience team through this year's **Best Practices Award!**



## Groundbreakers Award

State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines, IA

It is estimated that 54,000 people in Iowa identify as blind or having low vision. Recognizing that their museum was not accessible to this audience without assistance, the State Historical Society of Iowa set out to transform their visitor experience. In 2021, the staff initiated a collaboration with the Iowa Council of the United Blind and the Iowa Department for the Blind to pilot various initiatives in the museum. With input and feedback from these partners, they tested braille transcription, touch tours, audio description tours, large print exhibit text, and eventually building navigation technology.

With the support of a Prairie Meadows Community Betterment Grant, the society implemented NaviLens building navigation technology at the State Historical Museum. The platform has enabled blind and low-vision visitors to independently navigate museum spaces, access detailed information, and engage with exhibits through a variety of media. The app has enhanced the experience for all museum visitors, who benefit from access to multimedia content including images, videos, audio tours, language translations, and educational materials.

AMM is pleased to honor the State Historical Society of Iowa's crucial steps to improve accessibility and the visitor experience through this year's **Groundbreakers Award!**



# AMM Awards

congratulations to the 2025 AMM Awards recipients!



## Distinguished Career Award

Dr. Elena Gonzales, Chicago, IL

Throughout her 20+ years in the museum profession, from Chicago to Washington, DC, Dr. Elena Gonzales has been devoted to community collaboration and advancing social justice. Elena joined the Chicago History Museum in spring 2021 as a guest curator and a year later transitioned to the position of Curator, Civic Engagement and Social Justice at the Museum. Elena is spearheading *Aquí en Chicago*, a project and exhibition stemming from a protest by high school students from Rudy Lozano Leadership Academy that called out the lack of Latino/a/e representation in the museum's exhibitions. Her thoughtful approach to community engagement and storytelling has nurtured connections and uplifted underrepresented voices. Through partnerships and collaborations fostered by Elena, the museum has exchanged resources and expertise with local communities.

As her peers expressed in their nomination, Elena is a "dedicated and fearless scholar" who "has shone brightly, displaying leadership, vision, mentorship, and creativity while impacting staff and Chicago's communities positively." After reading their testimony, we too are inspired by Elena's "ability to push the museum to foster civic engagement and social justice at a time when some institutions were shying away from addressing the harm they have caused their communities," and that she has penned the book *Exhibitions for Social Justice* so that her peers might learn from her research and experience in this area.

AMM is thrilled to celebrate the visionary leadership of Dr. Elena Gonzales through the **Distinguished Career Award!**

## Distinguished Career Award

Sara Jane DeHoff, Toledo, OH

For more than five decades, Sara Jane DeHoff has helped shape some of the Midwest's most innovative programs and enduring institutions. Originally from Iowa, Sara Jane relocated to Northwest Ohio in 1975 and quickly became a central figure in the region's cultural development. She has served on the boards of nearly every major arts and education organization in the Toledo area, including the Toledo Museum of Art.

Sara Jane is an advocate, philanthropist, and leader whose contributions have helped shape the Toledo Museum of Art's growth and evolution. Her involvement began in 1990 when she joined the Georgia Welles Apollo Society, partnering with curators to help acquire new works for the collection. By 1995, she had joined the Board of Directors, where she quickly became an active participant across a wide range of committees, including art, education, development, buildings and grounds, governance, and nominating. Her commitment to the museum deepened further when she was elected Board Chair in July 2023.

Sara Jane's nominators attribute their success to her vision and devotion to the arts. They described her as a "visionary leader and champion of education" who is "deeply respected not only for her thoughtful leadership, but for the joy, curiosity, and sense of purpose she brings to every conversation."

AMM is thrilled to honor Sara Jane DeHoff and recognize her tireless advocacy and visionary leadership through the **Distinguished Career Award!**



# AMM Awards

congratulations to the 2025 AMM Awards recipients!

## Promising Leadership Award

Chris Morehead, Indianapolis, IN

Chris Morehead began his career in cultural institutions as Manager of Volunteer Services at Newfields. Over the past decade, he has rapidly advanced through roles spanning volunteerism, internships, community engagement, customer service, guest experience, and operations. In his current role as Director of Experience and Operations, Chris oversees and supports frontline operations across Newfields' 152-acre campus, championing the institutional mission to enrich lives through exceptional experiences with art and nature. He has dedicated his energies to finding ways to strategically improve and grow systems-level operations, and leading "with a deep care for people, whether they are guests, coworkers, or community members. He does not just get things done; he elevates the people around him while doing so."

The impact of Chris' leadership has been both community-wide through his volunteer service as an Access Pass Program committee member at The Children's Museum, and national



through his service with the American Association of Museum Volunteerism. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Chris also formed a local crisis-response network for visitor services professionals that evolved into a sustained cross-museum collaboration. His museum peers describe his leadership style and dedication to excellence as driving forces behind this powerful and collaborative local support network. He is a rising leader whose "impact is regional in scope, collaborative in nature, and profoundly human in approach."

AMM looks forward to shining a light on Chris Morehead's compassionate and strategic leadership through the **Promising Leadership Award!**

## Promising Leadership Award

Rahim Thompson, Skokie, IL

Rahim Thompson is the Senior Program Manager at Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center (IHMEC) in Skokie, IL. Relatively new to the museum profession, he brings a background in project management, journalism, and production to his role, having developed more than 200 public programs addressing today's most urgent issues—from antisemitism and genocide to LGBTQ+ rights and racial justice. Through thought-provoking lectures, live performances, film screenings, powerful discussions, and global anti-hate initiatives, Rahim has empowered tens of thousands of audience members—uniting activists, scholars, and communities in a space for meaningful dialogue and civic transformation.

In recognition of his leadership, Rahim was promoted to the project team for the expansion of the Museum's award-winning Survivor Stories Experience, a world-first interactive XR technology used to preserve and share survivor testimonies by combining high-definition interviews with AI-powered voice recognition technology. In 2025, the initiative made history by adding three new testimonies, including that of Kizito Kalima, the first non-Holocaust survivor featured—a survivor of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda.

Known for his "positive attitude, collaborative spirit, and commitment to mentoring junior team members," Rahim is widely respected for "fostering an environment where everyone feels seen, respected, and empowered."

AMM is pleased to recognize the leadership and programmatic achievements of Rahim Thompson through the **Promising Leadership Award!**



# Save the date!

AMM 2026 Conference  
July 26-29 | Chicago, IL



Photo courtesy of Experience Columbus