



# 2018 ANNUAL REPORT



## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S LETTER



Have you ever experienced one of those periods in life when everything connected with your identity shifts? Within one year, I battled health issues, got married, moved, graduated a kid, and moved her to study at a university. Well, we're assuming the last two will happen still in 2019 (check back in September!)

The identity of the Anoka County Historical Society seems to be shifting, too. Nothing dramatic, we're not moving! But the Veterans Voice project and partnership with Twin Cities Public Television will produce a national documentary that will hoist our little history center to a new and exciting level. We have big ideas for a new website that's easier to use, as well as a new multi-touch digital table for the exhibit hall to bring depth and interest to our displays. All this, in addition to our quality programs, preservation, and research work we're known for.

I will celebrate my fourth anniversary as director at this annual meeting. It feels like we've done the groundwork, we've built the relationships, and we've set the goals. Now, we get to watch it all come together. Thank you for being the reason any of it can, and will, happen. Our members and donors remain the core of our mission.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Rebecca Ebnet-Desens".

Rebecca Ebnet-Desens, ACHS Executive Director

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

I am often asked what the Anoka County Historical Society does, and what surprises me is the paradigm that we record history from the past and it has to predate our lifetime. In reality what you did today, if recorded, is history. It's true that we collect and preserve the history of Anoka County. However, collection is only possible if someone recognized the value of recording it while the information was available.

As an example, in 2002 the Anoka County Board of Commissioners recognized that Anoka County had, in a short period of time, lost 60% of its family farms. With a goal of preserving the history of agriculture in Anoka County, the county board and the Anoka County Extension service funded the historical society for a two-year project that compiled and published the history of agriculture in Anoka County from 1900 to 2003. Agriculture at one time was the lifeblood of Anoka County. Today, for the most part, it is history. If we would not have recorded it when we still had some family farms to interview and photograph, that history would be lost.

ACHS stands ready to preserve your history, individual, family, business or non-profit. We can help with the recording, but we need you to come in and share your information with us.



A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Dennis D. Berg".

Dennis Berg, ACHS President

# THE 2018 ACHS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Al Pearson, *District #1 Representative*

Open, *District #2 Representative*

Orville Lindquist, *District #3 Representative*

Lotus Hubbard, *District #4 Representative (Vice-President)*

Richard Oxley, *District #5 Representative*

Open, *District #6 Representative*

Bart Ward, *District #7 Representative*

Steve Florman *At-Large A (Treasurer)*

Dennis Berg, *At-Large B (President)*

Mike Scott, *At-Large C*

Johannes Allert, *At-Large D*

Jim Rootes, *At-Large E*

Paul Pierce III, *At-Large F*

Shelly Peterson, *At-Large G (Secretary)*

Mary Nolan, *At-Large H*

Jim Kordiak, *Anoka County Commissioner Liaison*

## ACHS STAFF

Rebecca Ebnet-Desens, *Executive Director*

Audra Hilse, *Archivist & Administrator*

Sara Given, *Volunteer Coordinator*

Gail Dahl, *Staff*

Carol Dordan, *Staff & Facilities Manager*

Don Johnson, *Staff*

Karen Rieks, *Staff*

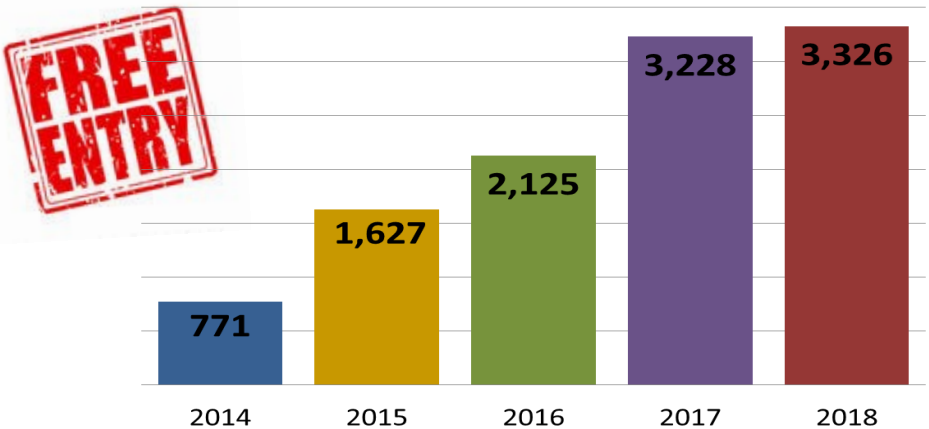
# THE GARAGE



The final installment in our *Farms to Flamingos* exhibit depicting Anoka County in the 1950's, 60's, and 70's captured the iconic garage. Archivist Audra, staff member Don, and volunteers raised walls with exposed studs and created a "concrete" floor.

Donors then filled the space with the detritus of life from that time-period. New suburban homes meant yards to tend, space to work on mechanical projects, and a place to store all those extra nails or screws in baby food jars. Opened to coincide with the Anoka Home and Garden Tour on July 15, the Garage has kept up with the seasons as ice skates and a sled joined the bike and basketball.

## EXHIBIT HALL VISITORS





# COLLECTIVE ACCESS



A large part of managing the collections at ACHS is maintaining not just the items, but the database where information about the items can be stored and searched. After 14 years using a program called Past Perfect, we needed a more accessible, non-subscription, cloud-based system. Along came an opportunity to join the Minnesota Alliance of

Local History Museums [MALHM] to help create one! MALHM is a state-wide organization where local museums of all sizes can come together to collaborate on projects, expand their learning, search out solutions to problems, and find common ground. With the help of a Legacy grant, MALHM created a museum software database that could be used by any museum in the state, called Collective Access. ACHS became a pilot site, which allowed us to migrate our data, make suggestions, and test out the functionality of this brand new system.

The database allows staff and volunteers to access to the info from any computer with an internet connection. This has allowed volunteers to take laptops into odd corners to work on projects, or even work from home. The information is stored on the cloud, which instituted a much-needed off-site backup in the event of catastrophic damage to the museum.

The long-term goal of ACHS and MAHLM is to turn this database into a system the general public can access from the comfort of their personal devices—anytime, anywhere.



*Public facing and searchable database*



This year has been exciting for working on the ACHS collections! Not only have we continued to receive many donations of interesting Anoka County artifacts for the museum, but we are gradually getting new and better tools to help improve the preservation of all our artifacts.

**Audra Hilse, Archivist & Administrator**

## NATIONAL REGISTER PROPERTY SERIES CONTINUES!

Last year we began our National Register Property Series

by writing MNOpedia articles on each. This year, we expanded access to them with a video project. Our partnership with the Hennepin Technical College continues thanks to an amazing group of students this fall. Under the supervision of their instructor and ACHS Board member, Rich Oxley, they filmed and interviewed people and properties associated with the National Register of Historic Places. These short documentaries will help residents explore their community and better understand the gems of preservation within our borders.



Shaw-Hammons ...



Kline Sanitarium - ...



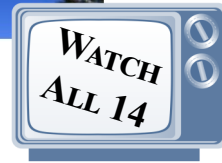
Anoka Post Office ...



Anoka-Champlin ...



Carlos Avery Gam...



## ARFSTROM GRANT WRAP UP

ACHS received a \$10,000 grant from the Historical and Cultural Heritage Fund (Legacy grants) and additional funds from the Arfstrom family to digitize a portion of the illustrated diaries kept by Jon Arfstrom. These not only track his daily life, but also

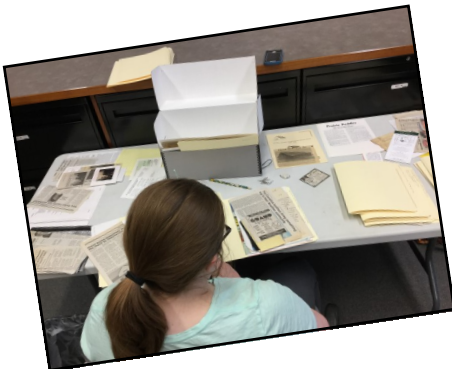
his artistic ideas and doodles. They are truly pieces of art in their own right. Preservation of his legacy continues as ACHS takes a seat at the Arfstrom Family Foundation board of directors with other stakeholders. Look for new exhibits, publications, and program opportunities ahead!

## 2018 COLLECTIONS HIGHLIGHTS

Rehousing files from Attorney Albert Pratt, 1890 to 1920. This includes wills, property disputes, divorces, and murder cases.



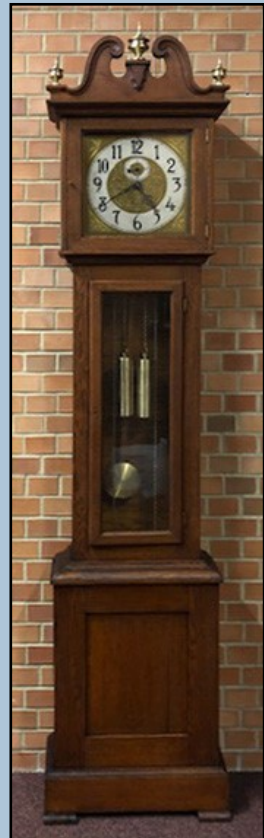
Digitizing and rehousing the large map collection from vertical rolled storage to horizontal which puts less stress on the item.



Intern Delaney organized five large bins of Nowthen history, and started her graduate degree from Simmons University.

## PHILOLECTIAN PERMANENT EXHIBIT

A multi-year renovation of our Philolectian meeting room culminated in 2018 with the installation of photo and text panels that highlight the legacy of this 129 year-old womens group. Volunteer Chuck restored the Philolectian clock, which now reminds us when to stop our meetings with a lovely sounding chime.



## 2018 PARTNERSHIPS

*Our partners provide ACHS with new connections to the community and a wider audience reach as well as a fresh approach to storytelling.*

I found a great job doing construction & the public computers at the Anoka Historical Society made it all possible - Thank You Guys  
-Ray E

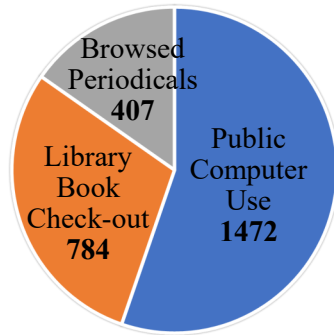
### ANOKA COUNTY LIBRARY

The ACHS building is officially the Anoka County History Center and Research Library. We house a museum, but still remain a part of the County Library system. Patrons can choose ACHS as a pick up location for library books, and for a significant number of people, the public computers here are the only access they have to the internet. Those that visit for these services become “regulars,” friends and part of our community. Their story has melded with ours and our ability to offer these services is essential.

# 14,812

**HISTORY CENTER  
VISITORS**

Equal to the populations of St. Francis & Spring Lake Park combined



### ANOKA COUNTY: THANK YOU

It is with deep gratitude that ACHS acknowledges the role played by the County in continuing to fund a large portion of the History Center operations: **the equivalent of 44 cents per resident.**

Without this core support, ACHS couldn't maintain the professional standards of research, preservation, and heritage we're known for. These funds help us create the outreach and educational opportunities found in this report, as well a multitude of daily tasks too large to list.

**As a result of this funding, your story is safe with us.**





## Senior Community Service Employment Program

is a federally funded, subsidized work program through the Anoka County Job Training Center. Senior (55+) workers are eligible to work up to 20 hours per week at a public or private non-profit agency and are paid directly by Anoka County.

The program matches organization needs with the skills and learning goals of the participants. As a result, ACHS gained two amazing people to help at our front desk.



### Meet Cindy!



Hi! I am excited to be working here and have the opportunity to learn of, and explore the history of, Anoka County. Libraries and museums have always been of special interest to me.

I look forward to all the exciting activities at ACHS!

### Meet Jan!



I've met so many amazing people who drop in to use the resources here in the building.

It was really exciting to find and work with old Property Assessment books as I worked as an assessor for 15 years. The things you can learn here!!

# 2018 PARTNERSHIPS



## TPT PRODUCTION

ACHS recognizes the role we must play in documenting the present moment in order to create history for future generations. The most recent veteran families who have served since the first Gulf War have a unique experience in military history. The advent of immediate, electronic communication, the televised conflicts, and the multiple deployments survived by citizen soldiers have set the stage for a story like no other America has in the books. This documentary gives Anoka County family members a chance to share their story on a national stage in a way that will connect us all.

Much of the filming has concluded and will culminate in the summer of 2019 as “We Too are at War” will premier on your local public television station. How did a fourth grader feel when Dad left yet again? How did a husband fare when traditional roles reversed and he stayed on the home front? What did a new couple with a baby do overseas when he left for harms way? How can we as a society support the ongoing commitment of our friends and neighbors who serve in America’s military? Watch for trailers and screening opportunities in 2019 to find these and other answers. PS...tissues are recommended, but not required.

Thank you

### \$10,000 SPONSORS



### \$2,000 SPONSORS:

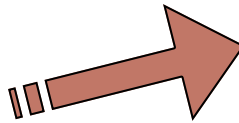
- Spring Lake Park Lions
- Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 470
- Dennis and Darlene Berg



*Interviews with Dale and Joyce Melcher (above) and Scott Collier (below).*



**VOLUNTEERS GAVE:**



EQUIVALENT OF  
PAID STAFF TIME  
**\$121,680**

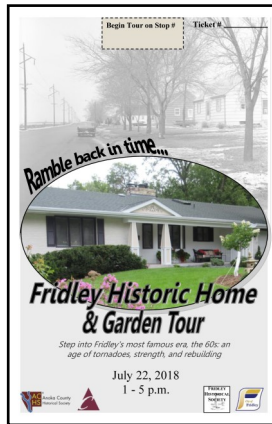
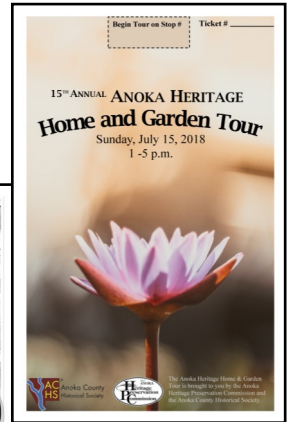
\* Based on reported  
volunteer hours.

**HOME AND GARDEN TOURS**

We had double the tour fun with two Home and Garden Tours in 2018.

ACHS partnered with the Anoka Heritage Preservation Committee in Anoka for the 15th year, while the Fridley Historical Society, city of Fridley, and County Library joined forces for the first-ever Fridley tour.

Each of these events showcased beautiful gardens, homes, and the unique history waiting in our back yards. A special thank you to the volunteers, committee members, and homeowners who made it all possible!



**26** STOPS

**427** VISITORS

**\$6,491** RAISED  
FOR THREE ORGANIZATIONS



History is dead!...or rather filled with dead people. The only way it lives and has a voice is through people who take the time to make it happen. Our volunteers create zombies every day and I couldn't be happier with the coming of the zombie apocalypse.

Sara Given, Volunteer Coordinator

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Despite common traditions within cultural heritage organizations, social media, the internet, and word-of-mouth are the most prevalent means of reaching potential visitors and future members regardless of age. For this reason, effective use of social media will be one of the primary driving forces behind membership growth and retention in the coming years.



ACHS has a presence on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook that we continue to grow each day with hand-selected photos and carefully worded announcements. The digital era has allowed nonprofits to reduce printing costs, yet reach more individuals than ever before. Find us and follow us to know more!



**Anoka County Historical Society**

Published by Audra Hilse [?] · February 2, 2018 · 🌐

Does anyone remember the Video Update in Andover, Minnesota? This photo was taken 21 years ago in February 1997; this is the strip mall at the corner of Round Lake Boulevard and Bunker Lake Boulevard. There was also a Blockbuster Video in Coon Rapids, Minnesota farther south on Round Lake Boulevard. Today there aren't too many video rental stores left! What Anoka County businesses do you remember (or maybe even have pictures of) that aren't around anymore? Any favorites that have (sadly) vanished? (Object ID# P128.1.07) #business #localbusiness #videostore #videoupdate #andover #roundlakeboulevard #anokacountyhistory #1990s City of Andover, MN City of Coon Rapids, MN - Local Government



*This post*

**29,300 PEOPLE REACHED**

**1,268 Reactions**



**309 Comments**

**Shared 89 times**



██████████ - I have so many memories in this store! Haha mostly dad not understanding why we wanted to rent the same video over and over again, but then him relenting and letting is do it anyway 😂😂 ██████████

Like · Reply · Message · 50w



# 15TH ANNUAL GHOSTS OF ANOKA WALKING TOURS



TOURS



17,502  
EARNED



TICKETS  
SOLD

44%  
INCREASE

The months of September and October translate into GHOST TOURS in our ACHS dictionary. The 15th year of tours broke all attendance records! Nearly 2,000 people attended the 83 tours we hosted over the course of these two months. Many came from Anoka County, but others traveled from across the metro area, and a few even from beyond the state. Groups of friends, the Coon Rapids Women of Today, Anoka Women of Today, Sisters in Crime Murder Mystery Writers, Girl Scout Troops, and Anoka Halloween Ambassadors and Candidates all attended the tour in large groups.

The tour is a fun evening walking around town hearing stories of history and mystery, but it is also one of our biggest fund raisers of the year. Each \$9 ticket purchase directly supports our organization. **Only 19 tickets remained unsold online for the entire season.** This had a lot to do with using Eventbrite as a ticketing platform. Through this website our tour dates reached **184,300** people and a new market for this event. With the majority of tours completely SOLD OUT, sometimes weeks in advance, our chance to grow this popular tour for the 16th year is clear.



Anoka Women of Today Private Tour

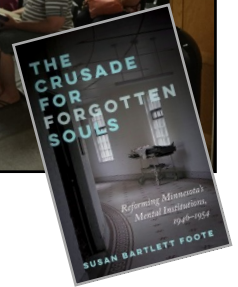


## Cool stuff with cool people:

- ◇ AARP– Tax Services
- ◇ Alexandra House
- ◇ Anoka American Legion Post 102
- ◇ Anoka Chamber of Commerce and Discover Anoka
- ◇ Anoka County Genealogical Society
- ◇ Anoka County Fair Board
- ◇ Anoka Historical Teen Council
- ◇ Anoka Lions Club
- ◇ Anoka *UnionHerald*
- ◇ Andover YMCA
- ◇ Arfstrom Foundation
- ◇ Blaine Festival
- ◇ Centerville Festival
- ◇ League of Women Voters-ABC
- ◇ MetroNorth Chamber of Commerce
- ◇ Minitex
- ◇ MN Digial Library
- ◇ Nowthen Threshing Show
- ◇ Nowthen Heritage Festival
- ◇ Opportunity Partners
- ◇ PEO Society
- ◇ Philolectian Society
- ◇ QCTV
- ◇ Quad-Cities Press
- ◇ RSVP
- ◇ Multiple Lions, Rotary, and Kiwanis
- ◇ TCART
- ◇ Vietnam Vets
- ◇ Wargo Nature Center

*History is an action verb in our lexicon and ACHS works with groups across the county—sometimes at the history center and sometimes in the community. Here are some of our fun adventures this year...*

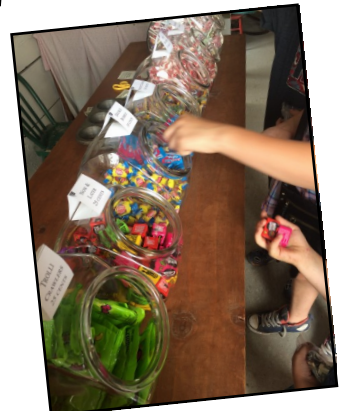
*Book Talk  
with MN  
Book Award  
finalist Susan  
Bartlett  
Foote*



*As Ambassadors for the MetroNorth Chamber, we attended numerous ribbon cuttings, Expos, and events around the county.*



*Many hands  
made for empty  
candy jars in our  
General Store at  
the Nowthen  
Threshing Show.*





*Ian served as our best volunteer during the Anoka County Fair at the Old Farmhouse.*



*Ever go to work in your (1860's) undies? Sara did! We presented at a Working With Women Chamber meeting as the featured nonprofit.*



*Rebecca presented with author Kim Heikkila on the emotional side of history and how we can harness that power for good storytelling.*



*A group of homeschool students joined Audra for a behind the scenes tour.*

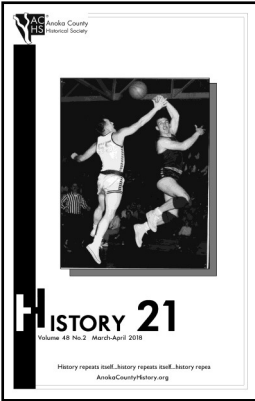


*Family puzzle session during Anoka's Riverfest.*

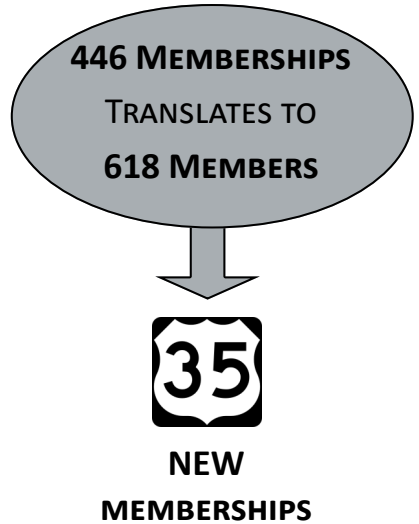
# 2018 FINANCIAL GROWTH

## MEMBERSHIPS

Your membership is not just a financial donation, but a declaration that you believe local history plays a vital role in the community by preserving the story of the path we walk together. We thank our current members who continue their commitment to the operation of the History Center and look forward to welcoming new members. Help us double our numbers by inviting a friend to join today!



Members receive *History 21* six times per year. It contains articles on interesting collection items as well as information about upcoming and past programs.



## SIGNIFICANT DONATIONS

ACHS treasures each and every donation that arrives in support of local history. Collectively, every dollar adds up and makes an enormous difference. Larger gifts, however, make a special impact for us. Thank you so very much to everyone who gives according to their ability.

### Gifts of \$500 or more

Andover Lions Club  
Coon Rapids Veterans  
Gloria Given  
Amanda Wendel  
Orville Lindquist  
Mary Dawson (In memory  
of Helen Dawson)

### Gifts of \$1,000 or more

Mary T. Home Health & Hospice  
PSD, LLC (10,000+)  
Anoka County (10,000+)

City of Anoka (In-Kind)  
Paul III & Mary Pierce  
Johannes Allert  
Vietnam Veterans of America  
Chapter 470  
Ramsey Lions Club (10,000+)  
Dennis & Darlene Berg  
AAA Auction & Realty LLC (In-Kind)  
Rita Warpeha  
Tim & Rose Talbot (In memory  
of Sheriff Buster Talbot)  
Plants & Things



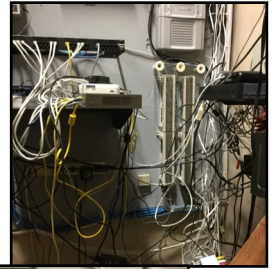


Contributions to ACHS don't always come in the way of cash to defray operating costs. The City of Anoka continues to support local history efforts by providing our building as an in-kind donation. As a result of this sizeable gift, ACHS can maintain the public computers and library space, preserve the story of the County, and recount the fascinating tales in our collection. We extend sincere thanks to the City of Anoka for their continued support!

## UPDATED TECHNOLOGY

In 2016 LeOrá Kroeger donated \$50,000 to ACHS. The board directed a portion of this to updating technology. We used these funds to purchase new computers, monitors, and a new server to house our digital collection and day-to-day work. Along with these physical changes, we updated our internet connection. All of these changes have made the digital workings of the historical society stable and more accessible.

Before



After



## STRATEGIC PLAN

Everyone needs to pause and rethink and regroup every so often. For the ACHS board, this happened last spring during a work session at the Blaine City Hall. After several hours of brainstorming and arranging sticky notes on walls (thank you to our library friends who facilitated!) we came away with the need to make

technology the hub of everything we do. Built from that, we extended spokes named “Gather”, “Define Identity”, “Engage”, and “Management” to correlate to newly consolidated committees. Staff can use the action points of these groups to guide their daily work and board members can now see a bigger picture more in focus than before. Interested? We would love to have you serve! Let us know by sending a note.

# 2018 FINANCIAL GROWTH

## Anoka County Historical Society

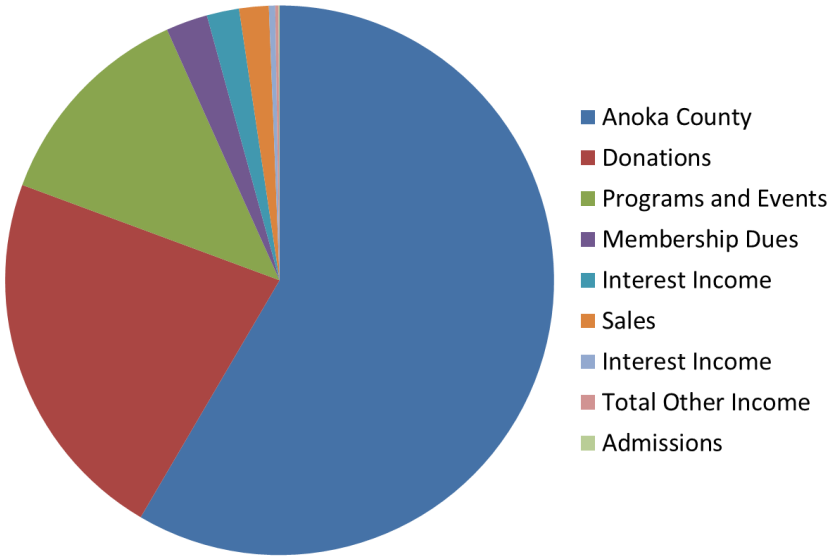
BUDGET VS. ACTUALS: FY\_2018

January - December 2018

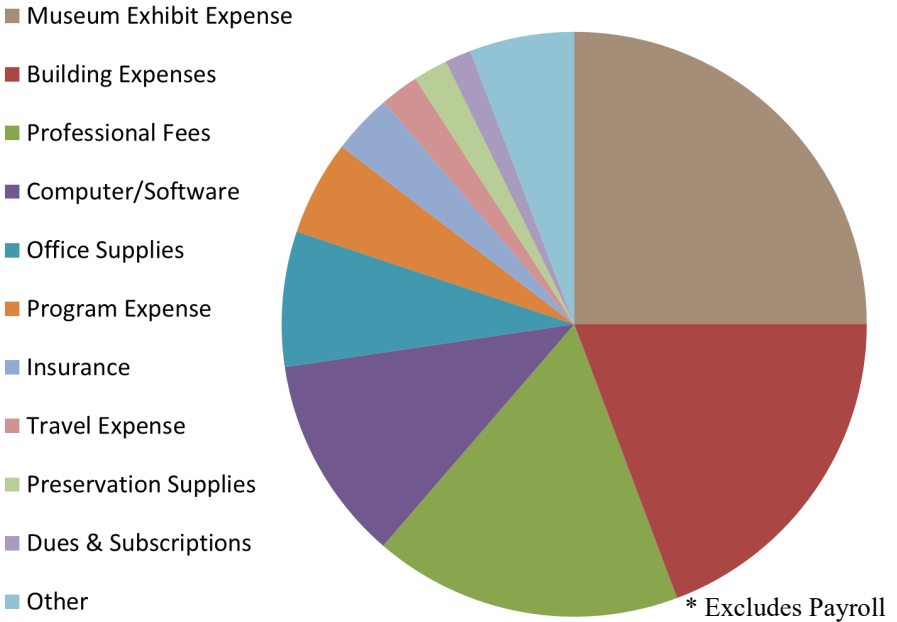
	TOTAL			
	ACTUAL	BUDGET	OVER BUDGET	% OF BUDGET
<b>Revenue</b>				
Inkind Revenue		0.00	0.00	
Net Asset Restrictions Released		0.00	0.00	
Sales	11.70		11.70	
<b>TOTAL SUPPORT</b>				
Admissions	155.00	906.00	-751.00	17.11 %
Anoka County	152,623.00	152,623.00	0.00	100.00 %
Donations	57,947.70	44,600.00	13,347.70	129.93 %
Grants		3,000.00	-3,000.00	
Interest Income	4,975.25	1,246.00	3,729.25	399.30 %
Membership Dues	6,411.00	7,200.00	-789.00	89.04 %
Other Income	1,476.46	0.00	1,476.46	
Programs and Events	32,987.30	32,777.00	210.30	100.64 %
Sales	4,547.24	4,664.00	-116.76	97.50 %
<b>Total TOTAL SUPPORT</b>	<b>261,122.95</b>	<b>247,016.00</b>	<b>14,106.95</b>	<b>105.71 %</b>
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$261,134.65</b>	<b>\$247,016.00</b>	<b>\$14,118.65</b>	<b>105.72 %</b>
<b>GROSS PROFIT</b>	<b>\$261,134.65</b>	<b>\$247,016.00</b>	<b>\$14,118.65</b>	<b>105.72 %</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>				
Advertising	287.93	990.00	-702.07	29.08 %
Auto Expense	34.00		34.00	
Bank Service Charges	530.39	942.00	-411.61	56.30 %
Building Expenses	27,690.08	34,139.00	-6,448.92	81.11 %
Computer/Software Expense	16,271.58	4,800.00	11,471.58	338.99 %
Depreciation Expense		0.00	0.00	
Donor Recognition		360.00	-360.00	
Dues and Subscriptions	2,080.69	1,740.00	340.69	119.58 %
Food	953.89	1,080.00	-126.11	88.32 %
Furniture & Other Equipment	454.55	960.00	-505.45	47.35 %
Gifts	291.07	150.00	141.07	194.05 %
Human Resources Expense	762.80	1,440.00	-677.20	52.97 %
Inkind Rent		0.00	0.00	
Inkind Services		0.00	0.00	
Insurance	4,809.95	4,669.00	140.95	103.02 %
Museum Exhibit Expense	35,909.89	3,600.00	32,309.89	997.50 %
Networking	289.09	360.00	-70.91	80.30 %
Office Supplies	10,738.01	9,000.00	1,738.01	119.31 %
PAYROLL	145,040.96	164,800.00	-19,759.04	88.01 %
Postage and Delivery	1,653.83	2,705.00	-1,051.17	61.14 %
Preservation Supplies	2,743.47	1,800.00	943.47	152.42 %
Printing and Reproduction	1,773.20	2,040.00	-266.80	86.92 %
Professional Fees	24,475.00	6,106.00	18,369.00	400.84 %
Program Expense	7,553.51	6,140.00	1,413.51	123.02 %
Purchases	758.07	900.00	-141.93	84.23 %
QuickBooks Payments Fees	8.37		8.37	
refund	155.11		155.11	
Repair/Maintenance-Non-Building	350.19	600.00	-249.81	58.37 %
Research Expense		300.00	-300.00	
TR NA Restrictions Released		0.00	0.00	
Travel Expense	3,049.31	2,940.00	109.31	103.72 %
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$288,664.94</b>	<b>\$252,561.00</b>	<b>\$36,103.94</b>	<b>114.30 %</b>
<b>NET OPERATING REVENUE</b>	<b>\$ -27,530.29</b>	<b>\$ -5,545.00</b>	<b>\$ -21,985.29</b>	<b>496.49 %</b>
Other Expenditures	\$1,184.85	\$524.00	\$660.85	226.12 %
<b>NET OTHER REVENUE</b>	<b>\$ -1,184.85</b>	<b>\$ -524.00</b>	<b>\$ -660.85</b>	<b>226.12 %</b>
<b>NET REVENUE</b>	<b>\$ -28,715.14</b>	<b>\$ -6,069.00</b>	<b>\$ -22,646.14</b>	<b>473.14 %</b>

*Unaudited 2018 expenditures exceeded revenues by \$27,530. This is the result of one-time expenditures for projects carried forward from the prior year of \$29,794. If you exclude those project expenditures, the operational revenues exceeded operational expenditures by \$2,263.*

## REVENUE



## EXPENDITURES



Thank you for your support!



2135 Third Ave North  
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Phone: 763-421-0600  
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