

Douglas County Historical Society/Watkins Museum of History Strategic Plan (approved 9/24/2019)

VISION 2025

VISION 2025: The Douglas County Historical Society and Watkins Museum of History serve as ***the gateway to Douglas County History***—engaging people, no matter where they are, with county heritage to ignite their interest and catalyze their understanding of local history.

Paramount to achieving this vision is commitment in our operations to community engagement, innovation, and empowerment. Measures of success include national recognition as a 21st century historical institution and achieved professional accreditation.

- We are recognized as an **innovative gateway** generating engagement and understanding of Douglas County history by: (WHAT we do)
 - Developing relevant collections, exhibits, programs and membership activities that reflect a diverse community and introduce important stories of our past
 - Forging expansive partnerships and strategic alliances across sectors, disciplines, and educational institutions
 - Expanding facilities to provide infrastructure supporting a larger role as a regional exhibit and research center
 - Providing professional leadership and administrative service to support and increase access to Douglas County’s historic resources
 - Attracting visitors and drawing residents to downtown Lawrence as a primary cultural anchor in the community
 - Welcoming all beyond our walls by applying innovative technology and engaging and timely communications

- We will **engage diverse communities** with all facets of our operations (For WHOM we do it)
 - Demographically, socio-economically, inter-generationally
 - Locally – all communities in Douglas County including Baldwin City, Lecompton, Eudora and Lawrence
 - Regionally – an attraction for residents of metropolitan Topeka and Kansas City and beyond
 - Nationally/Internationally – Welcoming visitors living outside the region

- **We empower people** through meaningful stories and experiences that generate strong, lifelong connections, build understanding, and encourage civic engagement (WHY we do what we do)

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Collections

Goal:

The identity of the museum is shaped by its accessioned collection of historic artifacts, documents, and photographs in support of its mission. The collection is reflective of the community's people and history. It is organized to be readily available to the general public.

Strategies:

1. Establish and implement collections staff and volunteer training. Implement procedures to eliminate errors and correct discrepancies within collections record keeping in the past and prevent future issues.
2. Assure proper storage and physical safety of collections.
3. Increase accessibility to collections through defined, purposeful, and strategic ties to the Douglas County Historical Society's mission.
4. Shape collections to make them relevant and useful to the mission of the Douglas County Historical Society.
5. Define gaps in the accessioned collection. Create and implement plan to identify potential donors/lenders.

Community Engagement

Goal:

The Watkins creates strong connections with a diverse array of community members, is relevant to community needs, attains national recognition, and engages audiences for life.

Strategies:

1. Provide relevant, innovative programs, changing exhibits, gallery experiences, and other encounters with historic stories at the museum and offsite, to engage new audiences, strengthen relationships with existing audiences, and build community partnerships.
2. Offer educational experiences that connect our local history to national themes, address multiple curriculum areas, and promote material culture as a primary resource.
3. Serve as a primary cultural anchor in downtown Lawrence and a regional attraction.
4. Provide a gateway to Douglas County heritage county-wide.

Development

Goal:

The Watkins Museum has a robust, diverse, and reliable funding base that sustains an annual operating budget adequate to support the museum's envisioned public engagement outcomes, secures funding for capital and special projects, and anticipates growth to support future needs as they emerge without incurring an operating deficit.

Strategies:

1. Establish and implement a comprehensive development plan that incorporates annual giving, planned giving, naming opportunities, business partnerships, and an annual signature event.
2. Attain funding to support an annual operating budget of \$500,000.
3. Secure \$500,000 in major gifts and grants to complete museum's core exhibits by 2020 and capital repair needs by 2025 (50th anniversary of the Watkins Museum).
4. Secure dedicated public funding from Douglas County and the City of Lawrence to sustain annual operations long-term.
5. Increase endowment by \$500,000.

Facilities

Goal 1:

Watkins facilities are functional, sustainably managed, and well-maintained.

Strategies:

1. Forecast upcoming maintenance needs and incorporate them in annual budget development process.
2. Complete Capital Repairs.
3. Keep abreast of changing technology and update/upgrade technology infrastructure.

Goal 2:

Watkins facilities are safe, inviting, and accessible for all ages and demographics, support achievement of the museum's mission and strategic goals, and adapt to meet changing organizational and community needs.

Strategies:

1. Assess and improve functionality of and ease of access to public entry spaces.
2. Develop plan to address needs for office space, workspace, and storage.
3. Explore new ways to utilize the Watkins building to engage new audiences, increase the public profile of the museum, and earn revenue.
4. Develop a Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Response Plan.

Marketing

Goal:

As the historical gateway for Douglas County, the Watkins Museum has a comprehensive marketing plan, based on consistent messaging and broad channels of communication, that evolves over time and increases the engagement and awareness of a diverse community of Watkins stakeholders.

Strategies:

1. Establish and implement a comprehensive marketing plan that includes branding and visual identity, a budget, and a calendar.
2. Create consistency and clarity in messaging.

3. Broaden channels of communication.
4. Appeal to and engage diverse audiences.
5. Engage the community as the gateway to history in Douglas County.

Membership

Goal:

The Watkins Museum's membership reaches 1,200 (the equivalent of 1% of the county population) and is an organization that individuals, groups, and diverse populations join to engage in stories that add richness and meaning to their lives.

Strategies:

1. Increase awareness of the Watkins Museum and the benefits and impact of the membership program.
2. Provide continued engagement with members.
3. Develop communication strategies.
4. Identify and approach new target audiences to increase the number and diversity of Kids Club (family), individual, and corporate memberships.

Personnel

Goal 1:

Professional and volunteer staff is sufficient in size and skill to achieve mission; talented enough to anticipate future needs; and appropriately compensated and rewarded for their achievements.

Strategies:

1. Establish systems to assess staffing needs, provide staff development, and support staff effectiveness and diversity.
2. Develop and implement strategy to address issues of equity, salary compression, and merit increases.
3. Plan the recruitment, training and deployment of volunteers for specific functions or projects.
4. Leverage opportunities presented by relationship with KU and other partners.

Goal 2:

The Board of Directors has a clear understanding of their responsibilities and has the talents and skills to provide needed support for the organization.

Strategies:

1. Develop recruitment plan for Board of Directors.
2. Develop and implement orientation program for new members of the Board of Directors.
3. Develop and implement a plan for on-going Board training.