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Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2009



As my three-year term as president of the Minnesota Historical Society draws to a close, I have considered carefully what thoughts I would leave with you as I step down. This is not to say I don't have more – how could I not after the momentous events at the Society in the last three years, events that will shape its future for years to come. But brevity is the soul of a memorable message, so here they are:

First, as the guardian of the state's history, the Society performs important work for Minnesota's people. Guardianship of our stories is the essence of the Society's mission; it comes in many forms, and it is a duty owed to all of us, now and into the future. Second, over the past three years I have observed the unswerving commitment of the Executive Council members and staff of the Society to meeting this responsibility. Whether the moment is one of calm or crisis, long-term planning or painful short-term fixes – or the difficult decision to take a different course than had been planned – the sole consideration has always been how to fulfill our duty to preserve and protect our stories. This is nothing new brought on by this generation. What is different is the frequency, complexity and magnitude of the challenges in the past few years. We can all take pride that through it all, no matter how weighty the problem, we have been true to our mission.

The resources available to the Society to fulfill its mission are many and extensive. Its work depends on a combination of public funding, earned revenue, endowment and the generosity of thousands of supporters. We thank you for your continued belief in the worth of our mission. Many thanks also to the Executive Council members who have given so generously of their time and energy in addressing the challenges we have faced. Finally, my deep gratitude to Nina Archabal and her most capable staff for their leadership in keeping the Society on course and true to its mission. Our stories are in caring hands.



Edward C. Stringer, President, Minnesota Historical Society

This, the Society's 160th year, has been remarkable by every measure. At this time last year we faced into a horizon obscured by the clouds of a global financial storm. Then, looking to the strong foundation of our institution, Society President Ed Stringer reassured us we would weather the storm. With thanks to Ed for his steady hand as chair of the Executive Council, we have done that and more. Even as we responded to a reduction of more than 13 percent in our state and non-state operating funds, we experienced increased attendance at our museums and historic sites across the state, greater visibility thanks to innovative marketing strategies, and an overwhelmingly enthusiastic response to our programs that connect Minnesotans with their history.

On the pages that follow are highlights of our work this year – initiatives such as the restoration of the rare battle flags carried at Bull Run, Shiloh and Gettysburg; our use of social media to connect with new audiences; and the opening of the “Minnesota's Greatest Generation: the Depression, the War, the Boom” exhibition. In a year of hard times, surely it was providential to open this exhibition, which follows the generation that grew up during the Great Depression. The voices of those who endured the 1930s reassure and inspire us today. They remind us of the values that unite people to a common purpose and foster personal courage and resourcefulness. Is it any wonder that Minnesota's Greatest Generation, five years in the making, has shattered attendance figures and filled the halls of the History Center with multiple generations of Minnesotans day after day?

No one knows if the economic storm has passed completely, yet, as I write this, the Society sees possibilities for history we could not have imagined 12 months ago. These opportunities are the promise of the Legacy Amendment approved by Minnesota voters in November 2008. This legislation bestows both new funding and new obligations on the Society: it is specifically designated for history projects that create a legacy for future generations. What perfect timing! What I see in this Minnesota autumn is a people less distracted by the fleeting, and more focused on the enduring, the very essence of legacy. Thanks to the wisdom of the people of Minnesota in approving the Legacy Amendment, the Society has a renewed opportunity to give the gift of history to the future.

This is a transformational moment for the Society. We have a big job to do in the days ahead and we hope for your abiding support. Many thanks to our members, donors, staff and governing board members, our volunteers, and to our elected leaders: Governor Pawlenty, the Minnesota Legislature and local officials around the state. We are grateful for your interest, your generosity and your belief in the enduring value of our history – the story of how life has been lived and experienced in this unique place called Minnesota.



Nina Archabal, Director

2009 HIGHLIGHTS

CREATIVE MARKETING, INNOVATIVE CAMPAIGNS AND POWERHOUSE EXHIBITS PAY OFF IN ATTENDANCE GROWTH

Attendance at all of the Society's historic sites and museums rose in fiscal year 2009, most dramatically at the History Center where it increased 27 percent over the previous year. The last year of a three-year marketing plan put in place in 2006 saw History Center attendance shoot up 41 percent overall. During the three-year time frame, Mill City Museum enjoyed a 17-percent increase in attendance. Other sites were up as well, including Historic Fort Snelling, where a 12-percent increase gave this preeminent historic site its largest visitation in years, and Split Rock Lighthouse, which increased 11 percent. Nearly one million visitors experienced Society historic sites and museums this year, nearly one third of that number at the History Center, including a record one-month total of 40,000 visitors in October 2008, the first full month that "Vatican Splendors" was on view. School groups accounted for 230,000 visitors statewide and 30,000 students participated in History Day. Fifty-two advanced to national competition winning seven medals: one gold, three silver and three bronze. And this year, History Day staff worked with four SPAN (Special Program for Adolescent Needs) programs in the Minneapolis School District, allowing increasingly diverse students to participate in this invaluable program.

'MINNESOTA'S GREATEST GENERATION' EXHIBIT OPENS TO RECORD CROWDS, 'VATICAN SPLENDORS' DRAWS MORE THAN 100,000 VISITORS AND CHANGING EXHIBITS EXPAND AUDIENCES

"Minnesota's Greatest Generation: the Depression, the War, the Boom," the capstone of the Society's multi-year effort to document the lives and contributions of this seminal generation, opened at the History Center on Memorial Day Weekend. The exhibit, which chalked up a record-breaking opening crowd of over 4,000 people, continued to draw thousands of visitors, many experiencing the History Center for the first time. Contributing greatly to the success of this ambitious effort was funding by individuals and organizations which reached its target of \$6 million in support of the project.

The heralded traveling exhibit, "Vatican Splendors: From Saint Peter's Basilica, the Vatican Museums and the Swiss Guard," drew 106,340 visitors to the History Center in its nearly four-month run. And changing exhibits continued to attract new and varied audiences. "Ellis Island Portraits, 1905-1920," a striking collection of photographs by Augustus Sherman, an amateur photographer and clerk with the immigration center, presented a historical document of unprecedented scope. "Minnesota on the Map" showcased four centuries of stunning maps from the Society's collection. "Native Words, Native Warriors" told the remarkable story of soldiers from more than a dozen tribes, including the Ojibwe and Dakota, who used their native languages in service to the U.S. military.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION BRINGS MIXED RESULTS

In the midst of one of the worst economic challenges in recent memory, the Society received a combination of good and bad news from the 2009 legislative session. An 8.9-percent reduction in its state appropriation which, in combination with reductions in other income sources, resulted in a nearly 13-percent overall reduction in the Society's budget. At the same time, the Society received \$2.065 million in the state's capital budget to preserve historic sites buildings, including statewide roof repairs and preservation work at Historic Fort Snelling and the James J. Hill House. At Split Rock Lighthouse, a two-year capital-funded preservation project was completed, helping to prepare the popular North Shore site for its upcoming centennial celebration in 2010.

LEGACY AMENDMENT PROVIDES NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR HISTORY

In November 2008, Minnesota voters approved a constitutional amendment that provides for an increase in the sales tax which will be dedicated for the next 25 years to support outdoor heritage, clean water, parks and trails, as well as arts, history and cultural heritage. For the first time, the "preservation of Minnesota's history" was written into the state's constitution. The funds, which are required to supplement, rather than substitute for, existing funding and programs, provide significant statewide support for history – an estimated \$22 million over the next two years. Allocations include \$6.75 million for grants to local, county and regional history organizations, to be administered by the Society, and \$4 million to support partnerships for organizations working together to increase public access to the state's historical resources. The Society also will receive funding for new historical and educational programs, including a major exhibition on the regional, local and cultural diversity of Minnesota's history and cultural heritage.

SAVE AMERICA'S TREASURES GRANT HELPS PRESERVE SOCIETY'S CIVIL WAR FLAGS

In December 2008, a project to preserve the Society's fragile Civil War and Spanish-American War battle flags was selected to receive \$181,119 in funding from the Save America's Treasures program, which is dedicated to preserving, conserving and rescuing the nation's most significant cultural and heritage resources. Funding from the State of Minnesota provided the required match to the federal grant. The first phase of the project includes conservation of 24 flags, including the banner of the First Minnesota, carried valiantly during the Battle at Bull Run in 1861. Once conserved, the flags will be on display, four at a time in rotation, at the State Capitol and also will be available to historical researchers, some for the first time. An additional 25 remaining flags in the collection will be stored in climate- and security-controlled cases until additional funds can be secured to undertake their conservation.

2009 HIGHLIGHTS

INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS ATTRACTED NEW AND DIVERSE AUDIENCES

Attendance at the History Center soared this year, thanks to such such programs as “The Global Hotdish Variety Show,” which featured multi-cultural and multi-generational artists in an eclectic mix of music, song and dance representing cultures around the world. The East Side Neighborhood Access Initiative continued to bring underserved audiences to the History Center. And the newly launched Rondo Neighborhood Access Initiative expanded to students from a nearby inner-city neighborhood. Plans are underway to add more schools in 2010. The perennially popular “Nine Nights of Music” attracted a record-breaking 7,053 to the History Center’s terrace and lawns, and History Pub Crawls took visitors on guided trolley tours of distinctive St. Paul neighborhoods and watering holes. Comics Camp, an intergenerational outreach project, paired teenagers with members of the Greatest Generation to conduct oral histories and create comic books that told the seniors’ stories, while Generations Camp, in partnership with the Center for Hmong Arts and Talent, involved students and seniors telling shared stories through artwork.

MAJOR ACQUISITIONS ENHANCE SOCIETY’S COLLECTIONS

Two paintings once owned by James J. Hill were given to the Society by Hill family members and are on permanent display at the James J. Hill House in St. Paul. “Village of Sevres” by Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot, purchased by Hill in 1896, once again hangs in the home’s art gallery, and “Nuns Making Preserves” by Francois Bonvin, purchased in 1891, is back in the breakfast room. Also acquired was a rare 18th-century DeLisle Globe, which served as the centerpiece of the exhibit “Minnesota on the Map” and will be on permanent display in the Weyerhaeuser Reading Room of the Library. The Society also received items from R. Bruce Laingen, the Minnesota-born American official held hostage in Iran in 1979-81, including the suit he wore, his diary and the American flag presented to him by President Ronald Reagan. The items are on display in the “Minnesota’s Greatest Generation” exhibit.

FINDING AIDS GO DIGITAL INCREASING ONLINE ACCESS TO SOCIETY’S HOLDINGS

A redesign of finding aids provided the ability to link digital copies of collection items to their descriptions. Now online visitors can view such rare items as Abraham Lincoln’s hand-written letters in the Edward D. Neill and Family Papers; Walter Mondale’s iconic 1976 memo to President-elect Jimmy Carter that helped transform the vice-presidency; or correspondence, news clippings and reports from the James J. Hill Papers. Selections from Alexander Ramsey’s 40-volume bound pamphlet collection provide a window in to the issues shaping Minnesota during the second half of the 19th century. And thanks to a federal Library Services and Technology grant that funded the bar coding of newspaper microfilm collections, researchers can find which issues of Minnesota newspapers, dating from 1849, are available on microfilm.

SOCIAL MEDIA OPEN NEW DOORS

The Society delved farther into the new and burgeoning world of social media, and the growing numbers of those who use it, to promote awareness of our collections, programs, events and exhibits. Thousands of people are now learning about and sharing the Society's events and programs on Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, YouTube and Flickr. These networks enable us to take advantage of our energized fans' own social networking, allowing them to share our content and spread our messages. Blogs and podcasts on our own web site also allow direct interaction with multiple and diverse audiences. Nearly 50,000 people visited nine Society blogs during the fiscal year. The latest to be introduced is a popular journal written by Split Rock Lighthouse's site manager, reminiscent of the log books and diaries kept by early site keepers that are part of the Society's permanent collections. More than 35 podcasts gave more than 20,000 online visitors entertaining and informational looks into the Society's collections on topics ranging from the Hill Family Papers to the history of streetcars in Minneapolis and St. Paul to a Dakota writer and scholar's search for an ancestor who played a key role in the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862.

SOCIETY NAMES TWO PROPERTIES TO NATIONAL REGISTER, AWARDS \$1,118,647 IN GRANTS

The Society's Historic Preservation, Field Services and Grants department awarded \$1,118,647 from three state and federally funded programs. Awards included 66 State Grants-in-Aid, 13 State Capital Grants-in-Aid and 11 Federal Certified Local Grants. Training workshops offered by the Local History Services section of the department drew participants from county and local historical organizations around the state. After passage of the Legacy Amendment in November 2008, the department also helped coordinate a series of public meetings to obtain input from history and historic preservation partners around the state regarding the use of dollars provided by Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund. The Preservation Alliance of Minnesota, the Minnesota Alliance of Local History Museums, the Council for Minnesota Archaeology, the Minnesota Archaeological Society and Minnesota Historic Northwest partnered with the Society to form the Minnesota History Coalition, which hosted the meetings.

Two historic properties were listed on the National Register during this fiscal year: Franklin Junior High School, Brainerd, a significant example of a time when architecture influenced every aspect of school design; and the Minnesota Building, St. Paul, the first building to introduce Art Deco/Modern, the architectural style which boomed in downtown St. Paul from the 1920s to 1940s.

Fiscal Year 2009 Financial Highlights

The Society received approximately \$23.7 million in operating support from the State of Minnesota in fiscal year 2009, 70% of total support and revenue. This represents a decrease of \$2.5 million from fiscal year 2008 due mainly to the absence of one-time appropriations for various initiatives in 2008, such as the Minnesota Sesquicentennial, in addition to a reduction in the base appropriation of approximately \$0.5 million.

In addition, the Society received \$2.1 million in capital bonding appropriations for Historic Asset Preservation, or 6.1% of total support and revenue. This level of funding is a \$7.1 million decrease from the \$9.2 million appropriation in fiscal 2008. The Legislature provides capital appropriations generally every other year.

Contributions from members, friends, corporations and foundations totaled \$5.2 million, or 15.3% of the total support and revenue, down \$0.8 million from fiscal year 2008. This decrease in contributions is mainly attributable to the economic environment during fiscal year 2009.

Total non-investment operating revenues overall were consistent with the previous fiscal year, with variances in certain categories. Increased revenue from admissions, auxiliary services, programs, and other sales totaling \$0.8 million can be attributed to the "Vatican Splendors" and "Minnesota's Greatest Generation" exhibits. Decreased revenue from Museum Store sales, publications, and other fees also totaled \$0.8 million and tended to reflect the downturn in the economy during fiscal year 2009.

Fiscal year 2009 was the fourth full year of the Society charging for admission at the History Center, which resulted in approximately \$266,000 in admission fees. This represents a decrease of \$47,000 in admissions sold at the History Center, however, \$66,000 in excess of the budget. Though total admissions revenue increased during fiscal 2009, the decrease in admissions sold at the History Center was due to the use of Ticketmaster for the "Vatican Splendors" exhibit. During fiscal year 2009, memberships were sold at the History Center generating over \$135,000.

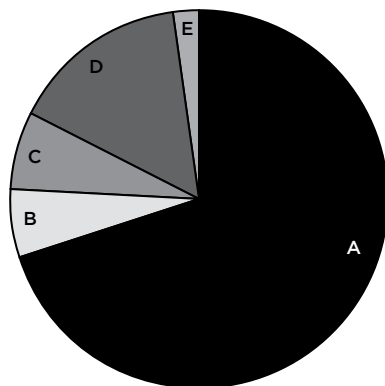
Realized and unrealized Investment losses during fiscal year 2009, were \$8.8 million. Declines in the market value of stocks and bonds held at the close of the fiscal year on June 30 comprised approximately \$4.2 million of the annual investment loss. The investment return on the endowment funds for fiscal year 2009 was a negative 29.5%.

Total expenses for fiscal year 2009 were \$47.2 million, up \$0.2 million from the prior year and related primarily to salary and benefit increases. Fiscal 2009 included an across-the-board wage increase of 3.25% for society employees.

Salaries and benefits expense increased 3% in fiscal year 2009 and comprised 50.8% (\$24.0 million) of the Society's total expenses for the fiscal year, compared to 49.5% (\$23.3 million) for fiscal year 2008. All other operating expenditures in total decreased approximately \$0.4 million in fiscal 2009.

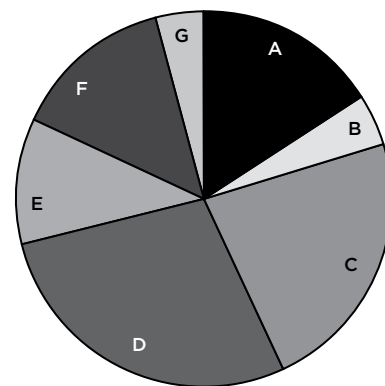
The Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act of 2006 (UPMIFA) adopted by the Minnesota Legislature became effective August 1, 2008. This Act, along with the guidance from the Financial Accounting Standards Board's Staff Position No. 117-1, requires the classification of that portion of investment return from donor-restricted endowment funds that are not classified as permanently restricted net assets, as temporarily restricted net assets until appropriated by the governing body for expenditure. The impact of the Act upon the Society's financial statements, was to reclassify \$5.1 million in endowment funds from Unrestricted Board Designated to Temporarily Restricted endowment funds.

Nearly 2,100 volunteers contributed more than 48,700 hours at the Society's museums and historic sites across the state.



Sources of Support and Revenue:

- A State Operating Appropriations 70.0%
- B State Capital Bond Appropriation 6.1%
- C Federal, State & County Grants 6.4%
- D Support from Individuals, Corporations and Foundations 15.3%
- E Earned Income 2.2%



Percentage of Expenses by Program Area:

- A Library Collections and Archival Services 16.1%
- B Publications 4.4%
- C History Center Museum 22.6%
- D Historic Sites 28.3%
- E Outreach and Preservation 10.8%
- F Management and General 14.0%
- G Development/Membership 3.9%

Condensed Balance Sheet As of June 30, 2009

(000's) omitted

	Unrestricted			Temporarily Restricted		Permanently Restricted	Total	
	Operating funds	Plant fund	Board designated endowment	State appropriation	Other	Endowment	2009	2008
Cash and investments	\$ 2,412		\$ 5,932	\$ (24)	\$ 9,959	\$ 16,135	\$ 34,414	\$ 49,378
Receivables	1,122			15,548	4,122	2,164	22,956	20,922
Museum shop inventories	922						922	980
Property and equipment net		\$ 86,829					86,829	88,075
Total assets	\$ 4,456	\$ 86,829	\$ 5,932	\$ 15,524	\$ 14,081	\$ 18,299	\$ 145,121	\$ 159,355
Payables and accrued liabilities	\$ 1,337			\$ 2,952	\$ 650	\$ 336	\$ 5,275	\$ 6,131
Net assets:								
Unrestricted	3,119	\$ 86,829	\$ 5,932				95,880	105,809
Temporarily restricted				12,572	13,431		26,003	27,746
Permanently restricted						17,963	17,963	19,669
Total net assets	3,119	86,829	5,932	12,572	13,431	17,963	139,846	153,224
Total liabilities and net assets	\$ 4,456	\$ 86,829	\$ 5,932	\$ 15,524	\$ 14,081	\$ 18,299	\$ 145,121	\$ 159,355

These statements are excerpts from the Society's audited financial statements which are available upon request.

Statement of Activities Year ended June 30, 2009

(000's) omitted

	Unrestricted			Temporarily Restricted		Permanently Restricted	Total	
	Operating funds	Plant fund	Board designated endowment	State appropriation	Other	Endowment	2009	2008
SUPPORT AND REVENUE								
Support:								
Private contributions	\$ 1,869				\$ 1,840	\$ 1,460	\$ 5,169	\$ 5,992
Federal grants					2,087		2,087	2,403
County and other grants					62		62	0
State operating appropriation				\$ 23,656			23,656	26,216
State capital appropriation	-	-	-	2,065	-	-	2,065	9,192
Total support	\$ 1,869	-	-	\$ 25,721	\$ 3,989	\$ 1,460	\$ 33,039	\$ 43,803
Revenue:								
Admissions fees	\$ 2,610						\$ 2,610	\$ 2,146
Museum Store sales	1,814						1,814	1,882
Membership	416						416	626
Publication sales	1,166						1,166	1,602
Program fees	679						679	625
Contract service fees	790						790	891
Digital product fees	384						384	412
Investment return	88		\$ (2,126)		(3,586)	(3,166)	(8,790)	(4,653)
Auxiliary services	1,183						1,183	1,047
Other sales and fees	493	-	-	-	-	-	493	342
Total revenue	\$ 9,623	-	\$ (2,126)	-	\$ (3,586)	\$ (3,166)	\$ 745	\$ 4,920
Total support and revenue	\$ 11,492	-	\$ (2,126)	\$ 25,721	\$ 403	\$ (1,706)	\$ 33,784	\$ 48,723
Net assets released from program restrictions	32,835	\$ 240	-	(27,962)	(5,113)	-	-	-
Total support, revenue and net assets released from program restrictions	\$ 44,327	\$ 240	\$ (2,126)	\$ (2,241)	\$ (4,710)	\$ (1,706)	\$ 33,784	\$ 48,723
EXPENSES:								
Program services:								
Library collections & archival services	\$ 7,409	\$ 192					\$ 7,601	\$ 7,318
Publications	2,045	8					2,053	2,349
History Center Museum	10,175	485					10,660	10,254
Historic sites	12,578	769					13,347	13,767
Outreach and preservation	5,092	5	-	-	-	-	5,097	4,482
Total program services	\$ 37,299	\$ 1,459	-	-	-	-	\$ 38,758	\$ 38,170
Supporting services:								
Management and general	\$ 6,554	\$ 26					\$ 6,580	\$ 7,126
Development/Membership	1,822	1	-	-	-	-	1,823	1,728
Total supporting services	\$ 8,376	\$ 27	-	-	-	-	\$ 8,403	\$ 8,854
Total expenses	\$ 45,675	\$ 1,486	-	-	-	-	\$ 47,161	\$ 47,024
Increase (decrease) in net assets before reclassifications	(1,348)	(1,246)	(2,126)	(2,241)	(4,710)	(1,706)	(13,377)	1,699
Reclassification of board designated endowment	13		(132)		119		-	-
Reclassification due to FAS 117-1	-	-	\$ (5,090)	-	\$ 5,090	-	-	-
Changes in net assets:								
Unrestricted	(1,335)	(1,246)	(7,348)				(9,929)	(5,138)
Temporarily restricted				(2,241)	499		(1,742)	8,440
Permanently restricted						(1,706)	(1,706)	(1,603)
Net changes in net assets	(1,335)	(1,246)	(7,348)	(2,241)	499	(1,706)	(13,377)	1,699
Net assets at beginning of year	4,454	88,075	13,280	14,813	12,932	19,669	153,223	151,524
Net assets at end of year	\$ 3,119	\$ 86,829	\$ 5,932	\$ 12,572	\$ 13,431	\$ 17,963	\$ 139,846	\$ 153,223

The Minnesota Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the generosity of the people of Minnesota who, through appropriations made by the Legislature and approved by the Governor, have supported the Society in its mission. The special support of our members and friends named in the following lists is critical to maintaining excellence in our programs and services. The Society is grateful to all those who have given their financial support, and we use this opportunity to give special recognition and thanks to those who have contributed \$250 or more.



NORTH STAR CIRCLE

The Minnesota Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the leadership support of the following North Star Circle members. These friends have contributed \$1,000 or more for annual membership during our 2009 fiscal year running from July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009.

Director's Circle: \$50,000+
David and Barbara Koch*

Guarantor: \$25,000-49,999
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Art and Martha Kaemmer†
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