



The Corporation of the City of Sault Ste. Marie
Historic Sites Board
Agenda

Wednesday, May 13, 2026

12:00 pm - 1:30 pm

Old Stone House

As a courtesy meetings may be viewed live on the City's YouTube channel
<https://www.youtube.com/user/SaultSteMarieOntario>

	Pages
1. Call to Order	
2. Declaration of Pecuniary Interest	
3. Adoption of Agenda	
Mover _____	
Seconder _____	
Resolved that the Agenda for Historic Sites Board meeting for May 13, 2026, as presented be approved.	
4. Adoption of Minutes	3 - 5
Mover _____	
Seconder _____	
Resolved that Minutes of Historic Sites Board meeting of April 15, 2026, be approved.	
5. Business Arising	
6. Accounts	
7. Curator's Report	6 - 20
1) 2025 Annual Report	
2) May is Museum month & the activities planned	

- 3) MOU with Parks Canada
- 4) MOU with Destination Ontario
- 5) Summer employee funding programs - update
- 6) May brings the first of the Cruise Ships and Bus Tours

Mover _____

Seconder _____

"Resolved that the members of the Historic Sites Board approve the 2025 Annual Report for the operations of ECNHS, and whereas, the report be submitted to Council as per the HSB management by-law."

8. Municipal Heritage Committee

9. New Business

10. Next Meeting

Date to be determined. June or July

July usually brings User Fees, Capital / Asset Management, and pre-budget considerations.

No meeting in August

11. Adjournment

Mover _____

Seconder _____

Resolved that this Committee now adjourn.



**The Corporation of the City of Sault Ste. Marie
Historic Sites Board
Minutes**

Wednesday, April 15, 2026
12:00 pm ~ Ermatinger Old Stone House - Summer Kitchen

Present: S. Casola, D. Conyers, Sandra Hollingsworth, Heather Bot,
Brittany Paat, J. van Haften

Absent: C. Caputo, C. Tomchick, S. Walker, L. Siegart

Officials: K. Fisher

1. Call to Order

12:02 call to order by Chair: S. Casola

Land Acknowledgement

2. Declaration of Pecuniary Interest

none noted

3. Adoption of Agenda

Moved by: Heather Bot

Seconded by: Sandra Hollingsworth

Resolved that the Agenda for Historic Sites Board meeting for April 15th, 2026 as presented be approved.

Carried

4. Adoption of Minutes

Moved by: Heather Bot
Seconded by: J. van Haaften

Resolved that Minutes of Historic Sites Board meeting of March 11th, 2026 be approved.

Carried

5. Business Arising

none noted

6. Accounts

Q1 drafted financial statement was reviewed.

Moved by: Sandra Hollingsworth
Seconded by: Brittany Paat

Resolved that the members of the Historic Sites Board approve the YTD - Q1 unofficial financials as presented.

Carried

7. Curator's Report

Strategic Plan was reviewed by a task group of staff, some members of the HSB, and some of our partners.

Final draft for the update presented today at the HSB meeting.

Plan will be presented to Council with the Annual Report on May 25th, 2026.

Updated Plan is required for CMOG application in June.

Moved by: Sandra Hollingsworth
Seconded by: Brittany Paat

Resolved that the members of the Historic Sites Board, approve the updated Strategic Plan (2024 to 2029) and the revised policies of: Governance, Community, Finance, Human Resources, and Accessibility as they relate to the Strategic Plan update.

Carried

8. Municipal Heritage Committee

The Heritage Booklet is being reviewed by H. Ellis.

Heritage Week 2027 - start a planning group for November 2026. Would like to include a speakers series, promote Jane's walks, and review social media for 2027.

Heritage Trees Project - Sault College students are out taking tree measurements.

Doors Open 2026 - Information night will be planned for September. Currently MHC is finalizing the Sites that will be "open". Starting to look at Volunteer Recruitment.

9. New Business

Resignation of:

S. Walker

from HSB & MHC. Board members expressed sending a thank you and to acknowledge her resignation.

Two other members were sent letters to confirm their resignation from HSB:

C. Tomchick and L. Siegart.

10. Next Meeting: May 13, 2025 12:00 p.m. (noon)

Next meeting agenda will include the 2025 Annual Report. A requirement in the by-laws of the HSB to provide annually to Council.

May 25th Council meeting report: Annual report 2025, Strategic Plan update, Firearms & Noise exemptions.

11. Adjournment

Moved by: Sandra Hollingsworth

Seconded by: J. van Haften

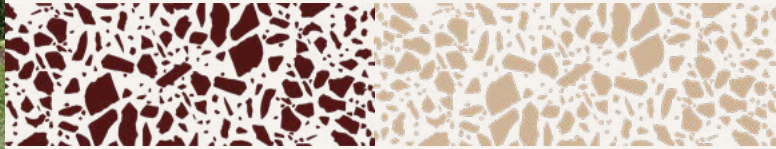
Resolved that this Committee now adjourn.

Carried



**ERMATINGER • CLERGUE
NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE**

2025 ANNUAL REPORT



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge with respect that this land is steeped in the rich history of First Nations, and in particular, that we are in the Robinson-Huron Treaty territory. We recognize that the land on which we are gathered is the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe, known as Baawating. Baawating is the home of Garden River First Nation, Batchewana First Nation, and the Historic Sault Ste. Marie Métis Council.

The Ermatinger Clergue National Historic Site stands with all Indigenous Peoples, past and present, in promoting the wise stewardship of the lands on which we live. We recognize that we must do more to learn about the history of Indigenous people. This will help us better understand our roles and take responsibility towards reconciliation, in that we can build on understanding, dignity and respect.

The Canadian Museums Association's Moved into Action: Activating UNDRIP in Canadian Museums, reinforces this responsibility.

In 2008, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was established, after the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) general assembly adopted the declaration in 2007.

Key Aspects of UNDRIP:

- **Purpose:** To uphold the inherent human rights of Indigenous Peoples worldwide, ensuring protection against discrimination and respecting traditional institutions.
- **Core Rights:** Includes the rights to self-determination, maintenance of traditional lands and resources, and the protection of cultural, spiritual, and language traditions.
- **Implementation in Canada:** Passed into federal law on June 21, 2021, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act requires the government to align federal laws with the Declaration and create an action plan.

The TRC released 94 Calls to Action.

Museums have an ethical responsibility to foster reconciliation.

TRC Calls to Action #67 through to #70 are specific to museums.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2025, the Ermatinger Clergue National Historic Site (ECNHS) welcomed over 30,000 visitors. When reviewing our key performance indicators, visitation from general tourists remains below the levels of pre-pandemic. However, our continued evolution of community programming and events for residents and tourists, enables us to maintain sustainability and the integrity of the Site – our two largest artifacts – the Ermatinger Old Stone House, and the Clergue Blockhouse. This past year was filled with history, heritage, culture and unforgettable moments made possible by the Historic Sites Board members, community Volunteers, Supporters, Partners and our dedicated “Friends of” group. I personally extend my heartfelt thanks to each for the support and patronage of ECNHS.

All programs and services are delivered by a very dedicated skeletal staff team. The staff team is comprised of only one other full-time employee (Ian) and 5 part-time workers (Anna, Anastasiia, Chris, Bradley, Alma). In addition, 4 summer employees are funded through various sources which includes Canadian Heritage Young Canada Works, Summer Experience Program with the Province, and the Métis Nation of Ontario, Employment and Training Summer Career Placement. A huge thank you to our Manager, Virginia McLeod, and the amazing TEAM at ECNHS, who all take pride in their planning and delivery of our services.

We made great strides in our Digital Strategy, with help from our Digital Youth Intern (John). A substantial financial contribution for the implementation of our Digital Strategy was from FedNor. The Tourism Growth project allowed us to create a stand-alone ECNHS website, in English and French, that enables us to now utilize e-commerce for admissions, event tickets, and souvenirs from our gift shop. We obtained 3 touch screen monitors (one for each of our building that will provide information, stories, and 360-degree virtual tours for anyone to use and to access areas of the buildings that may not be accessible to all. Audio tours and interactive exhibits will finish off the project in 2026.

Along with all these wonderful mechanisms to engage our visitors, the Site received a rebrand. A new LOGO, branding, and colour scheme provides a complete presentation that better depicts our Site and Stories steeped in stone. Kudos to our digital intern on the logo creation and branding of our new look. The launch of the new brand and logo was revealed at Fall Rendezvous – September 27, 2025.

The Friends of ECNHS, and our hosts of the annual Fall Rendezvous, provided a remarkable lineup of heritage presentations over 4 days – September 24 to 27. The Friends of ECNHS are supported by multiple funding programs from Canadian Heritage – Local Festivals, Experience Ontario, and the City of Sault Ste. Marie’s Arts & Culture Assistance Program. The 2025 festival showcased a new program component of Scottish heritage. Bag Pipes and Highland dancers entertained audiences in commemoration of the Scottish fur traders in partnership with Charles Ermatinger. The festival supported the grade 7 curriculum for approximately 1000 students. Rendezvous is the large-scale festival in Northern Ontario showcased with Ontario Culture Days and the Sault Ste. Marie hub.

The City of Sault Ste. Marie and Garden River First Nation entered into a Friendship Accord. This meaningful ceremony marked an important step in strengthening relationships, fostering mutual respect, and reaffirming a shared commitment to collaboration and understanding. Since the Ermatinger Site is rooted in history and connection, hosting the training ceremony made the occasion especially significant. We are committed to our journey of truth, reconciliation, and friendship.

At the Ermatinger Clergue National Historic Site we strive to ensure that the Site is relevant, accessible, and is in partnership with the community of Sault Ste. Marie and Algoma area. It is a steward of our community’s heritage and national heritage, as well as being actively engaged in the community to be responsive to its cultural needs. The Ermatinger Clergue National Historic Site is dedicated to preserving, interpreting, and exhibiting the heritage of Sault Ste. Marie specific to the timelines of the Old Stone House & the Clergue Blockhouse, and for other reasons of significance. As a community museum, the Site provides tangible and irreplaceable links to what defines us as a community. Heritage value resides in tangible material culture (objects, structures and spaces) and in the intangible associations, memories, and stories. It is our “Stories Steeped in Stone” that we pride ourselves.

As stated in the Strategic Plan, it is our goal to build on our community engagement, and develop the sense of belonging, to involve, collaborate, and empower people, in that they aid us in facilitating the mission and mandate of the Site.

The “Community” of this museum, is a mix of several communities, reaching from local, regional, provincial, and National audiences. A community’s heritage is part of its identity. The staff, volunteers, and Historic Sites Board of the Ermatinger Clergue National Historic Site are stewards of these resources, on behalf of the people of Sault Ste. Marie.

We are truly humbled and grateful for our community and all who help keep our history alive.

Kathy Fisher,
Curator

OMA Certification in Museum Studies, Bsc Recreation Management, Bsc Therapeutic Recreation,
Humanities associate degree with a concentration in Fine Arts
AMCTO – Municipal Administration Program

HISTORIC SITES BOARD

Silvana Casola
Chairman

Heather Bot
Vice Chairman

Board Members

Councillor Sandra Hollingsworth

David Conyers

Jami van Haaften

Brittany Paat

Carol Caputo

Sarah Walker

Colin Tomchick

Lamishia Siegart

MANDATE

The Ermatinger • Clergue National Historic Site provides visitors to, and residents of Sault Ste. Marie with an opportunity to experience the history of our community through the preservation and historic interpretation of artifacts related to the Site; within the Ermatinger Old Stone House, the Clergue Blockhouse, the Heritage Discovery Centre, including the heritage gardens and grounds and through related festivals and events.

MISSION

At the Ermatinger • Clergue National Historic Site, our mission is to facilitate dialogue, engage, and create an atmosphere that tells our stories steeped in stone, where cultures meet.

GOVERNANCE

The Ermatinger Clergue National Historic Site is owned and operated by the City of Sault Ste. Marie, under the management of the Historic Sites Board, an appointed Board of Council. The 2025 Board comprised of nine Council-appointed citizens and one Council member.

The Historic Sites Board By-law mandates the responsibilities of the Board in overseeing the operations of the Ermatinger Clergue National Historic Site, on behalf of Council.

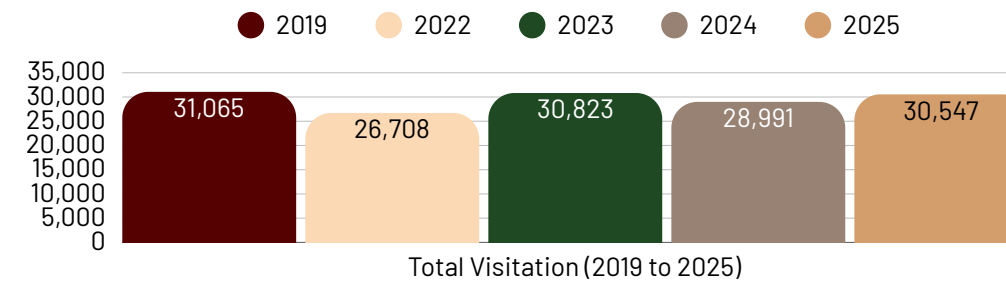
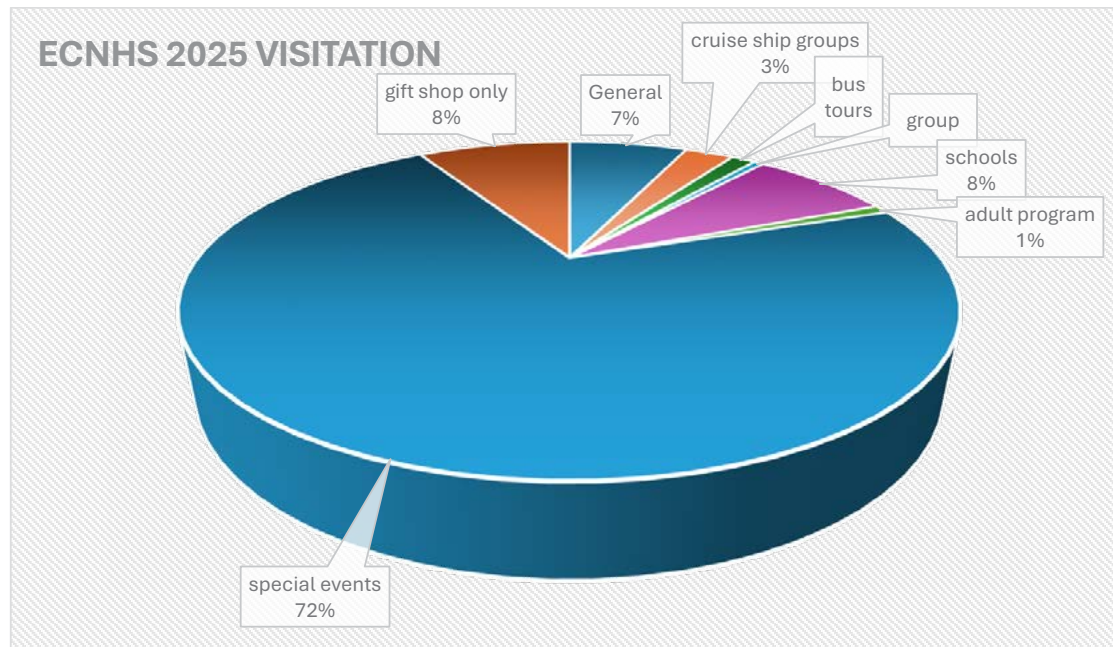
In 2018 and 2019, the Historic Sites Board reviewed and revised their strategic plan and governance policy to reflect the direction of the Ontario Museum Association, Ontario Cultural Plan, City of Sault Ste. Marie's corporate strategic plan, and the SSM Downtown Association plan. The strategic plan was updated and revised in 2024 & 2025 to reflect the operations and directions to 2029. Outcome based goals, timelines and resources assigned are the next steps within this governance document.

The Historic Sites Board along with the Curator, ensure that each year, the Ontario standards for Museums are met and submitted to the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Sport.

ECNHS maintains the annual membership with the Ontario Museums Association, and the Canadian Museums Association. Membership with the Ontario Historical Society is maintained through the Friends of ECNHS.

The staff and management of the Ermatinger Clergue National Historic Site fall within the Corporation through the Community Services and Enterprise Services, Recreation and Culture Division.

KPI COMPARISON CHART



KPI	2019	2022	2023	2024	2025
Total Visitation	31065	26708	30823	28991	30547
General Tourists	4983	1558	1711	2195	2010
Cruise Ship Visitors	1813	895	1213	973	818
Bus Tour Visitors	459	327	343	573	404
Group Tour Visitors	611	45	195	96	162
Students	2033	2073	2285	2620	2328
Adult Programming	567	96	583	623	249
Special Events	17667	18620	21776	18293	21816
Venue users	394	134	22	329	94
Non paying & Gift Shop visitors	2198	2849	2477	3289	2594

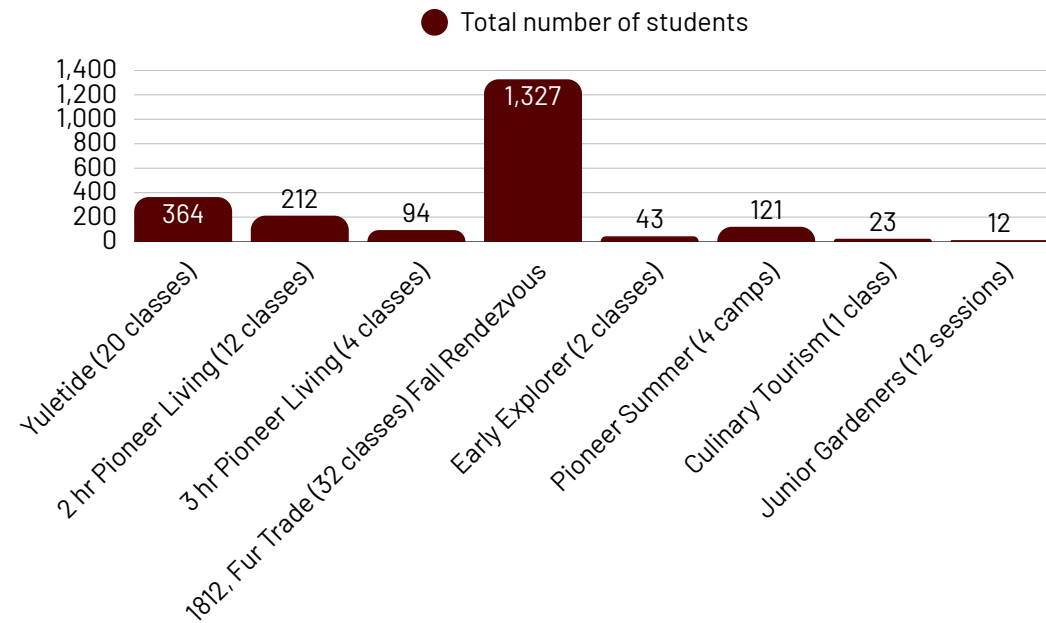
PROGRAMMING

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

In 2025, Students visited for curriculum-based tours with 2,328 students served. Curriculum programs focus:

- K to 2 Long Ago
- 1 to 3 **Yuletide**
- 3 **Pioneer Living** – 2-hour program & 3-hour program
- 4 to 6 Early Explorers
- 7 (6 to 8) **1812, Fur Trade**, Confederation
- 10 Canadian History
- 10 Civics – in combination with Civic Centre
- 11/12 Culinary Tourism
- K to 8 Summer Pioneers – end of year field trips
- Pioneer Summer Summer Camps

The italicized programs are our most popular for curriculum field trips, however, we do receive classes for all the programs listed. The students that visited in 2025 were:



Pricing for curriculum programs are usually \$6 per student, with the only exception being the 3-hour program which is \$10 per student. This program offers more hands-on experiences and lunch is provided.

We have one full time Programmer, and one part time programmer who are the main curriculum instructors for these.

In 2026, we are looking to implement a flat fee per class, that will be calculated based on average number of students per class, and supply fees. For example: 24 X \$6. + \$35 = \$180 flat fee. This fee will be required to accompany the class, on the day of the visit. This alleviates schools waiting to see how many children attend on the day of the tour and then requiring invoicing.



MARCH BREAK

During March Break 2025, the site participated in the Cultural Corridor Quest, a collaborative, week-long program with several Sault Ste. Marie attractions, including the Canadian Bushplane Heritage Centre, Entomica, the Art Gallery of Algoma, the Sault Ste. Marie Museum, and the Ermatinger Clergue National Historic Site. The program encouraged families to explore multiple cultural destinations across the city, creating a shared learning experience that connected art, science, aviation, natural history, and heritage.

The Cultural Corridor Quest attracted over 200 participants on the site only throughout the week, offering engaging activities at each location and fostering community connection, curiosity, and discovery during the school break ensuring authenticity, quality, and memorable visitor experiences throughout the year was a huge success.

EGG HUNT & EGGSCAVENGER

On April 19, 2025, with the celebration of Easter Day, the Old Stone House at the Ermatinger Clergue National Historic Site hosted a lively Egg Hunt and Egg Scavenger Hunt, welcoming children, families, and friends for a day filled with fun and discovery.

Almost 500 participants enjoyed collecting eggs scattered throughout the Old Stone House rooms while taking part in a variety of hands-on activities designed especially for young visitors. The event offered a joyful way for families to celebrate the season while engaging with the site's rich history in a welcoming and festive environment.



PROGRAMMING

ANNUAL FALL RENDEZVOUS!

The Annual Fall Rendezvous, themed Highland Fest, was a resounding success in 2025, welcoming over 5,800 visitors including school groups, families, friends, and community members from September 24 to 27, 2025.

Hosted by the Friends of ECNHS, with the generous support of several sponsors, the event delivered four days of immersive history, education, and cultural celebration.

The festival featured two dedicated educational days for schools, followed by two cultural celebration days open to the public. Visitors were transported back to the 1800s through engaging historical reenactments, period demonstrations, and interactive programming throughout the site.

New for 2025 was the introduction of the Highland Fest theme, developed in collaboration with the McTavish Clan, adding a rich Scottish cultural dimension to the event. The festival kicked off with a Scottish tasting experience hosted by The Whisky Barrel in the historic Summer Kitchen, which sold out and set the tone for a memorable celebration.

One of the most anticipated attractions was the cannon firing, which once again thrilled audiences and remained a highlight of the event. The 2025 Fall Rendezvous this year also marked the celebration of three significant milestones for the site:

- 60 years since the City acquired the Old Stone House
- 55 years since the site was designated a National Historic Site
- 45 years since its designation under the Ontario Heritage Act

The 2025 Fall Rendezvous & Highland Fest successfully combined education, heritage, and community spirit, making it one of the most impactful and well-attended events in the site's history.



2025 JUNIOR GARDEN PROGRAM



The **Junior Gardener Program 2025** marked a record-breaking year with 13 participants, ages 8 to 14, making it the highest enrollment the program has seen to date. Led by Garden keeper Chris Faulkner, the program exceeded expectations through 11 engaging sessions that combined hands-on gardening, cultural learning, and historic foodways.

Participants explored a wide range of topics, including pumpkin-growing methods, the Ojibwe Three Sisters planting technique, crop harvesting, and the importance of seed saving for sustainability. The program also connected gardening to heritage through pioneer-style baking in the historic Summer Kitchen, offering a meaningful link between the land, food, and history.

A major highlight of the season was the annual giant pumpkin weigh-in, where the group's pumpkin earned second place in the 16-and-under category at the 2025 weigh-off held at the Roberta Bondar Pavilion, hosted by the Algoma Farmers' Market on October 5, 2025.

The program concluded with a celebratory Pizza Day on the site grounds, rewarding participants for their dedication and hard work throughout the season and providing a joyful close to an outstanding year for the Junior Gardener Program.

SPECIAL EVENTS

2025 ALL YEAR ROUND SPECIAL EVENTS



Throughout 2025, the Ermatinger Clergue National Historic Site hosted a successful series of special events, most of which took place in the historic Summer Kitchen.

The series fostered community connection, encouraged conversation, and celebrated the rich history and cultural heritage of the site and the region.



Marked by a vibrant lineup of special events, many of which were hosted in the historic Summer Kitchen, creating an intimate and immersive setting for over 700+ visitors.

A great start of the year was the "Lunch and Learn: Fridays by the Fire" series, which featured 10 themed sessions with guest speakers who presented wide variety of historical and heritage topics related to the site. These events invited meaningful discussion and learning in a warm, welcoming atmosphere. The warmth of the hearth, combined with thoughtful discussion and learning, created memorable experiences that connected the past with the present while enjoying various soup dishes, biscuits, dessert, and a sip of tea and coffee.



Additional highlights included the popular Evening in the Summer Kitchen and the Sweets & Treats High Tea held in February and March, which offered visitors a charming experience rooted in tradition.

During the summer season, the festive Lilac and Lavender, Strawberry & Blueberry Socials, celebrations stood out as signature events, combining seasonal flavours with storytelling and shared heritage.

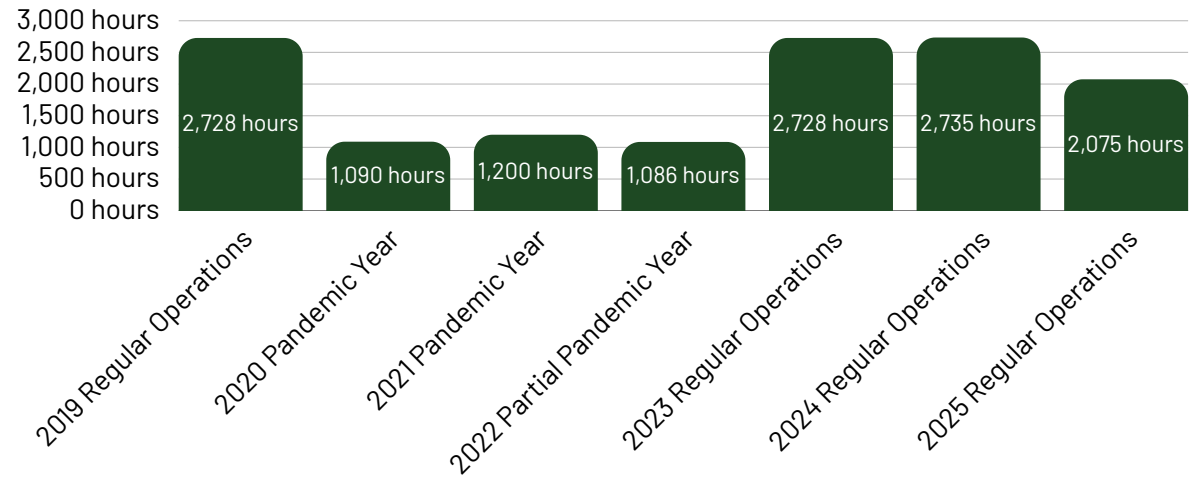
These events brought history to life through thoughtfully curated lunch and dinner experiences, led by Site Programmer Ian, with the dedicated support of site staff.

Each event was delivered with exceptional taste by Chef Alma and guided by the historical expertise of Curator Kathy Fisher, ensuring authenticity, quality, and memorable visitor experiences throughout the year.



MUSEUM STANDARDS

HOURS OPEN: – 1060 minimum required for Museum Standards



DAYS OPEN: – 180 minimum required for Museum Standards

Months	2019 # of days open	2020 # of days open	2021 # of days open	2022 # days open	2023 # of days open	2024 # of days open	2025 # of days OPEN
January	21	21	0	0	21	20	20
February	19	21	0	15 gift shop / curbside	19	19	22
March	21	10 - begin shut down	12 gift shop only	25 gift shop / curbside	21	21	20
April	20	0	10 gift shop only	16 gift shop / 5 open	20	21	21
May	26	0	19 gift shop only	21	26	25	22
June	30	6 gift shop & curb	24 gift shop only	30	30	30	29
July	31	23 gift shop & yard	22	31	31	31	31
August	31	20 gift shop & yard	22	31	31	31	31
September	30	22 gift shop & yard	25	30	30	30	30
October	27	23 with restrictions	22	24	27	28	29
November	20	20 with restrictions	22	21	20	22	20
December	16	17 with restrictions	22 with restrictions	14	16	15	15
TOTALS	292	183	200	258	292	293	290

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers who assist in activities, events, and programming are a mix of individuals from the following areas:

- Members of the Historic Sites Board
- Members of the Friends of Ermatinger • Clergue National Historic Site
- Adult and Youth Re-Enactors
- Adults & Seniors (55+) who individually want to assist in many capacities
- Youth for events, co-op placements, secondary school volunteer hours (40 hours)

The Site is managed by a volunteer Board (Historic Sites Board) which in 2025 was comprised of nine (9) members plus one (1) Coucillor, who contributed a total of 125 hours for Board Meetings. Members for the Sault Ste. Marie Historic Sites Board are appointed by City Council every 2 years.

The Ermatinger Clergue National Historic Site has 32 volunteers who contribute 1730 hours, including the Board members.



FEDNOR TOURISM GROWTH

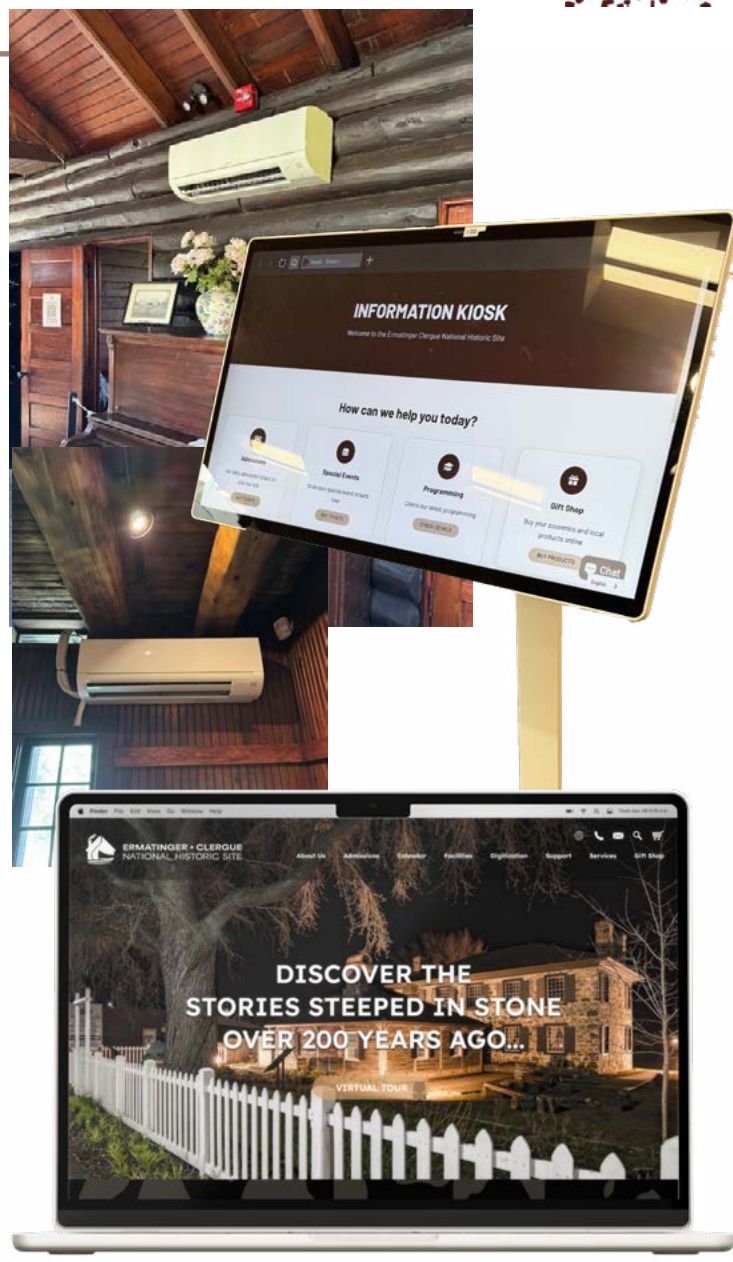
FEDNOR TOURISM PROJECT

The FedNor Tourism Project continues to advance its mission of transforming the Ermatinger Clergue National Historic Site (ECNHS) into a digitally accessible and engaging heritage experience. Supported by FedNor government funding and with the assistance of Digital Intern John, the site is expanding its horizons and providing enhanced accessibility for visitors of all ages.

Key developments in 2025 include Digital Experiences:

- Three information kiosk touchscreen display that offers accessibility to the visitors when they visited the site.
- Virtual Tours of all the three buildings are created to offer an interactive experience through the touchscreen displays.
- A standalone website in development to sell tickets for events and programs, provide access to digitized artifacts for research and education, and feature 360° virtual tours offering visitors a preview of the site.
- Blockhouse Heating and Cooling System Installation of the new system ensures the historic building can remain open longer during the winter months, providing a comfortable environment for visitors.

The website and Augmented Reality initiatives are expected to be fully launched by February 2026, ushering in a new year of enhanced digital experiences, improved year-round accessibility, and innovative ways to connect history, heritage, and culture with a broader audience than ever before.



NEW BRANDING & LOGO

Unveiled during the Fall Rendezvous and Highland Fest on September 27, 2025, the refreshed branding was unveiled by Mayor Matthew Shoemaker and Historic Sites Board Chairman Silvana Casola, reflecting the site's modernized vision while honouring its heritage, following a cake cutting at the Heritage Discovery Centre to celebrate the new brand.

The upper part of the smoke with the round shape symbolizes an eye of a beaver that witness the history.

The round shape is representation of the City of Sault Ste. Marie.

The smoke from the chimney represents Algoma Steel, which was the main industry of Sault Ste. Marie up until today.

The bottom part of the smoke represents the tail of the whitefish and symbolizes the Whitefish Island.

The chimney represents the hard work of Ermatinger and Clergue and the fur trading, which stood alone during the war. Also, it represents the Summer Kitchen and the heritage culinary experiences to share stories steeped in stone.

The left side represents the Old Stone House and the British-Canadian land, which became a crucial location of the war in 1812.

The bottom shape acknowledges the Robinson-Huron Treaty Territory for sharing the land and resources and as an independent fur trader of Ermatinger during the war and the grounds of the ECNHS today.

A negative space wave line represents the "Baawaating"—"the place of the rapids," also known today as St. Marys River, which separates the land of Canada and the USA.

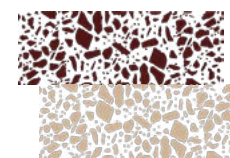
The right side represents Francis Hector Clergue's Blockhouse.

A negative space shaped like a wooden canoe represents the Anishnaabeg, particularly the Garden River and Batchewana First Nations, the Métis Nation of Ontario, and the Voyageurs' expedition.

The waves represent the hydroelectric potential of the St. Marys River rapids.

The logo is a full house-shaped icon represents all the buildings of ENCHS, which are the Old Stone House, Blockhouse, Summer Kitchen, and Heritage Discovery Centre, to honour the great history of the two men (Ermatinger & Clergue) and as a recognition for the two buildings as heritage and designated properties.

ERMATINGER • CLERGUE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE



The brand pattern consists of stone brick elements which represents different stories of the culture, heritage, and history over 200 years ago. It has different scales of bricks that symbolize the significant events that took place and where the stories steeped in stone are molded and passed over the years



"Stories Steeped in Stone" refers to the Ermatinger Clergue National Historic Site's interpretive programming and events that explore the history of the St. Marys River area, particularly the lives of early settlers and the impact of the fur trade, the War of 1812, and early industrial development.



DIGITAL STRATEGY GOALS

In 2023, we were fortunate to receive funding through Canadian Heritage, Museums Assistance Program, for the completion of a Digital Strategy. LORD Cultural Resources were contracted to lead us through the process.

The approach was a process of 2 key steps:

Step 1: Digital needs assessment, consultation, and research

- Start-up meeting
- Digital needs assessment
- Internal and external consultation and SWOT analysis
- Site visit
- Trends and leading practice research
- Key findings report

Step 2: Strategy development

- Strategy development workshop
- Draft digital strategy and presentation for approval
- Final strategy

The basics of the Strategy Recommendations / Goals are:



From the Digital Strategy, we applied for the following in 2024:

- FedNor Youth Internship funding – approved for 12 months, with possible extension up to 18 months
- FedNor Tourism Growth Program – approved 2025
- Website in English and French
- Digital content & Augmented exhibit components
- 360 virtual tours & touch screen displays
- Marketing
- Blockhouse heat & air

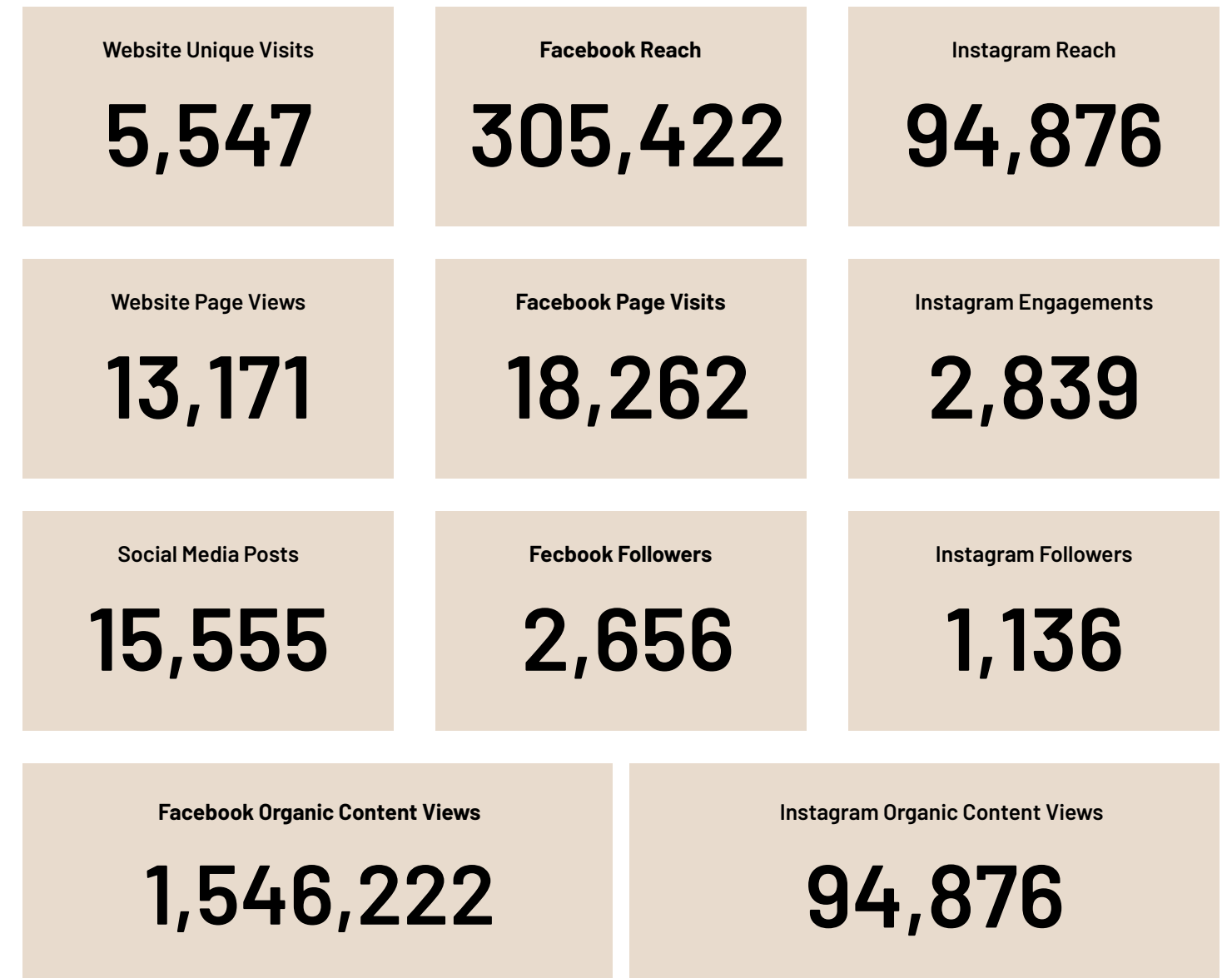
In 2025, with the assistance of our youth intern, and the approved funding we accomplished the following:

- Independent website, in English and French, with the capabilities of e-commerce for admissions, event tickets, and gift shop products.
- Digital content for exhibits
- Blockhouse heat & air
- New branding and Logo design

2026 remaining projects:

- Completion of the Augmented Reality
- Marketing
- Continued work on the website
- Installation of wifi and touch screens to all 3 buildings

DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT AND SOCIAL MEDIA



As part of the provincial festival funding for Fall Rendezvous, through the "Friends ECNHS", marketing strategies focused on digital and social media campaigns. Our regional tourism partners were contracted to assist in target marketing campaigns.

- Tourism Sault Ste. Marie, and
- Algoma Country

COLLECTION MANAGEMENT & EXHIBITS

COLLECTION MANAGEMENT & DIGITIZATION

During the pandemic years, we took inventory of the state of our collection. The responsibilities of the Curator (and staff) are to manage the collection, and to be a steward in preservation of the items within the collection.

For 2023 to 2024 a collections management and storage project was undertaken by staff. With funding from Canadian Heritage, Museums Assistance Program, we were able to purchase a lot of shelving, archival supplies, collection storage supplies, humidifiers, de-humidifiers, hydrothermographs, laptop for the collection, and more. The project and funding were completed by the deadline of March 31, 2024.

2025 to 2029 we will continue the process of digitizing the collection and maintaining the storage & collection management process.

This year our collection digitization and preparation for the new website had our collections assistant (Bradley) and our digital intern (John) working on gathering a list of special items to highlight from the collection.

The 2025 standards for the Province – Museum Standards required the submission of our Digital Plan (Strategy, Policy and Plan).

EXHIBITS

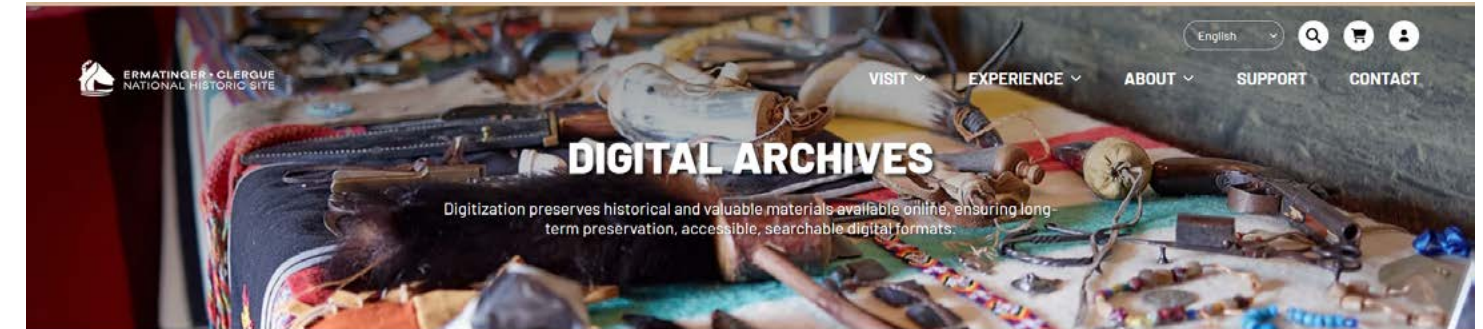
Due to the restoration of the Cedar Shake Hip roof of the Ermatinger Old Stone House, and the re-organization of the Attic Storage for this project in 2024 to 2025, we curated extra items within our period rooms.

Seasonal changes within the period rooms are constant, and reflect the events and programming for the following:










- Spring and Summer (lilac, lavender, strawberry, blueberry)
- Spring – sheep shearing – wool
- Spring fur trade room
- Fall Rendezvous, Crop harvest, and Thanksgiving
- Yuletide and Winter

As each of these changes occur, collection management practices are carried out as well as housekeeping and cleaning.

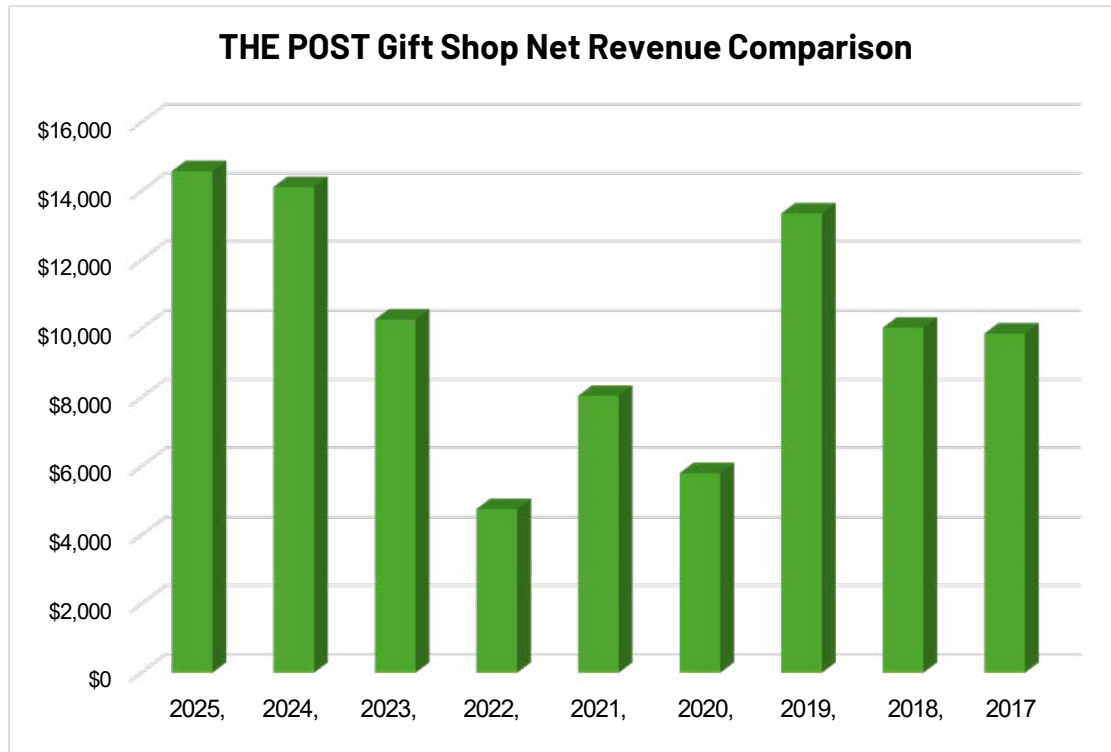
Digitized artifacts highlighted on our new website: <https://ecnhs.com/pages/digitization>



Filter by Department:

 <p>BOOKS Polygot Bible</p>	 <p>PERSONAL ARTIFACT - ERMATINGER FAMILY Ermatinger Crest</p>	 <p>PERSONAL ARTIFACT - ERMATINGER FAMILY Ermatinger Saber</p>	 <p>DOCUMENTARY Framed Envelope from Mrs. James Ermatinger</p>
 <p>BOOKS Culinary Landmarks: Sault Ste. Marie 1909</p>	 <p>PERSONAL ARTIFACT - FOOTWEAR Moccasins</p>	 <p>RECREATION Pair of Skates</p>	 <p>PERSONAL ARTIFACT - SERVING Silver Meat Cover</p>
 <p>PERSONAL ARTIFACT - ERMATINGER FAMILY Silver Tray - Ermatinger</p>			

GIFT SHOP - "THE POST"



The gift shop takes a team to ensure that we have product, pricing, and accurate book-keeping. A huge thanks to Bradley and John who worked with our I.T. department and our new POS system to ensure a seamless transition.

In 2024 we branched out and partnered with Destination Ontario - at the Ontario Travel Information Centre, and with Station Mall New York News. Each of these offsite venues sold our merchandise on consignment for us. Bookkeeping and liaison work was kept very organized by Anastasiia. These two venues are extremely beneficial to our gift shop net revenue and both 2024 and 2025 have shown a good return on our investment.

We attended the Canada Day activities at the Roberta Bondar Pavilion and brought as much "Canada" inventory as we could. It was a sell out!

The comparison chart shows the results of our visits to the Toronto Gift Shop in January for the past 2 years. Bringing in merchandise from the wholesalers that meets the needs of residents and tourists alike have increased our net revenue results.

2026 will bring to The Post - ecommerce. With the new addition of an independent website, we will now be sell selected merchandise on line.



SUMMARY

As per the Historic Sites Board (a committee of Council) management by-law, this report shall be submitted annually to City Council.

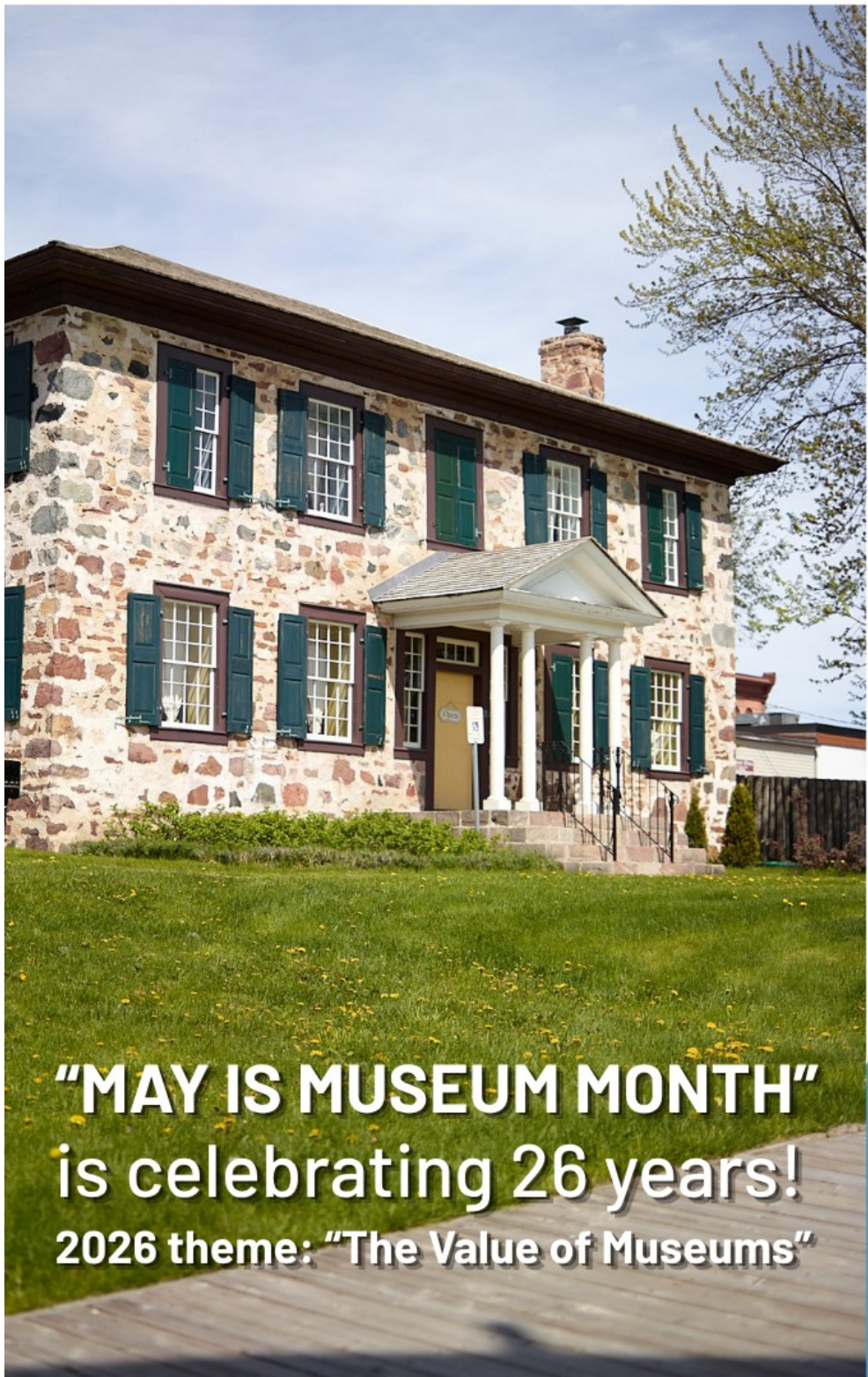
The annual report accompanies many funding applications, and we gratefully acknowledge the support and contributions of these agencies in 2025:

- **Community Museums Operating Grant – Grants Ontario**
- **FedNor – Tourism Growth Program**
- **FedNor – Youth Intern Program**

- **Canadian Heritage – Young Canada Works – Canadian Museums Association**
- **Ministry of Culture – Summer Experience Program**
- **Métis Nation of Ontario – Summer Education & Training: Summer Career Placement**



**ERMATINGER • CLERGUE
NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE**



"MAY IS MUSEUM MONTH"
is celebrating 26 years!
2026 theme: "The Value of Museums"



**ERMATINGER • CLERGUE
NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE**

- **May & June - "Hats off" exhibitk**
- **May 8th - Thinking Rock Community Arts**
- **May 9th - Mother's Day Teas - SOLD OUT.**
- **May 23rd - Museum Day (free), & Pancake Breakfast / Brunch, & Downtown Largest Garage Sale**
- **May 25th - Volunteer Appreciation 5 to 7 pm**
- **12 private bookings (schools, buses, and culinary bookings)**

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Ontario
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May is Museum Month



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