



2015 Annual Report
of the
Howard County Historical Society



2015 will be written in the books as the end of the Howard County Historical Society's first century - and a new beginning. Our greatest accomplishment for the past year may be among the least visible and the least exciting, but its impact will be seen and experienced for years to come. Ultimately, we hope it will also be exciting.

After a year of study and hours spent haggling over ideas and possibilities, the society's leadership adopted a new interpretation plan. With this plan in hand, we now have a blueprint for exhibit development, visitor tours, and publications. It prioritizes the stories we tell and draws them all together under one consistent theme, that of the great Indiana Gas Boom that led to the construction of Seiberling Mansion and laid the foundation of the county we live in today.

Three significant collaborations bore fruit for us in 2015. The Smithsonian's Places of Invention project is part of a new exhibit at the Museum of American History. Conner Prairie, a Smithsonian affiliate, asked us to work with them on a set of short videos for that exhibit, highlighting the role played by the gas boom in a local culture of innovation. We provided assistance in the form of images, concepts and research. The society was involved in the initial planning of the State of Indiana's 2015 Preserving Historic Places conference, helping convene the group of people who brought the conference to Kokomo and partnering with noted gas boom expert Dr. James Glass to create and present a conference bus tour of significant gas boom sites in Kokomo. We also



**Assistant Curator
Randy Smith at the
4-H Fair exhibit**



**Dr. Marilyn Skinner, Past
President and Auctioneer for
the Ladies' Tea**

assisted the City of Kokomo with its Kokomo Heritage videos, which were released early in the year. The society provided images, research services and recorded interviews with our staff.

The curatorial staff, under the leadership of Stew Lauterbach, has been steadily chipping away at exhibits, incorporating the story of the gas boom and upgrading aging displays. We partnered with the Greentown Historical Society and Russiaville Historical Society to produce an exhibit on early county schools for the Howard County 4-H fair, developed a new gas boom video for museum visitors, took in 1,800 new items for the collections, and continued the archiving and digital imaging work unabated.

Our first big event of the year 2015 was a partnership with the Kokomo-Howard County Public Library to present a Downton Abbey-style tea accompanied by an auction of fashionable lady's hats from Pat DiSalvo's extensive personal collection. We added a Staycation Sunday in August, partnering with the Automotive Heritage Museum and the Haynes Museum to provide a day of free admission to all three museums.

Also in August, six new members were added to the Hall of Legends and long-time board member and volunteer Dr. Allen Safianow was honored with the society's Mary Ellen Harnish Distinguished Service Award. Our annual meeting in October featured a retrospective of the society's first century and December's Christmas at the Seiberling brought thousands of visitors to the mansion, many for the first time.



**Dr. Allen Safianow
and Mary Ellen Harnish**

We seek to remember as we seek to be remembered. History isn't all just dates and names nor is it all wars and migrations. Preserving and sharing our history is how we respect our forebears and keep their memory alive. It's also how we tell the stories of our own lives to future generations.

2015 by the numbers

- **100** years since HCHS was founded
- **125** years since the Seiberling Mansion roof was raised
- **18,998** historic images viewable online at hchistory.org
- **32,650** items in the collections
- **43 states and 14 countries** - represented in the guest registers
- **300** members
- **38** volunteers (not including Christmas)
- **2,842** volunteer hours worked (not including Christmas)
- **4,000** visitors during Christmas At The Seiberling
- **1,850** Facebook followers
- **6** new members inducted in the Hall of Legends (total of 37)
- **27** tour groups totaling 429 visitors
- **314+** students, including Girl Scouts, Cub Scouts, Acacia Academy, CEO participants from the Kokomo Area Career Center, Kokomo International School students, Western School District's Little Hoosiers, classes from Lafayette Park, and Howard County Home Schoolers.
- **10** history articles published in **4** quarterly issues of Footprints
- **12** email updates published (sign up at howardcountymuseum.org)



With gratitude, we recognize the businesses who sponsored HCHS events in 2015 ...

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Board President Cathy Stover at the 2015 Hall of Legends banquet

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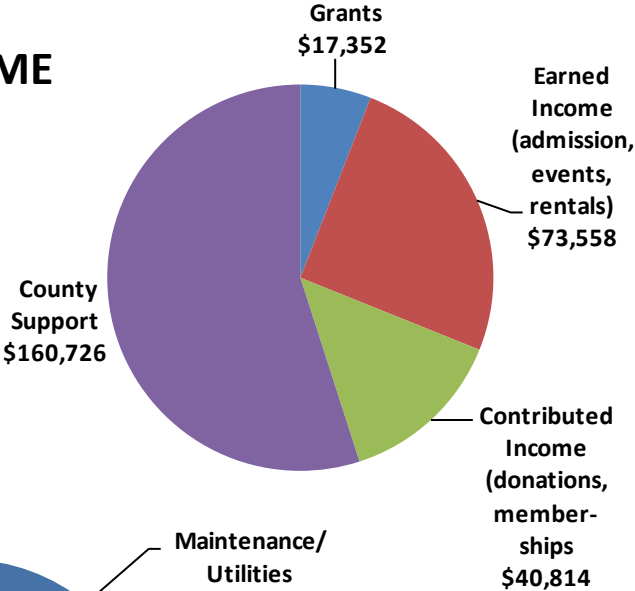
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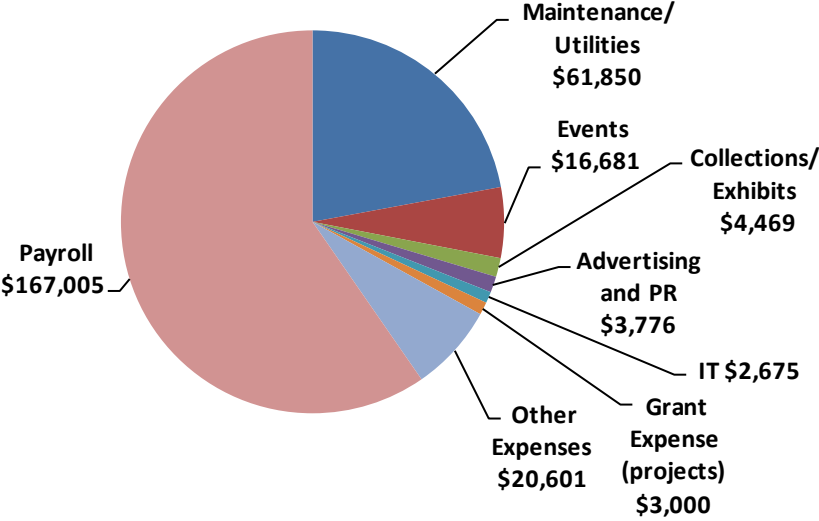


***The mission of the Historical Society is
to collect, preserve, and share Howard County history.***

INCOME



EXPENSES



Community Foundation: Ensuring the Future

Howard County Historical Society is the beneficiary of five endowment funds in the Community Foundation of Howard County. Your gift through the Community Foundation endowment funds will provide financial resources for the society’s mission in perpetuity. To learn more, contact the Community Foundation of Howard County at 765-454-7298.

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