

NEH Application Cover Sheet

Challenge Grants

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Field of Expertise: Museum Studies/Historic Preservation

INSTITUTION

Dubuque County Historical Society
Dubuque, IA UNITED STATES

APPLICATION INFORMATION

Title: *Challenge Grant for Humanities*

Grant Period: From 1/2010 to 12/2014

Field of Project: History - American

Description of Project: The Dubuque County Historical Society requests \$750,000 and commits to raise \$2,250,000 to create a humanities endowment of \$3,000,000 to support humanities staffing, exhibition and interpretation. This will endow the position of Director of Interpretation, who will be a highly talented and motivated humanist dedicated to quality exhibitions, collections and programs. He/she will be integrally involved in the intellectual life of the Society's museums: the River Museum, the Ham House, and the Old Jail Museum. The Director of Interpretation will be the lead humanist for the development of a series of exhibitions and interpretive programming supported by this endowment and presented at the three museums. The River Museum will continue to advance humanities programming and exhibitions in its current facilities. The humanities endowment will also support the interpretive programming at the Society's Mathias Ham House and Old Jail Museum.

BUDGET

Fiscal Year # 1	\$50,000.00	Total from NEH	\$750,000.00
Fiscal Year # 2	\$250,000.00	Non-Federal	\$2,250,000.00
Fiscal Year # 3	\$250,000.00	Total	\$3,000,000.00
Fiscal Year # 4	\$200,000.00	Matching Ratio: 3.00 to 1	

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Abstract

The Dubuque County Historical Society requests \$750,000 and commits to raise \$2,250,000 to create a humanities endowment of \$3,000,000 to support humanities staffing, exhibition and interpretation.

This will endow the position of Director of Interpretation, who will be a highly talented and motivated humanist dedicated to quality exhibitions, collections and programs. He/she will be integrally involved in the intellectual life of the Society's museums: the River Museum, the Ham House, and the Old Jail Museum. The Director of Interpretation will be the lead humanist for the development of a series of exhibitions and interpretive programming supported by this endowment and presented at the three museums.

The River Museum will continue to advance humanities programming and exhibitions in its current facilities. As the River Museum expands its facilities with an additional 14,000 square feet of gallery space, thoughtful research and planning will be necessary to continue to present stimulating and valuable encounters for our visitors. These exhibits will engage audiences in the story of the Mississippi River and the role of rivers in American history and identity. Rivers have long been seen as avenues of opportunity, but they are also corridors of cultural exchange and examples of human relationships with the natural world. Exhibits will allow visitors to encounter the river and its people in the present and the past, personalizing what could easily be distant and abstract. With these exhibitions, we can better understand options seen for development, conservation and preservation in the past, the choices people made, and why they made them.

The humanities endowment will also support the interpretive programming at the Society's Mathias Ham House, including the "At the Lead Mines" outdoor history program, programs within the house, and the historic landscaping program. This effort examines the lifeways of the early miners, examines their ethnic and economic background, and illustrates their role in local and regional history along the Mississippi River. Some of these miners were southerners, some Irish and English immigrants, some Native Americans, and some African Americans, both enslaved and free. In the 1830s, 90% of the country's lead came from the Dubuque, Galena, Mineral point lead region, with great quantities of lead transported to St. Louis on the Mississippi River.

The humanities endowment will also support exhibitions and interpretation at the Old Jail Museum, a museum of local history opened by the Historical Society in 2005. This National Landmark building provides a unique setting for exhibits of local and regional history. Future exhibits will examine the history of Dubuque through the decades, illuminating not only what happened but the underlying causes and connections.

This challenge grant request is an important part of the Historical Society's strategic plan. The Society has raised \$30 million towards a \$36 million fund raising campaign. Almost all of the \$30 million raised to date is restricted by the grantor/donor for projects, restoration, or expansion. The Historical Society desires to increase its endowment and is committing 50% of the remaining \$10 million to endowment, a sum of \$5 million. \$3 million of that \$5 million endowment can be secured with an NEH Challenge Grant of \$750,000 and matching funds of \$2.25 million.

Our fundraising leadership is in place. Our case has been made to our donors. Now we seek a challenge grant to stimulate donations specifically for a humanities endowment to support humanities staff, exhibitions and facilities for years to come.

Challenge Grant Budget

Total NEH Challenge Grant funds requested		\$750,000
	Year 1:	\$ 50,000
	Year 2:	\$250,000
	Year 3:	\$250,000
	Year 4:	<u>\$200,000</u>
Total nonfederal contributions		\$2,250,000
Total Grant Funds (NEH plus Match)		\$3,000,000
Planned Expenditures		
Invested in Endowment Principal		\$3,000,000
Rate of Expendable Return		5%
Projected Annual Income at 5%		150,000
Annual support for new Director of Interpretation position	75,000	
Annual Support for Exhibition and Interpretation series	<u>75,000</u>	
Total	150,000	

The Investment Policy of Dubuque County Historical Society is the preservation of principal, long term capital appreciation, and operational support. The annual operations support payout target is 5%.

The Board has delegated supervisory authority over its investment assets to the Executive Committee of the Board. The Executive Committee is responsible for regularly reporting on investment to the full Board. Investment manager performance, allocation guidelines, and annual operations support payouts are to be reviewed annually by the Board.

Principal in permanently restricted endowment funds shall not be invaded for any reason other than to satisfy the requirements of applicable law which would otherwise deprive this organization of its tax-exempt and/or public charity status.

Institutional Fact Summary Dubuque County Historical Society

History: Established in 1950

Operates three complimentary museums

Mission: To collect, research, preserve and interpret the history of Dubuque, the Mississippi, and the Rivers of America.

Accredited by: The American Association of Museums and affiliates of the Smithsonian Institution

The Mathias Ham House Historic Site Built 1856 Established as museum in 1964

Fully restored 23 room Italian villa house (National Register)

Site includes: 1833 log cabin, 1840s granary, and 1880s school house.

Annual emphasis on different historical time period or event, lead mine days, harvest days, and Civil War reenactments.

New humanities program: At the Lead Mines Living History program and historic landscape plan.

Attendance: 6,000 people annually \$5 adults, \$3 children, (\$1.50 per adult if combo ticket)

The National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium established as museum in 1979

\$44 million expansion in 2003 \$30 million expansion planned in 2010

The largest river museum in the ten states of the Mississippi River,

A rich variety of humanities programming including demonstrations, living history, speakers, seminars.

Ten acres, four buildings, eight galleries, an outdoor interpretive wetland, a historic boatyard, several historic vessels, two theaters, education room, five aquariums, Boatshop, Blacksmith Shop, Depot Café, Library and Archives, offices, collections storage, maintenance shop.

Attendance: 200,000 people annually \$10.50 adults, \$8/\$4 for children. Free for disadvantaged

The Old Jail Museum built 1857 Established as museum in 2005

A National Landmark jail and jailer's residence located in downtown Dubuque.

Limestone cells and iron doors create a striking atmosphere for historical exhibitions and interpretive programming. Several significant collections are interpreted in galleries in the former jailer's residence.

Audience: 4,500 people annually \$5 adults, \$3 children, (\$1.50 per adult if combo ticket)

Society Governance: 25 member Board, plus Local History Advisory Board and National Advisory Board.

Staff: (80% of staff are in the humanities) There are 33 full time staff led by the Executive Director, Chief Operating officer, and five department heads: Curator, Education Director, Marketing Director, Development Director, and Husbandry Curator. Over 60 part time staff, 520 volunteers.

Collections: 33,100 items (90% in the humanities) include people of Dubuque and the river: Native American, settlement artifacts, tools, decorative arts, and boats. 22,000 library/archive items (100% humanities) books, lithographs, photos, prints; ephemera; boatbuilding blueprints, oral histories. Collections are often used in humanities films, books and articles.

Recent Humanities Activities: 2 exhibits annually, 16,000 school visitors for 20 educational program offerings, adult program offerings monthly, on water boat tour for 3,600 people, historic bus tours for 8,000 adults. 47% of visitors stay 3 hours. 11% stay 5 to 6 hours.

Scholarship: Co-Organizer of the International Conference on Rivers and Civilization 2006; Organizer: Conference of Mississippi River Museums 2006; Moderator – Historic New Orleans Collection Conference 2008; Participant- History Channel *Mighty Mississippi*, BBC Music of the River – 2008. First *Humanities Iowa* award for humanities programming.

Annual operating budget: \$3.5 million **Members:** 2,000 memberships (8,000 people) from 36 states

1. Significance and intellectual quality of the Humanities Activities, Programs, and Holdings

The Dubuque County Historical Society is committed to humanities scholarship. In the past decade, the Society has developed an expertise in programming and exhibitions which has substantially increased its audience and effectiveness. This Challenge Grant will help the Dubuque County Historical Society maintain and improve the quality of those humanities efforts by endowing the position of Director of Interpretation and by supporting humanities exhibitions and programs each year.

The Historical Society operates three museums which collectively address local, regional, and national history, serving 210,000 people annually. The National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium interprets the Mississippi River and its social, cultural and technological history. The Mathias Ham House Historic Site interprets life *At the Lead Mines* and in early Dubuque from 1833 to 1883. The Old Jail Museum is the local history museum of Dubuque, providing permanent and changing exhibits of the area. The three sites provide a strong and diverse presentation of history for the community as well as visitors to the area.

During the past ten years the Historical Society has increased its audience threefold, from 70,000 people in 2002 to 210,000 people today. The **River Museum** had a major expansion in 2003, with substantial support from NEH Challenge and Public Program Grants. This provided for a significant growth in intellectual quality, as well as improvements in facilities, exhibits, audience, and programs. An NEH program officer visited the NEH-supported *Make Me a River* exhibit and was highly complimentary of the intellectual quality it presented. The exhibits that opened in 2003 expanded the Museum's role as a national leader in river studies. The River Museum now features six exhibition galleries, a living history wetland, a boatyard, a National Landmark steamboat, several smaller boats, and two theaters. This extensive expansion made a major impact on Dubuque and the Upper Mississippi valley, and visitors now come from 50 states and 70 countries each year.

The exhibits at the River Museum are highly engaging. Based on an exit survey of museum visitors, 52% of respondents said that they have changed their attitudes about the Mississippi as a result of their visit.

The Mississippi River Museum's collections support the Society's intellectual goals, documenting the story of people and rivers with 11,000 artifacts of Native American life, settlement, growth of towns and cities, boat building, commerce, river art, music, literature, and conservation. The Museum's collections of boats include the 277 foot long paddlewheel steamboat *William M. Black*, one of 23 National Landmarks in the state of Iowa. The boat collection also includes three other historic riverboats, 19 smaller craft, two boat houses (similar to floating boat garages) and a floating houseboat.

The library and archive contains 6,000 books, over 10,000 photographs, glass plate negatives, and prints; ephemera; boatbuilding blueprints, and oral histories from as early as the 1950s. The Henry Bosse Collection is a rare set of original cyanotypes which document 19th century Mississippi River improvements such as wing dams by the Corps of Engineers. Other important records include bills of lading documenting cargoes of steamboats, a carte de visite of Abraham Lincoln, and a rare 1856 invoice of payments made to a steamboat captain for the services and supplies for his enslaved African American deck hands that worked on his boat.

Ideas, artifacts, and archives are combined with compelling designs to reach visitors intellectually as well as visually. A cutaway model of a steamboat allows exploration of the steamboat's role in history, supported by scholarship of some of the leading steamboat historians in the nation. A floating log raft mounted on springs provides a sensory introduction to the important story of the logging trade and deforestation of the Mississippi River Valley. A working small boat shop allows discussion of cultural building patterns along the river, documented by efforts funded by Humanities Iowa and Illinois Humanities Council grants, while exhibits on clamming and commercial fishing interpret the lives of those who worked directly on the river.

A flowing stream table allows visitors to see the impact of land choices over the years and the impact on rivers, while the flowing flood table allows visitors to recreate both the 1965 flood and the future 500 year flood, serving as a springboard for docent-led discussion of flood wall and levee choices we have made in the past. Both ideas were strongly influenced by the NEH-funded scholar team. "Spin browser"

monitors show historic and modern images of the Mississippi, while five aquariums show how unique habitats of the Mississippi River have been impacted by human action over the past century.

The *River of Dreams* film, narrated by Garrison Keillor, traces the cultural history of the river, while the *River Journey* film gives the stage to the multiple voices of people from the length of the river. The *Barge Theater* is a film journey down the Mississippi on a modern towboat, while an interactive pilot house allows guests to put their hands on the throttle and steer their tow through the lock and dams and bridges. An interactive sound and light keelboat depicts the story of Blackhawk, Lewis and Clark and Sacagawea, with scholarship from conversations with Stephen Ambrose.

The *Outdoor Boatyard* invites visitors to “read the cultural landscape at the Museum’s door” including bridges, flood walls, rail lines, landside storage containers, marine repair docks, even the marked navigation channel. This approach was inspired by three consultants: Philip Scarpino, author of *Great River: An Environmental History of the Upper Mississippi River*; Edward Hawes author of several themes studies and the interpretive master plan for the Museum, and Craig Colten, author of *An Unnatural Metropolis: Wrestling New Orleans from Nature*. Philip Scarpino noted in our planning sessions that what we know as the river is the constantly changing product not only of the geological and ecological systems over time, but of humans and their systems. Scarpino further advised:

“the interpretation[should] embrace all . . . the surroundings and the river in the interpretive scheme; all of those things that make up the humanized environment of the Mississippi River and its valley. our surroundings are human artifacts, examples of material culture that expand the traditional emphasis of museums on doing history with things. This offers a bridge to an environmental history interpretation of human interaction with the river over time.

In the wetland, the Museum interprets an historic 1833 log cabin with assistance from the Iowa Office of Archaeology, and presents a recreated Meskwaki Indian wickiup fabricated with assistance from tribal historian Johnathon Buffalo. An audio wand interpretive system provides an additional interpretation with 114 messages throughout the river campus developed by the Museum’s curatorial and interpretive staff.

The cumulative visitor experience of the National Mississippi River Museum provides a broad and far reaching look at the Mississippi River as well as several in-depth examinations of particular aspects of the river.

In awarding NEH support in 2000, William Ferris, then chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, wrote *“Going far beyond the scope of most county historical societies, your organization has become the vehicle for telling the big story of the Mississippi River to local, regional and national audiences.”* (February 15, 2000)

During the same time the Society was building the River Museum, it was making preparations to open the **Old Jail Museum** in 2005 as a local history museum. This increased the Society’s emphasis on local humanities programming and presenting important exhibitions. The Old Jail Museum is a National Historic Landmark which was built in 1857 and housed prisoners through the 1970s. It has extraordinary historical and cultural significance and is recognized as one of the “Save America’s Treasures” by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The Old Jail Museum now houses Dubuque artifacts from Native Americans to the Julien Dubuque family cradle and beyond.

The Egyptian Revival style Jail is one of the few surviving structures of this rarest of American styles. The architecture features stylized lotus form columns, winged sun disk with human face lintel decoration, cavetto cornice, and decorative metal trim. It is also one of only a handful of extant buildings designed by John F. Rague, who also designed the first Illinois and the first Iowa State Capitols (both National Historic Landmarks), and the octagon Langworthy House in Dubuque. The Jail is also one of the few remaining examples of the antebellum penal reform movement that made American jails and prisons international models in terms of design, planning, and organization. In addition to the exhibitions, the Society is managing a \$228,000 restoration of the National Landmark building.

Meanwhile, at the **Ham House**, the Society’s first museum, the Society is developing the living history program *“At the Lead Mines”* which interprets the lifeways and historic clues of lead mining in the region. The 1856 National Register Mathias Ham House is a prominent landmark in Dubuque's historic landscape. From his cupola vantage point, Mathias Ham observed the Mississippi River and the comings

and goings of steamboats including his own ferry boat that crossed the Mississippi at Eagle Point. The historic home is used to illustrate the early history of Dubuque as seen through the Ham family as they progressed from log cabin to Italian Villa, using the proceeds of Ham's lead mining and lead smelting businesses.

The Society is developing a new landscape plan with historic landscape scholar Robert Harvey who helped develop the landscape plan for the Abraham Lincoln Home in Springfield. The plan for the Ham House will apportion the site into three interpretive precincts: the lead mine region which has the 1833 Arriandeau cabin and several living history interpretive stations related to lead mining; the Ham House itself with 14 period rooms exhibited to show lifeways of 19th century Dubuque, and the Ham House grounds which includes the 1840s granary and exhibits of historic gardens.

These and other plans at the Society's three museums will be well served by the addition of the Director of Interpretation position and by the funding for annual exhibits and interpretive programming. The Society already has a strong base with well developed facilities and an energetic and dedicated staff. Adding this leader will maintain and improve the intellectual quality and humanities emphasis. By providing an annual fund of \$75,000 for exhibitions and interpretation, the Society is assured that the resources will be there to continue its intellectual conversation with its audience.

To whom are these activities important? The Historical Society serves 210,000 people each year with its museums. Since its major expansion six years ago, the River Museum has had 1.3 million guests. This is a sizeable audience for a city with a population of 57,000 people.

The River Museum's expansion not only increased the intellectual vigor of the Society, but the community image as well. Because of the River Museum's expansion, the City of Dubuque was designated an All America City in 2007 and as the Most Livable Small City in America in 2008 by the U.S. Conference of Mayors. Just this spring, Dubuque was selected by the National Trust for Historic Preservation as one of three incubator cities for its green restoration effort—the other two cities being Seattle and San Francisco.

The River Museum engages its audience. According to a professional survey of our audience, 47% of visitors stay three hours or more and 11% of visitors stay five to six hours. Memberships have increased

from 470 members to 2,000 members. This represents approximately 8,000 people, 1/7th of the population of the city of Dubuque.

The River Museum has been measurably aided, both financially and intellectually, from past investments by the NEH. The Museum began its very existence in 1975 with an NEH self study. This led to a \$1.1 million fund drive to create its first museum exhibits. The addition of several galleries and the establishment of the Museum's first endowment came in the 1980s as a result of a \$200,000 NEH Challenge Grant and a \$1.2 million capital campaign. In 1991 the River Museum further expanded its ability to provide humanities programming with addition of staff and facilities. This also was aided by an NEH Challenge Grant.

From 1992 to 2003, the River Museum engaged in a major examination of its humanities potential, funded in part by an NEH Self Study in 1992, an NEH interpretive planning grant in 1993, and NEH Implementation grants in 1996 and 2000. These grants enabled the museum to work with several scholars including Craig Colten, Philip Scarpino, David Edmunds, Edward Hawes, Tom Morain, and others described latter.

2. Long-Range Plans for Advancing and Disseminating Humanistic Knowledge

The Historical Society's long range plans for advancing and disseminating humanistic knowledge are:

- Hire a Director of Interpretation to work with the exhibit team to assist with and provide intellectual vigor for the following goals. (2010)
- Continue to engage scholars to insure thoughtful and thought-provoking content for the following exhibits and programs. (Ongoing)
- At the River Museum: Evaluate *Mark Twain's River*, a 6,000 square foot exhibit which interprets Twain artifacts and artifacts purchased at auction in New Orleans. (See Buchanan, *Black Life on the Mississippi*.) (2009)

- Evaluate *RiverWays*, *Rivers to the Sea*, and *RiverWorks* exhibit in expansion building, 4,500 square feet, to interpret themes of Native American life, frontier, rivers remade, American identities, accompanying programs and gallery talks. (2010)
- Evaluate the traveling version of *RiverWays* and *Rivers to the Sea* exhibit as it travels to ten states along the Mississippi River. Continue the monitoring of scholar talks which are presented concurrently. (2011-15)
- Develop local supplement to national touring exhibit *Women and Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America*, 2,500 square feet, collaborate with Clarke College scholars. (2011)
- Develop new exhibit on Native American life on rivers in the concourse area, 2,000 square feet (supported by scholars Buffalo, Edmunds, Lucy). (2012)
- Develop Julien Dubuque, le Petite Nuit exhibit, 2,000 square feet, on 250th anniversary of Julien Dubuque's birth. (repository in Trois-Rivières, Quebec, Chouteau collection, Missouri Historical Society). (2012)
- Develop additional "Reading the Cultural Landscape" interpretation and outdoor river exhibits in the 300 foot open space between the existing and the new museum buildings. (2010-2015)
- At Ham House: Evaluate and refine outdoor living history presentation of *At the Lead Mines*. (2009-2012)
- Evaluate and train interpreters at Ham House for maximum effectiveness in conveying historical themes and engaging audiences in compelling discussions. (Ongoing)
- Evaluate and refine the historic landscape interpretive plan for 5-acre grounds. (2011)
- Find and consider relocating historic barn to Ham House as interpretive center for site to interpret not only Ham House, but the adjacent Eagle Point Park with architecture by Frank Lloyd Wright student Alfred Caldwell. (2013-2014)
- At Old Jail: Present the restoration of the National Landmark structure as an exhibit with discussion of architecture as expression of culture, values and history. (2009-2012)

- Research and install exhibit on the history of the Dubuque Packing Company, now defunct, along with outreach programming, 2,400 square feet. (2011)
- Replace *175 Artifacts of Dubuque History* with more relevant exhibit of Dubuque's past such as *Reflections of a River Town*, including role of women and African Americans in Dubuque history. (2012)
- Replace *The Hanging of Patrick O'Connor* sound and light show with new presentation in cell block area to introduce new themes and content. (2013)

The exhibits at the Society's three museums continue to be guided by strong interpretive planning that the Society has conducted and continues to conduct with scholars. NEH-funded scholars participated in four different planning exercises with the Society, including self-study, planning grants, and implementation grants. Twelve themes for planning were identified which offer thoughtful approaches for analysis:

- 1) Geology and the River,
- 2) Riverine Ecosystems: Today and Through Time,
- 3) Changing Ideas of the River and Nature: Perceptions, Values, Beliefs and Visions,
- 4) Time and the River: Tentative Periodization for Ideas Theme and Others,
- 5) Native Americans and the River,
- 6) Resource Development,
- 7) The Great Transformation, 1890-1960,
- 8) Development of River Towns and Cities,
- 9) Lifeways on the River: Roots, Occupational and Social Patterns,
- 10) For Whom Does the River Flow?
- 11) Visions and Decisions, and
- 12) Reading and Preserving the Changing Cultural Landscape.

Elements of the long range plan for intellectual development include: 1) Development of exhibits and programs that continue to advance scholarship, knowledge and awareness of history and humanistic themes. 2) Partnering with scholars and museums throughout the Mississippi River Valley and along other rivers in America to help inform future exhibits and programs created by the River Museum and also to provide a national reach and exposure to the exhibits and programs of the River Museum. 3) Embracing

technology as a supporting platform for exhibits, research, and communication. 4) Increasing audience through significant partnerships, collaborative programming, and use of web and digital kiosk technology, bringing this expanded story to a much larger audience.

The Museum has acquired a new facility, donated to the Museum, along with a gift of \$3 million for the building's remodeling into museum space. Several additional gifts followed, which are described later.

The Society is now planning a \$30 million expansion of the River Museum and \$1.5 million of improvements at the Ham House and Old Jail. The River Museum will add a 50,000 square foot adjacent building which will present three galleries, a theater, a research center, as well as five acres of waterfront space. This will open in 2010 with the feature exhibit, *RiverWays*, about America's river history. The *Rivers to the Sea* exhibit will examine choices we make for the natural world, and *RiverWorks* is a hands-on history gallery for children and families.

A key humanities goal supported by Challenge Grant expenditures is to connect or reconnect people to the cultural history of the Mississippi River and as the rivers of the United States. Americans have been dependant on water from its very first settlements, whether Native Americans, European settlers, enslaved American people, woolen mill workers, grain farmers, fishers and clammers, boat builders, commercial transporters, artists, writers, musicians, or conservationists. This historical connection continues to this day.

Current events along the river can be traced directly to past attitudes and technologies for controlling flood waters. Floods continue to threaten the livelihoods and cultural heritage of people who live along the banks of the Mississippi, with high waters again rising this week.

Environmental historians use insights, concepts and sometimes even models from ecology to explain, in part, historical phenomena. Sometimes adopting ecological perspectives calls for examining not only human lives lived on, in or near the river, but also other "lives" that most history books and museum exhibits ignore.

Our consulting scholars have called for what they term a "process orientation" in exhibits, program content, and method. Human perceptions, systems of knowledge (both

scientific and vernacular), attitudes, values and beliefs, as well as visions of the real and ideal, all have played major roles in transforming the river. They have shaped choices made fully consciously and those made with dim awareness of consequences.

As we examined the River Museum's intellectual strengths and directions, we noted gaps in our current presentation. One major gap was the concept of river and the role that rivers have played in our national history and identity. To fill this gap the Society's *RiverWays* exhibit will engage audiences in stories of exploration, shaping of rivers, river life, river geography, and river identity. Going far beyond the story of the Mississippi at Dubuque, *RiverWays* will address several themes identified in our interpretive planning with NEH-funded humanities scholars. This includes the continued exploration of the interrelations of the river and humans over time.

The rivers of America are abundant and diverse—natural and industrial, urban and wild, pristine and degraded. They are work and they are play. They represent the diverse geography, cultural composition and economic vitality of the United States both historical and today. In an area called *Meeting America*, visitors can appreciate the history of naturalists, explorers, surveyors and scientists. They can trace the earliest assumptions of America's natural history and follow the evolution of ideas as America defined itself, its natural history, and its cultural composition, Native Americans, explorers, traders and surveyors lived and traveled by rivers to explore unmapped territory. Within the immersive context of the American wilderness, visitors can peruse the diary accounts of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark and the photographs of John Wesley Powell's Colorado and Green River expeditions. These early accounts, along with artifacts and personal stories, can be juxtaposed with those of contemporary researchers and adventurers who continue to examine our rivers as a way of understanding our natural environment and our relationship with it.

Rivers of Opportunity: Rivers have offered a means for cultures to utilize the resources of North America. They provide energy and avenues for the movement of people, materials, and culture. Great river cities of commerce rise up along them. Major infrastructure projects have created connections between rivers and have also separated rivers from the land.

In many ways our rivers have, and always will, define where and how we live. Visitors can examine our rivers' roles in shaping America's economy, community, transportation, and communication networks. In this gallery, amidst the context of steamboats, mills, and canal gates, visitors can discover that rivers serve as sources of energy and thoroughfares for both culture and commodities and the building of the Erie Canal.

Additionally, rivers have been battlegrounds and points of contention, from the river battles of the Revolutionary and Civil Wars to the fight for preservation of the Everglades as chronicled in Marjory Stoneman Douglas' *River of Grass*. American settlers, ignorant or dismissive of the Native American claims to these lands, saw rivers and river-fed landscapes as raw materials that could fuel a new nation. Digital technology can bring these stories, charts, images and remembrances to the gallery.

American Identities: In the third area of the *RiverWays* gallery, visitors can explore the role that rivers and waterways have in defining the American consciousness. Here we may examine the story of rivers in every day life, the lure of the Grand Canyon, and the distinctly different river city cultures of New Orleans, St. Louis, Dubuque, Louisville and others. Our rivers comprise an important part of our national identity—we are drawn to them, have incorporated them into our past and popular culture, and honored them in song, national parklands, art, literature and identity. The *RiverWays* gallery can be filled with a variety of vignettes with digitized video, audio and lighting elements that will bring them to life in surprising and entertaining ways. For example, Mark Twain's book, *Life on the Mississippi* could be illustrated by an I-Viewer. Upon focusing the video selector on a trumpet case, visitors might see footage of Louie Armstrong playing on a riverboat. Possible subjects for vignettes include Callie French, one of the first female pilots on the rivers of America, and John & Washington Roebling building the Brooklyn Bridge

The Big Map: Riverine landscapes across the U.S. are records of our natural and cultural history. The intersection of these histories can be compared and contrasted in terms of geography, ecology, and history. A journey through the *RiverWays Big Map* is a journey through American history. A large "billboard-sized" map is designed to serve as a platform for digital productions which show the big picture of rivers in America. Providing simple geographical context while in its "rest" mode, the map periodically comes to life, transforming the self-guided gallery into an engaging digital theater experience. The lighting

in the gallery dims to focus visitors' attention on the map, and a soundtrack broadcasts throughout the gallery. The themes of these programs, underscoring the major themes of the gallery, rotate on a 20 to 30 minute basis, and are from 2 to 4 minutes in duration. Potential topics include Finding America, Opening of America; Canals, Steamboats and Barges; River Culture; and Shaping Rivers. Visitors may track the routes of African slaves that were "sold down the river" or escaped across them or see technologies for bridges and boat design.

The River Museum founded and leads the 62-member Great River Road Network of Museums and Interpretive Centers. This network enables the River Museum to create a traveling digital kiosk available to go to all 62 of these museum network partners. The partners are located from the headwaters of the river at Lake Itasca State Park down to the southernmost member, the Jean Lafitte National Historic Park and Preserve, the site of the Battle of New Orleans. The Museum convened twenty-four of these member museums in Dubuque in 2006 to help plan a traveling exhibit entitled *Rivers to the Sea*. States participating included: Arkansas, Iowa, Illinois, Louisiana, Minnesota, Missouri, Tennessee, and Wisconsin. This network will benefit from humanities programming created by this project, some of which will eventually travel to network locations.

Design is a critical component of good interpretation. For its current development, the River Museum launched a national search to find a design team which utilized story as a key organizing principal, selecting Christopher Chadbourne and Associates, Boston, Massachusetts. They are interpretive specialists with a recognized expertise in exhibits that focus on humanities story and immersive qualities.

Chadbourne's exhibits include "The Price of Freedom: Americans at War" at the Smithsonian Museum of American History and the George Washington Education Center at Mount Vernon, Virginia.

The Museum developed its long range plan with participation of the community. Several formal studies involved participation of board, staff, scholars, the public, and professional planners. As part of its planning, the Museum conducted a public input session in 2005 to help plan its interpretive direction, with over 60 people participating. Participants broke into small groups and discussed next steps for the Museum

as well as next steps for the Port of Dubuque. Several scenarios for expansion were studied in the development of this proposal, and the strongest elements were selected for inclusion in our vision.

The Museum also commissioned a study by Vernon Research Group of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, to assess visitation patterns, length of stay, and effectiveness of messaging, referenced earlier. Our own internal visitor studies and written visitor comments show that the public is captivated by the river and is clearly interested in additional opportunities. Unsolicited visitor comments, many emailed to the Museum after their visit, include statements such as “*Bless the forward thinkers who created this magnificent museum.*” “*Don’t change . . . just keep adding.*” “*This is a great museum. I’ve seen many all over the world. This is special.*” See Appendix C for more visitor comments.

The Museum’s planning for possible expansion was validated through a community-wide visioning process called ENVISION 2010. This process generated 2,300 ideas submitted by over 10,000 people. A broad-based committee of community leaders reviewed the 2,300 ideas and narrowed the list down to 100. Then the community came together again to participate in a town meeting. Three hundred participants used hand-held electronic voting devices to vote their preferences among the 100 ideas. Each idea was shown on the screen twice, with a different array of selections each time. This statistically-valid ranking prioritized the 100 ideas, and the River Museum’s expansion ranked as number 1 of the 100 ideas.

Also as part of its planning, the River Museum engaged in ten-state telephone polling and three focus group sessions. The statistically valid telephone poll, conducted by Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin & Associates and Public Opinion Strategies in 2007, interviewed 1,200 registered voters who resided in the counties or parishes along the ten-state Mississippi River as well as several hundred residents away from the river. The research team also conducted three focus group sessions—in the Quad Cities of Iowa and Illinois, in St. Louis, and in Baton Rouge.

Those surveyed express a significant appreciation for the Mississippi River, recognizing its importance to the history of their region. In some cases, they acknowledged that their cities would not be where they are without it. They also recognized the lasting impact it has had on their regional culture. As a result, most people associated themselves with the River and—when asked—say that they are residents of

the Mississippi River. They did not hesitate to classify the Mississippi as a “national treasure” or “America’s greatest River.” Not unexpectedly, by most measures, residents of Mississippi River states who live further from the River do not have the same connection to it.

While respondents acknowledged the cultural importance of the river and how it shaped their communities, they discussed the river with a striking lack of passion. Few held a deep personal connection to the river or spoke about it with enthusiasm, even though they agreed that the river was important to their region’s history. Culturally, the Mississippi River history cited by those surveyed mentioned only Mark Twain or Lewis and Clark. The Museum sees that this tunnel vision of river history needs to be changed through continued programming and education

Mission and personnel: The Mission of the Dubuque County Historical Society is to collect, research, preserve and interpret the history of Dubuque, the Mississippi River and the rivers of America. The museums are governed by a 25 member Board of Directors, and have a strong and experienced staff, eighty percent of whom are focused in the humanities:

Executive Director Jerry Enzler has 32 years of experience with the society as its first director and also its director of interpretation. He has directed many projects supported by NEH, IMLS, the National Park Service, and others. He is past chair of the National Maritime Alliance, a consortium of major maritime history museums in the nation and is the founder and chair of the Great River Road network of 62 museums and interpretive centers on the Mississippi River. He received a Master of Arts degree in Museum Studies from the Cooperstown, New York, Graduate Program (SUNY) and has developed expertise in history of the fur trade and steamboat eras. He is the recipient of Humanities Iowa’s 1st award for Outstanding Public Programming in the Humanities, Dubuque’s 1st Citizen Award, an honorary Doctorate of Humanities degree from Clarke College and honorary Doctorate of Laws from Loras College for his work in the humanities. He recently served as speaker and conference moderator for the Historic New Orleans Collection’s Symposium, *The Mississippi River: Artery of Commerce and Culture*.

Curator Tacie Campbell has 37 years professional experience and holds the Master of Arts degree in Museum Studies from the Cooperstown, New York, Graduate Program (SUNY). She is an expert in lead

mine and frontier settlement and historic house restoration, with research at the National Archives, the Library of Congress, and several regional repositories. Campbell is past chair of the curator's committee for the Midwest Outdoor Museum Coordinating Council (MOMCC) and is a recognized museum professional in her field. She has also directed a series of programs for Canadian Educational Television.

Education Director Mark Wagner is the Director of Visitor Experiences for the Mississippi River Museum. He has been an educator for over 30 years as well as a historian and a living history demonstrator. He is widely recognized throughout the Midwest for his expertise in informal education and interpretation. Wagner graduated from Iowa State University in 1972 with a degree in Fisheries and Wildlife Management, and he has made living history a life-long part of his professional practice. He specializes in the fur trade period along the Mississippi River, water power milling, and pioneer life.

Collaborators and Advisors: The Dubuque County Historical Society collaborates with several scholars in the development of its intellectual content. It is in regular contact with these scholars: **Michael Allen**, PhD, Professor of History & American Studies, University of Washington and author of *Western Rivermen, 1763-1861*; **John Anfinson**, PhD, Historian and Author of *The River We Have Wrought*, National Park Service; **John Barry**, author of *Rising Tide, How the Flood of 1927 Changed America*; **Douglas Brinkley**, PhD, Professor of History at Rice University, author of *The Great Deluge* and co-author with Stephen Ambrose of *The Mississippi and the Making of a Nation*; **Thomas Buchanan**, Assistant Professor of History at the University of Adelaide and author of *Black Life on the Mississippi: Slaves, Free Blacks, and the Western Steamboat World*; **Johnathon Buffalo**, Tribal Historian, Sauk and Fox Nation; **Craig Colten**, Carl O. Sauer Professor of Geography and Anthropology at Louisiana State University and author of *An Unnatural Metropolis: Wrestling New Orleans from Nature*; **David Edmunds**, PhD, Watson Professor of American History at the University of Texas and consultant to *500 Nations*; **William Goetzmann**, PhD, Professor of American Studies, University of Texas and Pulitzer Prize-winning historian of *Exploration and Empire*; **Ed Hawes**, PhD, Independent Consultant in historical interpretation, Bath, Maine; **Priscilla Lawrence**, Executive Director of the Historic New Orleans Collection; **Tom Morain**, PhD, former Director of Interpretation at Living History Farms and Administrator of the Historical Society of Iowa; **Lucy**

Murphy, PhD, Associate Professor of History at the Ohio State University at Newark, author of *A Gathering of Rivers: Indians, Métis, and Mining in the Western Great Lakes, 1737 – 1832*; and **Philip Scarpino**, PhD, Chair, Dept. of History, Indiana University, author of *Great River: An Environmental History of the Upper Mississippi River, 1890-1950*.

Representative letters of support secured in this application include letters from Willard Boyd, President Emeritus of The Field Museums and President Emeritus, University of Iowa, as well as from Craig Colten and Phillip Scarpino. Additionally, letters of support are included from several museums in the Mississippi River valley that have expressed a desire to work with us in our *Rivers to the Sea* interpretive programming.

As testimony to excellence in humanities programming, the River Museum received honors for programming including the “Distinguished Public Programming in the Humanities” award from the Humanities Iowa Board, “Best Humanities Project” from Humanities Iowa, Commendation from the American Association for State and Local History for the *Magnificent River* exhibit, and award for “Best Film in a History Museum” from the American Association of Museums for its *River of Dreams* film.

3. Impact of Challenge Grant Funds to Strengthen and Improve the Humanities

This grant will enable the Historical Society to support humanities programming, research and outreach for decades to come, funding an aggressive schedule of humanities programming. Careful strategic planning indicates the need to increase the staffing dedicated to humanities and the resources to create exhibitions and programs.

The \$3 million humanities endowment will provide \$150,000 annually to support humanities exhibits and programming. \$75,000 will be used for salary for the new position of Director of Interpretation. If this is not adequate to hire the desired candidate, the Society will supplement the salary with its own funds

The Director of Interpretation position will fill an important need for the Historical Society. Many of the Society’s award winning exhibits and films have been created by collaborative effort of Executive Director Jerry Enzler, Curator Tacie Campbell, Education Director Mark Wagner, Registrar of Collections

Jim Wall-Wild, consulting scholars, museum researchers, exhibit designers, and audio visual producers. As the Society has grown and continues to grow, it is imperative that a Director of Interpretation be hired to provide full time leadership for the intellectual responsibilities of this team. A search will be conducted to fill this position, the qualifications of which are described in Appendix A.

While half of the endowment proceeds will be spent for the Director of Interpretation, the other \$75,000 will be spent to support annual exhibits and interpretive programs which disseminate the humanities. This is in addition to the research, leadership and scholarship of the Director of Interpretation. It is projected that in a typical year, funds might be expended as follows:

Scholar, speaker, or researcher honorarium - 6 days @ \$500	\$ 3,000
Research	\$ 6,000
Exhibit design	\$ 6,000
Graphic rights	\$ 2,000
Creation of Interpretive panels	\$15,000
Specialty casework, temporary walls	\$11,000
Fabrication of exhibit elements	\$17,000
Technology and digital conversion when appropriate	\$ 5,000
Interpretation and programming	\$ 4,000
Artifact care, mounting, protection, miscellaneous	\$ 3,000
Evaluation and remediation as necessary	<u>\$ 3,000</u>
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$75,000</i>

For programs and interpretive activities, the expenditure budget might look like this:

Seminar speakers 10 @ \$1,000	\$ 10,000
Travel and per diem 10 @ \$800	\$ 8,000
Conference organizer 12 months @ ½ time	\$ 20,000
Publicity and promotion	\$ 12,000
Facility charges	<u>\$ 2,000</u>

Subtotal	\$ 2,000
Less seminar registration fees 200 @ \$100	<u>(\$20,000)</u>
Net cost	\$32,000

At the Lead Mines Interpretive Program

Development and printing of research materials	\$ 6,000
Preparation of Interpretive manual	\$ 5,000
Training of interpretive staff 10 @ \$1,500	\$ 15,000
Development of Interpretive aides and devices	\$ 6,000
Historic Costuming	\$ 3,000
Publicity	\$ 6,000
Evaluation	<u>\$ 2,000</u>
Total	\$ 43,000
<i>Total of seminar and At the Lead Mines program</i>	<i>\$ 75,000</i>

Assessment: The project will be evaluated to assure success in meeting its goals. First, the fund raising effort will be evaluated to insure that the funds are raised in accordance with NEH Challenge grant guidelines. Second, the Director of Interpretation will be evaluated semi-annually to start and then annually to insure that duties and goals are being met. Each department head is responsible for preparing an annual statement of goals, which is reviewed by their supervisor and ultimately by the executive committee of the board along with the annual budget. The semi-annual and annual evaluation will be based on this statement of goals. Third, the Director of Interpretation will be responsible for securing or developing an evaluation tool to assess the effectiveness of the exhibitions and programs offered. In some cases this will include formative evaluation at the beginning of the project to determine baseline knowledge or preconceived notions, floor testing to evaluate certain components, and summative evaluation to identify weaknesses that can be corrected to achieve more effective results.

4. Plans for Fund Raising

The Dubuque County Historical Society is prepared to meet this fund raising challenge. Three years ago the Society launched a capital and endowment campaign to raise funds for its expansion and to increase its endowment. The first phase goal was set at \$36 million which includes a \$5 million endowment, \$3 million of which would be dedicated strictly to humanities scholarship and interpretation. To date, we have raised \$30 million of that \$36 million goal.

In-kind gift of building: For several years the Society was looking to secure space for long term development of its River Museum. The board directed the staff to identify and secure space which would enable the River Museum to have the option to expand. The Museum was bounded on the south by the river and the west by railroad tracks and a highway, so the only available directions were north and east. The City of Dubuque offered a space directly north of the Museum. The Society felt that this space did not meet the strategic needs of the Museum. The adjacent property owner to the east, the Diamond Jo Casino was interested in building a new land-based facility and offered the Museum its 35,000 square foot building along with \$3 million as a charitable gift. There were several advantages to this offer. The Museum already owned the 15,000 square foot northern portion of that building and it was underutilized. Combining it with the 35,000 square foot southern portion of the building made a usable 50,000 square foot space. Second, this was Mississippi River waterfront space which would provide the Museum with interpretive possibilities along the water's edge. Third, the Society was free to develop its expansion plans under its own schedule. Fourth, the Casino was providing \$3 million which would aid in transforming the building to serve a museum purpose. We accepted the Portside building, and the entire site was appraised at \$6.2 million as in-kind support.

State: At the state level, the Society received an \$8 million grant from Vision Iowa, a program established by the state legislature to support major developments in the state. Iowa also designated Dubuque as one of 12 Iowa Great Places and provided \$250,000 towards the Museum expansion. In addition, the state provided a historic preservation grant of \$100,000 for the National Landmark Old Jail and a \$100,000 preservation grant for restoration of the National Landmark steamboat *William M. Black*. In

total, the Society has secured \$8.5 million at the state level, all of which is designated for project activities and cannot be used for endowment.

Federal: At the federal level, the Society received a \$4.5 million award from the Federal Highway Department because the River Museum's expansion would interpret the Great River Road Scenic Byway which runs the length of the Mississippi River. The Society also received a \$125,000 Save America's Treasures grant from the National Park Service to restore the Old Jail and a \$256,000 Save America's Treasure grant to restore the steamboat *William M. Black*. The Society received a White House Preserve America grant of \$150,000 to develop a Dubuque History Trail, an IMLS grant of \$150,000 to develop the *RiverWays* exhibit at the River Museum, and an IMLS grant of \$142,000 to develop the *At the Lead Mines* interpretive program at the Mathias Ham House. In total, the Society has received federal grant awards of \$5.5 million, all of which is designated for capital or project costs and cannot be used for endowment.

City and County: The City of Dubuque has made several in-kind contributions to the project, most notably the construction of a multi-million dollar parking structure nearby for museum patrons. In addition the City is providing all public infrastructure for the Museum, including walkways, park-like settings, directional signage, and utility relocation costs. The City is also providing all the exterior preservation costs for the Mathias Ham House. Dubuque County is providing \$728,000 in support, including the use of the Old Jail Building, \$228,000 towards its restoration, and \$250,000 for the River Museum expansion. All of these funds are also capital or project oriented and cannot be used for endowment.

Private giving: The private giving goal was tested by a feasibility study conducted by the fund raising firm of Braren, Mulder and German, of Davenport, Iowa. The study not only assessed the potential for a private giving campaign, but gauged the opinions and attitudes towards the Society and identified potential champions for the campaign. The fund raising feasibility study had several conclusions which pointed to success:

- The Dubuque County Historical Society is held in very high regard, with 91.5% of those responding expressing a positive opinion.

- The Society’s National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium received an even higher level of support, with 95% of those giving it high marks. They said, “A well-respected, well-known institution delivering a high quality visitor experience”, “Generating significant economic impact on the region”, and “A remarkable window to this part of the world.”
- The River Museum Expansion and the plans for local history were viewed as exciting and appealing.
- Endowment was viewed as crucial to the ongoing financial health of the Society and a natural step for an organization that has established a strong and positive reputation and a record of achievements.
- When asked about moving forward with a private giving campaign, 71% indicated positive reaction. 50% indicated they would definitely support the project with a gift or pledge, and 27.5% indicated it was possible.

The conclusion of the fund raising feasibility study was that the proposed goal of \$12 million could be achieved, but only with concerted effort and a strong relationship based campaign effort.

The Society began its fund raising effort in 2006 with a \$3 million gift from the Diamond Jo Casino. In fall of 2007, the Society conducted a board campaign that resulted in \$1,021,000 in board giving and \$75,000 in staff giving. Two donors pledged \$1 million. The Society received a \$1 million challenge grant from The Kresge Foundation, provided that we complete the private giving goal. A Kresge Foundation grant is considered a significant accomplishment that assures donors of the merits of the project and the perceived success of the fund drive effort. In total the Society has secured \$9 million in private gifts from the first 60 donors.

We now stand at a total of \$30 million raised, with \$6 million more to raise to complete the first phase. Of the \$6 million remaining, \$3 million is projected from government sources at the federal, state, city or county level and could include this \$750,000 grant request from NEH. The private fund raising goal

of \$3,000,000 would be allocated \$2,250,000 to match the NEH Challenge and \$750,000 for capital improvement costs.

The Society has already raised some funds towards its humanities endowment in anticipation of a possible NEH challenge grant. Several donors have made contributions to the Society's endowment at the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque. These contributions amount to \$110,000. Also, \$200,000 in private contributions have been made available to match this potential NEH challenge grant. In addition, of the staff donation of \$75,000 from the Executive Director and the Development Director, one half, or \$37,500, is being allocated by these staff members to match this potential NEH challenge grant. Therefore the Historical Society has raised \$347,500 towards the goal of \$2,225,000 to match a potential NEH challenge grant and has \$1,902,500 to go.

Fund Raising Staff: *Jerry Enzler*, Executive Director, has supervised four previous major capital campaigns as a hands-on participant in campaign strategy and top level calls. He has led the Museum in campaigns totaling \$1.1 million in 1979, \$1.2 million in 1984, \$3.5 million in 1991, and \$56 million in 2003. He has been the leader in raising the \$30 million secured to date in this campaign. He will provide overall direction for this campaign and will be personally involved in major calls towards this NEH matching requirement.

Ginger Sakas, Director of Development, has an extensive background in community fundraising and non-profit service. She is President of the Mercy Service Club of Mercy Hospital and past chair of the Budget and Finance Committee. She is a member of the International Women's Philanthropic Organization and several other philanthropic and service organizations. She will be the lead coordinator for the local NEH matching campaign, developing strategy, coordinating calls and follow up, and participating in calls.

Teri Goodmann, National Advancement, was campaign coordinator for the \$56 million Museum drive in 2003 working with Director Enzler. Goodmann now coordinates the Museum's national fund

raising effort. She is former trustee of the Iowa State Historical Society Board of Trustees and advisor to several political and public awareness efforts.

We have presented our case to prospective donors not only in Dubuque, but also in Minneapolis, Cedar Rapids, Des Moines, New Orleans, and Washington, D.C. We have augmented our development team by the addition of a full time grant writer and a support intern. We have enlisted six museum board members to serve as members of the Campaign Strategy Committee and twelve key community leaders to serve as the Campaign Leadership Cabinet. Team members are responsible for working with key staff to identify, evaluate and solicit lead gifts of \$10,000 and above.

The Museum has developed a list of the top 150 gift relationship prospects made up on current donors and prospective donors where we have an ongoing relationship. We have held awareness meetings with 75% of these gift prospects, and, in many cases, multiple meetings.

We have identified 20 potential donors in the asking range of \$100,000 to \$250,000, 40 prospects in the \$25,000 to \$100,000 range, and over 90 donors in the asking range of \$5,000 to \$25,000 level. There will also be several gifts at levels below \$5,000.

These are difficult times to be raising money, especially in the mid range of gifts. Normally we might calculate that 1/3 of the possible donors will decide to make a gift at the requested amount. In these times however, it might be one out of four or one out of five. We continue to maintain close contact with potential donors. Many have assured us they will be making a gift but will need to wait until the end of 2009 before they decide the amount. Others have told us that they will make their gift in 2010. This makes an NEH Challenge Grant that much more valuable and more crucial—first to secure the funds for the Historical Society, and second, to insure that they are designated for the humanities endowment.

This is why an NEH Challenge Grant will be so important. In these challenging times, an NEH Challenge will help make the difference in seeing that donors' limited funds will go towards our humanities endowment. Donors do not want to see that potential challenge grant dollars might be lost.

Long-term Financial Stability: The Dubuque County Historical Society is fiscally strong. There is no long term debt. Endowment and reserves of \$4 million have suffered some decline this past year, with

much of the unrealized loss eating into the unrealized gain from prior years. While endowment and reserve funds are 20% below cost right now, we are hopeful and confident, as is the rest of the nation, that the market will rebound.

The Society studied the sustainability and economic factors which would foster the continued success of the institution. *The National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium Opportunities Studies* (ConsultEcon, Cambridge, Massachusetts – 2007 and 2009) studied the visitor experience proposed by our design team and evaluated the economics of the expansion (see Appendix B). This study assessed market conditions and visitation patterns, cited comparable institutions as models, developed a pro forma operating budget for the institution after this expansion, looked at different ticketing options, and examined the need for endowment, membership and annual giving. This economic feasibility report concluded that the River Museum expansion is warranted and prudent, that the expanded Museum should be presented as a single ticket option, that the income and expense of this expansion will have a neutral to positive cash flow, and that the expansion is not only sustainable, but is important to the long term sustainability of the entire Museum.

Broadening the Base of Institutional Support: The expansion project will broaden institutional support through the cultivation of local as well as regional and national supporters. The NEH Challenge will be used as leverage to attract new donors and increase levels of donations to the Museum.

The Museum has enjoyed a particularly strong reputation in the community. In its last major campaign, the Museum was seen as not only expanding its own facilities, but being responsible for the redevelopment of the entire riverfront in Dubuque. Many community leaders have told the Museum that its efforts constructed more than a museum—it constructed a community spirit which became a model throughout the state. The Governor of Iowa presented the Museum with a special award, citing its role in revitalizing the entire city. Newspapers across the state have pointed to Dubuque as an exemplary model for their own communities to follow.

Recent NEH and State Humanities Council Grants: The Dubuque County Historical Society has received four recent grants from Humanities Iowa to support programming. Program support from Humanities Iowa funded *History Comes Alive: Infusing Humanities into Dubuque's 175th Year*, a series of

cultural events celebrating the 175th anniversary of the founding of Dubuque. The *At the Lead Mines* historical interpretation received funding. The *Book It, Dubuque* exhibit recreated Dubuque's first bookstore. The *Do You Remember Dubuque?* presented a lecture series about the history of the area.

Prior NEH Challenge Grants: The Museum has received three previous NEH Challenge Grants during the past 25 years and believes it has used the support well.

In 1983 the Historical Society received its first NEH challenge grant, an award of \$200,000 that was matched with \$600,000 from non-federal sources. These funds were used to complete the restoration of the Mathias Ham House, complete the initial exhibits at the River Museum, and establish the Society's first endowment at \$200,000.

In 1991, the Museum received a \$525,000 NEH Challenge Grant and raised \$2.1 million in matching funds to expand its museum facilities and bring the endowment up to the \$600,000 level. The new museum gallery and support space was developed, providing 16,000 square feet of space of collections storage, exhibit space, and new archive facilities.

In 1999, the Museum received a \$500,000 NEH Challenge Grant and raised \$2 million in matching funds to expand its museum facilities and add \$1.2 million to its endowment. The new National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium expanded into a new 65,000 square foot building.

These challenge grants sparked major growth for the Historical Society and its ability to present the humanities. Staff increased, and the number of exhibits and programs and collections grew with a total investment of \$44 million. The numbers of people served with humanities programming increased tremendously from 70,000 to over 200,000 annually. Financially, admission income and membership support tripled, and fund raising capability increased enormously.

Conclusion: This Challenge Grant will increase the capacity of the Dubuque County Historical Society to maintain its commitment to the humanities. It will encourage non-federal funding support, building long term capacity and relationships with donors. It will provide leadership staffing and exhibit and program funding at three regionally and nationally significant historic sites.