

Report to Council

Date: June 23, 2025
From: Claudette Martin, on behalf of Museum Services Board
Re: Blockhouse Museum Operational Update

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Council of the Corporation of the Village of Merrickville-Wolford be apprised of preparations and 2025 operational goals for the Blockhouse Museum.

BACKGROUND

The Museum Services Board (MSB) has continued its dedicated work in support of the Merrickville Blockhouse Museum, making steady progress in its stewardship and preparation for the 2025 summer season.

We've maintained a close collaboration with the **Merrickville and District Historical Society (MDHS)**. With their vital support, the museum has been thoroughly cleaned and readied. This partnership also allowed us to open the museum for two pre-season weekends: June 14–15 and June 20–21. These early openings provide valuable opportunities to engage visitors and extend site access beyond the core summer schedule. The MDHS successfully hosted its first Kawartha Cruise tour and look forward to welcoming an additional 11 tours throughout the season.

The Board deeply appreciates the **ongoing assistance of Village of Merrickville–Wolford staff** in preparing the site. Their support is essential to the museum's successful operation. Special thanks to **Shelley MacKenzy (Public Works) and Kirsten Rahm (Finance Dept)** for their invaluable coordination across many aspects of our seasonal preparations.

ANALYSIS

The Merrickville Blockhouse Museum will open 5 days/week, **June 26th - August 25th**. Our programming and interpretive offerings will focus on sharing the rich heritage of the site and the community with the following operational goals:

- **Increase Visitor Engagement:**
 - **Visitor Numbers:** Achieve a target of 8000 visitors by the end of the season through enhanced staff training and social media marketing to create a *buzz*.
- **Enhance Financial Sustainability:**

- **Donations:** Increase overall visitor donations by 8% compared to the 2024 season (from \$4500 - \$5000).
- **Develop Staff Excellence:**
 - **Training & Development:** Ensure summer student staff receive comprehensive training in historical interpretation, customer service, and interactive engagement, fostering a positive and proactive approach to visitor interaction.
 - **Program Delivery:** Empower staff to independently lead engaging interpretive story-telling and answer visitor questions confidently.
 - **Interactive Experiences:** Introduce and actively promote child-centred and family-friendly activities to enhance visitor participation.

BUDGET/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

We have successfully hired **three summer staff** for the 2025 season including a supervisor and two interpreters. We've secured funding support through both the **Young Canada Works program** and the **Canada Summer Jobs Grant** to support these positions.

CONCLUSION

All preparations are in order for the upcoming season. The Museum Services Board anticipates operating within the budget approved by Council and is looking forward to achieving our outlined operational goals for a successful summer.

ATTACHMENTS

No attachments.

Submitted by:

Claudette Martin

Approved by:

Darlene Plumley, CAO