

For Immediate Release

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Wisconsin’s New History Museum to Open in 2026
Aiming to become the premier Midwest destination for history

Madison, WI. – The Wisconsin Historical Society (WHS) is excited to announce a new history museum of state and national history will open in 2026. This comes after the WHS recently announced the final siting for the new Wisconsin history museum which keeps the building on the Capitol Square adjacent to the State Capitol building in Madison. Through the leadership and vision of Fred and Mary Mohs and the Mohs family, the Wisconsin Historical Foundation will acquire the 20-22 North Carroll Street properties adjacent to the current Wisconsin Historical Museum on the Capitol Square for the development of the new museum.

“The new history museum will highlight stories that, connect individuals and communities to our region, the nation and the world,” said Christian Overland, Ruth and Hartley Barker director & CEO of the Wisconsin Historical Society. “We are ecstatic to be able to keep our commitment to our residents and we are grateful for the support and enthusiasm from the State, donors, and communities throughout Wisconsin and the nation to open a new museum in 2026.”

New commitments from Madison, Wisconsin philanthropists Jerry Frautschi and Pleasant Rowland, founder of American Girl bring their combined gifts to \$16.6 million and total private funds raised for the Campaign for a New Wisconsin History Museum to \$34.9 million. This exceeds the required match of \$30 million to release the State's \$70 million enumeration for design, construction, and site acquisition.

“Thanks to the generosity of Pleasant and Jerry, we are once again indebted to them for their incredible support of Wisconsin’s history museum project,” said Julie Lussier, Wisconsin Historical Foundation executive director.

Through exhibitions and programs curated for guests of all ages, the museum will share wide ranging perspectives from the past and present, and bring historical context to an expansive and ever-growing American history collection of national significance. It will house permanent and temporary galleries which will allow WHS to present stories for local, regional and national audiences. Visitors will enter spaces that engage every sense through rotating art, objects and images, soundscapes from state and national musicians, and regional food and beverage tastings. It will be a regional learning hub, emerging as a leading history experience in the Midwest.

With plans to welcome over 200,000 guests annually, the new \$100 million, 100,000 square-foot Wisconsin history museum will more than double exhibition space, include state-of-the-art technology that will provide greater access to the Society's collection and give them unparalleled access to history. The new museum will be the heart of a network to reach and connect people across the state through distance learning technology and exciting, modern exhibitions.

"By expanding our current space, we will be able to build a new history museum that will exhibit and connect our stories with all 72 counties in Wisconsin and allow the Society to provide greater access to our treasured Wisconsin and American history collections," continued Overland. "The larger future museum will serve more than double the number of students and families who currently visit the Wisconsin Historical Museum."

The Wisconsin Historical Society will immediately start the search for both exhibit and architectural design firms.

For more information visit wisconsinhistory.org/newmuseum.

About Wisconsin Historical Society

The Wisconsin Historical Society, founded in 1846, ranks as one of the largest, most active and most diversified state historical societies in the nation. As both a state agency and a private membership organization, its mission is to help people connect to the past by collecting, preserving and sharing stories. The Wisconsin Historical Society serves millions of people every year through a wide range of sites, programs and services. For more information, visit www.wisconsinhistory.org.

About the Wisconsin Historical Foundation

The Wisconsin Historical Foundation, a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization, receives grants and private contributions benefitting the Society and administers the membership program. Visit wisconsinhistory.org for more information.

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