

Spencerport Depot and Canal Museum



Annual Report 2019

Organization History

The Spencerport Depot and Canal Museum is a 501(c)(3) organization which first opened in 2007. It operates out of a restored trolley station which was originally built in 1906. The second floor of the present-day building at 16 East Avenue in Spencerport, served as the Spencerport station of the Rochester, Lockport and Buffalo Railroad.

The Museum's displays and exhibits focus on four areas: The Erie Canal, Communication, Transportation and Local History. It also offers youth and adult education programs including field trips for students in the Spencerport Central School District.

The Museum is open to the public from May to October. It also operates as a visitor center, and as a welcome center for boaters who dock in Spencerport. The Museum organizes its own activities and events as well as participating in other community activities. From 2007 to 2016, the Museum was also a satellite location of the Ogden Farmer's Library.

We operate with 3 staff and a group of committed volunteers who ensure we are open seven days a week during the Summer months. We are a non-profit organization which operates thanks to private donations, grants, gift shop sales and community support.

Our Mission

The purposes of the Museum as set forth in its constitution are exclusively educational in nature, to wit:

- (a) To establish and maintain a history museum, historical research and reference center, and visitor center relating to the history of the Erie Canal, the Ogden Telephone Company, and transportation and communication in the Village of Spencerport and Town of Ogden in the County of Monroe, State of New York.
- (b) To collect, own, hold, maintain, preserve, and make available appropriate historical objects and artifacts.
- (c) To arrange, create, maintain and promote appropriate historical exhibits and displays.
- (d) To honor the memory of Donald F. and Maxine B. Davison, owners of the Ogden Telephone Company, active citizens whose philanthropy has benefited the community.
- (e) To present living history lessons to students in the community.
- (f) To provide a community meeting place, promote tradition and heritage, and provide facilities to visitors and canal travelers.
- (g) To promote and support historical research and scholarship, issue publications in any format, and organize historical and cultural activities, programs and events for the public.
- (h) To cooperate with the Ogden Historical Society and with county and state officials and historical organizations to collect, preserve and display of materials of local, countywide and statewide significance.

Museum Director's Notes

I have just completed my third season as Museum Director and continue to work on improving the Museum experience for all. Work continues behind the scenes to attract new visitors to the Museum, improve our educational offerings and give back to the community. I also continue to improve our displays and exhibits and to offer something new for visitors to see and learn each time they visit.

We focused on displaying telephones and other telephonic equipment in 2019 and featured a spectacular Kodak camera exhibit, a project completed by an intern from the College of Brockport. These exhibits stirred up memories and created conversation for many who visited us in 2019. The addition of a new interactive lift bridge model and a play table also added fun and education for visitors of all ages.

The closure of the Union Street Lift Bridge, starting in July, didn't seem to dramatically affect general Museum attendance. Event attendance has dramatically decreased this year, in part due to weather, but education outreach and some surprising pockets of good weather have helped balance out overall participation.

Thank you for your support in 2019. We hope to see you in 2020!

Best regards,



Simon Devenish
Museum Director

2019 Achievements

Revived the Pumpkin People Activity

In October, after several years in hiatus, the Pumpkin People Community was revived for 2019. 52 people were involved in the construction of the community and 184 votes were received.

Added Interactive Lift Bridge Model

The Rochester Museum and Science Center built a 1/64 interactive scale model of the Union Street Lift Bridge which was delivered in late 2018. This has been a big attraction in 2019. More improvements are planned for this display in the near future.



The Pumpkin People Community (outside the Museum)

Repainted the Museum Building Exterior

After discussion in 2018, the Village of Spencerport budgeted to have the exterior of the Museum building repainted in July 2019.

Improved Visitor Engagement

Exhibits such as our Kodak Camera exhibit, telephone exhibit and our new interactive lift bridge display encouraged more conversation and interactivity with the exhibits. We identified an improvement in the length of time visitors spent at the Museum.

New History Projects with Spencerport Neighbors

We embarked on two Ogden history related projects with the Spencerport Neighbors magazine in 2019.

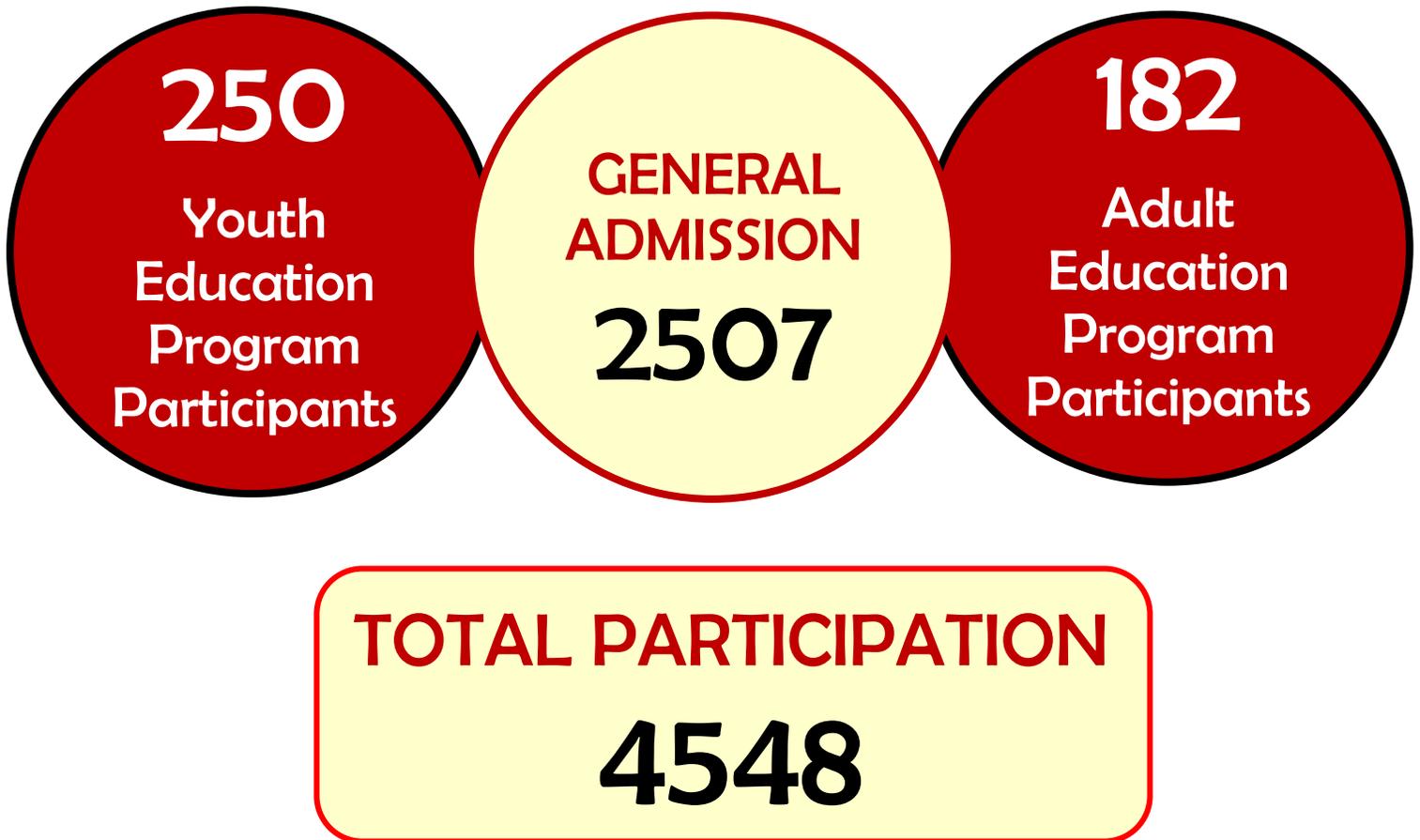
Look Back Story: The first story was published in May 2019. This project looks to continue until 2022. Each month, we contribute a story to the magazine about Ogden's history. These stories are compiled by our Director or by volunteers at the Ogden Historical Society.

Where's Spencer: Each month, we submit two images to the magazine featuring our mascot, Spencer the Museum Bear at a location in the Town of Ogden. These images are also posted to our Facebook and Instagram pages. Towards the end of the month, the location and a historical fun fact is revealed about the locations.

2019 Statistics

Attendance and participation figures have remained steady the past 4 years showing small increases in some areas. In 2019, general attendance was better than expected with a total of 2507 people walking through the doors. Overall participation numbers are the second highest ever recorded (our record of 5149 was set in 2018).

General attendance visitors have remained at approximately 2500 people for the past four years (2018 being an exception with attendance of 2810 people).



Plans for 2020

- Expand and promote Education Program activities
- Develop new Erie Canal exhibits
- Develop a Newsletter
- Improve Volunteer Base
- Develop a new long term plan

Special Thanks to...

Bob McDonald

Cindy Lott

Museum Board of Directors

Museum Volunteers

Village of Spencerport Staff

Village of Spencerport Trustees

Many Thanks to...

Andrea Davison

Antique Wireless Museum Volunteers

Bruce Schwendy

Carol Coburn (Town of Ogden Historian)

Craig Williams

David and Liz Beebe from Camillus Erie Canal Park

Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor Staff

Joel Humphrey (Village Historian)

John Elsbree

Josef Scheel

Karen Sadowski

Nellie Gardner

Ogden Farmer's Library Staff

Ogden Historical Society Volunteers

Spencerport Central School District Staff



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