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MMAM receives sustaining support to recover and reimagine

WINONA, MN (May 12, 2022) - The Minnesota Marine Art Museum announced it received a major gift of sustaining support from the Winona Foundation today. The Winona Foundation, a non-profit 501c3 organization funded and administered by the family and heirs of the Laird Norton Co., which began operations in Winona, MN in 1855, recognizes MMAM as an “exemplary organization contributing to the cultural, historical and educational heritage of Winona, Minnesota,” notes Andrew Parks, Winona Foundation, Board President.

“The museum’s relentless commitment to serving the community it operates from through arts access programs like Seasonal Saturdays, early childhood initiatives like Toddler Tuesdays, and health and wellness initiatives like SPARK!! are just a few examples of how the mission-driven nonprofit arts museum is offering ‘innovative programs’ central to our mission,” adds Parks. “Partnering with MMAM continues to be a source of great pride for our family, with gratitude for the many generousities we have received from Winona and the community at large.”

MMAM will use this support to fund educational programs that are core to the museum’s commitment to providing meaningful art experiences that explore the historic and ongoing human relationship to water.

MMAM also received additional and new support this spring through grants from the Southeast Minnesota Arts Council, the Carl and Verna Schmidt Foundation, the Winona Community Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Winona Area Chamber of Commerce. The latter two granting efforts leveraged support from the President Biden led American Rescue Plan to support businesses and organizations like MMAM through the current public health crises and resulting economic crisis.

“Museums and cultural organizations across the country, and the state, have been adversely affected by the crisis, and will be for some time,” notes Scott Pollock, MMAM Executive Director. “As noted in a recent study by the American Alliance of Museums, the museum field will take years to recover to pre-pandemic levels of staffing, revenue, and community engagement,” continues Pollock.

MMAM experienced an 84% drop in revenues, far beyond the average 40% nationwide, for nearly two years and is now only seeing visitation return to pre-pandemic levels.

Thanks in large part to several federal relief programs like the American Rescue Plan, and now pending state legislation, like the Cultural Community Rescue Program, supported across party lines in Minnesota, notes MMAM Board Member, Greg Neidhardt, “museums, theaters, and arts organizations will be able to bounce back and get back to doing the work they do best - weaving together the social fabric of our communities.”

Minnesota’s arts and cultural organizations lost a total of \$2.2 billion in revenue, which led to over 60,000 layoffs in the industry. The Cultural Community Rescue Program would use American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars to fund grants to the roughly 1,400 statewide nonprofits and cultural organizations that were adversely affected by the pandemic. As Senator Karin Housely (R-Stillwater) comments, “The arts are so important to our state—not only do they play a key role in our economy, but they bring diverse people and communities together.”

As a destination museum with a deep commitment to serving its community, MMAM is positioned to build on this support. On May 18, International Museum Day, the Minnesota Marine Art Museum will announce how it plans to roll out a series of initiatives and partnerships that allow it to not only

return to pre-pandemic activity levels, but reimagine how it does its work, and with whom.

ABOUT

Founded in 2004 as the Maritime Heritage Society by a dedicated community of volunteers, the Minnesota Museum of Marine Art has evolved into a mission-driven nonprofit art museum that engages visitors in meaningful art experiences through education and exhibitions that explore the ongoing and historic human relationship with water. Our mission is to engage audiences in meaningful art experiences through education and exhibitions that explore the ongoing and historic human relationship with water.

The Minnesota Marine Art Museum operates from Mni Sota Makoce (Land Where the Waters Reflect The Clouds), the traditional homeland of the Dakota people. Residing here since time immemorial, Dakota still call Mni Sota Makoce home, with four federally recognized Dakota nations and many more Dakota people residing in what is now the state of Minnesota. Due to continued legacies of colonization, genocide and forced removal, generations of Dakota people remain disenfranchised from their traditional homeland. Presently, Mni Sota Makoce has become a refuge and home for many Indigenous nations and peoples, including seven federally recognized Ojibwe nations. We humbly encourage our audiences to reflect upon the historical legacies held in the lands they occupy.

The Minnesota Marine Art Museum is committed to ecological stewardship. We strive to make the communities - natural and cultural - operate from better off than we found them. The museum's six-acre campus is built on a large sand pile on the bank of the Mississippi River, in Winona's busy commercial port. Now MMAM is home to a six-gallery museum education center, and a five-acre prairie garden restoration - its 7th Gallery. This outdoor gallery is not only a garden of natural beauty but the base of MMAM's sustainability goals. The land has transformed to become a biodiverse ecosystem that sequesters carbon and improves climate sustainability. From the roots of the plants to the roof of the museum, MMAM is working to achieve Net Zero by 2030 by maintaining a carbon sink and decreasing carbon emissions with efficient HVAC systems, installing LED lighting, and more.