

Program Partner Name: Winona County Historical Society

Classification: Arts/Education

Federal I.D. #: 41-0789-385

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Tax Status Determination: 501 (c) 3 non-profit corporation. Founded 1935.

Website: www.winonahistory.org

Mission Statement: The Winona County Historical Society was established for the purpose of discovering, collecting, preserving, and interpreting objects that document the human activity in the geographic area legally defined as Winona County, Minnesota, and to disseminate the knowledge about this history to the general public.

Brief Organization Overview: The Society operates three sites within Winona County that are open to the public. The main museum facility is housed in a former National Guard Armory (1915) that is located in downtown Winona and listed on the National register of Historic Places. The facility houses the library and archives, offices, meeting/programming space, collection storage, gift shop, exhibits, and the offices of the Winona Convention & Visitors Bureau and is open year-round to the public. The historic Willard B. Bunnell House, located in Homer, MN, and the Arches Museum of Pioneer Life near Lewiston, MN, are open during the summer months and other times by appointment. A board of directors consisting of 18 members and an Executive Director runs the organization. The annual budget of the Society is approximately \$300,000 with about 18% coming from the county and a smaller portion from the city and Convention and Visitors Bureau. The rest of the budget is earned from memberships, special events, grants, gift shop sales, tours, endowment interest, and donations.

Programming/Events: The Society provides an ambitious schedule of special events and programs throughout the year. Some of the annual events include: Annual meeting, "Chocolate, Champagne & Shakespeare", "Voices From the Past" cemetery walk, Christmas House Tour, Family Frolic. The Society also provides programming for people of all ages. Examples include: twice monthly Food for Thought lectures, evening speakers and workshops, American Girl Club, Pioneer School, self-guided and guided tours, step-on guides for buses, regional bus tours, Food For Thought Book Chat, in-school and nursing home programs, and an active publishing program on local history topics.

Endowment Funds: The Society maintains two endowment funds. The Hiawatha Endowment Fund currently has assets of over \$500,000. The interest from this fund is used for general operation and property improvements. The Laird Lucas Endowment Fund has assets of just under \$100,000 with the interest restricted for the archives.

Membership: The Society currently has over 1,400 members making it the largest county historical society in the state.