

# Douglas County Historical Society

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[www.watkinsmuseum.org](http://www.watkinsmuseum.org)

May 1, 2014

Mayor Mike Amyx  
City of Lawrence  
City Hall  
P.O. Box 708  
Lawrence, KS 66044

RE: City Funding for Watkins Museum Core Exhibit

Dear Mayor Amyx,

On behalf of the Douglas County Historical Society Board of Directors, I ask that the City of Lawrence consider providing financial support to complete the installation of a permanent core exhibit on the history of Lawrence and Douglas County on the third floor of the Watkins Museum of History in downtown Lawrence. We request \$100,000, potentially spread over two or three fiscal years, toward the nearly \$450,000 project. A project description, preliminary budget, and potential timeline for completion are enclosed.

The third floor core exhibit will continue the revitalization of the visitor experience at the Watkins Museum that began with the opening of the second floor core exhibit in August 2013. The third floor exhibit will utilize the same types of interpretive techniques as have been used on the second floor, incorporating graphics, artifacts, documents, and interactive elements. Themes of economic development/entrepreneurship, cultural expression, education, and consumerism will explore daily life in Lawrence and Douglas County over the past 150 years. A family education center will include the museum's popular late 1800s playhouse. Audience research beginning this summer will help define exhibit storylines and identify opportunities for interactive experiences.

We are currently seeking a 2014 Douglas County Heritage Conservation Grant to continue the momentum of the project by completing the restoration and interpretation of the museum's main stair hall by the end of this year. A 2012 gift from the Dolph Simons Family Fund of the Douglas County Community Foundation provided funding to plan the third floor portion of the core exhibit. Exhibit planning, which should be completed in late 2014, will produce a detailed and definite budget for exhibit installation and infrastructure improvement. The DCHS Board of Directors is now developing the strategy to fund the installation. In addition to seeking City funding, we intend to pursue

a major Heritage Conservation Grant in the 2015 funding cycle, a Douglas County Community Foundation grant, and contributions or sponsorships from local businesses and individuals.

In addition to exhibit fabrication and installation, the project includes refurbishment of the gallery space, particularly floors and plaster repair, and upgrades to the infrastructure that will support the exhibit, including electrical systems, lighting, and security. Such improvements will ensure the galleries meet modern museum standards for display and security and provide an up-to-date visitor experience. Upgrades to the third floor HVAC system were completed in the spring of 2014, funded by private contributions made in 2013. If the 2014 Douglas County Heritage Conservation Grant is awarded, work done under that grant will include restoration of the stained glass windows in the stair hall and upgrades to the lighting. In addition, a 2014 grant from the City of Lawrence Historical Preservation Advised Fund of the Douglas County Community Foundation will ensure that much-needed restoration of the Watkins Building's third floor windows will be completed this year.

The DCHS Board of Directors is determined to move the completion of the core exhibit forward in a timely way. An aggressive timeline (enclosed) bringing the project to a close in 2015 has been proposed, however, proceeding on this schedule is dependent on funding. It is possible to phase the project over a longer period of time, as funding becomes available. Phasing could be accomplished by separating infrastructure improvement from exhibit installation or by installing the exhibit in sections.

Thank you for this opportunity to present our exhibit project. We appreciate your consideration. Thank you also for investing in the preservation of the Watkins Building and for your support of the core exhibit installation on the second floor. If you have any questions or need additional information, please let me know.

Sincerely,



Steven J. Nowak  
Executive Director

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cc: Dave Corliss



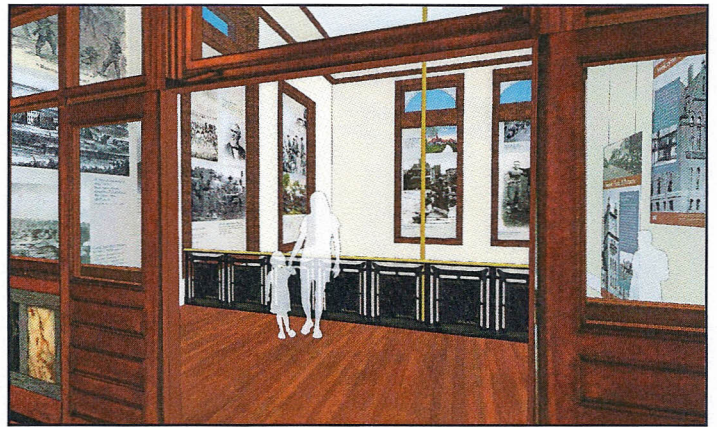


## Watkins Museum of History Third Floor Core Exhibit

The core exhibit to be installed on the third floor of the Watkins Museum will explore life in Lawrence and Douglas County through the following themes:

- Entrepreneurship and Innovation
- Community and Cultural Expression
- Consumer Goods and Local Merchants
- Education and the Pursuit of Knowledge

The exhibit will utilize historic artifacts, photos and documents to highlight the people, causes, and events that shaped our communities. Exhibit storylines will feature native populations, early settlers, business leaders, activists, educators, athletes, philanthropists, and immigrants. Displays on schools and literary societies, farms and retail stores, railroads and industry, music and film-making will allow visitors to experience the past and learn how it influences who we are today. Interactive elements will draw visitors back in time and give them an opportunity to reflect on today's issues. A family education center will help children and parents understand how things used by earlier generations reveal clues about the past.



Stair Hall, looking northeast



Third Floor, looking east

Third Floor, overview





**Watkins Museum of History**

Estimated Budget for completion of Core Exhibit

February 25, 2014

**Core Exhibit Planning**

Design Fees	\$39,375
Audience Research	\$3,700
<b>Exhibit Design Total:</b>	<b>\$43,075 (funds in hand)</b>

**Stair Hall**

Window Coverings	\$7,750
Painting	\$5,000
Text Panels	\$6,000
Upgrade Electrical Systems	\$2,600
Light Fixtures	\$8,000
Stained Glass Window Restoration	\$10,000
Graphic Design	\$2,500
<b>Stair Hall Total:</b>	<b>\$41,850 (seeking Heritage Grant)</b>

**Third Floor**

Exhibit Fabrication and Installation	\$250,000
Casework and Mounts	\$50,000
Window Coverings	\$39,000
Refurbish Playhouse	\$1,500
Upgrade HVAC System	\$25,834 (completed)
Upgrade Electrical System	\$30,000
Light Fixtures	\$9,000
Plaster Repair	\$5,000
Wood Floor Repair	\$17,165
Mosaic Floor Repair	\$3,000
Painting	\$8,000
Security Cameras	\$3,000
<b>Third Floor Total:</b>	<b>\$441,499</b>

## Watkins Museum Core Exhibit Development Timeline

2011	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
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### Phase 1: Interpretive Planning (complete)

Develop interpretive plan

On-going fundraising began November 2011

2012	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
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### Phase 2: Develop Storylines and Interpretive Approaches (complete)

Define overall exhibit storyline

Schematic design of exhibit layout

### Phase 3: Fabrication & Installation, 2nd Floor (complete)

Finalize 2nd floor design

Define story detail, write interpretive text

Develop/fabricate exhibit elements

Ongoing fundraising

2013	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
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### Phase 3: Fabrication & Installation, 2nd Floor (complete)

Ongoing fundraising

Write/edit interpretive text

Develop/fabricate exhibit elements

Refurbish gallery space/upgrade systems

Install exhibit

**2nd Floor exhibit opened to the public, August 17, 2013**

2014	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
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### Phase 4: Design, Fabrication & Installation, Stair Hall and 3rd Floor

#### Stair Hall

Design exhibit graphics, lighting system

Electrical work/lighting installation

Plaster repair and painting

Stained glass window restoration

Install window coverings and banners

**If funded, Stair Hall complete by DCHS Annual Meeting, approx. November 20**

#### 3rd Floor

Identify funding sources

Initiate fundraising

Define exhibit

Exhibit design/develop detailed budget

2015	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
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### 3rd Floor continued (pending funding)

On-going fundraising

Gallery repair/systems upgrade

Exhibit fabrication and installation