



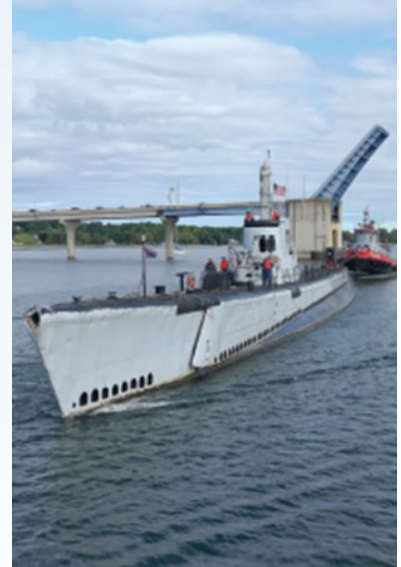
WISCONSIN MARITIME MUSEUM

AT MANITOWOC

2025 Impact Report



USS COBIA



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Mission Statement

The Wisconsin Maritime Museum connects all people with Wisconsin's waterways, by engaging and educating the public about the Great Lakes, Wisconsin's maritime history, Wisconsin's World War II submarines and USS Cobia.



Letter From The Director

75 Maritime Drive
Manitowoc, WI
54220

2025 was a year of monumental accomplishments for the Wisconsin Maritime Museum. We welcomed more than 35,000 visitors from across the country and internationally. That impact extended beyond 40,000 people, who attended private events at the museum last year.

The museum also achieved a major milestone in USS *Cobia*'s storied life, by successfully completing a full exterior restoration of the submarine at Fincantieri Bay Shipbuilding in Sturgeon Bay. This \$1.5 million dollar project was nearly 30-years in the making and was achieved thanks to the many staff, board members, and volunteers who worked tirelessly to plan and execute this complex dry dock project.

Our exhibit, *Wisconsin's Shipwreck Coasts*, received the 2025 Wisconsin Historical Society's Board of Curators award for best large exhibit in the state! The 3,000 square-foot exhibit features artifacts, stories, and interactives from multiple shipwrecks that were lost beneath the vast natural highways along Wisconsin's coastlines.

Additionally, in 2025, we made great strides in the renovation of the Wisconsin Maritime Heritage Center, on Franklin Street. This 25,000 square-foot collections storage facility is undergoing a multi-year renovation to properly care for thousands of shipwreck artifacts, over 60 small watercraft, hundreds of outboard boat motors, and submarine and shipbuilding objects. In November 2025, we also took a major step in breaking ground to build a publicly accessible maritime heritage garden outside the Maritime Heritage Center. This 20,000 square foot garden will feature maritime artifacts, perennial plantings and a gathering space for community events. Opening is slated for Fall 2026.

We are excited to further our mission in 2026 as we open new doors to collaboration, education, and financial sustainability. One notable new initiative launching in 2026 is the Wisconsin Sailing & Maritime Hall of Fame. This brand new exhibit opens in September with an induction ceremony on September 19, 2026 at the Wisconsin Maritime Museum. In times of financial uncertainty for many nonprofit organizations, it is gratifying to see that WMM's mission is making an impact in the lives of those we serve.

Thank you to all of our supporters!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin Cullen".

Kevin Cullen
Executive Director

2025 Organizational Revenue was Net Positive!

Financially, the museum raised nearly \$3 Million dollars through grants, donations, and earned revenue. Much of this was earmarked for USS *Cobia* dry dock.

2025 ORGANIZATIONAL P&L

JAN 1 – DEC 31 2025

**2025 TOTAL (preliminary)
ORGANIZATIONAL REVENUE**
\$2,837,504

**2025 TOTAL (preliminary)
ORGANIZATIONAL EXPENSES**
\$2,567,439

**2025
NET ORG. REVENUE**
\$261,397 (with depreciation)

**2024 TOTAL
ORGANIZATIONAL REVENUE**
\$1,510,861

**2024 TOTAL
ORGANIZATIONAL EXPENSES**
\$1,416,001

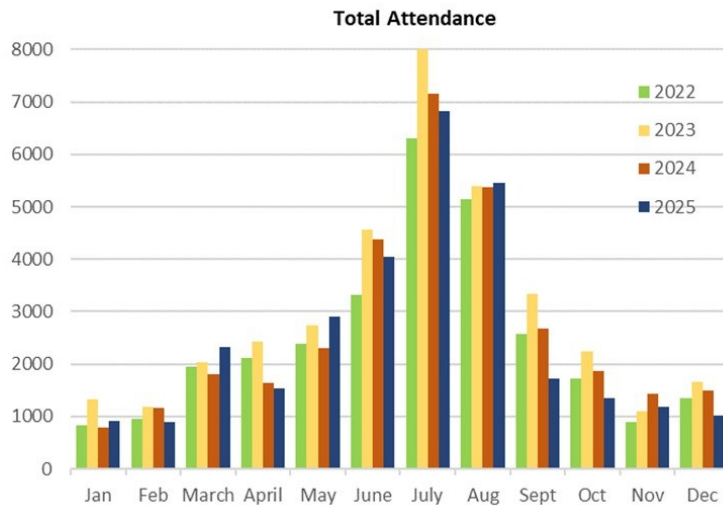
**2024
NET ORG. REVENUE**
\$86,624

2025 ATTENDANCE

TOTAL: 35,612

ADMISSION = 30,202
(EDUCATION, PROGRAMS = 7992)

SUBMARINE OVERNIGHTS: 3,426
SubBnB: 1,984



Education & Program Impact

Each year, thousands of students walk through our doors to participate in hands-on learning that brings maritime education to life. These memorable experiences enhance what they learn in the classroom and inspire them to become lifelong ambassadors of our maritime history.

In 2025, the Wisconsin Maritime Museum welcomed **over 130 schools** and group tours and engaged **over 5,000 students** from across the state in hands-on programs. That was an increase of over 2,000 people from 2024!

Meanwhile, nearly **2,000 adults** participated in **over 60 program offerings** including tours of the north breakwater lighthouse for the first time. Finally, more than 10,000 people interacted with museum staff at multiple outreach events throughout northeast Wisconsin in 2025!

2025 EDUCATION & OUTREACH IMPACT

2025 TOTAL IMPACT: 21,574

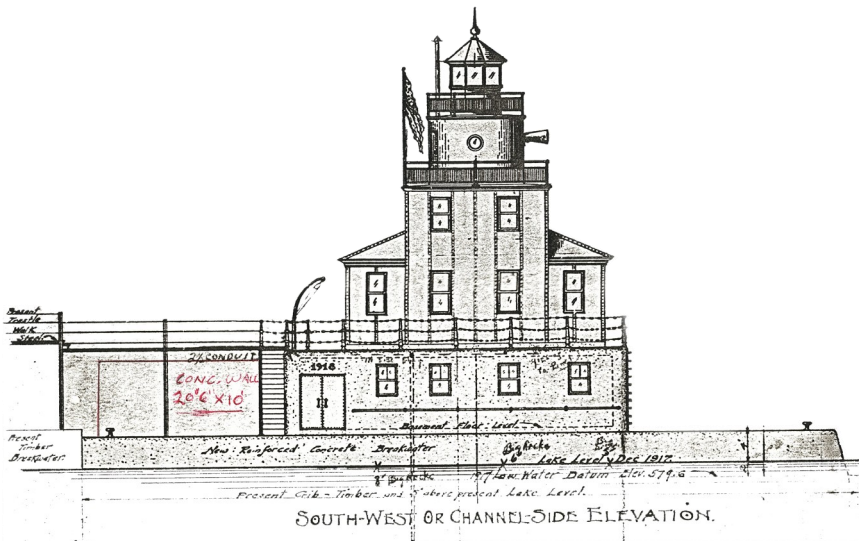
- 2025 EDUCATION & GROUP TOURS: 5,274
 - 2024: 3,137
- 2025 PROGRAMS: 2,718
 - 2024: 6,907 (IN PERSON & VIRTUAL)
- 2025 OUTREACH: 10,156
 - 2024: 6,543
- 2025 SUB OVERNIGHTS: 3,426
 - 2024: 3,035



New Tours of the Manitowoc North Breakwater Lighthouse

New programming in 2025 included organizing and leading public tours of Manitowoc's North Breakwater Lighthouse. Over 300 people were able to tour inside the privately owned 1918 lighthouse during the summer of 2025. Special thanks to Phil Carlucci and the Sunrise Rotary Club for partnering with the Wisconsin Maritime Museum to make these tours possible.

The museum also partnered with PBS Wisconsin to create a virtual 3D tour of the lighthouse that will be incorporated into the museum's exhibit. This exhibit features the original Fresnel lens and lighthouse keepers uniform.



USS COBIA



USS Cobia goes to Dry Dock

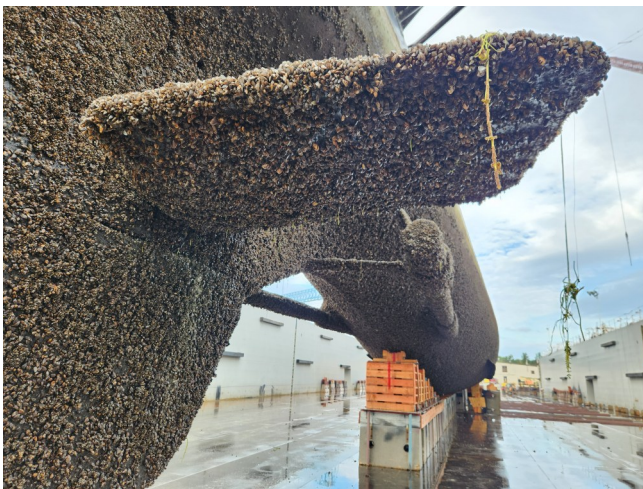
The museum also achieved a major milestone in USS Cobia's storied life by successfully completing a full exterior restoration of the submarine at Fincantieri Bay Shipbuilding in Sturgeon Bay. This \$1.5 million dollar project was nearly 30-years in the making. Work included removing three tons of mussel growth from the hull, repairing damage to the hull and repainting the entire submarine.

The media interest in this project was outstanding and was covered by all regional television stations, as well as several national news networks. Thousands of people from across the area turned out to watch the submarine depart on September 7, and return on October 15, 2025.



*USS Cobia leaves Manitowoc on the way to dry dock.
Photo by : Julie Hartlaub*

USS *Cobia* goes to Dry Dock



USS *Cobia* in dry dock. Photos by Wisconsin Maritime Museum and Door County Drone

USS COBIA

Return Journey of USS *Cobia*



USS Cobia leaves Sturgeon Bay following exterior hull restoration in dry dock.

On October 15, 2025 USS *Cobia* embarked on the return voyage back to the Wisconsin Maritime Museum in Manitowoc after six weeks of restoration in Sturgeon Bay. A few museum staff and *Cobia* volunteers were aboard the sub during the transit.



USS Cobia returns from Sturgeon Bay following exterior hull restoration in dry dock.

Museum hosts USS *Cobia* Thank You Event



Tony Evers - Governor of the State of Wisconsin

The Wisconsin Maritime Museum hosted a special thank you event on November 20 at the museum for those who contributed to the successful dry dock project of USS *Cobia*.

Speakers Included:

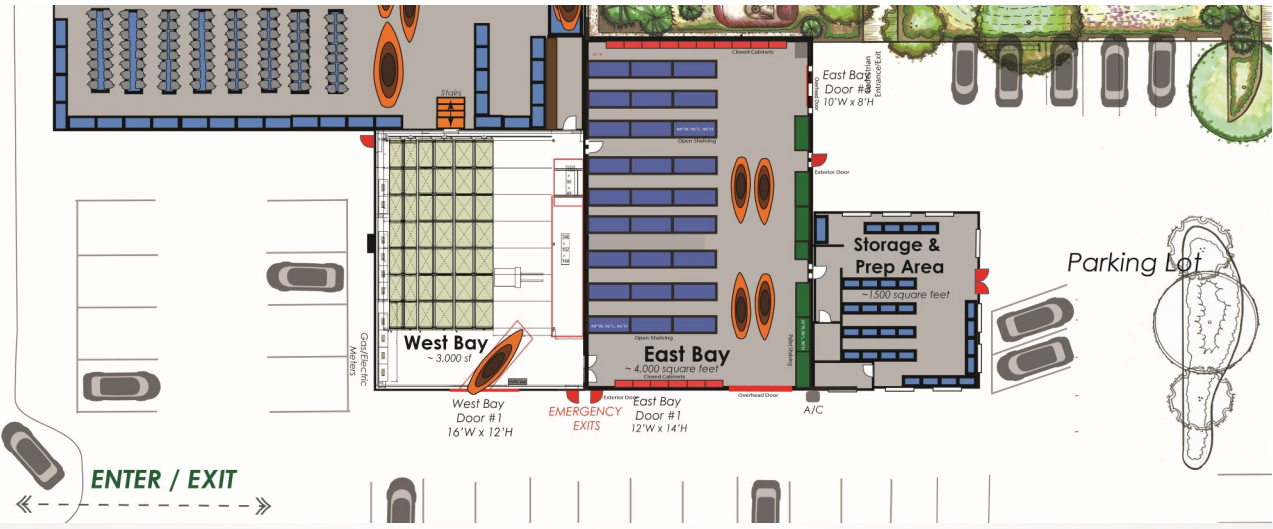
- Kevin Cullen - Executive Director
- Karen Duvall - Submarine Curator
- Logan Rooney - Board of Trustees and Chair of the USS *Cobia* Committee
- Justin Nickels - Mayor of the City of Manitowoc
- Paul Tittl - State Representative from Wisconsin's 25th Assembly District
- Devin LeMahieu - State Senator from Wisconsin's 9th Senate District
- Tony Evers - Governor of the State of Wisconsin



Wisconsin Maritime Heritage Center

In 2025, the Wisconsin Maritime Museum made great strides in the renovation of the Wisconsin Maritime Heritage Center, on Franklin Street. This 25,000 square-foot collections storage facility is undergoing a multi-year, multi-million dollar renovation to properly care for thousands of shipwreck artifacts, over 60 small watercraft, hundreds of outboard boat motors, and submarine and shipbuilding objects.

Thanks to a grant from The West Foundation, the museum completed an interior renovation of one section of the Maritime Heritage Center and installed a state-of-the-art vertical boat racking system. This motorized system allows us to more efficiently store dozens of rare Wisconsin-built boats for preservation and exhibition.



West Bay – January 2024

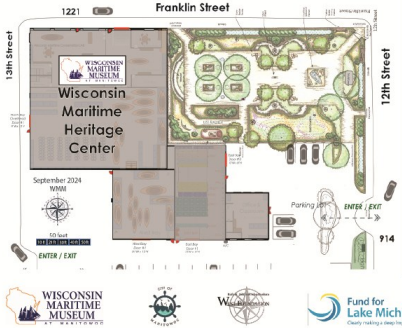


West Bay — December 2025

2025 Impact Report

MANITOWOC NOON ROTARY MARITIME GARDEN HOME OF CAPTAIN CARUS

1221 Franklin St. Manitowoc, WI 54220



Breaking Ground on the Rotary Maritime Garden: Home of Captain Carus

In November 2025, the museum took a major step in breaking ground to build a publicly accessible maritime heritage garden across from the post office on the corner of S. 12th St. and Franklin St. This 20,000 square foot garden will feature maritime artifacts, perennial plantings and a gathering space for community events. Naming rights for this garden were secured with a generous gift from the Manitowoc Noon Rotary Club. Work will continue through the end of 2026.



Wisconsin Economic Development Corp. (WEDC) Secretary, Missy Hughes, views the port anchor from the shipwreck SS MILWAUKEE outside the Maritime Heritage Center. 6/5/25

Wisconsin's Shipwreck Coasts Exhibit Earns State Award!

The museum's *Wisconsin's Shipwreck Coasts* exhibit received the 2025 Wisconsin Historical Society's Board of Curators award for best large exhibit in the state! The 3,000 square-foot exhibit features artifacts, stories, and interactives from multiple shipwrecks that were lost beneath the vast natural highways along Wisconsin's coastlines. This award-winning exhibit was developed in collaboration with the Wisconsin Shipwreck Coast National Marine Sanctuary and opened in May of 2024.



Wisconsin Historical Society CEO, Christian Overland presents the award to Kevin Cullen



MUSEUM EXHIBIT AWARD

WISCONSIN
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

BOARD OF
CURATORS AWARD



PRESENTED TO
Wisconsin Maritime Museum
FOR
**Wisconsin's Shipwreck Coasts,
Manitowoc, Wisconsin**

Angela B. Bartell
Angela B. Bartell
President, Board of Curators

Christian W. Overland
Christian W. Overland
The Ruth and Hartley Barker Director & CEO

June 5, 2025
APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF CURATORS

From Lake To Plate: Local Fishing Families and Foodways

January – October 2025

In January 2025, the museum launched a temporary exhibit in the Riverside Gallery that explored the people that bring you the fish that you eat. The exhibit featured the work of two Wisconsin photographers, Tom Kutchera and Jim Legault, who captured the portraits, over the past fifty years, of Wisconsin's commercial fishermen, fish cutters, smokehouses, delivery drivers, and retail clerks. These images illustrated the evolving "foodways" of how fish are harvested from Lake Michigan, then processed, and eventually arrive on our plates.



LOCAL FISHING FAMILIES AND FOODWAYS

Who are the people that bring you the fish that you eat? This exhibit features the work of two Wisconsin photographers who captured these portraits over the past fifty years of Wisconsin's commercial fishermen, fish cutters, smokehouses, delivery drivers, and retail clerks. These images illustrate the evolving "foodways" of how fish are harvested from Lake Michigan, then processed, and eventually arrive on our plates.

Tom Kutchera grew up in a family-owned fish company – Empire Fish – based in Milwaukee, that was founded by his great grandfather in 1913. Tom photographed employees of Empire Fish over a 30-year period, creating a collection of portraits that can be described as a "work family."

Jim Legault began photographing Wisconsin's fishermen and fishing families in the 1960s and '70s and continues to document Lake Michigan's commercial fishing industry today. He has come to know many of our state's family fishing operations very well over the years.

Photography by Tom Kutchera & Jim Legault • Written and Curated by Jim Kutchera & Kevin Cullen
Fishing history insights by Tisa Sathamer • Oral Histories Collected by Shelly Miller • Design by Chloe Eckstein

FROM LAKE TO PLATE

LOCAL FISHING FAMILIES AND FOODWAYS

Thank you to our sponsors and partners for making this exhibit possible.

BAILEY HARBOR FISH COMPANY

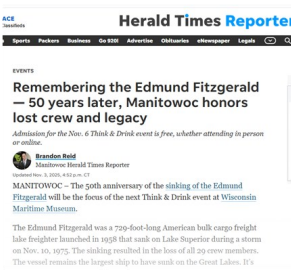
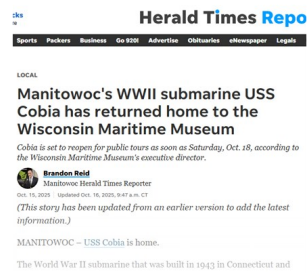
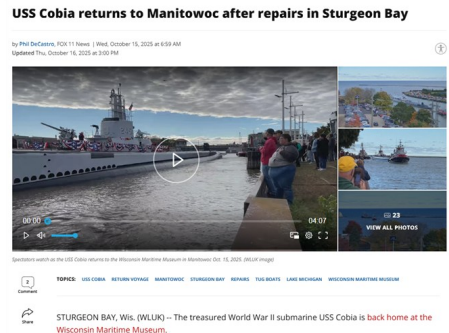
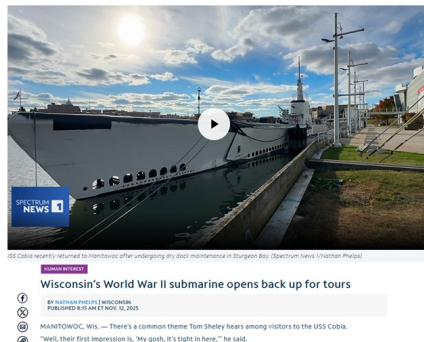
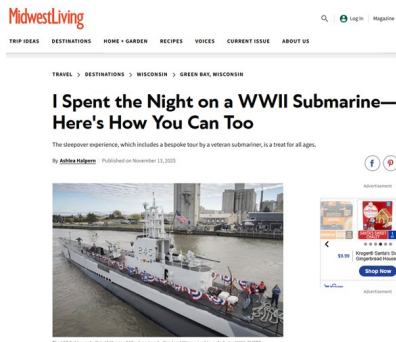
empire fish

Sea Grant
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

2025 Impact Report

Wisconsin Maritime Museum Makes National News!

Media exposure in 2025 was one of the strongest years on record! We achieved strong local, state and national attention for *Cobia's* preservation efforts, our new exhibits and dynamic programs.



2025 WMM MEDIA EXPOSURE

TV

NE Wisconsin: WFRV – WBAY - NBC 26 - Fox 11
SE Wisconsin: CBS 58 Milwaukee, PBS Wisconsin



Radio

Local: WOMT
Regional: Woodward Radio
State: Wisconsin Public Radio
National: Arizona AM



Print

Local: Herald Times Reporter - Monthly Columns
Multiple articles about WMM and Cobia Dry Dock project
State: Milwaukee Journal Sentinel – Lake to Plate exhibit, F.J. King shipwreck find, Cobia Dry Dock Project
National: New York Times – F.J. King shipwreck discovery
The Debrief – Cobia, shipwrecks,
Midwest Living – SubBnB aboard Cobia



2025 Impact Report

FACEBOOK

Views:

6 Million +

Followers:

23,000 +

Social Media Goes Through the Roof!

In 2025, WMM achieved over 6 million views on Facebook! This is up over 5 million views from 2024, largely due to the news coverage from USS *Cobia* going to dry dock.

Our followers increased nearly 5,000 people since 2024 to over 23,000 individuals.

TikTok videos continue to generate hundreds of thousands of views.

WMM IN SOCIAL MEDIA

JAN. 1 2025 – DEC. 31 2025



Facebook

Views: **6,045,652**
(2024: 817,000)

Engagement: **411,248**

Followers: **23,000+**

New Followers in 2025: 4,748

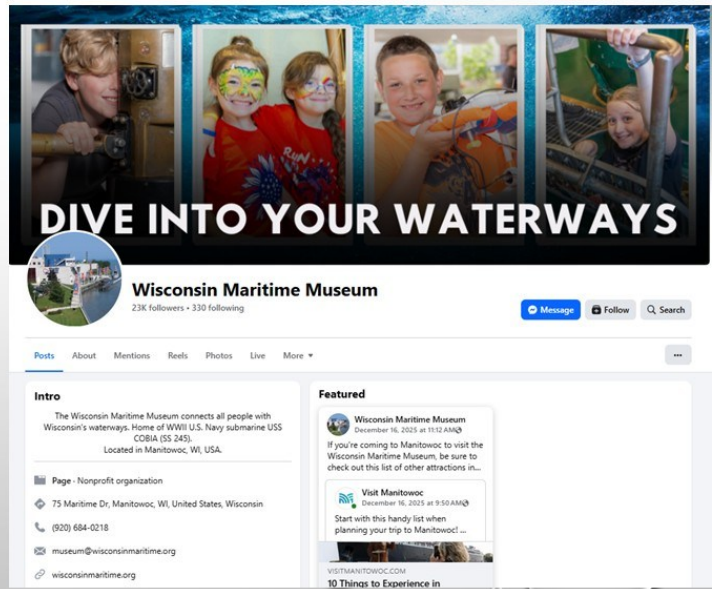


TikTok

348,000 views

(2024: 334,000)

20,000 likes and 751 shares



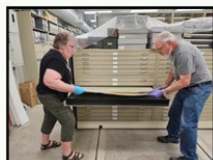
2025 Impact Report

Thank you to our Awesome Volunteers!



Volunteers

January 1 - December 31, 2025



129 *total volunteers gave their time and talents*
+1535.75 *more hours than 2024*

Total: **4,281.25 Hours**



valued at

\$145,562.50

Based on the 2025 Value of Volunteer Time for Wisconsin (\$34.00/hour)

Projects Included:

- Submarine Tours & Special Events
- Documentary Recording & Editing
- Artifact Relocation & Cataloging
- General Maintenance & Store Processing
- USS Cobia Dry Dock Project
- and so much MORE!



Thank you to our dedicated Board of Trustees!

2025 OFFICERS:

Jeff Sabel—President
Thomas Griesbach—Vice President
Rich Larsen —Treasurer
Mary Ellen Giffels —Secretary

DIRECTORS AT LARGE:

Scott Ferguson
Sam Grage
Daniel Hassemer
Andrew Dunbar
Logan Rooney
Dan Schneider
Tom Wright
Jamie Zastrow
Howard Zimmerman

2025 Impact Report

Thank You To Our Amazing 2026 Full Time Crew!



Alexandria Bolle
*Communications
Coordinator*



Amy Fettes
*Finance & HR
Manager*



Ariel Ducat
*Rentals & Overnight
Coordinator*



Jozlyn Michalek
*Visitor Engagement
Supervisor & Store
Coordinator*



Lio O'Shasky
*Education &
Programming
Coordinator*



Karen Duvall
*Cobia Curator &
Exhibits Manager*



Kevin Cullen
Executive Director



Kevin Newhouse
*Facilities &
Maintenance
Manager*



Lizzy Farrey-Luerssen
*Community Engagement,
Memberships & Volunteer
Coordinator*



Serena Stuetgen
*Archives &
Collections
Manager*



Tim Dittloff
*Director of
Development &
Advancement*

Thank you to all of our dedicated Part-Time crew too! Your work is vital to our museum's success.

RETIREMENT:

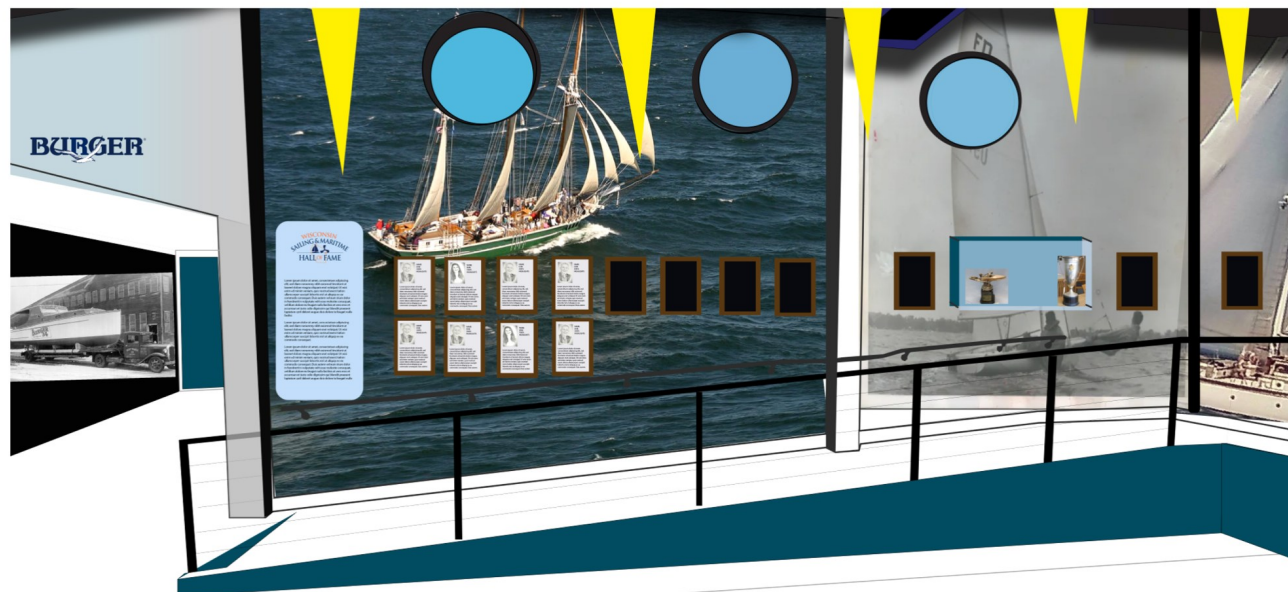
Congratulations to Paul Rutherford for 43 years of service to the mission of the Wisconsin Maritime Museum! Paul retired as Maintenance Supervisor at the end of 2025.



Opening in September 2026

The Wisconsin Sailing & Maritime Hall of Fame

The Wisconsin Sailing and Maritime Hall of Fame (WS&MHOF) will highlight Wisconsinites contributions to the overall marine world. It will select and display the achievements of honorees for their distinguished contributions to the sport of sailing or the general commercial marine industry. Partnered with the Wisconsin Maritime Museum in Manitowoc, the WS&MHOF will display its honorees and their contributions to the public to further enhance understanding of Wisconsin's deep maritime heritage.



OPENING 09/19/2026

75 MARITIME DRIVE
MANITOWOC, WI

