



1710 W Woodside Drive
Dunlap, IL 61525
(309) 243-9020
info@wheelsotime.org

An Invitation to Support Wheels O' Time Museum's *Building on Our Past* Capital Campaign

BACKGROUND

The Wheels O' Time Museum was founded in 1977 and opened to the public in 1983. Over the years, it has grown from the original building to five large structures encompassing over 30,000 square feet. The museum averages over 6,500 visitors per year from local communities and all over the world. The museum has over 100 volunteers. The annual budget is \$200,000 to \$250,000.

The museum's exhibits include interactive and educational materials for all ages, from forty-five antique and collector cars to a steam locomotive and rail cars, farm and Caterpillar equipment, a restored LeTourneau Steel House from 1938, fire trucks, airplanes, bicycles, clocks, music devices, vintage clothing, and many more exhibitions for the enjoyment of kids and adults alike. Through many of the exhibits, visitors get a glimpse into early domestic and industrial life. In 2019, the LeTourneau Steel House was designated a historic landmark.

The museum is open to the public from May through October. Maintenance and exhibition updates continue during the other six months of the year. During the winter months and for a discretionary donation, space is offered for the storage of private vehicles.

In 2017 the museum became a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) corporation with a 16-member board of directors. This status helps the museum to secure additional items for display and funding for education and community outreach programs, maintenance, care, renovation, and showcasing of the museum's displayed artifacts, many of which are interactive. There is not a museum similar to the Wheels O' Time Museum in a broad geographic range, perhaps anywhere!



Current Campus Layout

CURRENT GROWTH NEEDS

The Wheels O' Time Museum campus display space is currently at capacity, which limits our ability to accept, preserve, and display new artifacts. Also, several historically-significant artifacts are in need of major restorations and structural improvements to their display spaces, which projects extend beyond the abilities of our current skilled volunteers.

Once our current limitations are addressed, we will be able to

- Appropriately showcase the spectacularly-restored 1931 Ahrens-Fox Fire Truck, which is currently housed in our workshop area with limited visibility for museum visitors.
- Accept unanticipated large artifacts that are of historical significance and interest to visitors near and far (a 1947 Korean War “Grasshopper” aerial reconnaissance plane has been offered to the Museum contingent on suitable display space).
- Consolidate current artifacts into meaningful, cohesive displays. For instance, military vehicles are in one building, military uniforms and medals in another; Caterpillar machines and engines are displayed throughout our campus.
- Offer rotating special exhibits. Static exhibits with little change deter visitors from making repeat visits since they’ve already “seen it all.” Special exhibits bring them back.
- Complete full restorations and improve visitor interaction with our unique outdoor train exhibit.

OUR GROWTH PLAN and TIMELINE

Summer 2019: Erect a new (24’x32’) storage building to resemble a train depot at the back of the campus, to be named “Happy Valley,” for storage of lawn, groundskeeping, and maintenance equipment, as well as storage of artifacts not currently on display.

Spring 2020: Demolish the aging storage building we affectionately call “Death Valley”

Summer 2020: Build a new 50’ x 100’ Exhibit Building

Summer 2019 to Spring 2020: Complete full restorations to allow public access and improve visitor interaction with our unique **outdoor train exhibit**. Exterior paint is needed for four rail cars to address rust and aging; the two Vonachen’s Old Place Pullman dining cars, the “Danville” and the “El Fleda” elegant private car (both currently closed to the public), need interior renovations to include heat and air-conditioning that will facilitate additional uses of the rail cars; a ramp and elevated walkway alongside the rail cars will allow improved handicapped access alongside the rail cars and better passage for visitors from one end of the train display to the other, ultimately leading straight to the new exhibit building.

WHEELS O’ TIME MUSEUM PLANS FOR BUILDING ON OUR PAST

The new exhibit building will be integrated with the general feel and look of the museum campus, including interactive exhibits. Its specifications include:

- “Firehouse” height doors to load in and display the restored 1931 **Ahrens Fox Fire Truck** and another vintage Fire Engine.
- A 20’ ceiling to allow for display of the donated 1947 Korean War Grasshopper aerial reconnaissance plane as part of a unified exhibit of **Military Artifacts**, including a 1952 Ford military jeep, a 1967 MUTT (Military Utility Tactical Truck), service uniforms, medals and more.
- A **collection of numerous Caterpillar artifacts** that are currently located throughout our five building campus. The new exhibit will display together: 1924 Best Tractor, Holt Two-ton Tractor, 3206 Engine Props, 5310 Gas Turbine Engine, CAT Oil Test Engine,

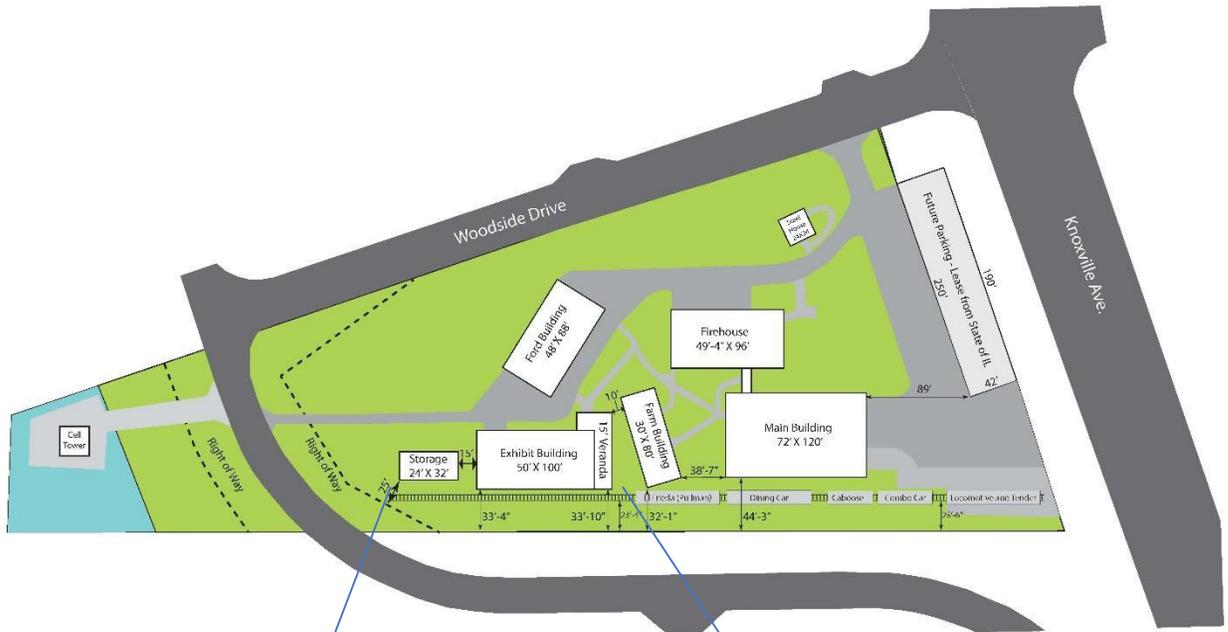
CAT Number 10 Tractor, CAT Twenty-Two Tractor, CAT D4 Tractor, CAT D2 Tractor, CAT Motor Grader

- Dedicated space for temporary, **rotating special exhibits**.
- A **meeting room** to be used for talks, presentations, performances, and small community gatherings, with a sliding or similar door that can open to the larger display area for larger events or gatherings.
- **Heated floors and solar panels for** energy efficiency.
- A **covered veranda** to be used for picnicking or relaxation by museum guests.

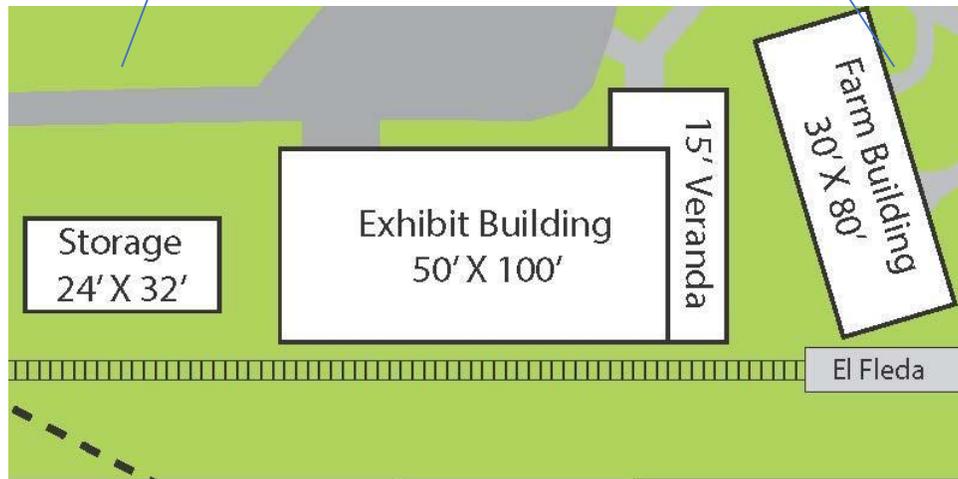


Planned Exhibit Building with Veranda

WHEELS O' TIME MUSEUM PLANS FOR *BUILDING ON OUR PAST*



Planned Campus with New Exhibit and Storage Buildings



Planned New Buildings

BUILDING ON OUR PAST CAPITAL CAMPAIGN SUPPORT STATUS

Campaign Target - \$600,000

- \$400,000 for building the 50' x 100' new exhibit building, which includes demolition of "Death Valley," permits, grading
- \$26,000 for building the "Happy Valley" 24' x 32' storage structure resembling a train depot
- \$40,000 for painting the exterior of four rail cars
- \$134,000 to include ramp and elevated walkway alongside rail cars; interior restoration of rail cars including heating and air-conditioning of rail cars; painting roof and adding fans for cooling and ventilation of Farm Building; enhanced display signage, and other restorations and display repairs and upgrades as needed

Current Amount Pledged before community campaign has begun - \$200,000 plus two separate challenge grants of \$100,000 each

The Wheels O' Time Museum is actively seeking contributions from the community to support the *Building on Our Past* capital campaign and honor the museum's mission of:

Preserving the Past for the Enjoyment and Education of Future Generations