

# MORE FOR THE MISSION



# Providing for future generations

Responsible stewardship is at the core of the Minnesota Historical Society's mission. Through *preserving, sharing and connecting*, MNHS uses the power of history to transform lives.

More for the Mission is MNHS' innovative new sustainability program that builds on the MNHS mission. By focusing on environmental factors, More for the Mission helps the organization reduce greenhouse gas emissions, conserve energy and reduce costs, ensuring that MNHS can continue to provide high-quality programs for future generations.

## DATA-DRIVEN APPROACH

Beginning in 2010, MNHS conducted audits to track environmental, cost and social impacts. Seventy-five strategies were identified that would save the organization nearly \$2 million in utility bills over a five-year period, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 15 percent. To date, 60 strategies are in progress or have been implemented.

- The Minnesota History Center in St. Paul has **reduced energy usage by 50 percent over the last six years**, saving a cumulative \$1.9 million since 2008.
- More than 20 projects at historic sites across the state are on track to **save the institution \$17,000 a year** in energy bills. These include a multi-year project to retrofit lighting in galleries, retail spaces and offices with cost-saving LED lights.
- The new Oliver Kelley Farm visitor center, slated to open in spring 2017, will incorporate sustainable features that will keep operating and maintenance costs at nearly current levels, despite an expansion plan to triple the size of the current visitor center. In addition, **the new visitor center will be LEED certified.**
- Extending the life of artifacts is the goal of a cold storage project funded in part by an NEH planning grant. By restructuring and upgrading the mechanical systems, MNHS has determined ways to **extend the life of very delicate film materials** from an estimated 100 years to 400 years, while also saving \$16,000 a year in energy costs.
- Greenhouse gas emissions have been reduced across the institution through the expanded use of recycling bins, new water reclamation systems in bathrooms and at public fountains, and innovative waste recycling programs. For example, the History Center's Café Minnesota partners with Barthold Recycling, which picks up food waste and processes it into a safe food supply for local pig farms. In the past 5 years, **150 tons of food waste has been diverted from the landfill.**



A cold storage room undergoing an energy-efficiency study.



New LED light fixtures in the *Then Now Wow* gallery at the Minnesota History Center.



*History teaches the importance of preserving our past. And what is more sustainable than preserving the past for future generations?*

— Shengyin Xu, Sustainability & Capital Projects manager

*Re-use of historic and older buildings, greening the existing building stock, and reinvestment in older and historic communities, is crucial to combating climate change.*

National Trust for Historic Preservation

## **PRESERVATION=SUSTAINABILITY**

We know Minnesotans take pride in their history and heritage. By using and teaching best practices for interpretation, conservation, and preservation—and connecting Minnesotans to important state and federal resources—MNHS helps preserve history and heritage and keeps stories alive throughout the generations.

MNHS has been entrusted with the care of close to 150 historic buildings totalling over 793,000 square feet, including the ruins of the Washburn “A” Mill—inside which Mill City Museum was built—as well as Split Rock Lighthouse and Historic Fort Snelling.

## **NATIONAL AWARDS**

The More for the Mission initiative has received popular support and has been featured in a number of recent publications: *The Green Museum: A Primer on Environmental Practice* by Sarah Brophy and Elizabeth Wiley, *Sustainable Museums: Strategies for the 21st Century* by Rachel Madan and *Environmental Sustainability at History Museums and Historic Sites* by Sarah Sutton. In addition, a number of public and private funders have provided support to help make these projects happen, including grants from the National Endowment of the Humanities, the Fidelity Foundation and the Bush Foundation.

**Left:** Calvary barracks at Historic Fort Snelling. MNHS is planning future adaptive reuse of these historic assets.





MINNESOTA  
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345 W. Kellogg Blvd., St. Paul, MN 55102  
[mnhs.org/sustainability](http://mnhs.org/sustainability)

More for the Mission

Using the Power of History to Transform Lives  
PRESERVING > SHARING > CONNECTING