One year ago, in this annual report letter, I expressed my belief that our state will benefit from the continued development and excellence of the Minnesota Historical Society. I believe that remains true today. An understanding of history, of the problems faced before and how they were (or were not) addressed, is one of the most valuable tools we have for understanding and addressing today’s issues.

This past year, the Society produced two exhibits that demonstrate this point. Our extremely popular “The 1968 Exhibit” captured the challenges, issues and emotions of that remarkable year. The current “U.S.-Dakota War of 1862” exhibit, while focused on issues from 106 years before 1968, also clearly touches on emotions, issues and challenges that remain very real today in our state and beyond.

But the Society also offers the pure aesthetic of history – from the innate beauty of everyday items from the past to the wonderful paintings in the exhibit “1934: A New Deal for Artists,” not to mention the creations displayed in RetroRama.

The Minnesota Historical Society uses the power of history to transform lives. The Society has a remarkable staff, a dedicated governing board, and a growing number of members like you. Thank you all for your support.

William R. Stoeri, President, Minnesota Historical Society
At the Minnesota Historical Society, we witness daily how Minnesotans – young and old – are moved through the power of history.

This past year was no exception. From baby boomers flocking to the History Center’s exhilarating exhibition on the year 1968, to schoolchildren delighting in History Live lessons brought straight to their classrooms through technology, we continue to see the “aha” moments on people’s faces as history touches their lives today. Of the many initiatives of the past year, many of which are outlined in this report, two stand out as we prepare for the future.

The first is the powerful and comprehensive work we’ve done to share with Minnesotans the history preceding and surrounding the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862 and how the horrific events set in motion 150 years ago continue to impact our state and all of us today.

The second is our work to create a vibrant future for the Society, one that builds on our past and connects us even more closely to the issues of today and tomorrow.

The Minnesota Historical Society will continue to be a dynamic and widely recognized educational organization, always viewed as a trusted resource for history – as an organization highly valued for its educational impact, service, advocacy and leadership and as an organization that receives broad public and private support.

Guided by our mission –

**Using the Power of History to Transform Lives**

**Preserving > Sharing > Connecting**

We will be:

• A partner in helping young people succeed educationally and realize their potential.
• A home for collections, programs, staff and leaders that reflects and serves the diversity of people who are today’s and tomorrow’s Minnesotans.
• An advocate for and steward of historical resources and a facilitator of compelling, substantive and enjoyable learning experiences.
• A workplace that attracts, retains and develops talented people and enables them to do excellent work.
• An important priority for a broad network of supporters, public officials, members, donors, volunteers, trustees and others who work to extend the Society’s impact and strengthen its future.

Progress toward our vision is possible only through the Society’s dedicated board, members, volunteers and staff, and through the generous support of the State of Minnesota and our many funders. Thank you. Your support is enabling us to enrich lives daily across Minnesota.

Sincerely,

D. Stephen Elliott, Director and CEO
DESPITE A CHALLENGING START, THE SOCIETY MARKED STRONG ATTENDANCE WITH 761,000 VISITORS

Fiscal year 2012 (FY12) began with a state government shutdown that forced the closure of all of the Society’s historic sites and museums during what is typically the highest month for attendance. Popular programs like 9 Nights of Music and Mill City Live were suspended and many visitors were turned away. Attendance at sites came in at 511,274, but when adjusted for the closure, remarkably, attendance was up 1% from the previous year. This number included 170,403 students visiting on school field trips. The History Center also did well in FY12 with 249,696 people visiting the exhibit galleries, library, rental events and public programs. Of that number, 55,383 children and chaperones visited on school field trips. This reflects an increase of nearly 11% over the previous year, due in large part to the run of “The 1968 Exhibit,” and marks the second biggest attendance year on record, behind FY09 when the History Center presented both “Vatican Splendors” and “Minnesota’s Greatest Generation.” Online visitor traffic remained strong with 3.6 million visits by more than 2.3 million people.

THE HISTORY CENTER WAS "FEELING GROOVY" WITH NEW EXHIBITS

“The 1968 Exhibit” smashed attendance, membership and earned-revenue records during its four-month run. The numbers included 107,000 visitors, 1,524 memberships sold for a new record of 24,000 members, and an increase in History Center revenue of 9% over the previous year. A strong marketing campaign drove public awareness with creative and fun ads including “Be There or Be Square,” “Recommended by 9 out of 10 Hippies” and “Tune In. Turn On. Drop By.” Media relations resulted in national exposure on C-SPAN, which broadcast the show “The Contenders” live from the gallery. Musical legends Martha Reeves and Peter Asher visited the exhibit as part of a promotional partnership with the Dakota Jazz Club in Minneapolis. And a successful media partnership with the Star Tribune resulted in a multi-page “blockbuster” ad that ran on opening weekend, while 20,000 visitors picked up a reprint of the Minneapolis Tribune (predecessor to the Star Tribune) dated Dec. 24, 1968. Public programs included a sold-out opening party, West Bank Walking Tours, Something Groovy! Drop-In Family Workshops and Hot Wax: A Musical History of 1968. After its run in St. Paul, “The 1968 Exhibit” began its national tour, making its first stop at the Oakland Museum of California, where it opened to rave reviews.

Also on exhibit in FY12 were, “We the People: The First Official Printing of the U.S. Constitution, presented by Thomson Reuters; “1934: A New Deal for Artists,” a traveling exhibit from the Smithsonian Museum of American Art; and “The U.S.-Dakota War of 1862.”

The Legacy-funded program Exhibits To Go! added two new titles in FY12 with “Uncle Sam’s New Deal,” developed in partnership with the Landmark Center, winning a 2012 Award of Merit from the American Association for State and Local History.
2012 marked 150 years since the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862. Throughout the year, the Minnesota Historical Society offered many new ways to learn about the war, how it shaped Minnesota and the Upper Midwest, and how its bitter consequences are still felt today. Funded in part by the Legacy Amendment, initiatives in FY12 included an exhibit, website, oral histories, the Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway Mobile History Tour, publications and programs.

“The U.S.-Dakota War of 1862” exhibit followed a “truth recovery” process. For nearly a year leading up to the opening, exhibit staff members met with descendants of those touched by the war, including Dakota people from throughout Minnesota, the Upper Midwest and Canada, and settler descendants from the Minnesota River Valley region. These groups took an active role in shaping the exhibit by discussing the significance and interpretation of artifacts and primary sources from the Society’s collections. The result is an exhibit that incorporates multiple points of view on the war, its causes and its aftermath.

An interactive website, www.usdakotawar.org, tells stories of the war and its aftermath through oral histories, photos, journals, letters, newspapers, government documents and other primary resources. The site also provides resources for classroom use.

Facebook remained the largest social media platform for connecting with history fans, with almost 6,400 followers on the main MHS page, and thousands of followers on historic sites and program pages. The Society’s Twitter following reached nearly 6,000 this year. In addition, the Society was one of the first Minnesota museums to begin connecting with fans on Pinterest, by showcasing collections and other visual elements. Flickr, YouTube and Google+ are other prominent channels used for interacting with followers of Minnesota history.

This year also showed dramatic use of social media as a way to access the collections. The Society tracked more than 100,000 views of the Collections Up Close blog, 46,000 views on YouTube, more than 7,000 subscribers to the Civil War Day Book blog, and 720 followers of MHS Library Acquisition a Day on Twitter.

Launched in FY12, the “More for the Mission” campaign is an institution-wide sustainability effort. The Society projects that over the next five years, sustainability initiatives will save more than $1.8 million and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 15%. These efforts led to recognition by the American Alliance of Museums and international experts on sustainability.
Despite a modest fee increase of $1 that took effect Dec. 1, 2011, attendance and revenue at the Society’s network of historic sites and museums was up, driven in part by a new events-focused marketing campaign. In addition, a new statewide promotional campaign called Museums May partnered the Society with the Star Tribune and museums and historical societies across the state to celebrate events and exhibits at Minnesota’s many cultural institutions throughout the month of May. The result was a strong launch to the summer travel season. More than 100,000 people visited Split Rock Lighthouse alone in FY12.

 Programs at many historic sites got an update in FY12. Site managers developed innovative and expanded educational opportunities including the Tale of the Seasons field trip program at the North West Company Fur Post, a new Spirit of St. Louis flight simulator at the Charles A. Lindbergh Historic Site, and the Ramsey Etiquette School education outreach program offered at regional libraries.

 At the Alexander Ramsey House, additional interpretive re-imagining took place. The annual Christmas program underwent changes including a new tour route, greater interaction with history players and a new audio component which brought voices of the past to visitors. The result was an increase in visitation of 38%, with gift shop sales increasing 64% over the previous year. Other new programs included Bright Society, a fashion event which blended new fashion trends with Victorian design, and the new monthly History Happy Hour and Ramsey After Dark programs which appealed to adults looking for dynamic and fun ways to explore history.

 The Gale Family Library welcomed 22,185 researcher and classroom visits, handled 11,552 research requests, pulled 121,976 items to view, made 242,146 copies, processed 5,096 death certificate orders, revised the Researching Dakota Family History guide, and served family history researchers who flocked to the library in the first days following the launch of the 1940 census.
This spring, the Society earned just over $1.5 million with the sale of non-Minnesota related items from the Allyn K. Ford manuscript and autograph collection. The sale featured a highly prized collection of letters from Revolutionary War-era Americans, including George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, as well as soldiers, politicians and ordinary citizens. The proceeds went into the Allyn K. Ford Collections Fund, an endowment fund for purchases that help the Society chronicle Minnesota’s history. The collection was given to the Society in 1965 by Minneapolis businessman Allyn K. Ford. His heirs acknowledged the broad scope of the collection and requested that the Society consider selling the non-Minnesota items. Researchers can continue to view the entire Allyn K. Ford manuscript and autograph collection on microfilm in the Library’s Ronald M. Hubbs microfilm room.

The Society acquired significant items in FY12 including: the state legislature’s original Session Laws, 1858-2010; Governor Henry Swift’s Nov. 26, 1863 Thanksgiving Day Proclamation; a complete set of Minnesota state park entrance stickers, 1953-2008; state hospital patient index cards, 1870s - mid-2000s; the first panoramic map of St. Paul, 1853; a salesman’s sample of Sinclair Lewis’s Pulitzer Prize-winning “Arrowsmith;” an original Lindbergh kidnappers “wanted” poster; Twins and Millers team uniforms; and St. Paul gangster “Dapper Dan” Hogan’s marriage certificate. In addition, 200 donation offers came in after the April 3 Star Tribune article “Scraps of History,” which featured the Society’s collections.

New web projects made it easier for the public to access the Society’s collections. Projects included: the migration of the Visual Resources Database to the Collections Management System, accessible by the public through Collections Online; the launch of online inventories of the corporate records of the Great Northern and Northern Pacific railway companies; the launch of the Seven Council Fires website providing access to 1,000 items of material culture associated with Dakota, Lakota and Nakota peoples; and the processing and cataloging of 748 accessions relating to state governors, including the records of Tim Pawlenty, which contained more than 2,100 digital files, an increasingly common format for all government records. In addition, more than 1,100 3D objects, 90 works of art and 300 photographs were digitized and made available through Collections Online.
In addition to funds appropriated in 2011 for the FY11-12 biennium, the 2012 Legislature appropriated an additional $800,000 to the Society through the Legacy Amendment’s Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund (ACHF). This appropriation brought the Society’s total biennial ACHF funding to $24.9 million for statewide history programs, partnerships, projects and grants. This represents an increase of more than 13% in ACHF funding compared to the previous biennium.

A portion of ACHF funds appropriated to the Society support the Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage Grants (MHCHG) program, which provides an unprecedented opportunity for local and regional historical organizations to preserve and share our state’s history and cultural heritage. FY12-13 saw a 55% increase in ACHF funds for the MHCHG program from the previous biennium. In FY12, a total of 253 grants were awarded in 71 of Minnesota’s 87 counties. The Society’s ability to process grants increased dramatically with the launch of a new online grants portal that allows real-time tracking of application reviews and updates.

Despite the state government shutdown, the State Historic Preservation Office’s (SHPO) emergency response team visited with the Isanti County Historical Society on July 8, 2011 following an arson fire. The team provided step-by-step guidance for salvaging the collection and awarded an emergency grant.

In addition, SHPO distributed 11 bond-funded State Capital Grants-in-Aid and 17 Certified Local Government grants for preservation projects.

The Society published “Building Museums: A Handbook for Small and Midsize Organizations” to popular reception. The book helps museum professionals and volunteers understand the construction process to reach goals with tight budgets. And the annual State Historic Preservation Conference in Faribault provided professional continuing education opportunities for preservationists statewide.

A number of Society historic sites underwent asset preservation in FY12. Exterior repairs were made to the Washburn Crosby Grain Elevator No. 1 at Mill City Museum, and the red slate roofs on Buildings 17 and 18 were replaced at Historic Fort Snelling. Both the Fort Ridgely and Acton State Monuments received conservation treatment prior to summer events recognizing the 150th anniversary of the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862.
The properties added to the National Register through SHPO in FY12 included: C. Berg’s Hotel, Sleepy Eye, Brown County; Milford Mine Historic District, Wolford Township, Crow Wing County; Bridge No. 5722, Spring Valley, Fillmore County; Oakwood Cemetery, Red Wing, Goodhue County; Buzza Company Building, Minneapolis, Hennepin County; Bridge No. 6679, Sheldon Township, Houston County; Lakeland Hotel, Willmar, Kandiyohi County; Halfway Ranger Station, Fall Lake Township, Lake County; Benike Family Barn, Farmington Township, Olmsted County; Charles Thompson Memorial Hall, St. Paul, Ramsey County; Hamline Methodist Episcopal Church, St. Paul, Ramsey County; Faribault Woolen Mill Company, Rice County; Elk River Water Tower, Sherburne County; Gaylord City Park, Sibley County; Gethsemane Episcopal Church, Appleton, Swift County; District No. 44 School, Taylor Township, Traverse County; and four Winona County schools – Central Grade School, Jefferson School, Madison School and Washington-Kosciusko School – all in Winona.

In FY12, MHS Press sold 93,143 print books and 13,022 e-books, increasing the number of books sold over last year by 4%. MNopedia, the online encyclopedia about Minnesota, launched in FY12 with more than 30,000 unique visits to date and won an AAM MUSE award. MHS Press staff worked closely with members of the Dakota community on a number of books in development including: the reprint edition of “Lincoln and the Indians” by David A. Nichols; the publication of “Dakota Women’s Work” by Colette A. Hyman; the paper-back edition of “Beloved Child” by Diane Wilson; the Summer 2012 issue of Minnesota History (vol. 63, no. 2) entirely devoted to U.S.-Dakota War topics; and a new one-page feature in Minnesota History, “1862: Before and Beyond,” which highlights recent oral history work and objects in the Society’s collections.

Also making news in FY12 was “Big Little Brother” by Kevin Kling and Chris Monroe. The book received positive and starred reviews in the New York Times, Kirkus and Publishers Weekly, while the companion iTunes app was named by Kirkus as one of the best apps in 2011.

Now in its second year, History Live! interactive video conferencing served more than 6,000 students in FY12 and won its second Pinnacle Award from the Center for Interactive Learning and Collaboration, an award determined by teacher evaluations. The History in Our Hands mobile learning initiative received a $449,036 grant from the Institute for Museums and Library Services for being a project that advances the museum field. The rollout of History in Our Hands will happen in spring 2013 as a mobile component to the “Then, Now, Wow” exhibit. Both History Live! and History in Our Hands were recognized by the International Society for Technology in Education as thought leaders in education.

The History Player in the Classroom program served 11,236 students and the corollary History Player program for adults served 4,655. Together these numbers reflect an increase of 18% from FY11. In addition, 57 free programs reached more than 2,500 Minnesotans in local libraries as part of the Legacy-funded library partnership between the Society and the Minnesota Regional Public Library Systems. An additional 3,800 students were served by partnerships with libraries across the state in conjunction with National History Day in Minnesota.

The statewide program, Sharing Community Stories, hosted inter-generational learning projects with teens and seniors in eight communities: Alexandria, Detroit Lakes, Tower, Chisholm, St. Paul, Minneapolis, Stillwater and Pine City. For the first time, the program worked with the Oromiya community through a partnership with Bedlam Theatre and the Brian Coyle Center.

At the History Center, the Neighborhood Partnership Program served 538 students from the Rondo and East Side neighborhoods, while Wellstone Elementary participated in its 16th year of instructional partnership. The program brings fourth-grade students in St. Paul schools to the History Center for hands-on learning experiences that engage them in history in their neighborhoods.
30,000 STUDENTS TOOK PART IN NATIONAL HISTORY DAY IN MINNESOTA

Students from more than 250 schools completed projects on the theme “Revolution, Reaction, Reform in History.” Out of the 1,300 students who made it to the State History Day at the University of Minnesota, 63 were chosen to go to the national competition. Once again, Minnesota students led the nation with 17 final-round entries and eight medal-winning entries, with one student receiving a four-year, full-tuition scholarship to Case Western Reserve University.

HISTORY CENTER PUBLIC PROGRAMS SERVED NEW AUDIENCES, INCLUDING COMMUNITY PARTNERS AND TEENS

The Society’s public programs responded to new demands in FY12. The very popular History Forum series added a second lecture on each date, increasing attendance by 100%. History Lounge attendance more than doubled to nearly 100 people for each program. Pub, food and architecture “crawls” sold out, and 800 party-goers visited the History Center for RetroRama, many for the first time. Family programs continued to develop strong community partnerships to serve diverse audiences through programs including Day of the Dead, the Global Hotdish Variety Show and Asian Pacific Heritage Day.

The History Center’s Teen Advisory Council created the “LOL: Living Our Lives” exhibit and event, garnering strong public feedback including one visitor who called it “ambitious, professional and heartfelt.” Six teens also became museum interpreters as part of the first Gallery Assistants Program, a collaboration between the History Center, Volunteer Services and Education Outreach departments.

TOGETHER, VOLUNTEERS AND INTERNS CONTRIBUTED MORE THAN 50,000 HOURS STATEWIDE

Nearly 2,000 volunteers worked across the Society in FY12 contributing 42,000 hours. They rehabilitated a Huey helicopter for “The 1968 Exhibit,” ushered and greeted visitors at events and helped behind the scenes.

Partnerships with local companies resulted in volunteer assistance including a program at the Oliver H. Kelley Farm with more than 70 students from Robbinsdale Cooper High School and nearly 120 Honeywell employees. The volunteers repaired and built fences and picnic tables, painted porches and cleared trails, donating a total of 1,080 hours.

Sixty-nine college students held intern positions in FY12, contributing more than 8,600 hours of service. The Society’s Museum and American Indian Fellowship program served an additional 27 college students. Internship programs provided opportunities for students to learn about current issues and trends facing museums in the 21st century and explore career paths within the field.
The Society received $37.8 million in support from the State of Minnesota in fiscal year 2012, or 71% of total support and revenue. This represents an increase of $4.2 million from fiscal year 2011 and was expected due to receiving a capital appropriation in fiscal year 2012.

Contributions from individuals, corporations and foundations totaled $3.6 million in fiscal year 2012, or 7% of total support and revenue, which is a decrease of $5.9 million from fiscal year 2011. The majority of this decrease related to a unique endowment campaign during fiscal year 2011 that was not repeated during fiscal year 2012.

The Society received $1.5 million from the sale of a portion of the Allyn K Ford Collection as authorized by the Executive Council. In accordance with the Society’s charter, the net proceeds from the sale must be treated as permanently restricted endowment for the acquisition and care of collections.

Federal Grants of $1.9 million were received in fiscal year 2012, or 4% of total support and revenue, which is a consistent level of funding compared to fiscal year 2011.

Investment losses of $1.7 million were sustained from the Society’s endowments during fiscal year 2012, or -3% of total support and revenue, which is a $10.4 million decrease over fiscal year 2011. This decrease is related to market conditions affecting the individual investments and, more specifically, includes a significant amount of unrealized loss during fiscal year 2012.

Other earned revenues were $9.7 million during fiscal year 2012, or 18% of total support and revenue, which is a slight decrease over fiscal year 2011.

Total expenses for fiscal year 2012 were $51.9 million which represents a $5.3 million decrease over fiscal year 2011. This decrease is due primarily to decreased Legacy Fund expense of $5.7 million. The two-year cycle of Legacy funds resulted in proportionally higher spending in odd numbered fiscal years.

Fiscal year 2012 Legacy expenses included $3.2 million in funds granted to other organizations.

**2012 FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS**

**Condensed Balance Sheet** As of June 30, 2012

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**Net assets:**

Unrestricted: $3,206; 81,423; 2012, 91,939; 94,104
Temporarily restricted: 15,012; 14,559; 29,571; 27,813
Permanently restricted: 31,911; 31,911; 30,385

Total net assets: $3,206; 81,423; 15,012; 14,559; 31,911; 153,421; 152,302

Total liabilities & net assets: $6,539; 81,423; 19,106; 14,776; 32,243; 161,397; 161,276

These statements are condensed from the Society’s audited financial statements which are available upon request.
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management &amp; general</td>
<td>7,094</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
<td>7,133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development &amp; membership</td>
<td>1,612</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,613</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total supporting services</td>
<td>8,706</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
<td>8,746</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total expenses</td>
<td>50,451</td>
<td>1,495</td>
<td></td>
<td>51,946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase (decrease) in net assets</td>
<td>997</td>
<td>(2,570)</td>
<td>(592)</td>
<td>3,972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in net assets:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Unrestricted</td>
<td>997</td>
<td>(2,570)</td>
<td>(592)</td>
<td>(2,165)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporarily restricted</td>
<td></td>
<td>3,972</td>
<td>(1,347)</td>
<td>2,625</td>
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<tr>
<td>Permanently restricted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net changes in net assets</td>
<td>997</td>
<td>(2,570)</td>
<td>(592)</td>
<td>(2,165)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net assets beginning of year</td>
<td>2,209</td>
<td>83,993</td>
<td>7,902</td>
<td>11,040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restatement of beginning net assets</td>
<td>(867)</td>
<td>(867)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net assets beginning of year, as restated</td>
<td>2,209</td>
<td>83,993</td>
<td>7,902</td>
<td>11,040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net assets at end of year</td>
<td>$3,206</td>
<td>81,423</td>
<td>7,310</td>
<td>15,012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Statement of Activities** Year ended June 30, 2012

(000’s omitted)
The Minnesota Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the generosity of the people of Minnesota who, through appropriations made by the Legislature and approved by the Governor, have supported the Society in its mission. The special support of our members and friends named in the following lists is critical to maintaining excellence in our programs and services. The Society is grateful to all those who have given their financial support, and we use this opportunity to give special recognition and thanks to those who have contributed $250 or more.

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