

2009 Annual Report  
**Grand Rapids Public Museum**

July 1, 2008 - June 30, 2009



**Re-Imagining Change**



**GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC MUSEUM**



**"All  
meaningful  
and lasting  
change  
starts first  
in your  
imagination..."**

- Albert Einstein,  
1879-1955

Before Einstein could develop his theory of special relativity, he had to imagine the speed of light...in slow motion. Change really does begin in the imagination.

During Fiscal Year 2009, the Grand Rapids Public Museum prepared for lasting change by reimagining itself.

We imagined a more accessible Museum with expanded evening hours and free events.

We imagined a more collaborative Museum where decisions about exhibitions, interpretation and building use are made in partnership with the community.

We imagined a Museum of life-long learning where educating and delighting are one in the same.

What was imagined is becoming real. Find out how as you read through these pages and let your imagination soar.

Sincerely,

Danny Gaydou, Chairman  
Grand Rapids Public Museum Friends Foundation

## From the President and CEO

During Fiscal Year 2009, the Museum adopted a new organizational structure, a new core purpose statement and a new logo.

Expanded evening hours and special dinner ticket packages during major exhibitions have made the Museum more accessible and affordable to out-of-town guests and working families. These changes have allowed us to branch out. We're bridging generations with our Mighty Wurlitzer performances. We're sharing stories and ideas with business leaders through CEO Lunches and creating community through Twitter, Facebook and blogs.

Our directors have a combined 68 years of experience with the Museum, a knowledge base that lends continuity to every endeavor. We have been fortunate this year to add new full time staff as well: youthful innovators in education, preservation, exhibit design and public relations.

Visitors have responded to these changes in record numbers. Admissions rose 70% during FY09. Membership grew by 58%.

Generous donors, dedicated staff and a responsive community have been integral to this success. I know you will see yourselves in these pages. Thank you for your every contribution.

Sincerely,



Dale A. Robertson, President and CEO  
Grand Rapids Public Museum



**"Continuity  
gives  
us roots;  
change  
gives us  
branches..."**

**- Pauline Kezer,  
1943-**



## FY09 in Review

- Veteran director Mary Esther Lee retires; The Grand Rapids Public Museum Friends Foundation names Dale A. Robertson President and CEO.
- A new display, memorializing the life of Apollo 1 astronaut and native son, Roger B. Chaffee, opens in the planetarium lobby.
- Snowflake Break takes a bite out of winter with discounted admission, and free activities and carousel rides.
- *A Field Guide to Ethnic Groups in West Michigan*, authored by Museum staff, becomes available on Amazon.com
- Months of design preparation culminate in the unveiling of a new Museum logo.
- Junior detectives test their crime solving prowess at the crowd-pleasing exhibit WHODUNIT?
- The popular PBS series, *Antiques Roadshow*, films a segment at the Grand Rapids Public Museum, highlighting some of the pieces found in the Museum's preeminent furniture collection.
- The Museum is the recipient of a 2008 National Park Service Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) grant which funds a detailed evaluation and consultation process for all of the Michigan Native American burials in the collection.
- DINOSAURS: JUST IMAGINE! roars into town, entrancing children young and old with their larger-than-life storybook appeal.
- An updated Museum website with bright colors, easy navigation and an integrated Flickr photo library helps guests plan the ultimate Museum visit.
- Lights dim and drama unfolds during Night At Your Museum, a sell-out evening of adventure.
- Engineering Week fills to capacity.
- The Museum celebrates International Year of Astronomy with NASA lecturers, a Vernal Equinox Festival, planetarium shows and 100 hours of Astronomy.
- Lunch with the CEO establishes a forum where business leaders exchange ideas and share a vision for the Museum's future.
- The Museum establishes regular Tuesday evening hours.
- With school budgets challenged, Museum staffers dig deep into their own pockets to provide bus funding for a group of inner-city fourth-graders.
- The Museum is reaccredited by the American Association of Museums (AAM).

# A Fresh Perspective

Recognizing its multiple roles as an anchor institution, the Grand Rapids Public Museum adopted a new core purpose, mission statement and logo:

## PURPOSE

The GRPM is a conservator of the past, but is in the business of the future. With its roots as an educator, it is a place for bridging generations, sharing stories and ideas, and creating community.

## MISSION

The Public Museum will play vital leadership and servant roles in enhancing the lives of those in our communities. More specifically:

- As a convener and facilitator, we will partner with and bring institutions and individuals together in the pursuit of insight and understanding,
- As a collector, we will preserve the treasures of the past and present – to be used for teaching the lessons for the future,
- As a motivator, we will inspire discovery learning, and
- As a resource, we will provide life-long learning, in part, as an extension of our community's formal educational systems.

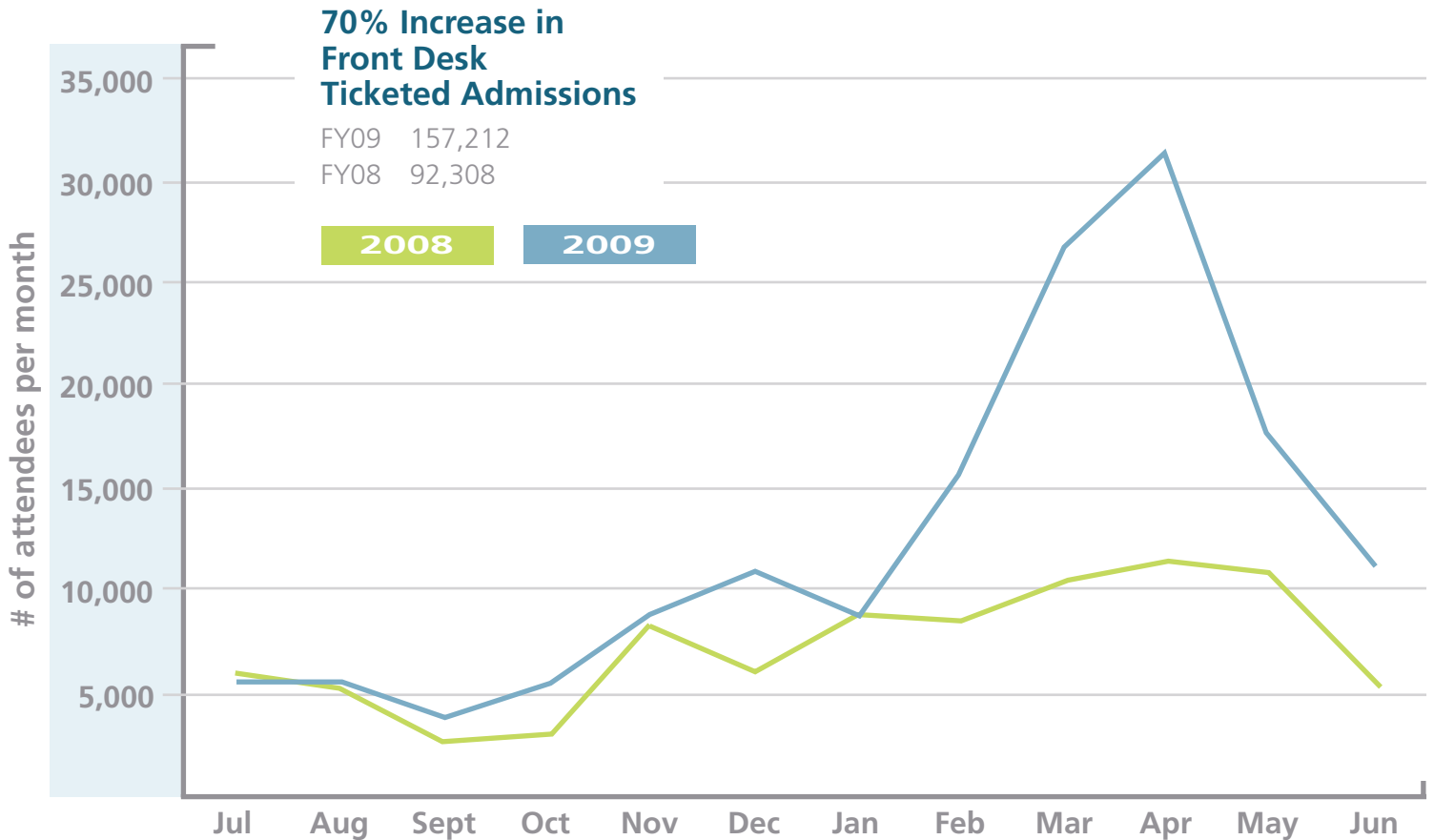


The Public Museum's new logo, a stylized representation of the Cook Carousel Pavilion jutting over the waves of the Grand River, exemplifies our new direction as an organization while honoring our past.



# Off the Charts

Museum attendance increased 70% during FY09, with ticketed admissions topping 157,000. Innovative programming, extended evening hours and exhibition excellence reeled visitors in and took FY09 numbers off the charts.



## Membership - 58% Increase

FY09	4,335
FY08	2,752

## Planetarium - 30% Increase

FY09	64,103
FY08	49,147

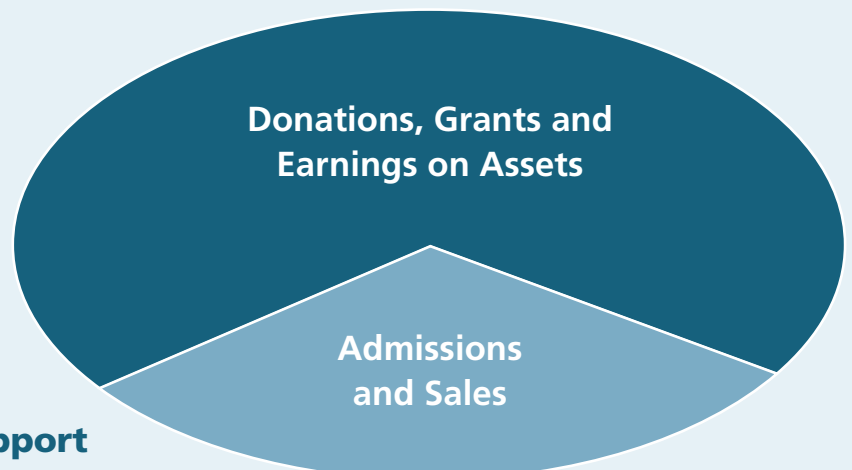
## Overall Visitors - 42% Increase

FY09	265,058
FY08	187,282

## FY2009 Revenues

Admissions and Sales 32%

Donations, Grants and Earnings on Assets 68%



**We depend on your individual support**

# Philanthropy in Action

Whether it is a rare collection of Dutch Delft or the historical interpretation of life along the Grand River, the Museum collects and preserves snapshots in time. This living record could not be enjoyed or utilized without the benefits of philanthropy.



Sometimes, it is a matter of utilizing resources for a higher purpose, as when the Museum creates greater accessibility by bundling admission to include planetarium shows, carousel rides and a café meal.

Other contributions from individuals, foundations and corporations:

- Create evening hours for working families, out-of-towners and millennials
- Develop diversity programming
- Provide scholarships so children can experience the magic of the planetarium, participate in Native American Days or go to engineering camp
- Support free days such as the Ethnic Heritage Festival
- Provide passes to organizations that serve those struggling with illness and abuse
- Help maintain a \$1.1 million heating and cooling budget that preserves and protects Museum specimens and artifacts
- Pave the way for foster children and wards of the court to attend Front Row for the Fireworks on the Fourth of July

**In whatever amount and wherever it goes, the benefits of philanthropy are profound**



## FY2009 Expenses

Exhibits and Programming	82%
Fundraising	6%
Administration and Operations	12%

# THANK YOU to Those Who Imagined the Next Step...

## Grand Rapids Public Museum Friends Foundation

Danny R. Gaydou, Chair  
Carol Van Andel, Vice Chair  
Rich Noreen, Secretary /Treasurer  
John Canepa  
John Dean  
Birgit M. Klohs  
Donald Maine  
Dale A. Robertson  
Steele A. Taylor  
Larry Titley  
Thomas Wesholski  
John Wheeler  
Casey Wondergem  
Kaplin Jones, Counsel

"Change  
starts when  
someone sees  
the next  
step..."

- William Drayton,  
1732-1790

## FY2009 Donors

### Matching Gift Companies

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Grainger  
IBM International Foundation  
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The Richard and Helen DeVos Foundation  
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Douglas and Maria DeVos Foundation  
The Meijer Foundation  
Michigan Council For Arts &  
Cultural Affairs  
Public Museum of Grand Rapids  
Friends Foundation  
David and Carol Van Andel Foundation  
VanderWeide Family Foundation

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Bea Idema  
Irwin Seating Company  
National Park Service

### \$10,000+

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Grand Rapids Jaycees Foundation  
Howard Miller Foundation

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### \$500+

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Robert Goodrich  
Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and  
Chippewa Indians  
Ron & Nancy Hager  
Little River Band of Ottawa Indians  
Little Traverse Bay Bands  
of Odawa Indians  
Timothy & Kimberly Long  
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## \$125+

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Joan Wilson  
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Gib, Barbara & Micah Wynn  
Kurt & Sally Yost  
Richard & Barbara Young  
Teri Zinn

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Bob Younger

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Keith Alexis  
Christian G. Carron  
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Mark Dixon  
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Linda Duncan  
Tracy Engles  
Alexander Forist  
Alvena Franzen  
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Tri-Cities Historical Museum  
West Michigan Quilter's Guild  
West Michigan Whitecaps  
Chuck Wiersum  
Jim & Marie Wisnewski  
Mary Wisnewski  
Theophile & Barbara Wybrecht

## By the Numbers

**20**

Full time staff

**81**

Michigan counties  
served

**1,700**

Children and families attending  
the third annual GRPM Kindergarten:  
Here I Come program

**4,335**

Members

**14,109**

Volunteer hours worked



**33,197**

Students  
visiting during  
school field trips

**70**

Percentage increase  
in attendance

**64,093**

Planetarium tickets sold



**2,150**

Read and Connect  
program participants

**58**

Percentage increase  
in membership

**1,017**

Chairs in the collection

**52**

Chairs on exhibit at the  
Van Andel Museum Center

**157,222**

Ticketed admissions

**2,500**

Visitors attending the  
DTE Energy Foundation  
Ethnic Heritage Festival



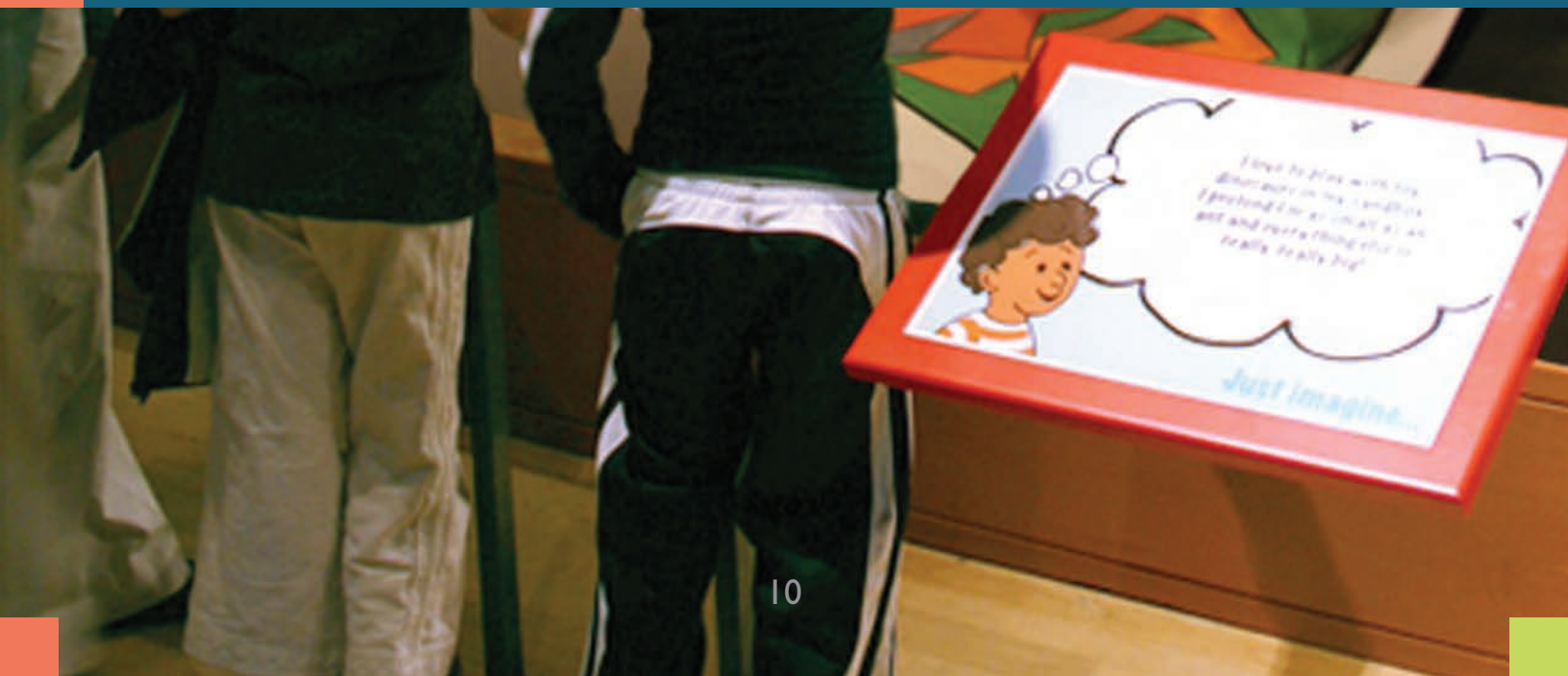
**511**

New items accessioned to the collection





**78,602** Visitors attended DINOSAURS: JUST IMAGINE!



# Accreditation: Anchoring Change in Continuity

From its earliest start, the Museum has held itself to the highest standards of excellence. And, whatever alters in the Museum landscape, striving for excellence is unchanging.

In 1979, the Grand Rapids Public Museum became one of the first museums in the nation to be accredited by the American Association of Museums (AAM). In 2009, the Museum was reaccredited by the AAM, a high honor that is difficult to achieve. Fewer than 800 of the country's 17,500 museums are AAM accredited. The process takes 2 1/2 years of application, self-study, site visits, peer review and board approval.

The American Association of Museums helps to develop standards and best practices for our nation's museums, addressing such issues as diversity, strategic planning, governance and ethics. Accredited museums are dedicated to ensuring that "the museum world" remains a vital part of the American landscape.

An accredited museum, however, is more than the sum of its parts. Because the Museum is committed to holding itself to the higher standards of professional rigor that accreditation demands, the entire West Michigan community benefits.

Accreditation demands the Museum give voice to what matters most and to identify what makes the Museum important, to whom it is important and to understand how it makes a difference.

In other words, accreditation helps us define the stories we tell and the ways we tell them. And, it is in the telling of these stories that the Museum connects people with the greatest achievements of the human experience.



**GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC MUSEUM**

272 Pearl Street NW • Grand Rapids, MI 49504  
616.456.3977 • [grmuseum.org](http://grmuseum.org)

