



News Release

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DETROIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY TO CLOSE DOSSIN GREAT LAKES MUSEUM ON BELLE ISLE FOR A 12-WEEK MAKEOVER

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DETROIT After an extremely successful 10-week renovation and Grand Re-Opening this fall at its flagship Detroit Historical Museum, the Detroit Historical Society will turn its attention to the Dossin Great Lakes Museum in the new year.

The Society's Belle Isle attraction, which is dedicated to the maritime history of southeastern Michigan, the Detroit River and the Great Lakes, will close to the public for 12 weeks for an upgrade of exhibits and facilities. The Dossin Makeover officially begins at the close of business on Saturday, December 30th and will culminate with a free to the public Grand Re-Opening weekend celebration starting Saturday, March 24th.

When guests visit the Dossin Museum this spring, they will notice more than \$100,000 in upgrades, including the following new exhibits:

Era of Elegance: Cruising on the Lakes will bring together artifacts, photographs, and stories to recall a time when luxurious steamers sailed the Great Lakes forerunners of today's modern cruise lines;

Maritime Marvels will display a treasury of Great Lakes artifacts from the Museum's extensive collection.

Other exhibits that have been favorites for years will receive updates. For example:

The Museum will update City on the Straits, which examines three centuries of the history and ecology of the Detroit River, to include an expanded tribute to Bob-Lo Island -- the iconic former amusement park beloved to metro Detroiters;

The gothic-style smoking lounge from the luxury steamship City of Detroit III will receive enhancements to evoke the feeling of cruising down the Detroit River;

The museum's building and grounds will also receive several upgrades, including:

signage;

New lighting in and around the museum;

New landscaping;

New paint, carpet and flooring.

This makeover project at the Dossin Great Lakes Museum gives us the opportunity to continue our mission of preserving and portraying our region's history in a new and

exciting way, said Detroit Historical Society Executive Director Bob Bury. We're looking forward to reintroducing metro Detroiters to our gem on Belle Isle next spring.

This activity is supported by the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs and the National Endowment for the Arts.

In 1949, the Detroit Historical Commission opened the Maritime Museum of Detroit on Belle Isle. The last commercial sailing vessel on the Great Lakes, the wood schooner J.T. Wing, housed the museum for several years. When the old ship became too fragile for public visitation in 1956, the city closed the museum and burned it to the ground. At that time, Walter, Roy, and Russell Dossin pledged part of their fortune -- earned as owners of the exclusive Pepsi-Cola bottling franchise in Michigan and northern Ohio -- and their fame -- as sponsors of several legendary hydroplane racing boats -- to build a new museum. On July 24, 1961, the Dossin Great Lakes Museum opened to the public on the same site where the J.T. Wing had been moored.

In March of this year, the City of Detroit and the Detroit Historical Society reached an agreement that transferred management of the Detroit Historical Museum, Dossin Great Lakes Museum, and Collections Resource Center housed at Historic Fort Wayne to the Society. This historic agreement continues a partnership between the City and the Society that spans over seven decades.