

The History Center

“By 2030, Springfield will be recognized for its innovation and creativity – using arts and culture as a catalyst for economic development, quality of life and civic pride, all while maintaining Springfield as the cultural hub of the Ozarks” - the 2010 Springfield Strategic Plan.

History Center to become a cultural destination



The History Museum, because of the lack of exhibition space and visibility, is in the process of an evolution from its current location on the 3rd floor of the old City Hall to a ten times larger facility located prominently on The Square. The new History Center will have the size, the exhibits and the programs to be a major destination for people both living in and visiting the Springfield region.

Substantial expansion into historic setting

The Museum relocation is an expansion from a 5,700 square foot space to a fully renovated and modernized 46,000 square foot historic complex. The Museum has acquired and is instilling new life into the landmark Barth’s building, its adjacent neighbor, and the former Fox Theater, all of which are in a National Register Historic District. Planning continues with a vision of additional expansion in future phases.



Importance of location

The History Center has chosen to relocate to The Square, the one area commonly identified as the origin and heart of the Springfield community. This Center represents a commitment to the continued evolution of Springfield’s Central Business District. The multi-million dollar project, partly enabled by substantial private contributions, will be an extension of the newly renovated The Square and will serve as a catalyst to the redevelopment of the downtown’s physical, business and cultural environment.

Due to its proximity, the Center will be a cultural companion to the Downtown Library, the Discovery Center, the Gillioz and Landers Theaters, Founder's Park, and the many center city galleries, residential units and other businesses.



Programs and exhibits as “edutainment”

The size of the facility will make possible greatly improved programs and museum functions.

- Education for children “of all ages” will result from exhibits literally coming to life through the use of technology and interactive hands-on features. The experiential exhibits will be entertaining as well as educational.
- Space will be available for special regional and national traveling exhibits.
- Special exhibit areas are being planned for the areas of broadcast, music, transportation, medicine, archaeology and many others.
- Expansive display windows, though not common for museums, and a giant video display will take exhibits and presentations out to The Square for all to enjoy.
- “Beyond the Walls” programs will facilitate walking tours and digital presentations at remote locations such as Founder’s Park, historic markers and other historic sites.



Collaborations of a true cultural center

The History Center will provide an opportunity to pursue creative exhibit and programming collaborations with other museums and related facilities, including: Missouri State, Drury, and Evangel Universities’ programs, departments and interns as well as those of OTC; the Discovery Center; the Gillioz and Landers Theaters; Wonders of Wildlife; the Springfield-Greene County Library; the Greene County Archives; Missouri Sports Hall of Fame; Air and Military Museum; the Natural History Museum; the Missouri History Museum; the Springfield Regional Arts Council and their many programs; and the various other visual and performing arts venues.

This collaboration will be instrumental in our efforts to build a synergistic impact of major proportions with all of the area’s museums and similar venues. Visitors will see elements of and linkages to many of these other cultural centers, and will be encouraged to extend their trips.

The economic impact of museums to the Springfield region

The 2010 Springfield Strategic Plan states that considering the City's dependence on sales tax revenue, growing the visitor base is very important to the economic well being of the City of Springfield and the many travel related businesses in the community.

Museums receive more visits a year than all professional sporting events and theme parks combined

In 2009, the American Association of Museums published its report on the state of U.S. museums, *Museum Financial Information 2009*. Among its numerous and well substantiated findings are these:

- American museums receive more than 850 million visits a year, more than all professional sporting events and theme parks combined
- There are more museums in the U.S. than there are McDonald's restaurants or Starbuck's cafes
- Nearly all regional art, science and history museums, botanical gardens and aquariums reported modest to strong growth in 2010
- Museums contributed approximately \$20.7 billion to the American economy in 2008
- Americans volunteer nearly one million hours a week of their time to museums
- Museums make an annual direct contribution to American education equivalent to \$2.2 billion

Museums are one of rated highest activities by visitors to Missouri

The Missouri Division of Tourism reports for 2011:

- Going to museums is one of the highest rated activities for nationwide visitors to Missouri, along with visiting relatives and friends, shopping, sightseeing, dining and theme parks. This is 2.6 times more than attendance at our state's very popular major sports events.
- Visitors to and within Missouri spend more on cultural activities than on non-cultural activities, according to the 2005 Missouri Cultural & Heritage Tourism Study:
 - In-state visitors spend an average of \$400 per trip. Non-cultural visitors spend the least (\$392) while cultural visitors spend the most (\$426).
 - Out-of-state visitors spend \$600 per trip. Out-of-state visitors spend more: \$581 for non-culturally motivated visitors to \$725 for culturally motivated (a difference of \$144).
 - Annually, both resident and non-resident culturally motivated travelers take two extra trips in/to Missouri compared to total visitors.
- There was over \$550 million spent in the various tourism related businesses in Greene County, and \$7.44 billion spent in Missouri.
- State tax revenues due to travel in Missouri are estimated at nearly \$640 million.
- The Institute of Museum and Library Services's *InterConnections: A National Study of Users and Potential Users of Online Information* (2008) states that visitors rated museums along with libraries as the most credible sources of information available to them in a society that is awash in information, misinformation, and opinion.