

DIY Strategic Planning for Small Museums

by Cinnamon Catlin-Legutko

In the spirit of “do-it-yourself” television shows, this technical leaflet offers a do it yourself (DIY) approach to strategic planning. Developed in 2003 at the General Lew Wallace Study & Museum, a small museum and historic site, in Crawfordsville, Indiana, this approach is especially appealing to small museums as it costs little to no money to implement and it can be completed in-house. This approach is also a good match for small museums as it accommodates “nuts and bolts” goals and projects.

For the purposes of this article, a small museum will be defined as having an annual budget of less than \$250,000, operated with a small staff with multiple responsibilities, and employing volunteers to perform key staff functions. Other characteristics such as the physical size of the museum, collections size and scope, etc. may further classify a museum as small.

Many small museums operate with volunteer and non-professional staff. Some small museums are in caretaker mode—operating to keep the roof on and the doors open. They may not have had the opportunity to look to the future and make the best decisions for the organization in the long term. DIY strategic planning is an excellent way to start thinking about the future and improve the present.

At its core, this template is rooted in basic project management where it is important to determine tasks, resources, and deadlines ahead of a project's start date to lower the risk of failure. With a vision for your organization, an allocation of time for planning, public speaking ability, and a modicum of computer literacy, you can easily create a strategic plan embraced internally by staff and externally by donors, grantmakers, civic leaders, visitors, educators, and other interested parties.

Why Are Strategic Plans Needed?

A strategic plan is a map or chart that an organization agrees to follow for three or five years in order to reach their goals. Institutions need strategic plans to help direct efforts and resources in an efficient and strategic manner. Responding to community and audience needs requires a strategic plan.

The planning process is strategic because you are establishing the goals that make the organization dynamic in its community and allow it to keep in step with community needs. It is systematic because it is focused and evaluative in choosing priorities. Institutions make decisions about short- and long-term goals and secure consensus. And most importantly, strategic planning is about building commitment and engaging stakeholders. Once the plan is in place and you have met with all the stakeholders you can, you now have the authority to complete the work and a course of direction to take.

Strategic plans are different from long-range or operational plans. Plans are strategic when the goals are responding to the museum's environment, seeking a competitive edge, and looking for the keys to long-term sustainability. Long range or operational plans do not redefine the organization and position it in the community. These plans are more concerned with laying out immediate and future goals and are less concerned with organizational change. At the end of a five-year strategic plan, you will want to take the time to evaluate the success of the plan and consider next steps. If it was a complete success, changing course may not be necessary and you simply need to plan the next five years along the same course. This would warrant a long-range or operational plan.

Through strategic planning, pen is put to paper and major goals are defined. These goals may spur a sea change or a small shift in operations. It is important to realize at the beginning that the strategic plan is the means to an end. It is a living document and as such, opportunities that are good for the organization should be considered with the plan in mind, but not completely disregarded because "it's not in the plan." The *means* are flexible, while the *end* is not. ***The Strategic Plan is the means (flexible) to an end (not flexible). It is a LIVING DOCUMENT.***

Is Your Museum Ready for Strategic Planning?

Conditions must be right for strategic planning to begin. None of us has the time to waste on planning if the board does not support it or if the goals are unachievable. In these circumstances, staff and board will ignore any attempt at a plan. The proper strategic planning conditions depend on the organization, but the primary indicators for readiness include board and staff commitment and a vision for the future. There are two parts to guaranteeing the success of a strategic plan:

1. Creating a realistic strategy that matches current and anticipated resources.
2. Ensuring board and staff embrace the plan and agree on the articulated goals.

Before you get started, the director should evaluate organizational readiness. If the organization has serious issues—such as board in-fighting, major budgetary shortfalls, or cynicism regarding planning—take steps to resolve them before the process begins. The following table provides several statements to help you consider organizational readiness. Consider the statements provided in the left column of the table and check whether your museum is ready or not. When selecting a "No" response, make a note about whom to consult with to consider resolution (the board president, executive committee, etc.) If you realize you are not ready based on two or more negative responses, use the considerations in the far right column to determine how to get ready and when you might be able to begin strategic planning.

If you have any checks in the "No" column, consider addressing those questions before beginning strategic planning and determining when to start. If you cannot easily remedy these considerations, create an action plan based on responses. Work with key individuals to execute that plan and set a schedule for getting back to strategic planning.

If you are ready, consider if you have lingering comments or concerns to capture and share with the appropriate committee or person before you proceed. It's essential to address these concerns up front.

The Key Players

There are several individuals who should participate in the strategic planning process, but the actual number of participants and their function in the organization will vary from museum to museum. The goal should be to have all board members participate in the process, and depending on staff size, all or most of the staff should participate. It is also important to look beyond the internal players and think externally. The museum exists to serve the public, so what does the public want from your institution?

Depending on your museum's size, you could have the board, staff, and community leaders all sitting at

Readiness Issues	YES	NO	Considerations if not ready	Start strategic planning
The museum has enough money to pay bills over the next six months.			How can your museum get enough money? By when?	
The museum has a history of being able to plan and implement its plans.			What can be done to address this issue? Leadership development? Other ideas?	
Board members work well together. Staff members get along.			Problem in board? Problem with staff? What can be done?	
Board members are willing to be involved in top-level planning.			What can be done?	
Board members and staff will find the time to do the planning.			What can be done to free up more time?	
No major changes are expected in the next 1-2 months.			What changes? What can be done to get ready for strategic planning? By when?	
There is extensive support for planning in your museum (internally and externally).			What can you do to address any cynicism?	
Strategic planning efforts are underway because the museum is ready for change and not just because a grantmaker or funder is asking for it.			What should you do about this?	

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the same table during the strategic planning process. But realistically, splitting these groups up might be better. You could hold a joint board and staff session and a separate public focus group or you could hold three separate sessions. It depends on what the facilitator and/or the museum director find to be the best scenario for the organization.

Creating the Plan

The following is a step-by-step outline for Do-It-Yourself Strategic Planning developed at the General Lew Wallace Study & Museum. This approach has been successfully implemented in other small organizations and produced the same results. While it was a complete success for us, you may want to adapt some steps to match your organizational behavior. For example, at my museum, board members involved in the plan were unable to meet for a long period of time. For this reason, we compromised and shortened the first session to three hours (instead of the six we really needed). By the next strategic planning cycle, the board will be more accustomed to strategic thinking and implementing plans and we anticipate that we will spend more time around the table developing the next plan.

DIY Strategic Planning has three key processes:

- I. Preparation
- II. Facilitation
- III. Formatting

I. Preparation

1. Gain board support for strategic planning. One of the key functions of the board is to set the strategic direction of the museum and ensure that the

resources are in place to realize the goals. During the course of a regular board meeting, the president should lead a discussion about strategic planning, the methods you plan to use, board member expectations, and how much time the process will take. Once the groundwork is in place, the president should call for a motion to proceed with strategic planning. During that meeting, set the date for the first session.

2. Select project leader/facilitator. The museum director serves as the project leader/facilitator in the absence of funding for a consultant. While it is better to have an independent party facilitate brainstorming activities and guide the overall process (this allows the director to participate more fully and prevents the director from being “heavy-handed”), this is often not feasible in a small museum. To make sure the director has input in the process, he or she may meet with board members before the meeting, share ideas, and encourage them to spur these ideas during later brainstorming opportunities.

3. Determine length of plan. Decide along with the board whether this will be a three- or five-year plan. There is no magic formula for deciding the length of the plan. In the case of our institution, we chose five years because the board and director knew that resources would support a five-year plan and we knew that the amount of change needed to improve operations would be better affected by a five-year plan. However, we left the fifth year open and assigned no formal tasks, specifically for the purpose of leaving room for scope and timeline changes. During the strategic planning process, the staff consisted of only two part-time seasonal employees, the director included. As the implementation of the plan gained momentum, the board and staff worked together to negotiate

deadlines and adjust the scope to fit resources. By year three of the plan, the fifth year was full of tasks.

If you are an all-volunteer organization, a three-year plan might be more suitable. Volunteer energy needs to be replenished more frequently and the planning process can be a tool for reenergizing and refocusing. An organization that has board members not completely convinced with strategic planning may choose three years to demonstrate organizational potential. Experts do not recommend plans shorter than three years because it takes at least three years for many changes to take root and for resources to align with strategic areas.

4. Identify five organizational categories. Identifying categories from the outset will help frame the overall planning process and the later brainstorming activity. You will need to distill museum functions and projects into five categories at most. (Education, Administration, Collections, etc.) These categories can be broad umbrella terms or they can be issues pertinent to your organization such as interpretation, a community initiative, or a major event (e.g., a centennial commemoration). To guarantee the development of a feasible plan, limit it to five categories and use them as guideposts during the planning process and as the backbone of the final plan.

At General Lew Wallace Study & Museum, we used the categories of Administration, Education, Collections Management, Building/Grounds Preservation, and Development. For our purposes, exhibits, educational programming, and guided tours fell under the Education umbrella because their ultimate intent is to educate the public. Development included fundraising, public relations, marketing, and staff training because these efforts develop the overall sustainability and visibility of the site. For us, these categories were most relevant in 2003, but in 2008, when we develop the next plan, they may not be.

5. Distribute a “warm-up” activity. Before the first scheduled strategic planning session, distribute a worksheet to participants to spur thinking about the future of the organization and prepare them for the brainstorming session. Email or mail the worksheet and instruct them to complete it and bring it to the first session.

II. Facilitation

1. Convene a brainstorming session. Ideally, the first gathering should be a five-hour session with a clear agenda provided ahead of time. During this first gathering, the lion’s share of board work is completed. Board members will be sharing ideas, thinking of new

ones, and begin placing them into concise statements.

For this first session, you will need two flip charts (preferably the kind with adhesive) and several colors of markers. Do not use a chalkboard or dry erase board. You need to keep the notes throughout the entire planning process—you will refer to them during the second strategic planning session and you will need them as you draft the plan. Plus, it is always a good idea to keep the evidence.

2. Begin with an icebreaker exercise. Although it may sound and feel corny, an icebreaker exercise is a good way to make everyone comfortable and ready to begin. If you choose the right icebreaker, you can learn something about the participants. Go around the room and ask what was the last museum they visited (it cannot be yours) and why. You’ll learn something about what drives them to go to a museum, what kinds of museums they like, or how far they will travel to visit a museum. Or, you’ll find out that some of them have no relationship to museums other than the one they serve. Both types of responses can be very enlightening.

3. Present ground rules. Adults need ground rules as much as children do. To keep the group charged with positive energy and encouragement, cover the ground rules and post them on a wall in the meeting

room. Refer to the rules throughout the process to help control behavior issues. At no point do you want anyone to feel alienated, threatened, or discouraged. The brainstorming process works best when everyone is firing off ideas and working in a respectful manner.

4. Work in pairs. Before you start the open brainstorming segment, divide the group into pairs. Be sure to select pairs of people who may not know each other very well or individuals who rarely have the opportunity to work together. Send them to various locations (outside, down the hall, in the corner) with the “Before the Storm Worksheet.” This worksheet is designed to build confidence among participants,

WARM-UP WORKSHEET

Develop a worksheet that asks these questions:

1. What is your vision for the museum?
2. List five things you would like to see happen at the museum that will help make this vision a reality.
3. Where do you see yourself in this vision?
4. Where do you see the museum in five years?

SAMPLE GROUND RULES

1. There are NO bad ideas!
2. One person speaks at a time.
3. Listen when another participant speaks. Allow him or her the floor.
4. Think about small, medium, and large ideas. No idea is too small.
5. Allow yourself to be inspired by another participant’s idea.
6. When thinking of ideas, visualize yourself as a board member, a staff member, a volunteer, a museum visitor, and a donor.

SAMPLE BEFORE THE STORM WORKSHEET

For the purposes of this strategic plan, we are using five pre-determined categories of museum management and operation: Administration, Collections Management, Education, Building/ Grounds Preservation, and Development.

1. Working with a partner, consider these categories and create a vision for the museum. What kind of museum will it be in 5, 10, 15 years? When the vision is realized, what will the museum be like for the visitor? This should be one sentence that imagines “a day in the life of the visitor” and makes a promise.
2. Use the vision and quickly brainstorm ideas that can make the vision a reality. These will be your notes for the group brainstorming session, which will ultimately reveal the main components of the strategic plan.
3. Finally, turn the sheet over and drill your brainstorm ideas down into five main strategic goals. You can come up with more if necessary.

You will have thirty minutes to complete this activity.

drill down the ideas, and begin the visioning process. At the end of the exercise, the pair will condense their ideas into five strategic goals.

5. Brainstorm as a group. The purpose of the group brainstorm is to gather as many ideas as possible, capture them on paper, and keep everyone engaged and excited about the ideas. Very simply, facilitation is about helping a group of people reach their goals. During the course of the brainstorming session, the facilitator will:

- Control the meeting
- Set rules and enforce them
- Ensure participation
- Allow for flow of thought
- Keep the ball rolling
- Keep the meeting on topic
- Act generally as a non-participant
- Be a subject matter expert
- Accurately sum up discussion
- Smile as much as humanly possible

Brainstorming sessions are fast, exciting, and creative. To warm up the group to the challenge, you may start the session with a mock brainstorm. Ask them to share ideas about what are the great moments in American history or what are the best movies of all time. Not only will newcomers to the process get the opportunity to see how it works (and you will get a chance to practice), you will see who the talkers and who the wallflowers are. This also helps you keep the conversation balanced and watch for domineering personality types.

Once the ball is rolling, these steps will take you through the process and help you gather the most

salient points:

- The facilitator will jot ideas onto flip charts while keeping ideas flowing.
- Once momentum has slowed, review ideas for clarity and ask for a show of hands of how many people identified these ideas on worksheets ahead of time (mark the number of hands next to each one to show consensus—items with the most hash marks should receive highest priority in the plan). This quick break will likely inspire more brainstorming. Keep it going while ideas are hot!
- During a food break, categorize the brainstorm list onto separate flip chart sheets. Before getting started, write each operational category on a separate flip chart sheet (e.g., Collection Management). As an alternative, you can run through the lists and code the idea into a category, i.e., D for Development, E for Education, etc.
- Once everyone has eaten and had a break, reconvene the group to consider the categories and how you assigned them. Look for gaps. Did they have a million programming ideas but never mentioned collections care? You can take time at this point to restart the brainstorm if there are some obvious holes.

6. Initial visioning session. Once the brainstorm period has slowed down, it is time to start developing a vision statement. A vision statement is focused on the future and considers what the museum will look like down the road (What will the visitor experience be like? How will the museum function?) The vision statement incorporates the needs and desires of the board and staff and crystallizes them into a picture of the future. For some, it is the simple question, “What

do you want to be when you grow up?” This first visioning session will start with a conversation resulting in a first draft of a vision statement. To start the discussion, it is useful to create a word list on flip charts about what the board values and what can the museum offer. Having a pool of words to refer to is helpful when drafting a statement.

7. Plan a follow-up session. Before the participants leave the first session, establish the date and time of

the follow-up session. Get a sense of how many people will attend the second session. (For some reason, no matter what you do, expect fewer participants for this second session.) It will last about two hours.

During the follow-up, the facilitator presents the plan’s initial draft and walks the group through the format. This will include ideas from the first brainstorm session and formalized strategic goals. It may also include proposed timelines and anticipated resources. This is another opportunity for idea clarification and consideration of the priorities and timeline.

SHOPPING LIST

- ✓ Snacks and beverages
- ✓ Lunch or dinner
- ✓ Flip charts (at least two)
- ✓ Easels (2)
- ✓ Open wall space
- ✓ Markers, two to three colors
- ✓ Masking tape
- ✓ Ink pens
- ✓ Tent cards (for participant names)

Once the group approves the first report, return to the vision statement drafted in the first session. Does it still hold water? Does anyone have revisions? If they do, take time to wordsmith, but do not allow the conversation to drag out longer than thirty minutes. You will want spend the bulk of your time in the session on developing the mission statement.

The mission statement is the most important series of words the board will consider, develop, and approve. It defines the purpose of the organization. It answers why you are here and why the museum matters to its visitors and community. The board must believe in the mission and enforce it. While the vision looks to the future, the mission establishes why the museum should continue and the strategic plan determines how it will reach the future. Your current mission statement might be aligned with your plan's direction, but the board needs to review and consider it during this process. If you decide to write a new one, it may be helpful to refer to the same list of words that the group used to develop the vision statement. Another excellent source of inspiration is to evaluate what visitors and program participants regularly say about the museum. What inspiration do they feel? What questions do they frequently ask?

As in the first session, the group should leave the table with a draft mission statement in their notes. At the next regularly scheduled board meeting, present the final draft of the plan for approval and ask them to formally adopt the new mission statement.

Overall, the strategic planning process can take between four and twelve months. We began planning in May and approved the final plan in September. For us, this short timeframe was essential because we had a great deal of “nuts and bolts” work to do immediately and the director wanted as much authority as possible to accomplish the work. The strategic plan allowed that to happen.

III. Formatting

The final document is simply a formal plan that speaks about the organization's value and makes a case for its future. It outlines the organizational goals and spells out the steps to realize those goals. Once formalized, this document should be shared with community stakeholders, donors, political leaders, volunteers, and whoever is interested in the plan. Post it on your website. Create an abbreviated version and turn it into a brochure. Make presentations in your community sharing the exciting news that your plan has produced.

The format of your plan will look like this:

1. **Introduction** – Provide information regarding how the plan was developed, who participated, and what the timeframe was.
2. **History of the Organization** – Start from the beginning. How did your museum develop? What are some

of its milestones? The strategic plan is used as a way to build awareness of your organization and attract support for what you do. Present the whole picture.

3. Vision Statement and Mission Statement

4. **Strategic Goals** – After the first brainstorming session, the director will synthesize the ideas and themes into broadly stated strategic goals. All of the activities and projects the group decides to implement will have a relationship with these larger goals. This section requires the director to have some personal vision for the organization.

5. **Evaluation** – A plan works best when the board and staff refer to it and regularly evaluate its progress. Explain how you will track and measure the impact (see Tracking and Measuring the Plan).

6. **Implementation Schedule** – Staff develop, and the board approves as part of the entire plan, the last three sections. You may want to involve key board members in the process of assigning tasks, solutions, responsibilities, and deadlines. In this section, indicate the priority of the project. You will likely have some projects that are urgent and/or have the requisite resources to accomplish them. Assign these projects highest priority. Other tasks may be excellent ideas but funding sources are not clear at the moment and postponing the idea will not affect operations or endanger anything. This type of project will have a lower priority rating. Pick realistic timeframes—estimate on the high side—and whenever possible, assign responsibility to a person, not a committee.

7. **Task Lists** – To understand better what the institution will accomplish year-to-year, reorganize the implementation schedule into a listing of projects and activities by year and quarter. In this format, board and staff can track progress more clearly.

8. **Action Plans** – Used for major project and budget planning, action plans drill down details even further and are helpful tools for the board to review. A good action plan identifies the strategic goal addressed, solutions, action steps, deadlines, responsible parties, costs, and outcome measurements. In the final draft of the strategic plan, only include a template of an action plan. Create a new action plan each time you launch a project.

If you are still not sure how the plan should look, please email me at clegutko@ben-hur.com. I am happy to email you a copy of our first strategic plan.

When the Plan is Ready

Tracking and Measuring the Plan

Once the plan is in place and formally approved, track and measure its progress on a regular basis. Keeping tabs on the plan is a major concern of the board and staff and a formal reporting mechanism is useful. We use the task list and insert status updates on an annual or biennial basis. The board formally

approves the revised task list.

On a semi-monthly basis, the director's report to the board is formatted to include each strategic goal and every item reported is placed underneath one of the goals. The staff also reviews the plan two to three times per year and makes adjustments to the regular work plan if needed. At year-end, we modify tasks not completed with a new deadline and justification for the change. This flexibility is essential because of our small staff size and funding limitations.

From the start of the plan in September 2003 to April 2006, we met sixty-eight percent of our goals. With the completion of a major capital project in 2006, we reached eighty-one percent of our goals with over a year left in the five-year plan.

General Lew Wallace Study & Museum Strategic Plan Achievements:

- We adopted a new name and developed an identity for the museum.
- The board of trustees restructured and grew from five members to thirteen.
- Fundraising efforts resulted in a 187% increase in income for the first twelve months. Each following year has netted similar results.
- Staff size increased from two part-time seasonal to two full-time and two part-time employees.
- We completed the Carriage House Interpretive Center, a full-service office and exhibit complex located in Wallace's 1875 carriage house. This major capital project utilized nearly \$250,000 in donations and grants.
- The museum introduced and sustained new and innovative annual programs, including the Lew Wallace Youth Academy, the Artists-in-Residence program, and the Winter Historic Preservation Workshop Series.
- Each year, we offer special programming inspired by the annual exhibit theme.
- Museum visitation has increased ten percent or more each year since 2003.

Beyond the First Plan

DIY Strategic Planning is best used as the first strategic plan for a small museum. If you have implemented the first plan's goals and strengthened organizational capacity, the board and staff have greater options available when developing a second plan. For example, you may choose to use an outside consultant to facilitate and draft a new strategic plan. (Unbiased facilitation is always recommended.) Most importantly, with a fully implemented initial plan, chances are you can afford to pay for help when it is time for the second plan!

Variations in the Process

This approach is tailored for the smallest of museum staff and boards. At General Lew Wallace Study

& Museum, we were a mighty bunch of two staff members and five board members using the approach. This model will work for larger board and staff sizes, but if the group becomes larger than eighteen to twenty people, I suggest you break up the group. You could brainstorm and do vision/mission with the board (with a few staff members participating) and then separately with staff. Follow this with a session with the board where you bring the perspectives of both camps together and look for differences and similarities. This approach is especially helpful when looking for disconnects in the organization.

Another variation is to use community focus groups to gauge interest and perspective on the organization. With a smaller staff and board, include community members in the entire planning process and have everyone working through it together. Or, if there are too many individuals involved, hold independent strategic planning sessions and limit it to a brainstorming session. During the last thirty minutes, field test the new vision and mission statements and see if they resonate with the public.

Managing Change

If this is the first strategic plan for your organization, you are facing a great deal of change over the next few years. Being sensitive to stakeholders and processes is half the battle when managing change. Once you decide to make a change, think through the impact of the change and do some troubleshooting. With a little thoughtful examination at the outset, the important changes you are making will last.

To orchestrate major changes at General Lew Wallace Study & Museum, we use charters and change documents. These tools open up communication channels and document the change. When appropriate, the board will formally approve the document, endorsing the change. Everyone starts out—literally and figuratively—on the same page.

- **Charters** – Charters are documents that outline responsibilities and structures, and they are tools for managing people, projects, and change. We use them primarily to define the purpose and goals of board and ad-hoc committees. With a charter, we make committee members aware of why they are there, chart out planned changes, promote accountability, and define budgetary impact. A charter typically has eleven components outlined and defined: project/committee overview, scope, objectives, relevant strategic goals, measures/deliverables, budget, customers, boundaries, milestones, deadlines, and supporting documentation.
- **Change Documents** – Informally referred to as a change document, these reports can be used to make a case for change to the board, stakeholders, and government entities. The format we use defines the statement of need, the current state, and

the future state. It also offers a proposal, timeline, cost benefit analysis, barriers, and a final recommendation.

Both documents demonstrate you have done your homework and considered the impact of proposed changes. Essentially, if you cannot define what is requested in a charter or change document, you need to reconsider making the change.

Conclusion

This is just one approach to strategic planning. Other museum and non-profit professionals may stress varying approaches that may include SWOT analyses, more extensive visioning sessions, longer timeframes, etc. As a small museum director, I found that I really didn't need to be that reflective the first time. And, with just two staff members working part-time, we were always on the front line testing what visitors wanted and making quick decisions to meet needs. In addition, in the fast-paced small museum environment, we needed this first plan in place quickly so we could make major board-mandated changes to improve operations.

In developing a strategic plan, it is really time for "first things first." What will it take to do X? What will it take to do Y? Where do we start? Invariably it always ends up with fundraising and development. If you don't have income, much less a sustainable income, how can you do innovative programming and exhibits or improve collections care? If you are struggling with timeframes and which tasks take priority, maybe it would be best to prioritize the development goals first. With the completion of a strategic plan, you have a strong case for support. Use it.

About the General Lew Wallace Study & Museum, Crawfordsville, IN

The General Lew Wallace Study & Museum is a National Historic Landmark site owned and operated by the City of Crawfordsville and governed by the Lew Wallace Study Preservation Society. The centerpiece of the site is the freestanding study that General Lew Wallace designed. Best known as the author of *Ben-Hur*, Wallace was a renaissance man and notable Hoosier. The museum houses personal mementos from his service as a Civil War Major General, second officer of the Lincoln Conspiracy military tribunal, Governor of New Mexico Territory, and as U.S. Minister to Turkey. Wallace's artwork, violins, inventions, and library are on display, along with memorabilia from various adaptations of *Ben-Hur*.

Upon Wallace's death in 1905, the Wallace family opened the study as a museum and operated it until 1939. The City of Crawfordsville has owned the property since 1941. Today, annual visitation is over 5,000 with an annual budget of \$120,000. A full time director and associate director, two part time employees, and a small corps of volunteers staff the museum. Programs are offered year round including the popular Lew Wallace Youth Academy, the fall Artists-in-Residence program, and a variety of themed programming in support of temporary exhibits. The museum also hosts the annual Taste of Montgomery County, a fundraiser for the Preservation Society.

Resources

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