

Quality of Life, Quality of Place

2024-2026 Strategic Plan

Mission

Presenting the relevance of Cedar Lake history.

Vision

The Museum at Lassen's Resort will be the Calumet region's premier living history experience and destination for participating in the renaissance of Cedar Lake's resort culture.

Values

- Uplift: Enhance community pride by revealing Cedar Lake's rich history and demonstrating the community's relevance to the world.
- Safeguard: Preserve the last of Cedar Lake's resort-era culture through the restoration of Lassen's Resort Hotel building and caring for and exhibiting local artifacts.
- Engage: Immerse young people in interactive experiences so that a new generation will appreciate local history.
- Illuminate: Highlight what makes Cedar Lake special through programs and experiences that showcase community stories.
- Welcome: Provide recreational public access to the lake for those who might not otherwise have the means, thus creating an open community gathering place for citizens to call home and for visitors to explore.

Priorities & Strategic Goals

Restoration ■ Preservation ■ Presentation ■ Experiences

- Expand Cedar Lake's tourism opportunities by operating a stellar historic attraction
- Create economic impact for existing businesses, especially through partnerships
- Support new investment development starts



Strategy Statement

Dream Big & "Bea" Determined

CLHA is a non-profit organization where **big ideas have effective impact**. Since our founding through community-based grassroots efforts led by Beatrice "Bea" Horner in 1977, we have developed programs that **entertain** and **educate**, offer historical understanding, and create experiences for the highest quality of community life.

CLHA utilizes dedicated board members, volunteer staff, and community talent to provide **serene recreation** and extraordinary historical knowledge to residents and tourists. Our **vibrant museum** is a tool used to leverage connections, establish our local expertise, and foster a regional network of colleagues. These assets, combined with a community-based fundraising model, intentionally position CLHA to deliver **economic impact** and program effectiveness.

By showcasing the historic Lassen's Resort Hotel, we educate the public on the relevance of Cedar Lake through **creative storytelling** and **imaginative exhibits**. While discovery happens on our shore, we also know that the town looks different from the lake. We are committed to **improving lives** by presenting the relevance of Cedar Lake's history on the water as well. Our engaging programs and educational services create **meaningful connections** for diverse populations throughout the Calumet region.

Understanding history encourages interpersonal sharing, critical thinking, and an appreciation of multiple perspectives. In teaching Cedar Lake's story, we create **more informed and involved citizens**.

By forming strategic partnerships with aligned community champions, the museum is the **premier historic attraction** in Cedar Lake. CLHA implements a growth-engagement model to become the **community center of activity** and, ultimately, the experiential recreational **destination of choice** in the Calumet region of Northwest Indiana.

What Makes Us Unique

Established in 1977, we have evolved from a grassroots advocacy group formed to save a historic structure from demolition to one of the most vibrant historical and community-minded organizations in Northwest Indiana. We provide leadership among, and maintain positive relationships with, our peers across the Calumet Region. Our passion is connecting partners to resources and helping them network with one another while championing the value of bonding with loved ones through experiential learning.

Where We Do It

Our outstanding volunteer staff and driven board of governors deliver resources and programs from The Museum at Lassen's Resort. The museum building was built in the 1890s on the west shore of the lake by the Armour Brothers as a boardinghouse for employees who cut and harvested ice from the lake.

In 1919, the Armours sold their ice business. Chris Lassen and his brothers operated a well-known dance pavilion featuring live band performances and their 20-acre resort needed a hotel. They purchased and moved the old boarding house across the frozen lake to the east shore. It was remodeled into Lassen's Resort Hotel and opened on May 7, 1921.

The property and hotel were eventually purchased by the Town of Cedar Lake in 1976. In 1981, through the efforts of CLHA, the former hotel was placed on the State & National Registers of Historic Places. CLHA expertly tells its history. It is the last vestige of more than 50 resort properties that used to grace the shoreline of magnificent Cedar Lake.



Who We Serve

Advocates. Donors. Supporters. Volunteers.

Situated in the northwest corner of Indiana and adjacent to the vibrancy of Chicago and the varied treasures of the Calumet Region, CLHA recognizes the many opportunities that abound to fill leisure time for residents as well as tourists and their families.

We believe that we enrich the quality of life and provide quality of place for our community: youth, families, businesses, volunteers, tourists, those without water-front access, and history-minded adventurers of all ages. We also serve our donors by giving them reasons to believe in our mission in order to become their first charity of choice.

Engaging Programs

The Story of Cedar Lake Exhibit Gallery: a museum experience that educates and enlightens through storytelling that utilizes professionally designed exhibits and historic vignettes depicting the resort era and significant Cedar Lake achievements.

Dewey Line Cruises: a triple award-winning resort history cruise aboard Steamer Dewey, a 1915 steamboat as well as a sunset dinner cruise inspired by resort-era cuisine aboard Baby Dewey, a six-passenger electric boat.

- American Association for State & Local History
2022 Albert B. Corey Award
- Indiana Historical Society
2022 Outstanding Collaborative Project
- Society of Innovators at Purdue University Northwest
2022 Team Innovation Award

Preserving History Seminar: a networking luncheon for historians and volunteers with professional development and educational programs.

Community Art Show: a non-competitive exhibition for artists of all ages throughout the region.

Steam Through History: an annual celebration held on the anniversary of the rebirth of the Dewey Line.

Speakeasy Summer Social: an opportunity to celebrate the 1920s resort-era clothing, music, dancing, and culture (21 and over annual event).

Guest Speaker Series: a myriad of citizens and scholars present topics of local, regional, national, and world history for multiple-aged audiences.

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Program Design

Programs are evaluated for mission alignment, tourism appeal, geographic impact, and use of placemaking principles.

1) All programs must contribute to at least one of the following mission priorities:

Museum restoration and renovation: Invest funds in projects that will sustain and enhance the last building from Cedar Lake's resort-era to enact a renaissance of the resort lifestyle while providing economic impact in the community.

Collections preservation and conservation: Inform individuals about artifacts related to the antiquity of Cedar Lake to increase cultural stewardship and encourage behaviors that support our mission.

Presenting relevance: Educate members, partners, donors, and individuals about Cedar Lake's relevance in the Calumet region and promote policies, investments, and ideas that support world-class programming for all.

Providing experiences for all: Bring together guests from a broad range of perspectives and roles and link them to our unique living history and recreational resources while creating quality of place, friendships, and lifelong memories.

2) All programs must align with organizational capacity and/or contribute cash flow. Programs are evaluated utilizing assessment tools and industry best practices. Board committees and staff teams tie their objectives to the strategic goals of this plan in the areas of Building & Restoration, Collections Care, Events, Finance, Guest Services, and Transportation.

What Success Looks Like

Cedar Lake history is good for business and community. CLHA will dramatically expand its proud role as the center of activity of the Cedar Lake community – a major goal of this strategic plan – to those curious about our past, as well as to those seeking a greater connection to the community and opportunities around them.

CLHA is poised to harness the potential of continued renovation efforts to extend its museum programs and services year-round, establish itself as a premier Calumet region attraction, and ultimately to include resort-era dining experiences and a suite-based boutique hotel on the second story.

A special place citizens can call home & visitors can explore.

A Resort-era Renaissance



Creating economic impact & supporting investment development.