Friends of the Museum,

It’s starting to be the busy season here at the Kansas Oil Museum. Just since the start of the year we’ve hosted an old-fashioned Dutch oven luncheon, held two wine & craft nights bringing over 60 people through our doors, put up a new exhibit — and there’s a lot more on the way. Coming up are our annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner, Rockfest, the latest induction into our Oil & Gas Legacy Gallery, an ice cream social, summer camps, and of course monthly Family Fun Days... With all this going on, the next few months are sure to fly by. Even Mother Nature seems to be getting a jump on things this year.

Our first event coming up is the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner on April 4th. We are receiving a grant from the Kansas Humanities Council to have Jane Rhoads come speak on “Opera House Culture and the Kansas Frontier”. Jane has taught at Butler Community College and has quite a bit of information on El Dorado’s Ellet Opera House. Tickets for the dinner are available from the museum for $15. Volunteers of course get in free!

Up next we have ROCKFEST on April 29th, and it’s going to be a fun event! So far plans include living history, a glow-in-the-dark rock display, a Great Dino Dig pit for the kids, crafts and vendors, our Annual Meeting, and lots of activities and games. The list is still evolving so make sure you check back on our Facebook page as we announce more additions as they are confirmed.

Our Family Fun Days and summer camps have been big draws to the museum in recent years, and our biggest need in these areas, as well as across all areas of the museum, is YOU! Volunteers are the lifeblood of any museum and are often in short supply. All time and talent given to KOM is of use in some way so please consider joining us a few hours a month, or for a specific event. Also vital to fulfilling our mission is the donations given to us. We are lucky enough to again be the recipients of a matching grant for 2017 and all funds given to the KOM will be matched 50%, up to $37,000. We are so very grateful for this opportunity for funding, but we need assistance from our community to make this happen for us! Please consider making a donation to our General Fund today so we can continue to develop programs to educate and promote history in Butler County.

~ Tamara Johnson, Interim Director

O: 316-321-9333 | E: director@kansasoilmuseum.org
On 12 April 1878, it was reported that Butler County was home to 15,000 people.
Over the years this space has highlighted some of the most interesting items in our collection, whether it’s been large outdoor equipment like the Star spudder or the oilfield cannon, or smaller specialty objects like last month’s aluminum Christmas tree. But there’s one “object” central to all of these that’s never been touched on before — the museum building itself!

The building here at 383 E Main in El Dorado is not the one that the Kansas Oil Museum (originally the Butler County Historical Society) has always occupied. In fact the Historical Society moved around a bit in its early days as it attempted to find a home that would be a good fit for its ever-growing collections and exhibits. When the Historical Society was incorporated in 1956, for $14,000 it purchased the T.A. Kramer property at 320 W Central Ave. This was a house located in the historic E.L. Lower division and once owned by James R. Mead, a well-known Indian trader. It was a two-story white clapboard structure that has since been torn down.

In fact this building did not remain in the Historical Society’s possession for long. It was soon judged too small to adequately house and display the Society’s artifacts, so in December of 1960 they purchased instead the cut limestone building at the corner of W Central Ave and South Star. This had formerly been the town’s Carnegie library (it is now occupied by Gravity ::Works), but in 1960 it was up for sale on account of the El Dorado Public Library’s having just moved into the newly completed Bradford library building.

The Carnegie was a great location because not only was it a lovely building with historic significance, but it was centrally located right near El Dorado’s downtown.

But after over a decade’s residence there, the Historical Society realized that once again it was outgrowing its space thanks to the generosity of Butler County donors and the ever-expanding vision of its board and members. The Society would make its third and final move in 1977, to a newly-built structure on the east side of town. Two years previously the decision had been made to build a new museum on open ground along East Central Avenue. This was done in concert with the El Dorado Chamber of Commerce, which had similarly outgrown the facility it occupied and planned to share the new building with the museum. The pre-stressed concrete structure was designed by El Dorado architect John Prigmore and completed in 1976. Opening Day for the new museum came on March 1, 1977, followed by an Open House on March 6 — 500 people attended!

And that brings us to where we are today: still welcoming new visitors, still growing, and still preserving and interpreting our county’s history for present and future generations.

~ Ardath
Our latest exhibit is now open!

“Curiouser & Curiouser: A Butler County Cabinet of Curiosities”, features the weird, the wonderful, and the just plain random from the Kansas Oil Museum collections. What can you expect to see in it? A little bit of everything! Here are just a few things you will be able to find:

◊ A pair of ice skates used to skate all the way from Augusta to El Dorado along the Walnut River

◊ A 12-lb ball and chain worn by prisoners at the El Dorado city jail back in the late 1800s

◊ Statuettes from Ming Dynasty China, once owned by William Allen White

◊ Probably the biggest Victorian hair wreath you’ve ever seen!

This is only a tiny sample of what we have on display in this very unique exhibit!

There is also plenty of opportunity to interact with these artifacts yourself, whether it’s by exploring everything in the hands-on Wonder Box, curating your own mini-exhibit, or just trying to guess the identity of all the objects in our Widgets and Watchamacallits gallery.

“Curiouser & Curiouser” is scheduled to run through April 30 and has received a lot of inquisitive visitors so far! Be sure to poke your head in before it’s gone!
to correspondence from film studio Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer itself concerning the movie’s promotion.

I would also like to encourage all of you stop by and see the museum’s latest temporary exhibit, the Cabinet of Curiosities (see p. 4 for more details). Office Manager Cynthia and I had quite a time combing through our collections to pick out some of KOM’s oddest and most novel artifacts. It seems like we have only just skimmed the surface of our collections, so there may be a Curiouser & Curiouser 2 one day!

~ Ardath, Museum Educator & Research Librarian

A letter written from the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer film studio to Gypsy Moths house owner Francis Frazier.

In September 1943 a delay to the opening of the new Andover School was announced, due to a polio outbreak in the section.
May 1950: “It's official now! The US Board of Geographic names has handed down a decision that El Dorado be spelled 2 words.”

Volunteer View

Hard-working volunteer Dale Wilson runs the museum's Rotary Drilling Rig during one of our summer tours.

The 2017 Volunteer Appreciation Dinner is Coming Up!!

When: Tuesday, April 4, 6pm

What: A catered meal, a fun historic program, and recognition for our amazing volunteers!

Program: “Kansas Opera Houses, Actors, and Community Events 1885—1925”

Speaker: Jane Rhoads

This talk will include information on El Dorado’s very own Ellet Opera House! Volunteers get in free, but everyone is invited to come out to enjoy the evening. Admission to the dinner for the general public is $15. Call 316-321-9333 for tickets.

Maintenance Minute

Spring has sprung early... so far. We are starting to gather resources and plan our new gardens. We have gotten funding to put towards the creation of 3 new planted areas in the boomtown: a WWII style victory garden, an heirloom crop field (with kaffir corn and other crops historically grown in our area), and a native grassland plot. We hope to begin breaking ground on these projects soon.

Recent Projects

Volunteers both old and new continue to be one of our most valuable assets! Throughout the year they have been hard at work on a variety of projects and events:

- Barry Avery has been cleaning carpets and helping to get large mailings out, but his most noticeable project has been working with Mike Tracy to create a new planting at the side of the museum.

- With his demonstrations of the museum’s working rigs and other equipment, Dale Wilson has been busy educating and entertaining schoolkids from around Butler and Sedgwick Counties.

- Keith McClusky has been hard at work in the collections and research library divisions this past year. He has been making great headway in clearing up our backlog of historic photographs needing to be labeled and filed.

- Patti Luck, Carol Turner, and our newest volunteer Amy Wright have been putting in time with newspapers new and old to help expand our obituary files. Carol has also been diligently clipping articles about the museum’s latest activities and events, and Amy has been a big help in cleaning up after our January and February Family Fun Days.

The mild temperatures have also helped with projects in our heated historic buildings. The General Store is the focus of a makeover right now. There are many great pieces of history in there; we want visitors to get a better look at them. The barriers are being changed so that you will no longer be stopped two steps in from the door. The new barriers will follow the rows of shelves and give access to the back door and living quarters. A meat cutting area has been added behind the mail counter, and artifacts are being cleaned and appropriately refurbished to provide for their lasting care. Prices on the goods stocked in the store are also being researched and posted on the shelf rails. Along with this we will be putting up more explanatory signage and adding an interactive aspect to the exhibit. The goal is to give folks a truly immersive experience in the sights and smells of an early 20th century mercantile establishment. The project will be ready to view at Rockfest.

~Mike, Museum Maintenance & Facilities Manager
It’s been a good start to the year for the Rolla A. Clymer Research Library! We have had some great new books given to the library (see below), and thanks to some generous donations to the library we have also been able to purchase new book repair supplies! While archival glue, book tape, and Cellugel might not sound like the most exciting purchase, supplies like these are vital for keeping the library’s materials in good shape and accessible to researchers well into the future.

If you have a love for books, old newspapers, or local history in general, we have many volunteer opportunities in the library and archives! There are projects of all kinds and scope available: digitizing archival materials, indexing local history books, going through old newspapers to add to our obituary catalog, data entry, and more. We also have lots of old photographs of people and places in collections that we would love to have some of our longer-term county residents help us identify. If you have an interest in any of these projects, just let us know! We’re also always happy to have visitors new and old stop by.

~ Ardath, Museum Educator & Research Librarian

### Coming Up with the Butler County Genealogical Society

- **March 16** - Paleography: The Art of Reading Old Handwriting
- **April 20** - Probate / Land Records
- **May 18** - American Migration

### Memorials

The Kansas Oil Museum would like to thank those who established memorials for the following individual, and those who generously contributed to them:

- **Robert E. “Bob” Moser**

### Just in at the Library


Though many people aren’t aware of it, El Dorado had its own German POW camp from 1944 to 1945. Most of these POWs had belonged to General Erwin Rommel’s Afrika Corps and were captured in the North African theatre, but the enlisted men were largely just farm boys at heart. In Butler County these young men helped supply labor on farms that were struggling to get by with a workforce much depleted by wartime enlistment. This book tells El Dorado’s story as well as providing a fascinating history of the POW camps throughout Kansas. Big thanks to Howard & Barbara Redburn for making this purchase possible!

As reported on 10 May 1927, the price of gasoline at El Dorado filling stations was 18.8 cents a gallon.
On 23 Oct 1891, a “wave of thieving” was reported in Butler County, particularly horse theft.
WANTED!

LOOKING FOR
Local Artist & Artisans
interested in adding their unique items
on consignment to the
Gusher Gift Shop

More information available @www.kansasoilmuseum.org

Craft & Vendor Spots available for our
2nd Annual ROCKFEST
on April 29th.

Email admin@kansasoilmuseum.org for more information.

The early 1900s outdoor mannequins of Augusta’s Viets Clothing Store were renowned, being always dressed for the weather.
The 1st official burial in the Leon Cemetery is of Addison Sawyer, killed in 1870 while searching for his stolen horses.

The 2017 Calendar of Events:

**2017 EVENTS**

**MARCH—APRIL** — Newest Exhibit: “Curiouser & Curiouser: A Butler County Cabinet of Curiosities”

**SATURDAY, APRIL 29** — ROCKFEST & ANNUAL MEETING

Our 2nd Annual ROCKFEST, a day of fun celebrating geology and the science of oil and gas exploration. Featuring living history, craft vendors and demos, kids’ crafts & activities, the Great Dino Dig, and more! For more information and a schedule of events, check out www.kansasoilmuseum.org/attend-an-event.

**MAY** — OIL & GAS LEGACY INDUCTION

**JUNE 17** — ICE CREAM SOCIAL/FAMILY FUN DAY

**JULY 18-21** — SUMMER CAMP I: TECHNOLOGY TRAILS

**AUGUST 1-4** — SUMMER CAMP II: HEARTLAND OF DISCOVERY

Highlighting the connections between history and science, our two camps will get kids involved in exploration and innovation within the setting of the Great Plains.

**AUGUST** — SPECIAL TOUR: Stay tuned for more information!

**SEPTEMBER 23** — COUNTRY HEAVY METAL

2nd Annual County Heavy Metal, a festival celebrating Butler County’s first settlers and its ranching and agricultural community.

**OCTOBER** — CEMETERY TOURS

**NOVEMBER** — NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM: “CANDY & CANVAS”

**DECEMBER** — OLD FASHIONED CHRISTMAS

---

**ROCKFEST 2016**

~Commerce Bank, El Dorado~

~Community National Bank and Trust~

~John & Mindy Sutherland~

~Stanfield Roofing~

~Sundgren Realty, Inc.~

~Sunrise Oilfield Supply~

~Sutherland Lumber Company~

**Air Maze**

~Holly Frontier~

**Events Tent**

~Maclaskey Oilfield Services~

**Legacy Induction Ceremony**

~Walnut River Brewing Co.~

**Ice Cream Social**

~El Dorado TrueCare Pharmacy~

~Freddy’s, El Dorado~

**Country Heavy Metal**

~El Dorado Livestock Auction, Inc.~

~Security 1st Title, LLC~

**Summer Camp 2016**

~Thomas & Connie Paulson~

**Old Fashioned Christmas**

~Sutherland Lumber Company~

~John & Mindy Sutherland~

---

**2016 Sponsors**

~Loren & Kathy Jack~

---

The 1st official burial in the Leon Cemetery is of Addison Sawyer, killed in 1870 while searching for his stolen horses.
Some El Dorado women go skating at the rink while their husbands stay home & mind the children.” -- 1884 Walnut Valley Times

Missed the snow this year? Winter blankets Butler County in a soft haze of snow in this scene from the 1890s. A handwritten caption on the back of the photograph indicates that this farm was located on SW Ohio St.
The Kansas Oil Museum has been given a second matching gift challenge! This year our donor is willing to match all general contributions (one dollar for every two given) for up to $37,000.

Your donations and continued support enable us to impact lives, preserve history, and promote greater understanding in public schools, corporations, and throughout the community. Every dollar counts! Over 80% of your donation will go directly to educational programming. Funding is the only limitation we currently have on the number of lives we can impact.

Please consider making a donation to the Kansas Oil Museum today!

Planned Giving
Contribute to the Kansas Oil Museum’s future by planning a special gift. Although cash contributions are always appreciated, there are other creative and flexible options that can benefit you and the Museum.

When planning your legacy remember the museum by:

- Including the museum in your will or irrevocable trust
- Giving the gift of real estate, stocks, IRAs, qualifying retirement plans and other assets
- Listing the Museum as an owner and/or beneficiary of a life insurance policy.

Giving a charitable income tax or estate tax deduction, your gift will benefit you and your heirs.