



CULTURAL SERVICES

2023 Annual Report



Cultural Services Division

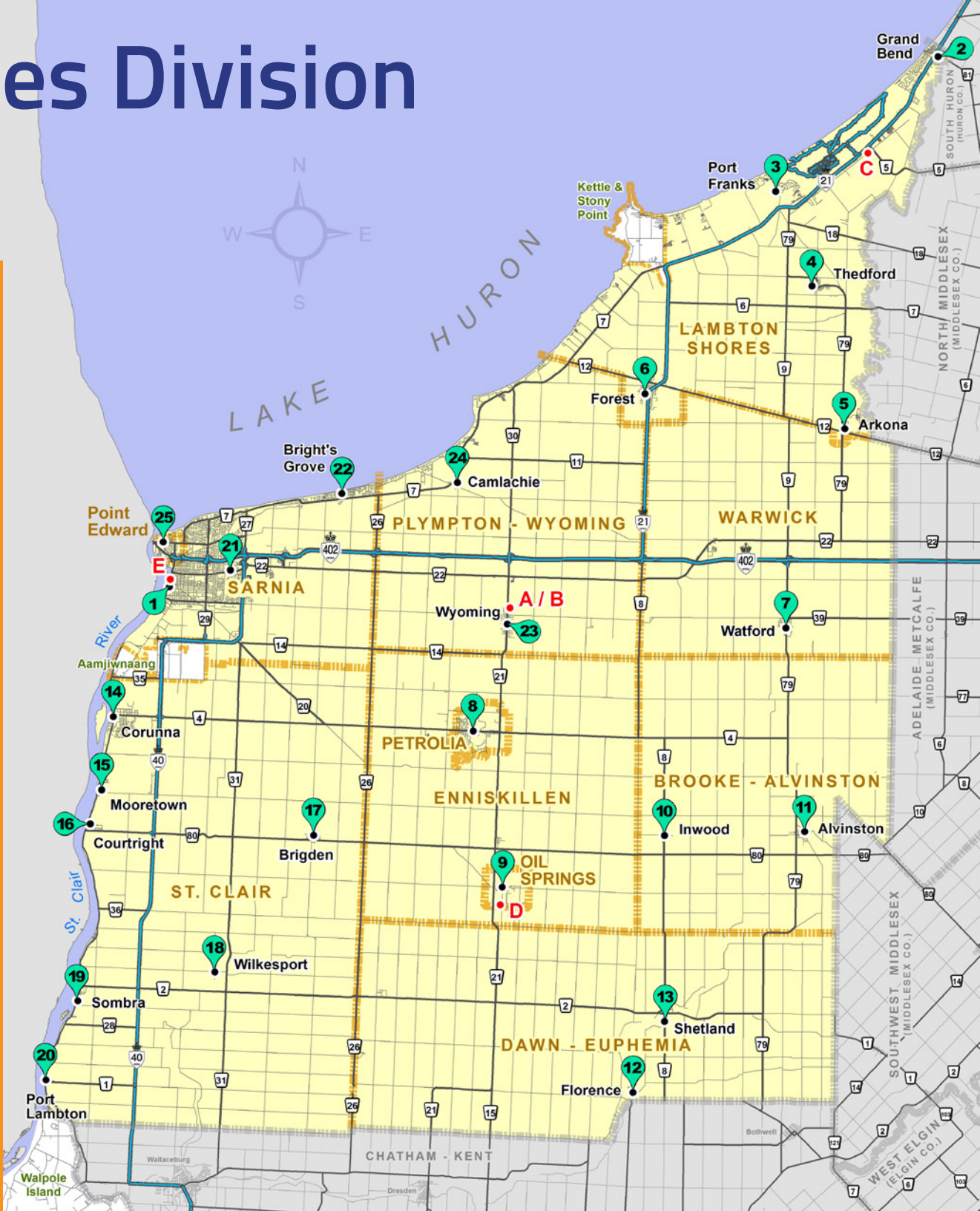
OVERVIEW MAP



Lambton County Archives, 787 Broadway Street, Wyoming

ID	LOCATION	WEBSITE	TELEPHONE	ADDRESS
A	Library Headquarters	www.lclibrary.ca	519-845-3324	787 Broadway Street
B	Lambton County Archives	www.lambtonarchives.ca	519-845-5426	787 Broadway Street
C	Lambton Heritage Museum	www.heritagemuseum.ca	519-243-2600	10035 Museum Road
D	Oil Museum of Canada National Historic Site	www.oilmuseum.ca	519-834-2840	2423 Kelly Road
E	Judith & Norman Alix Art Gallery	www.jnaag.ca	519-336-8127	147 Lochiel Street

REGION	ID	LIBRARY LOCATION	TELEPHONE	ADDRESS	MUNICIPALITY
Region 1	1	Sarnia Library	519-337-3291	124 Christina Street S.	Sarnia
Region 2	2	Grand Bend Library	519-238-2067	15 Gill Road	Lambton Shores
	3	Port Franks Library	519-243-2820	9997 Port Franks Rd.	Lambton Shores
	4	Thedford Library	519-296-4459	16 Allen Street	Lambton Shores
	5	Arkona Library	519-828-3406	16 Smith Street	Lambton Shores
	6	Forest Library	519-786-5152	61 King Street West	Lambton Shores
	7	Watford Library	519-876-2204	5317 Nauvoo Road	Warwick
	Region 3	8	Petrolia Library	519-882-0771	4200 Petrolia Line
9		Oil Springs Library	519-834-2670	4596 Oil Springs Line	Oil Springs
10		Inwood Library	519-844-2491	6504 James Street	Brooke-Alvinston
11		Alvinston Library	519-898-2921	3251 River Street	Brooke-Alvinston
12		Florence Library	519-692-3213	6213 Mill Street	Dawn-Euphemia
13		Shetland Library	519-695-3330	1279 Shetland Road	Dawn-Euphemia
Region 4		14	Corunna Library	519-862-1132	417 Lyndoch Street
	15	Mooretown Library	519-867-2823	1166 Emily Street	St. Clair
	16	Courtright Library	519-867-2712	1533 Fourth Street	St. Clair
	17	Brigden Library	519-864-1142	1540 Duncan Street	St. Clair
	18	Wilkesport Library	519-864-4000	1349 Wilkesport Line	St. Clair
	19	Sombra Library	519-892-3711	3536 St. Clair Parkway	St. Clair
	20	Port Lambton Library	519-677-5217	507 Stoddard Street	St. Clair
Region 5	21	Mallroad Library	519-542-2580	1362 Lambton Mall Rd.	Sarnia
	22	Bright's Grove Library	519-869-2351	2618 Hamilton Road	Sarnia
	23	Wyoming Library	519-845-0181	536 Niagara Street	Plympton-Wyoming
	24	Camlachie Library	519-899-2202	6745 Camlachie Road	Plympton-Wyoming
	25	Point Edward Library	519-336-3291	220 Michigan Avenue	Point Edward



Contents



Visitors to Lambton Heritage Museum take in the new Lambton Gallery after extensive renovations to address facility repairs, revitalize the exhibit and enhance accessibility.



Anishinaabe artist Nico Williams provides visitors with a tour of his art installations at the JNAAG as part of the *Biskaabiiyang | Returning to Ourselves* exhibition.



Proud graduates of Lambton County Library's "1000 Books Before Kindergarten Challenge" pose for a photo with their summer reading program prizes.

Cultural Services Division Overview Map

2

Cultural Services Division Profile

4

Enhancing Access, Inclusion & Community Engagement

6

Creating & Delivering Great Experiences

10

Developing Partnerships That Increase Participation in Culture

12

Maximizing the Value of Our Collections & Spaces

16

Building Cultural Capacity & Raising Lambton's Profile

18

Managing Our Resources Efficiently & Effectively

19

Cultural Services Division Profile



Visitors review artifacts featured as part of the international oil driller display in the Oil Museum of Canada gallery.



Members of the Sarnia Library staff team work hard to provide a welcoming environment for all. Left to right are Charlotte Walicki, Anna Lakey and Christine Hartman-Wilson.



Lambton County Library publishes *Check It Out* magazine every other month, providing patrons with a guide to library news and programs. Printed copies are available at each library location, and the publication can also be viewed online.

The County of Lambton Cultural Services Division's mandate is to provide leadership and support to advance cultural development for economic, social and broader community benefit in Lambton County. In support of this mandate, the Division assumes responsibilities in the areas of cultural planning and policy development, capacity building, program delivery, strategic investment and resource development.

Lambton County Library

Lambton County Library manages a network of 25 libraries, provides courier service to all County Divisions and partner agencies Tourism Sarnia-Lambton and Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership, and operates a mobile library outreach service. Services offered to its over 20,760 active cardholders include the ability to borrow books, audio books, magazines, audio-visual materials and more. Patrons can participate in story hours, hear from guest speakers, and access reference service and the Internet through public computer workstations. Library cardholders also have access to a range of convenient eLibrary services available on any device connected to the Internet, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. These services include electronic books, magazines, newspapers, digital media (such as music and movies) and educational courses.

Judith & Norman Alix Art Gallery

Judith & Norman Alix Art Gallery (JNAAG) is a free public art gallery located in downtown Sarnia. With the support of a dedicated staff and volunteer team, the JNAAG engages the community through a wide-range of exhibitions, tours, lectures and programs for all ages. The gallery's collection is comprised of 1,200 primarily Canadian historical and contemporary works of both local and national significance. The JNAAG is a regional gallery with a national mandate, and holds the distinction of Category 'A' designation received from the Department of Canadian Heritage. As such, the gallery meets and maintains a range of strict building, operational and professional standards.



Meagan Sinclair provides a tour of the collections vault for the *Behind the Scenes* social media series promoting the resources of LCA.



Members of the Dominion of Canada Reenactment Corps provide demonstrations at the *Experience the First World War* event at LHM.



The "singing docents" prepare to engage the visiting public in a tour of John Hartman's exhibition *Many Lives Mark This Place* at JNAAG.

Oil Museum of Canada National Historic Site

Oil Museum of Canada (OMC) is a designated National Historic Site, situated on the world's first commercial oil field. The ten-acre site features four historic buildings with reconstructed spring-pole and three-pole derricks dominating the property. A series of jerker lines, pumping stations, storage tanks and oil wagons combine with the material in the museum collection to bring the fascinating story of the oil industry to life. The main exhibition centre, constructed in 1960, houses over 9,000 artifacts that interpret the international influence of Lambton's proud oil heritage.

Lambton County Archives

Lambton County Archives (LCA) serves as an active genealogical and local history resource centre. The archives preserves

significant local material including census records, birth, marriage and death records, local newspapers, corporate records, Land Registry records and a vast historical photograph collection. The archives offers seminars and information sessions to help individuals develop their historical and genealogical research skills, as well as educate Lambton's residents about their past.

Lambton Heritage Museum

Lambton Heritage Museum (LHM) is entrusted with the care of over 25,000 historic artifacts which preserve the history of Lambton County. Situated on 30 acres, the museum maintains six historic buildings, two display buildings and one main exhibition centre. The museum is open year round, and provides picnic grounds and the 1km Woodland Heritage Trail. LHM has evolved from a passive museum site to an active experiential tourism destination.

Sarnia Library Theatre

Sarnia Library is home to the Sarnia Library Theatre, which features special Cultural Services Division programming and also plays host to many events by community organizations and cultural groups. With a capacity of over 300 and projection, sound and lighting equipment, the theatre space is available for rent to accommodate concerts, lectures, celebrations, film screenings and more.

Creative County Grant Program

The Creative County Grant Program invests matching funds (up to 50% of the total cost) in new and innovative projects that build cultural capacity, strengthen the creative community, define Lambton's unique identity and enrich the quality of life of all residents. Projects led by or in partnership with local Indigenous communities are also encouraged.

Below: Lambton County Cultural Services Division staff participate in a Divisional training event in November of 2023.



Enhancing Access, Inclusion & Community Engagement



The Connection Cube private meeting space was launched at Sarnia Library in partnership with the Sarnia-Lambton Ontario Health Team.



Artist Jeff George (second from right) completed two murals at Hillside School, Kettle & Stony Point, with support from Lambton's Creative County Grant Program.

The Cultural Services Division strives to promote and enhance awareness of cultural opportunities across Lambton County, and provide access to relevant and engaging exhibitions, programming and services for residents at all phases of life.

Lambton County Library Policy Development

Lambton County Library created several new policies in 2023 to set the foundation for improved access and inclusion. Lambton County Council, as the Library Board, approved an Accessibility Policy, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, and an Indigenous Awareness and Reconciliation Policy. The Accessibility Policy outlines library's commitment to meet the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities and require that the library incorporate concepts of accessibility into the library's collections, physical spaces, programs and service delivery.

The Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy ensures the Library operates its services in a manner that allows equitable access, meets the needs of a diverse population and is inclusive to all persons. The Indigenous Awareness and Reconciliation Policy outlines the Library's commitment to

providing welcoming spaces and library services to Indigenous peoples. The policy also points to the Library's existing Collection and Programming Policies that speak to the need for a diverse collection and program calendar that provides a variety of voices and points of view, and meets the needs of all people.

Sarnia Library Connection Cube

Lambton County Library publicly launched a new Connection Cube meeting space at Sarnia Library, funded by Sarnia-Lambton Ontario Health Team, and took steps to actively promote the newly created / renovated private meeting spaces at the following libraries: Alvinston, Corunna, Forest, Thedford and Wyoming. The Social Services Division funded the purchase of iPads for use at each of the meeting rooms to facilitate the ability of people to meet remotely with community, government and health care agencies.

Museums, Gallery & Archives Attendance

While visitor traffic was impacted by the Lambton Gallery renovation, LHM drew 10,136 total visitors (32% being residents of Lambton) in 2023. The JNAAG welcomed over 6,240 visitors (81% residents) in 2023, while OMC attracted 4,094 visitors (37% residents) and LCA supported 1,405 in-person and online genealogical and local history requests from researchers.



As part of the Division's ongoing commitment to enhancing the County brand and recognizing municipal partners, new signage is installed at various library locations throughout the County.



In 2023, **527,949**

physical library items were loaned through in-person service to

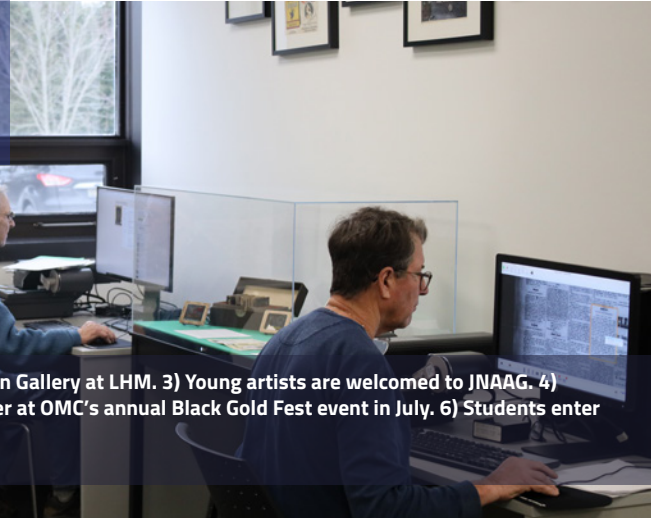
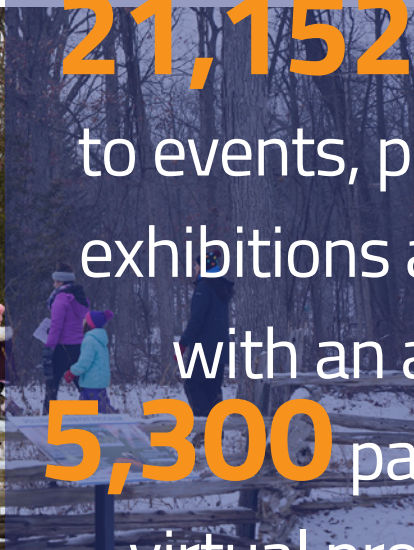
13,238

unique Lambton County Library patrons, and

524,248 e-service

items were accessed by cardholders online.

Clockwise from top left: Members of Lambton County Council captivate little ones with stories and activities as they share the Ontario Public Library Week theme of "Libraries for Life!" 1) Mayor Ian Veen, Village of Oil Springs, at Oil Springs Library. 2) City-County Councillor Chrissy McRoberts, City of Sarnia, at Sarnia Library. 3) Mayor Gary Atkinson, Town of Plympton-Wyoming, at Camlachie Library. 4) Mayor Jeff Agar, Township of St. Clair, at Corunna Library. 5) Deputy-Mayor Dan Sageman, Municipality of Lambton-Shores, at Forest Library. 6) Mayor Todd Case, Township of Warwick, at Watford Library.



The museums, gallery
and archives welcomed
21,152 visitors
to events, programs and
exhibitions and engaged
with an additional
5,300 patrons through
virtual programs and
community outreach.

Clockwise from top left: 1) Students tour the exhibition *A Family Palette* at JNAAG. 2) Cadets take in the 'Our Natural World' display in the new Lambton Gallery at LHM. 3) Young artists are welcomed to JNAAG. 4) Researchers make use of the historical resources available through microfilm readers at LCA. 5) Onlookers enjoy a reenactment of John Shaw's gusher at OMC's annual Black Gold Fest event in July. 6) Students enter the Tudhop Cabin as part of LHM's holiday program activities.



Adrienne Lebert and Lori Fraser of Lambton County Library show off some of the Valentine's cards delivered to long-term care residents.



Image of the 'Florence Chicks' softball team, 1958, displayed as part of an exhibition at the Florence Library coordinated by LCA.



Staff participate in the Age Friendly Sarnia-Lambton Expo to promote the services offered at the museums, gallery and archives.

Valentines for Long-Term Care

Libraries distributed blank Valentine's Day cards between January 3 to February 1 for patrons to write messages or draw pictures for residents living in the three long-term care homes operated by the County of Lambton. Over 1,800 Valentine's cards were received for delivery to residents.

Improved Online Engagement

The Division has made a concerted effort to enhance its online communications through improved social media engagement, online publications and e-blasts to members and cardholders, and enhanced website content.

As of December of 2023, JNAAG has 5,320 followers on Facebook, had 1,750 visits to its profile page and experienced a screen reach of 236,427 people. LHM has 4,045 followers (15,480 visits and reach of 350,421), Lambton County Library has 3,511 (29,685 visits and reach of 295,877, LCA has 3,372 (12,261 visits and reach of 289,401) and OMC has 1,959 (400 visits and reach of 267,635).

Combined, the YouTube channels of the Division also attracted over 35,000 views, with over 1,200 hours watched and 262 subscribers.

Family Saturday at JNAAG

2023 marked the return of weekend family programming at JNAAG after a pause due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The JNAAG studio featured engaging, art-based programming every Saturday afternoon with artist-facilitated activities inspired by current exhibitions. New activities are offered every month, with the same activity running weekly for the entirety of that month.

Inspirational Exhibitions

Staff of the Museums, Gallery & Archives Department created several engaging exhibitions in 2023. LHM introduced its new permanent exhibition in the Lambton Gallery, and also developed a display for *Return of the Swans* (February 15 to April 14) and the *North Lambton Quilters' Guild Quilt Show* (June 29 to September 2) in the new multi-purpose space. Staff at LCA also prepared two exhibitions in 2023, *Marie Provost: From Sarnia to Stardom*, and *Documenting the Past: Holland Paisley Photo Collection*, and the 2022 exhibition *Beyond the Books: History of Lambton County Library* continued on display at the Sarnia Library.

In early 2023, JNAAG featured *Beneath the Mask: Symbols as a Healing Phenomenon* by Darla Fisher Odjig, and *From Skyworld to*

Cyberspace by Skawennati. JNAAG also introduced an ambitious schedule of new exhibitions, including three installments of the six-part *Re View* Exhibition series (exhibitions 2, 3 and 4 were featured in 2023). This exhibition series marks the 10th Anniversary of the gallery in its current location, placing the permanent collection in the spotlight and celebrating the power of art. The gallery also coordinated a Community Art Initiative called 'Future Community Blueprint', which invited visitors at JNAAG to consider how the community might be designed in the future. Over 200 blueprint designs were submitted, and a selection were transformed to create a virtual visualization that can be experienced through augmented reality.

The gallery also featured the exhibitions *Many Lives Mark This Place* (April 15 to September 9) by Ontario-based painter and printmaker John Hartman, *Biskaabiiyang: Returning to Ourselves* (April 14 to September 9) by Nico Williams, *Humans of Lambton*, (August 4 to October 14) featuring the portraits of photographer Stephen Livick alongside a juried selection of photographs submitted as part of the Teen Photo Contest, and *A Family Palette* (October 6 to March 16, 2024), featuring the work of Frances-Anne Johnston, Franz Johnston, and Franklin Arbuckle.

Creating & Delivering Great Experiences



A student participates in a candle-making activity at OMC as part of the popular holiday open house programs attended by area schools.



Firefighter Rachel from Brooke Fire Rescue visited Alvinston Library to lead a Firefighter Storytime and share stories about fire safety with a crowd of participants during Local Government Week.



Jim Southcott, of the Grand Bend Historical Walk Committee, shows off one of the new interpretive signs identifying significant locations of historical interest on Main Street in Grand Bend. The project was supported by a contribution from the Creative County Grant Program.

The Cultural Services Division aims to provide unique experiences that engage and inspire visitors. This is achieved through the presentation of exhibitions and interpretive displays, programs and activities, tours and events, and the appropriate use of emergent technologies to enhance the visitor experience.

Winter Reading Program

The annual Winter Reading Program, *Bundle Up With a Book*, along with the Teen *Freedom to Read Challenge* ran from January 9 – February 19, which asked library patrons to record the number of books they read for a chance to win prizes. While fewer people participated in 2023, those who did read more with 382 people reading 7,356. In total, 699 books were distributed as prizes for reaching reading milestones. Twenty-two teens participated in the *Freedom to Read Challenge*, reading for 5,217 minutes, earning 21 book prizes.

One Seed Lambton

The Dwarf Grey Sugar Snow Pea was announced as the OneSeed Lambton variety for 2023. The OneSeed Lambton program promotes Lambton's Seed Library – the ability to borrow garden seeds

from the library in an effort to educate the community about gardening techniques to grow their own food, inform participants about the importance of food security, teach people how to preserve vegetables and save seeds, and encourage the donation of fresh produce to food banks. Approximately 2,500 packets of Dwarf Grey Sugar Snow Peas were distributed to Lambton's libraries. Programs that complement the theme of gardening and food security took place in the spring and summer.

1,000 Books Before Kindergarten

The Library began hosting graduation ceremonies for its littlest readers who complete the *1,000 Books Before Kindergarten Challenge*. With the introduction of new technology that was implemented in 2022 (Beanstack), library patrons are able to use an app to record their reading activities and participate in challenges. The program encourages parents to start good reading habits early with their young children.

Research has shown that increasing an individual's literacy levels has many benefits, including the development of employable skills, higher wages, increased job satisfaction, improved personal health and wellbeing, and increased community involvement. Upon completion of the *1,000 Books Before Kindergarten Challenge*, graduates were rewarded with a certificate and a plush toy.



Ottawa Art Gallery curator Rebecca Baciano speaks on the work of Frances-Anne Johnston as a part of JNAAG's *Art & Ideas* series.



Lambton Shores Phragmites Community Group installs boot scrapers at LHM's Woodland Heritage Trail to prevent invasive species.



Children try out the new digital activity table at Sarnia Library, which offers experiential learning through interactive puzzles and games.

Summer Reading Program

The Library's Summer Reading Program saw 2,220 children, 100 teens and 461 adults registered to participate in activities, contests and chances to win prizes. Children read 31,438 books, completed 2,703 activities, and earned 2,718 book prizes. Teens read for 50,032 minutes, completed 167 activities, and earned 108 book prizes. Adults read 1,870 books and completed 708 activities. This program is instrumental in helping children retain the literacy skills they have developed throughout the school year while they take a formal break from their studies in formal school settings. This year's themes were: *An Ocean of Possibilities* (Children), *Make Waves* (Teens) and *Challenge Yourself* (Adults).

Culture Days

The Library planned and hosted four special events to celebrate the provincial initiative – Culture Days – from September 22 to October 19, 2023. The Library's programs included Indigenous Storytimes, Kimchi Tasting with Jiak, Paint Night with Moses Lunham, and The Great War in Colour with Andrew Robertshaw.

Library Performance Evaluation

Lambton County Council, as Lambton's Library Board approved an Evaluation Policy in 2023

which will set the stage for the Library to formally use performance measures to evaluate the effectiveness in achieving its mission and objectives. Feedback received from evaluation efforts will also be incorporated into employee training and program planning and delivery efforts.

Museums, Gallery & Archives Programs Engage Community

The museums had a very active year in 2023, with signature events like the Black Gold Fest at OMC and Lambton Fall Colour & Craft Festival at LHM drawing a combined 2,790 visitors to experience the rich history and culture of Lambton. New events were pursued as well. LHM welcomed 200 participants to the *Experience the First World War*, a special reenactment event in partnership with the Dominion of Canada Reenactment Corps.

Perennial programs like the Holiday Open House and themed PA Day events attracted youth to OMC and LHM throughout the year with unique themes (environmental stewardship, yoga, winter sports, oil refining, etc.) that engaged diverse audiences. New programs were also launched, including *Machinery Masterminds* at LHM, a program to teach aspiring minds how to service and maintain antique machinery. In total, 25 in-

person programs were offered at the museum sites, attracting 925 participants. Opening events for the new Lambton Gallery drew 115 visitors to see the results of the renovation at LHM, while the Lambton Agricultural Hall of Fame Awards Ceremony welcomed 82 guests to OMC.

OMC organized seven virtual programs engaging over 200 participants, which included guest presentations from the Canadian Energy Museum and Craighleith Heritage Depot on oil industry history. LHM offered 5 virtual programs, attracting 94 participants, and the museums supported Heritage Sarnia-Lambton with coordinating 2 Virtual Talks that engaged 65 participants. Museum staff also participated in a total of 35 offsite outreach programs connecting with 875 members of the community.

JNAAG hosted 115 in-person programs, attracting 1,453 participants in 2023. The gallery also coordinated 6 virtual programs that engaged 2,724 participants, and hosted opening receptions for the exhibitions *Many Lives Mark This Place*, *Humans of Lambton* and *A Family Palette* that drew 240 attendees. LCA participated in 23 offsite outreach programs, sharing its services and connecting with 382 residents.

Developing Partnerships That Increase Participation in Culture



Ron Vanhorne (left) and Scott Ferguson (right) of the Forest Optimist Club present a donation of \$2,000 to LHM Curator/Supervisor Dana Thorne in support of the Canatara Cabin Restoration Project.



Members of the Creative County Committee and delegates from both the local and County Council attend the unveiling of the community mural project completed by artist DERKZ at Blue Willow Restaurant in Sombra. The project was supported by the Creative County Grant Program.

As a guiding principle of the County of Lambton Cultural Plan, the Cultural Services Division seeks to build partnerships and work collaboratively with the private, public and volunteer sectors to identify and seize shared challenges and opportunities.

Clash of the Classrooms

In 2023, the Library launched “Clash of the Classrooms” through a partnership with Chatham-Kent Public Library. A challenge was issued to all school classrooms and homeschooling groups in Lambton County and the Municipality of Chatham-Kent to record the number of minutes their students read between February 6 – March 10 in an attempt to win prizes for their classroom or school. Winners of a pizza party for their classroom included the Grade 2/3 Class from Confederation Central School, the Grade 7/8 class from John Knox Christian School, and the Library Team from North Lambton Secondary School. John Knox Christian School was also awarded a \$250 donation toward the school’s library and learning commons and Wellington Homeschool was awarded a \$100 donation to their programming.

Canatara Cabin Restoration Project

The historic Canatara Cabin was moved from Canatara Park in Sarnia to LHM in late 2020 with the support of the City of Sarnia and a volunteer group dedicated to ensuring its restoration at the site. Since then, a restoration journey has been underway to safeguard its legacy and contribute to the cultural heritage of the community. A pivotal phase of the project is now completed, involving the adjustment of an existing concrete pad on the Museum grounds to precisely align with the footprint of the Canatara Cabin. New concrete footings and blockwork were added to support the cabin’s footprint and features, which will include a stone fireplace. The roof, carefully propped on the pad during relocation, has been reinforced and now rests on a specially constructed frame, setting the stage for the cabin’s reassembly.

The restoration efforts have been further elevated with the engagement of John Rutledge, a distinguished architect and heritage restoration specialist. The process for reconstruction and restorative work is expected to move forward in 2024. A fundraising goal of \$100,000 to support the project has been set, with nearly \$60,000 raised to date. Support is still being sought to help reach the fundraising goal.



In June, Lambton Heritage Museum opened the new **Lambton**

Gallery following a major renovation that renewed the gallery space and transformed the museum into an **experiential destination** for Lambton.

Clockwise from top left: A family experiences the new Lambton Gallery following extensive renovations at the museum. 1) Interacting with one of several touchscreen kiosk and listening stations available throughout the gallery. 2) A new biodiversity feature educates visitors about the value of their natural environment. 3) The 'LAMBTON' feature wall in the museum's main lobby. 4) Artifacts showcasing stories 'Made in Lambton'. 5) Having fun 'On the Water' with the ship's wheel feature. 6) A new feature display on Lambton's military history honours those who served.



In 2023, JNAAG opened the exhibition **A Family Palette**. On loan from the **Ottawa Art Gallery**, the exhibition brings together the work of Frances-Anne Johnston, Franz Johnston and Franklin Arbuckle.

Clockwise from top left: 1) Students engage in a tour of the exhibition. 2) Facility/preparator Tim Churchill uses the skyjack to install a fabric feature as part of exhibition installation work. 3) Parents and students participate in a class tour of the exhibition. 4) Visitors experience an in-depth tour of the space as part of JNAAG's popular Red Dot tours. 5) Ottawa Art Gallery curator Rebecca Baciano leads gallery members on a preview tour of the exhibition. 6) Collections/preparator Shelly Mallon photographs the exhibition following installation.



Teen Photo Contest participants showcase their work as part of the *Humans of Lambton* exhibit at JNAAG, in collaboration with LCL.



Summer students like Liam Hurst (Visitor Services and Programming, OMC) provide museum staff support during the busy tourism season.



Library staff and members of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada prepare for the Stargazing Party at OMC in August.

Take Your Shot: Teen Photo Contest

Lambton County Library and the JNAAG worked together to deliver the *Take your Shot: Teen Photo Contest*, an annual event open to teens aged 13 to 18 in Lambton County. Teens were invited to submit photos based on the theme, “Humans of Lambton” in three categories: Groups, Candid/Environmental and Creative / Fine Art. Winning photos were selected by a jury from over 90 submissions and displayed in the exhibition, *Humans of Lambton* at the JNAAG alongside works from the permanent collection by Canadian artist and photographer, Stephen Livick.

Book Cover Design Contest

Lambton County Library and Gallery in the Grove launched a Book Cover Design Contest to coincide with the Gallery’s exhibit, “CANSCAIP in the Grove: The Art of Picturebooks” which featured artwork from a variety of Canadian picture book illustrators. Kids between the ages of 5 to 12 were encouraged to re-imagine a cover of their favourite book using any art medium. Winning submissions in two age categories were displayed at Gallery in the Grove for the duration of the exhibit. All other submissions were displayed at Sarnia Library from September 22 to October 21.

In total, 72 book cover designs with the winning designs featured in the gallery’s exhibit.

Community Battery Recycling

In April, Lambton County Library worked with the County’s Going Green Committee to offer battery recycling to the public at 12 of its libraries. A national consumer battery recycling organization, Call2Recycle, provides battery recycling boxes to each location. This initiative will help ensure batteries do not make their way into regular landfills where they can contaminate the environment and negatively impact future generations.

International Women’s Day

International Women’s Day was celebrated in March with a variety of events at Lambton County Library, including the display of the Famous 5 maquette at the Sarnia Library Theatre during its Canada-wide tour. The prominent Canadian suffragists depicted include Nellie McClung, Emily Murphy, Louise McKinney, Irene Parlby and Henrietta (Muir) Edwards, five Albertan women who blazed the trail for women’s rights in Canada in the 1920’s. The Library hosted a panel discussion on the topic of women in business and

community-driven women, a lecture from Lambton Heritage Museum about the history of women in Lambton County, a lecture from the Lambton County Archives about the history of Women’s Institutes in Lambton, and an opportunity for teens to create social justice banners.

Stargazing at Oil Museum of Canada

The night sky came alive in August at the Lambton County Library Stargazing Party, held on the grounds of Oil Museum of Canada. The event was coordinated in partnership with the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada - Sarnia, who provided telescopes for viewing stars, planets, and constellations.

Summer Students Positions

The museums, gallery and archives sites benefited from the support of summer student positions in 2023. \$58,302 in federal funding was received through Young Canada Works and Canada Summer Jobs to support the hiring of nine positions across the department. Students assisted in the areas of visitor experience, collections management, grounds keeping and communications.

Maximizing the Value of Our Collections & Spaces



Participants from the TNT ("Try New Things") program explore the exhibition *A Family Palette* at JNAAG.



Summer student Perrin Langille takes a photograph of a textile from the OMC collection to create a 3D image for use online and in programming.

The Cultural Services Division strategically manages and strengthens Lambton County's collections and associated research, developing and enhancing the important museum, gallery and library collections entrusted to the County.

A Library Collection that Responds to Community Interests

In 2023, 527,949 physical library items were loaned through in-person service to 13,238 unique Lambton County Library patrons, and 524,248 e-service items were accessed by cardholders online.

With increased demand on eLibrary services, the library continued to expand its electronic collections in 2023, with 4,268 new Overdrive titles (digital eBooks, eAudiobooks, streaming video and periodicals) added to the collection. The library also continued to subscribe to databases to give the library's 24,510 active card holders convenient access to millions of titles online to pursue their areas of interest.

In 2023, 13,714 new titles (19,768 total new items) were added to the library's physical collection of 176,095 items across 25 library locations. Cardholders borrowed 527,949 physical items in 2023.

The library's electronic circulation exceeded 2022 usage, with over 524,248 e-service items (digital books, newspapers, magazines, audiobooks, music, movies, etc.) accessed in 2023 representing approximately 50% of the total annual circulation (physical and electronic) in 2023. The library saw 20,738 public computer uses across its 25 libraries, as well as 26,129 uses of free library Wi Fi Service.

Lambton County Library also added a number of new items to its physical collection including walking poles, binoculars and fishing pole kits. These items are part of the library's Active Living Lifestyle Collection, which includes other items like Ontario Parks Passes, Snowshoes, and Pedometers.

2023 saw the addition of comics to the collection, which became available on the Hoopla app in June. More than 25,000 titles from 20 major publishers became available for library card holders to borrow electronically using the Hoopla app. Patrons have access to five titles per month, per library card.



A young library patron shows off his ship-in-a-bottle DIY, a tricky origami challenge included as part of the Summer Reading Program registration kits made available to families.



Members of the 1960s Sarnia rock group 'The Volcanoes' visited LHM to reminisce and check out a display celebrating the 1960s.



LCA staff view a negative from the collection using a light box in preparation for the 2024 exhibition *Hockey* at LHM.



The Inwood Writers Group published a book of short stories for Inwood's 150th anniversary celebrations.

Used Book Sale

The Library hosted a used book sale at the Wyoming Fairground where it sold duplicate, non-circulating or worn items from the library's collection that are no longer needed and to help make space for new materials. At the conclusion of the one-day event, about 350 people visited the sale, spending \$3,101.10 on purchases.

One Book Lambton

One Book Lambton 2023 introduced readers to *Still Life* by Louise Penny. Penny, a Canadian author living in Quebec, is known for her New York Times and Globe and Mail bestselling Chief Inspector Amand Gamache series. The One Book Lambton program encourages residents to read the same book and participate in programs and events that explore themes from the book.

New Acquisitions & Research

In 2023, the museums, gallery, and archives received a number of generous donations to the permanent collections of each site from area residents. There were 71 donations to LHM, 15 to OMC, 101 to LCA and 3 to JNAAG, which resulted in hundreds of individual

objects added to the permanent collections.

The redevelopment of the Lambton Gallery introduced new historical themes that created connections with the community, and led to new donations from visitors. LHM received several new donations that were directly inspired by the exhibition, including a coronet from the Lambton 149th Battalion, punch glasses from Lakeview Casino, a painting of the Bluewater Bridge which previously hung in the Bridge Tavern in Point Edward, a traditional highland uniform worn by a piper who was involved in celebrating the Bluewater Bridge opening in 1938, and even a patio lantern signed by Sarnia rock star Kim Mitchell, among other treasures.

To accommodate research, LCA responded to 723 virtual research requests related to genealogy and local history and welcomed 682 local researchers reviewing the resources available within the Archives.

Library Self-Serve Kiosk

While school was out of session at the Brigden Public School, library staff worked over the summer months to install security gates and a self-service kiosk at the Brigden Library

located inside the elementary school. This self-service kiosk will help the library provide students with access to reading and research materials during the hours when the library is not open and will reduce the number of lost / missing books at that specific location.

Enhanced Online Access to Collections

In 2020 the Division purchased a new, museum/archives specific Collections Management System (CMS) called Past Perfect. In 2023, a new feature was added, allowing the public to view the permanent collections of LCA, LHM and OMC online. The new online collections database will be available starting in January of 2024. Over 8,000 records of historical artifacts, photographs and archival documents will be available to search online. Records of all three institutions can be searched at one time from anywhere in the world. The currently available records represent a small selection of material from each institution's collection and staff will continue to upload new records on a regular basis. It is estimated that LCA, LHM and OMC house a combined total of over 100,000 individual artifacts.

Building Cultural Capacity & Raising Lambton's Profile



Lambton Shores Mayor Doug Cook, County Warden Kevin Marriott, MP Lianne Rood and MPP Bob Bailey open the new Lambton Gallery.



Promotional brochure holders and interactive kiosks were installed at all 29 Cultural Services facilities to promote local tourism and other resident services.

The Cultural Services Division endeavours to pursue opportunities that raise our profile at the provincial, national and international level, while maximizing our ability to contribute to the cultural, social and economic vitality of Lambton County.

OMC Hosts Minister Announcement

In December, the Honorable Graydon Smith, Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry hosted an announcement at OMC. The Ontario government used the museum as a venue to announce its plans to encourage innovation and reduce emissions by enabling industries to begin testing and demonstrating small-scale underground carbon storage projects on private land.

Interactive Kiosks at Cultural Sites

Interactive touchscreen kiosks were installed at all cultural services facilities in April, supported by a grant from the Ontario Tourism Relief Fund. The funding also included training by Tourism Sarnia-Lambton staff, with a goal of being able to better promote programs, exhibitions, events and activities offered across Sarnia-Lambton.

The interactive touchscreen kiosks were preloaded with the Tour Ontario's Blue Coast app, and accompanying poster holders contain information for Tourism Sarnia-Lambton and Lambton County's cultural sites. The kiosks will also be used to host promotional campaigns that raise awareness of other services offered to residents.

Ontario Public Library Week

Lambton County Library celebrated Ontario Public Library Week in a big way from October 16 to 20, 2023. In addition to contests with great prizes, and some sweet treats at every library, firefighters from a variety of fire services delivered Firefighter Storytimes, and members of Lambton County Library's Board helped library staff deliver storytimes and Kids' Club programs in Corunna, Watford, Oil Springs, Forest, Sarnia, Point Edward, Arkona, and Wyoming.

At the conclusion of Ontario Public Library Week, 87 new library card memberships had been activated, 15 people had been referred to get a library card from a friend, 70 new readers registered for the Beanstack app, 232 readers registered for the weekly challenge logging 921 books, 235 completed activities and 105 bingo winners. Adult programs attracted 144 participants, and 94 participants visited Firefighter Storytimes.



The Honorable Graydon Smith, Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry (center) hosts an announcement at OMC, joined by Bob Bailey, MPP for Sarnia-Lambton (left) and Kevin Marriott, Warden, Lambton County (right).



New entry ramps are installed at the Rokeby School (pictured), Cameron Church and Tudhop Cabin to improve accessibility at LHM.

Managing Our Resources Efficiently & Effectively

As a guiding principle, the Cultural Services Division ensures the most efficient and effective use of County resources, and strives for continuous innovation in addressing the needs of the community.

LHM Renovation & Site Work

In June, staff welcomed the public back to the renovated Lambton Gallery space at LHM. The renovation included a complete redesign of the exhibit space to create a new attraction for the museum. The design includes multi-use and temporary exhibit spaces, as well as a permanent exhibit area with new multi-media and interactive features, LED lighting, display cases and exhibit walls, audio capabilities, video surveillance, and improved accessibility features. Other projects at the LHM site included the installation of new accessible ramps at three historic buildings with funding from the Federal Enabling Accessibility Fund of \$68,796, as well as roof repairs to the main museum building.

Joint Library Facilities Review

In 2023, County Council approved the Joint Library Facilities Review study, defining the type

and quantity of library space required to meet community needs to the year 2031. This included the adoption of a Library Classification System that aligns with the ARUPLO Guidelines, consisting of four types of libraries: Urban, Large, Medium and Small. As a recommendation of the study, staff developed a Facility Standards Policy that was later approved by Council, defining minimum standards for design, amenities and upkeep of buildings occupied by Lambton County Library. This policy will be used to evaluate existing library spaces to prioritize required investments.

Sarnia, Clearwater & Bright's Grove Libraries

In 2023, staff worked with the City of Sarnia to advance several priorities identified in the 2017 Sarnia Library Space Needs study. At Sarnia Library, renovations were completed to the rear entrance of the facility to improve accessibility. The former Mallroad Library location closed its doors in November as the renovation of the new Clearwater Library at Clearwater Arena approached completion. It is anticipated that this new space, nearly twice the floor area of the Mallroad location, will be open to the public in February, 2024. Detailed design work and costing was completed for the Bright's Grove Library expansion, and a financial commitment was made by Sarnia City Council to advance the project.



Concrete footings are poured as part of the foundation for the reconstruction of the historic Canatara Cabin at LHM.



A new accessible service desk is installed as part of the renovations to the former community hall at the Clearwater Arena in Sarnia, in preparation for the opening of the new Clearwater Library, scheduled for February of 2024.



**Judith & Norman
Alix Art Gallery**

147 Lochiel Street
Sarnia, ON
N7T 0B4
519-336-8127
www.jnaag.ca

**Lambton Heritage
Museum**

10035 Museum Road
Grand Bend, ON
NOM 1T0
519-243-2600
www.heritagemuseum.ca

**Lambton County
Library Headquarters**

787 Broadway Street
Wyoming, ON
NON 1T0
519-845-3324
www.lclibrary.ca

**Lambton County
Archives**

787 Broadway Street
Wyoming, ON
NON 1T0
519-845-5426
www.lambtonarchives.ca

**Oil Museum of Canada
National Historic Site**

2423 Kelly Road
Oil Springs, ON
NON 1P0
519-834-2840
www.oilmuseum.ca



BACK COVER IMAGES: Clockwise from top left - 1) A young artist showcases her creations as part of the TNT Summer Splash program at JNAAG. 2) Warden Kevin Marriott poses alongside the Lambton County Council historical display at LHM. 3) Firefighter Storytime at Alvinston Library included an opportunity to try on some firefighter gear. 4) Representatives from Lambton County meet with The Honorable Graydon Smith, Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry at OMC. Left to Right are Laurie Webb, Manager, Museums, Gallery & Archives, Bob Bailey, MPP for Sarnia-Lambton, Minister Smith, Kevin Marriott, Warden, Lambton County, and Andrew Meyer, General Manager, Cultural Services Division.