



CULTURAL SERVICES

2025 Annual Report



Cultural Services Division

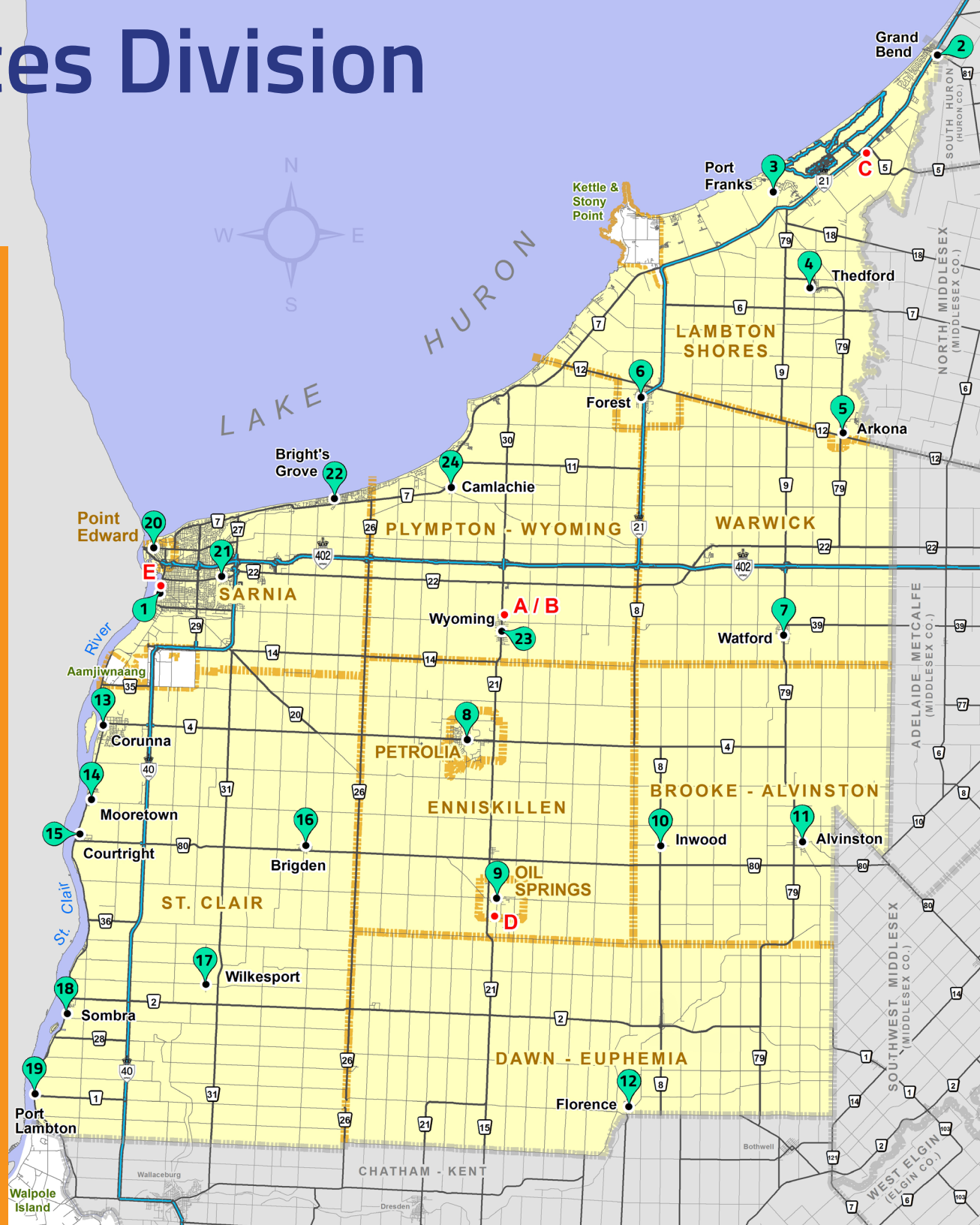
OVERVIEW MAP



Lambton Heritage Museum, 10035 Museum Road, Grand Bend

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	Samia Library	519-337-3291	124 Christina Street South	Samia
Region 2	2	Grand Bend Library	519-238-2067	15 Gill Road	Lambton Shores
	3	Port Franks Library	519-243-2820	9997 Port Franks Road	Lambton Shores
	4	Theedford 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	Petrolia
	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
Region 4	13	Corunna Library	519-862-1132	417 Lyndoch Street	St. Clair
	14	Mooretown Library	519-867-2823	1166 Emily Street	St. Clair
	15	Courtright Library	519-867-2712	1533 Fourth Street	St. Clair
	16	Brigden Library	519-864-1142	1540 Duncan Street	St. Clair
	17	Wilkesport Library	519-864-4000	1349 Wilkesport Line	St. Clair
	18	Sombra Library	519-892-3711	3536 St. Clair Parkway	St. Clair
	19	Port Lambton Library	519-677-5217	507 Stoddard Street	St. Clair
Region 5	20	Point Edward Library	519-336-3291	220 Michigan Avenue	Point Edward
	21	Clearwater Library	519-542-2580	1400 Wellington Street	Samia
	22	Bright's Grove Library	519-869-2351	2618 Hamilton Road	Samia
	23	Wyoming Library	519-845-0181	536 Niagara Street	Plympton-Wyoming
	24	Camlachie Library	519-899-2202	6745 Camlachie Road	Plympton-Wyoming



Contents



Visitors create linoblock art at the Oil Museum of Canada's Black Gold Fest.



Staff at Petrolia Library get into the Halloween spirit.



A docent at JNAAG leads a guided tour of *Storm Watch*.

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COVER IMAGES: Clockwise from top left - 1) Archivist / Supervisor, Nicole Aszalos shows the process of how Lambton County Archives stores family diaries. 2) Visitors explore an interactive display at the Oil Museum of Canada. 3) Artist John Williams paints *Debweewe Giizhik | (sound in the distance) from the sky* at JNAAG. 4) Carriage drivers visited Lambton Heritage Museum on a fall morning for a ride. 5) Adrienne Lebert, Lambton County Library Public Services Coordinator - Adult, poses with author Adam Shoalts at an Author Talk at Sarnia Library Theatre.

Cultural Services Division Profile

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 24 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 26,848 active cardholders include the ability to borrow traditional items like books, audiobooks, and magazines and non-traditional items like video games, snow shoes, telescopes and more. Patrons can participate in story hours, hear from guest speakers, access reference service and access the Internet through public computer workstations or free public wi-fi. 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) educational courses, electronic databases and research resources.

Judith & Norman Alix Art Gallery

Judith & Norman Alix Art Gallery (JNAAG) is a free public art gallery located in downtown Sarnia. JNAAG engages the community through a wide-range of exhibitions, tours, lectures and programs for all ages. The Gallery's collection is comprised of over 1,400 primarily Canadian historical and contemporary works of both local and national significance. The Gallery holds the distinction of Category 'A' designation from the Department of Canadian Heritage. As such, the Gallery meets and maintains a range of strict building, operational and professional standards.

Oil Museum of Canada - National Historic Site

Oil Museum of Canada 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 dotting 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 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. In total, the collection includes approximately 7,731 linear feet of records under care—the equivalent of nearly 1.5 kilometres of Lambton County's documentary history. The archives also offers free 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 is entrusted with the care of over 25,000 historic artifacts which preserve the history of Lambton County. Situated on 30 acres in an ecologically significant Carolinian forest, the museum maintains six historic buildings, two display buildings and one main exhibition centre. The museum also offers scenic picnic grounds and a 1km Woodland Heritage Trail. Lambton Heritage Museum 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 planned by community organizations and cultural groups. With a capacity of just over 300 and projection, sound and lighting equipment, the theatre space is available for rent for 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.

Wheels & Wells Car Show at the Oil Museum of Canada.



Enhancing Access, Inclusion & Community Engagement



Welcoming Our Community

21,312 people visited museums, gallery and archives sites.

Beyond Our Walls

The Oil Museum of Canada delivered 49 heritage programs to long-term care homes, reaching **1,045 residents** across Lambton County.

Cardholder Growth

Lambton County Library welcomed **5,142 new cardholders** and grew its active cardholders by **5%**.

Learning Without Limits

Lambton County Library circulated over **1.1 million** items, supporting learning, discovery, and enjoyment across the county.



Visitors pose with artwork they created with JNAAG at the Sarnia Pop Culture Show.



A family visits the Oil Museum of Canada.



Families explore the feature exhibit, *A Taste of Science*, at Lambton Heritage Museum.

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.

Visits and Outreach

In 2025, Museum, Gallery, and Archives sites attracted 21,312 visitors, reflecting strong community engagement with Lambton County's cultural heritage. JNAAG welcomed 7,446 visitors, while the Oil Museum of Canada attracted 4,626. Lambton Heritage Museum welcomed 8,519 visitors and Lambton County Archives supported 721 researchers.

Through targeted outreach initiatives, Museums, Gallery, and Archives connected with an additional 5,018 participants at schools and community venues, extending access to programming and enhancing appreciation for local history and the arts throughout the region.

Digital Access and Learning with the Library

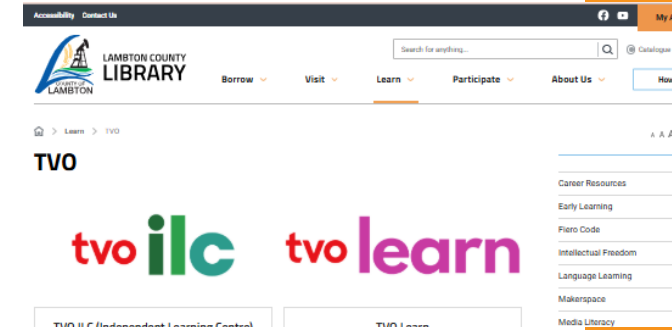
Lambton County Library's digital services portfolio continued to break down barriers to learning and opportunity throughout 2025. Grant Connect, a comprehensive online database, equipped local residents, non-profit organizations, and community groups with access to searchable funding opportunities, grant-writing resources, and application support tools.

Through a new partnership with TVO (Ontario's public educational media organization), library cardholders accessed high-quality digital learning content spanning curriculum-aligned resources, documentaries, and educational programming for children, students, and adult learners pursuing knowledge across diverse subjects.

Youth digital literacy advanced through Fiero Code, an innovative online platform that introduces young learners to computer programming and computational thinking through engaging, game-based lessons. This resource helped cultivate essential 21st-century skills among Lambton County's next generation.



Lambton County Archives Archivist / Supervisor, Nicole Aszalos leads a behind the scenes tour, being filmed by YourTV Cogeco during Archives Awareness Week.



Lambton County Library added free educational resources in partnership with TVO.



Rajni Perera *Futures* at JNAAG.



Larry Towell *Boundaries* at JNAAG.



Oil Museum of Canada's new Curator / Supervisor, Meagan Sinclair installs artifacts at Sarnia Library for an outreach exhibition.



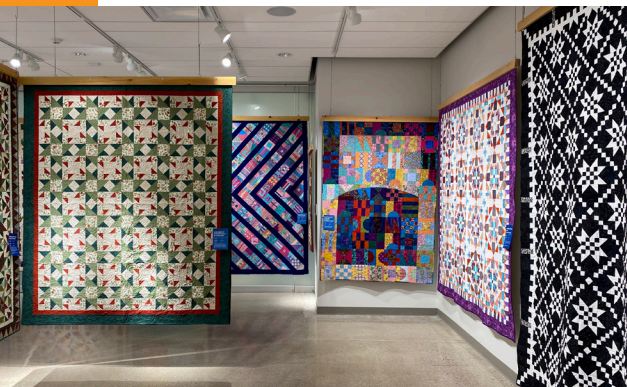
A young patron visits Watford Library to get her first library card.

Library Use and Engagement

Lambton County Library circulated 1,128,985 items among 26,848 active cardholders, including 5,142 new patrons. These figures reflect the library's enduring role as an essential community resource, providing access to books, digital media, and information resources that support learning, recreation, and personal enrichment.

Museums, Gallery, and Archives Exhibitions

Throughout 2025, Museums, Gallery, and Archives presented a diverse and engaging exhibition program that attracted visitors and sparked dialogue across multiple disciplines.



Lambton Quilters Guild Quilt Show at Lambton Heritage Museum.

Lambton Heritage Museum opened the year with *Return of the Swans*, exploring the environmental significance of the majestic tundra swans to our region. Subsequent exhibitions included *A Taste of Science*, on loan from the Canada Agriculture and Food Museum, which made scientific discovery accessible and engaging for all ages, and the biennial *North Lambton Quilters Guild Quilt Show*, celebrating traditional textile artistry and the skilled craftsmanship of local quilters.

The Oil Museum of Canada celebrated a century of national recognition, marking 100 years since its designation as a National Historic Site. This milestone exhibition, presented at Sarnia Library, reinforced the museum's critical role in preserving and interpreting Canada's petroleum heritage and the industry's transformative impact on the region and the nation. Additional exhibitions included *Village of Oil Springs: 160th Anniversary*, presented at Oil Springs Library and *Patrick Pickford: Modern International Driller*, was the featured lobby display that highlighted the global influence of a local innovator.

JNAAG delivered an ambitious exhibition calendar featuring both regional and national art. Early 2025 programming included Leslie Reid and Robert Kautuk's *Dark Ice*; *Sculpting Life*; *Pysanky*; Rajni Perera *Futures*; *Storm Watch*; and *Stories in Focus*, each offering distinct perspectives on art, culture, and human experience. The year concluded with three exhibitions: John Williams *Debwewe Giizhik | (sound in the distance) from the sky*, which centers Indigenous voices and perspectives; Larry Towell *Boundaries* the first displayed retrospective of internationally award winning photographer (and Lambton County resident) Larry Towell, and *Making Space*, showcasing recent acquisitions to the permanent collection. These exhibitions continue into 2026, extending their community impact.

Digital Impact



731,926 website views.



313,818 website users.



2,747,351 screens reached through social media.



921 hours of video watched.



Email campaigns received approximately 307,074 engagements.

Representing three websites, thirteen social media channels, and five email newsletters.

Youth Voice and Inclusion

Lambton County Library established a Teen Advisory Council in 2025, providing young people with a meaningful platform to influence library programming, communications methods and collections. This initiative recognizes teens as valuable stakeholders while fostering leadership development, civic engagement, and ensuring library services authentically reflect the interests and needs of youth in our community.

Mobile Library Reach

Throughout 2025, 212 residents of participating long-term care homes and retirement communities benefited from 230 Mobile Library visits. This outreach service brings library materials and programs directly to individuals who may face mobility challenges or transportation barriers, expanding library access across the community.



Mobile Library van in front of Albany Retirement Village in Petrolia.



Christina Sydorko, Educational Program Coordinator at the Oil Museum of Canada, delivers a program at Twin Lakes Terrace Long-Term Care Facility.

Long-Term Care History Education

The Oil Museum of Canada, delivered heritage and cultural programming directly to long-term care homes, extending Lambton's cultural reach to these communities. Through 49 visits to homes, programming reached 1,045 people, reinforcing Cultural Services' commitment to inclusive access while showcasing Lambton's rich history and expertise within care homes.

StoryWalk® at East Lambton Community Complex

In 2025, Lambton County Library launched a new StoryWalk® at the East Lambton Community Complex in Watford, creating an outdoor, interactive reading experience for children and families. Installed along a walking path near the complex, the StoryWalk® encourages early literacy, physical activity, and family engagement by combining pages of a children's book with movement and exploration. This addition expands access to literacy programming beyond library walls and strengthens the Library's presence in community spaces across Lambton County.



New StoryWalk® from Lambton County Library at the East Lambton Community Complex in Watford.

Creating & Delivering Great Experiences



Artist Rajni Perera leads an *Art & Ideas* Lecture on her exhibition, *Futures*.



A young visitor meets Victorian Santa at the Oil Museum of Canada's *Holiday Open House*.

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 use of emergent technologies to enhance the visitor experience.

Programs and Participation

Cultural Services continued to create meaningful opportunities for residents and visitors to learn, connect, and explore their creativity through diverse programming.

Lambton County Library delivered 7,717 programs that engaged 56,611 participants across all age groups. Programming spanned early literacy storytimes, tech workshops, author visits, book clubs, STEAM programs, craft sessions, and community events—each designed to foster learning, creativity, and social connection.

The Museum, Gallery, and Archives sites collectively offered 198 programs that attracted 4,020 participants in 2025. These experiences ranged from hands-on heritage workshops and artist talks to archival research sessions, exhibition tours, seasonal celebrations, and cultural events that deepened public engagement with art, history, and local heritage.



Author Adam Shoalts speaks to a full Sarnia Library Theatre about his book *Vanished Beyond the Map: The Mystery of Lost Explorer Hubert Darrell*.



Community Participation

More than **60,600 people** took part in library, museum, gallery and archives programs across Lambton County.



Signature Events that Draw Crowds

Major festivals and events welcomed thousands of visitors, including **3,128 attendees** at the Fall Colour & Craft Festival and **525 attendees** at Black Gold Fest.



A Summer of Reading

3,014 readers shared the joy of reading by logging **47,265 books** during the Summer Reading Challenge.

Participants sketch in the *Storm Watch* exhibition space as part of *Group of Seven Day* programming at JNAAG.



Councillor Brian White reads a story to young patrons at Bright's Grove Library as part of Ontario Public Library Week celebrations.



Patron-submitted photo of tomatoes started using Lambton County Library's 2025 One Seed Lambton seeds.



A patron reads outside as part of Lambton County Library's Summer Reading Challenge.

Rhythms of Lambton

Lambton County Library's 2025 Rhythms of Lambton concert series welcomed 480 attendees across multiple free performances by local ensembles including The Georgian Singers, Forest Excelsior Band, Lambton Concert Band, and Relic. These concerts celebrated regional musical talent while providing accessible cultural experiences that brought the community together.

Ontario Public Library Week

Lambton County Library celebrated Ontario Public Library Week by highlighting libraries' community impact. Over 300 people filled the Sarnia Library Theatre to capacity to hear author Adam Schultz speak about his book, "Vanished Beyond the Map: The Mystery of Lost Explorer Hubert Darrell" and libraries across the county welcomed back County Councillors to participate in "Councillor Storytimes". The "I Love Lambton County Library" campaign collected 534 testimonials. These activities strengthened connections between staff, municipal leaders, and residents while emphasizing the library's essential role in public service.

One Seed Lambton

One Seed Lambton's 2025 program engaged 3,000 residents in growing the Purple Cherokee Tomato, enhancing food literacy skills, environmental awareness, and community connection. Participants grew plants, shared harvests, and exchanged knowledge, sparking discussions about sustainable food systems and the rewards of gardening while strengthening ties between Cultural Services and community partners.

Winter Reading Challenge and Gabriel Alluhdua Talk: Harvesting Freedom

Lambton County Library's Winter Reading Challenge encouraged participants of all ages to explore new books, develop literacy skills, and celebrate the joy of reading during the winter months. Complementing this, the library hosted acclaimed speaker Gabriel Alluhdua for a presentation titled "Harvesting Freedom: The Life of A Migrant Worker". This powerful presentation provided insights into the migrant worker experience and fostered community understanding and dialogue about agricultural labour and social justice.

Summer Reading Challenge

In 2025, Lambton County Library's Summer Reading Challenge engaged readers across Lambton County under the theme Wild Wonder. The program encouraged participants of all ages to explore new books, develop literacy skills, and engage with stories in creative and interactive ways. A launch party kicked off the challenge, generating excitement among readers, families, and library staff. The challenge saw 3,014 people read 47,265 books throughout the summer months. The Summer Reading Challenge continues to be a key program in promoting literacy, curiosity, and a love of reading throughout the county. It is also an important tool to ensure school age children maintain their literacy skills over the summer break away from formal education.



Participants learn about reptiles as part of Lambton County Library's Summer Reading Challenge Launch Party.



Wild Ontario shows a bird as part of Lambton Heritage Museum's PA Day Event, *Wildlife Encounter: Birds of Prey*.



Participants take part in a plein air workshop overlooking the St. Clair River during JNAAG's *Group of Seven Day*.



Lambton Heritage Museum's *Fall Colour & Craft Festival, 2025*.

PA Day Programming

In 2025, PA Day programming across Cultural Services sites offered children and families a variety of engaging and educational activities during school breaks. Programs included hands-on learning experiences related to natural and industrial heritage, art workshops, coding activities, movie screenings, and other interactive opportunities. These sessions encouraged creativity, curiosity, and a love of learning outside the classroom, while providing welcoming spaces for families to connect with culture, history, and community resources.

Black Gold Fest

Black Gold Fest at the Oil Museum of Canada, coordinated alongside the Village of Oil Springs' 160th anniversary celebrations, attracted 525 attendees in 2025. The event spotlighted Lambton County's petroleum heritage through demonstrations, interactive activities, and family programming. This signature festival continues drawing local and regional visitors to explore the county's unique industrial history.

Dave Jurasek's 1970 Plymouth Roadrunner parked at the Oil Museum of Canada's *Wheels & Wells Car Show*.

Fall Colour & Craft Festival

Lambton Heritage Museum's Fall Colour and Craft Festival welcomed 3,128 visitors in 2025, showcasing 79 local artisans. This popular annual sale raised \$18,859 for the Canatara Cabin reconstruction, reinforcing its dual role as both an important venue for local artisans and a valued fundraising initiative.

Wheels & Wells Car Show

The Oil Museum of Canada's inaugural Wheels & Wells Car Show welcomed 450 attendees and showcased 122 vehicles in 2025, successfully launching a new celebration that engages new audiences and unites automotive heritage with local history. Car enthusiasts, families, and history lovers gathered to explore stories of engineering, innovation, and community pride, establishing a promising foundation for this new annual tradition.



Group of Seven Day

Group of Seven Day at JNAAG engaged 105 participants in 2025 through programming that connected Canadian art history with local context. Activities included plein air painting workshops along the St. Clair River, art workshops in the exhibition space, tours, and family programming. The event strengthened appreciation for the connections between visual art, landscape, and community identity.

Sharing Preservation Knowledge

Lambton County Archives' Preservation Lab was launched as a series of free, hands-on workshops designed to teach residents practical skills for preserving their own historical documents at home. The sessions focused on topics such as proper handling, storage, and basic conservation techniques for photographs, paper records, and other family keepsakes. By sharing professional preservation knowledge, the Archives empowered community members to protect personal and family histories, while strengthening awareness of the importance of long-term care for documentary heritage.

Developing Partnerships that Increase Participation in Culture



Staff and partners plant trees at the Oil Museum of Canada during the Tree Canada Partners in Planting event

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.

Publications and Research

Lambton Heritage Museum and Lambton County Archives continued to support local authors and researchers in 2025 by providing access to collections, research assistance, and historical expertise for publications. This work contributed to several historical projects, including publications focused on Grand Bend history, historic farmhouses, and the life of celebrated philanthropist and Sarnia resident, Maud Hanna. By supporting research and publication, the museum and archives help ensure that Lambton County's stories are documented, shared, and preserved for future generations, while strengthening relationships with local historians, writers, and scholars.

Summer Reading Challenge and First Nations Communities

In collaboration with Maajigin Gumig Greenhouse at Aamjiwnaang First Nation, Lambton County Library developed an Earth Ball Kit that paired seeds, supplies and information to grow native plant species with Indigenous plant knowledge. The kit honours traditional Anishinaabe growing practices and integrates Anishinaabemowin language, supporting ongoing efforts to preserve and revitalize Indigenous languages and cultural knowledge. Distributed to participating Summer Reading Challenge registrants, the kits invited children and families to grow native plant species while learning about their cultural significance.

This collaboration provided an opportunity to strengthen connections with Kettle and Stony Point First Nation Public Library and Bkejwanong First Nation Public Library, and helped expand access to summer literacy programming across First Nations communities. The collaboration with Stony Point First Nation Public Library saw approximately 30 children and families attend in-library events, and a Hillside School presentation reached over 100

students and family members. Lambton County Library provided registration kits for distribution to Bkejwanong First Nation Public Library patrons which complimented their TD Summer Reading Program.

Trees at Oil Museum of Canada

Environmental partnerships continued with tree planting initiatives at the Oil Museum of Canada. Over 400 native trees and shrubs were planted on the museum grounds, enhancing biodiversity and supporting local ecosystems. This initiative was made possible through collaboration with the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority, Tree Canada, Enbridge, TD Tree Day, Skyline, and Lambton County Library, demonstrating the value of cross-sector partnerships in promoting environmental stewardship and community engagement.

Tourism Sarnia-Lambton Collaborations

Cultural Services Division continued partnerships with Tourism Sarnia-Lambton throughout 2025, coordinating marketing efforts and resources that raised the profile of cultural attractions and drove tourism to the region.



Environmental Stewardship
More than **400 native trees** and shrubs were planted at the Oil Museum of Canada through cross-sector partnerships.



Expanding Knowledge
46 Anishinaabemowin words with English translations were featured on the Akii-Biwaakwad Earth Ball Kit available to all Summer Reading Challenge participants.



Youth Voices Through Art
The Teen Photo Contest gave **33 youth** a platform to share their art, with **26 photographs** selected for exhibition.



Reading That Adds Up
Students across Lambton County read an impressive **1,045,682 minutes** during the Clash of the Classrooms competition.



Growing Literacy Together
Weekly EarlyON storytimes reached **4,268** parents, caregivers, and young children, supporting early learning across Lambton County.

From Left: Vanitia Campbell, Lambton County Library, Public Services Coordinator - Youth, Dylan Henry, former greenhouse technician at Maajigin Gumig Greenhouse, and Adrienne Lebert, Lambton County Library, Public Services Coordinator - Adult showcase the Akii-Biwaakwad Earth Ball Kit.



Teen Photo Contest winners are presented with their winning photos. Left to right: Lambton College presents Fantasy, Lambton County Library presents Overall, JNAAG presents Comedy.



Baby Bookworm kits sit in bassinets at Bluewater Health ready to give out to new babies. *Photo courtesy of Literacy Lambton Facebook page.*



Lambton Heritage Museum's Curator / Supervisor, Dana Thorne with Diane Carrothers at the premier of *We Lend A Hand* at Sarnia Library Theatre.

EarlyON Partnership

Lambton County Library partnered with the County of Lambton Social Services Division to visit Ontario's EarlyON Child and Family Centres throughout Lambton County to deliver a storytime program. These visits offered parents and caregivers of children aged 0 to 6 various engaging activities and learning experiences, with 4,268 participants throughout the year.

Teen Photo Contest Expands

The Teen Photo Contest, a collaboration between Lambton County Library and JNAAG encouraged youth to enhance their artistic skills and connect with their community.

In 2025, the contest expanded with Lambton College becoming an official partner, providing additional expertise and opportunities for young photographers. With the theme "Stories in Focus" 98 photographs were submitted by 33 participants. A panel of jurors selected 26 photographs for the *Stories in Motion* exhibit. This contest provided a platform for young artists to share their perspectives, develop visual literacy skills, and contribute to Lambton's cultural narrative.

Clash of the Classrooms

The third annual Clash of the Classrooms partnership between Lambton County Library and Chatham-Kent Public Library brought 19 Lambton County schools together for literacy challenges. A total of 48 classrooms participated across Lambton, reading an impressive 1,045,682 minutes collectively. This initiative showcases a shared commitment to improving literacy while strengthening collaboration between bordering library systems that share district school boards.

Baby Bookworm

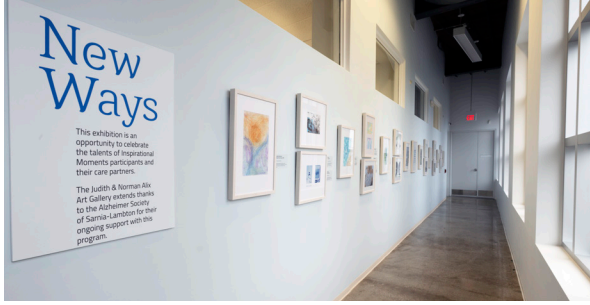
Lambton County Library continued to support Literacy Lambton's Baby Bookworm initiative. Each Baby Bookworm Bag included materials and information to encourage early reading habits, fostering literacy from birth. Through this partnership over 1,000 bags were delivered to new families at Bluewater Health in 2025, connecting them with library services from their child's first days.

Film and Local History

Lambton Heritage Museum partnered with local filmmakers to support the Sarnia premiere of *We Lend A Hand: The Forgotten Story of Ontario Farmerettes* at the Sarnia Library Theatre. Produced by Bonnie Sitter and Colin Field, the documentary highlights the contributions of more than 40,000 teenage girls who volunteered on Canadian farms during and after the Second World War, including many in Lambton County. The partnership complemented the Museum's ongoing interpretation of the Farmerette story through its in-person exhibition on the Ontario Farm Service Force and a related online exhibit, reinforcing the Museum's role in preserving and sharing this important chapter of local and national history.

Employment Ontario Collaboration

The collaboration with the County of Lambton's Lambton Works Centre continued to establish drop-in employment support services at six library locations, including Alvinston, Corunna, Forest, Thedford, Watford and Wyoming. This initiative connected rural job seekers with local employers and resources, expanding access to employment opportunities.



JNAAG's *New Ways* exhibition, curated from Inspirational Moments artwork.



The Art & Books Book Club touring Rajni Perera *Futures* at JNAAG after discussing the chosen book at Sarnia Library.



Visitors at Lambton Heritage Museum admiring quilts from the North Lambton Quilters' Guild Quilt Show.

Inspirational Moments

JNAAG continued its successful Inspirational Moments program, providing art-based programming for individuals living with Alzheimer's or dementia in partnership with the Alzheimer's Society of Sarnia-Lambton. This meaningful initiative uses art to spark memories, encourage social connection, and enhance quality of life. In 2025, 99 participants living with Alzheimer's or dementia connected through art during 12 sessions.

Huron Shores Area Transit Partnership

In partnership with Huron Shores Area Transit and the Municipality of Lambton Shores, Lambton County Library continued to offer Smart Cards in its collection, which provide free, unlimited travel on the transit system. Patrons can borrow transit passes for up to five days. In 2025, these passes supported inter-community connections across Lambton Shores, South Huron, North Middlesex, Bluewater, Kettle & Stony Point First Nation, Sarnia, London, Goderich, Sarnia, and the addition of Wyoming in 2025.

Lambton Immigration Partnership

The Cultural Services Division participated in surveys and training with the Lambton Immigration Partnership (LIP) to better understand newcomer experiences and enhance inclusive service delivery. As a result, cultural sites are anticipated to strengthen their role as key resource centres for newcomers, offering access to information, community connections, and culturally responsive programs that support settlement, learning, and integration in Lambton County.

Book Clubs

In 2025, book clubs continued to offer dynamic opportunities for collaboration between Lambton County Library and the Museums, Gallery, and Archives Department. The Art & Books Club at JNAAG invited participants to explore the connections between visual art and literature. At Lambton County Archives, Beyond the Book Club encouraged participants to engage with historical themes. These programs demonstrate the strength of cross-institutional partnerships in promoting lifelong learning and meaningful cultural engagement.

North Lambton Quilters Guild

In 2025, Lambton Heritage Museum continued its long-standing partnership with the North Lambton Quilters' Guild with the return of the biennial Quilt Show. The Guild has exhibited at the museum for nearly two decades, sharing both traditional and contemporary textile work with the community. The 2025 exhibition featured quilts alongside handmade items such as clothing, wall hangings, and accessories, while also highlighting the personal stories, inspirations, and techniques behind each piece. The opening weekend included opportunities for visitors to meet Guild members, explore quilting vendors, and engage directly with local makers, reinforcing the museum's role as a hub for community-based creativity and living heritage.

Maximizing the Value of Our Collections & Spaces



Dana Thorne, Curator/Supervisor at Lambton Heritage Museum, inspects artifacts in the Collections Centre.

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.



Donna Barnes, Collection Coordinator, and Meagan Sinclair, Curator/Supervisor at the Oil Museum of Canada, test new shelving in the museum's collection storage.

Oil Museum of Canada Collections Storage Renovation

The Oil Museum of Canada renovated its storage space to increase capacity and improve artifact accessibility. Under the supervision of staff, approximately 4,000 artifacts—including bankers boxes, bins, textile boxes, framed pieces, and oversized items—were inventoried, packed, and temporarily relocated while a wall was removed and high-density shelving prepared for installation. The upgraded storage will enhance preservation, support ongoing collecting, and allow future generations to explore Lambton County's industrial heritage, with public tours planned for 2026.

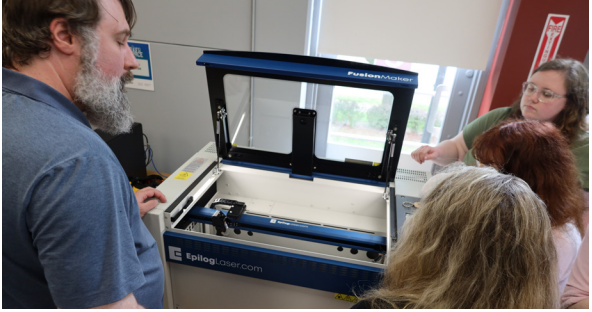
Lambton County Archives reused shelving that had previously been in the Oil Museum allowing for better preservation and access while supporting efficient management of historical records. These upgrades collectively strengthen the division's ability to care for artifacts and documents, ensuring Lambton County's cultural and documentary heritage is preserved for current and future generations.

Online Collection Database Continues to Grow

The Museums and Archives' Past Perfect collections database continued to expand throughout 2025 providing enhanced online and public access to records from museums and archives collections. The system recorded 15,918 searches conducted throughout the year, demonstrating strong public engagement with digital resources. At the end of 2025, the database included 20,923 records available for public search, with ongoing additions increasing accessibility each year.

New Acquisitions and Research

In 2025, the Museums, Gallery and Archives collections continued to grow, with 129 donations adding thousands of new items to the permanent collection. Support for research remained a priority throughout the year. Staff fulfilled dozens of research requests and welcomed 479 local researchers, supporting projects that deepen understanding of Lambton County's heritage and collections.



Sarnia Library staff learn how to use the updated Laser Cutter in Sarnia Library's Makerspace.



A tool kit available to borrow through Lambton County Library's Library of Things.



Damien Rousseliere, a researcher from France, visits the Archives while researching utopian communities, including the Maxwell Settlement (now Bright's Grove).

Library Collections

In 2025, Lambton County Library served 26,848 active cardholders and welcomed 5,142 new members. The library works annually to ensure it offers a balanced and current collection to its cardholders. In 2025, the library's physical collection totalled 184,981 items, including 12,167 new titles. Cardholders also have access to millions of eBooks, eAudiobooks, newspapers, magazines, music, movies and TV shows through subscription based services.

Access to technology remained a critical service. Public computers were used 26,165 times throughout the year, and the Wi-Fi hot-spot lending program recorded 192 checkouts. Free public Wi-Fi access continues to be in demand at libraries, underscoring the library's ongoing role in providing reliable internet access for learning, work, and everyday needs across Lambton County. The library also updated its laser cutter, enhancing makerspace technology and expanding opportunities for hands-on learning and creativity.

Virtual Library Services Expand

Lambton County Library continued to strengthen its virtual services throughout 2025, ensuring residents could access resources anytime and from anywhere. Databases and online library resources provided 24/7 access to research, learning, and reference materials, with 29,472 usages recorded over the year. Access to reading materials expanded through virtual books and audiobooks available on Libby and Hoopla, supporting flexible and convenient reading options for patrons. In addition, 37 virtual author talks were viewed 3,263 times.

Virtual exhibits from the Museums, Gallery and Archives Department extended experiences to online audiences, with 15 exhibits viewed 438 times. Programming shared through YouTube and other platforms increased access to educational content.

Together, these services reflect the Division's ongoing commitment to equitable access, lifelong learning, and digital inclusion across Lambton County.

Community Librarian, Naomi Woods, plays the ukelele from Lambton County Library's Library of Things.

Community Meeting Rooms

Community meeting rooms across Lambton County Library demonstrated substantial community engagement with 813 bookings, accumulating 2,251 hours of use and serving 1,752 attendees.

Library of Things

In 2025, the Library of Things continued to expand, offering access to useful items beyond traditional library materials. The collection grew to 19 unique items with the addition of Tennis, Ukulele and Tool Kits. By making occasional-use items available for borrowing rather than purchase, this service supports resource sharing, reduces waste, and helps patrons save money.



Building Cultural Capacity & Raising Lambton's Profile

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.



Building owners, artists, friends, family and members of the Downtown Collective gather to celebrate the completion of the waterfront mural, partially funded by the Creative County Grant Program.

Behind the scenes of filming the documentary *We Lend a Hand*, which explores the story of the Farmerettes in Lambton County and was partially funded by the Creative County Grant Program.



Creative County Initiative

The Creative County Grant Program continued to invest in new and innovative cultural projects throughout 2025, building cultural capacity and strengthening the creative community across Lambton County.

Nineteen grants totaling \$69,275 were awarded to local organizations and groups. Funded projects in 2025 spanned community celebrations, Indigenous cultural programming, public art, theatre, music, heritage interpretation, youth literacy, and local history initiatives. Based on estimated project costs submitted by applicants, the 2025 grants are expected to leverage more than \$322,000 in local cultural investment, amplifying the impact of County funding through partnerships and community support.



Performers take the stage in 1950s-inspired costumes during Pathways Health Centre for Children's Expressive Arts 2025 theatre production.

IODE Celebrates Sculpting Life

To celebrate the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire (IODE)'s 125th anniversary, JNAAG welcomed provincial IODE representatives for a guided tour of the exhibition, *Sculpting Life*. In 1960, the IODE generously donated a collection of Inuit carvings, which formed the centerpiece of the exhibition. This collaboration highlighted the enduring impact of community investment in cultural programming and reinforced the importance of preserving and showcasing Inuit art.



Sonya Blazek, Curator / Supervisor of JNAAG, poses in *Sculpting Life* with provincial members of the IODE in celebration of their 125th anniversary.



A band performs on stage at the Inwood 150 Music Festival, partially funded by the Creative County Grant Program.



The Village of Oil Springs celebrates its 160th Anniversary with a village wide event. The celebration was partially funded by the Creative County Grant Program. *Courtesy of the Village of Oil Springs.*



The Canatara Cabin following chinking work, an important step toward sealing and restoring the historic structure.

Fiero Code Winner

Local Lambton County Library cardholder, Naina Patel earned second place in the 12 and under category for a global coding competition, using Fiero Code, a software available for free with a library card.



Naina Patel, a patron of Clearwater Library, poses with her video game that she created using the coding software, Fiero Code.

Board and Committee Leadership

In 2025, Cultural Services staff played a role in building cultural capacity across Lambton County and elevating the profile of the region through active leadership on community and sector-based boards and committees. By contributing professional expertise beyond their core roles, staff strengthened partnerships, supported sector development, and helped position Lambton as a community that values culture, learning, and inclusion.

Vanitia Campbell, Public Services Coordinator, advanced youth engagement and education through her leadership as Chair of the Youth Engagement Subcommittee for the Lambton Drug and Alcohol Strategy Demand Reduction Working Group and represents the group at the Strategy's Steering Committee. Her participation on the Program Advisory Committee for the Lambton College Photography Program and the Lambton Child and Family Network Committee further strengthened connections between Cultural Services, post-secondary education, and community support systems.

Laurie Webb, Manager of Museums, Gallery and Archives, contributed to provincial museum sector development through

her active leadership within the Ontario Museum Association (OMA). Beyond membership, Laurie participated in sector-wide discussions, knowledge sharing, and professional collaboration that supported advocating for sustainable and relevant provincial funding for museums.

Building Cultural Capacity Through Heritage Restoration

This year's progress on the Canatara Cabin Restoration Project reflects more than construction milestones—it demonstrates the growing cultural capacity and leadership as stewards of Lambton's heritage. Key restoration work, including the log chinking, chimney, and fireplace, was completed, with efforts now focused on sealing the structure by completing the installation of windows and doors as well as interior finishes. These visible advances have increased public awareness of the project and reinforced Lambton's profile as a community committed to preserving and interpreting its historic places. The momentum built in 2025 positions the project well for its next phase, when the cabin will be interpreted as a 1930s family summer cottage and opened as a meaningful cultural experience for residents and visitors alike.

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.



Residents of St. Clair Township participate in a Town Hall regarding library service at Port Lambton Community Hall.



The West Room at Sarnia Library after minor renovations.

Library-Led Facility Improvements

In 2025, the Library undertook several projects to enhance accessibility, safety, and the usability of its spaces. At Florence Library, minor modifications were completed to create an accessible service desk and improve the layout to accommodate an increased collection following the closure of Shetland Library. An accessible service desk was installed at Corunna Library. At Sarnia Library, the West and East Rooms were upgraded with new flooring, lighting, and paint, while the theatre received additional lighting to enhance programming and performance capacity. Hazardous materials abatement was also completed on the West Room to ensure its continued availability for public use.

Municipal Facility Investments

Partner municipalities continued to invest in library infrastructure to ensure safe, accessible, and energy-efficient facilities. St. Clair Township installed new windows at Sombra Library, as well as completing extensive exterior work at Corunna Library, including the installation of new windows and entrance doorway, soffit repairs, masonry work, and exterior painting. St. Clair Township also replaced the roof at Wilkesport Library. The Township of Warwick installed a new furnace at Watford Library. The Municipality of Lambton



New windows installed by St. Clair Township at Sombra Library.

Shores completed accessibility improvements with new concrete at the front entrance of Forest Library and installed a new roof at Arkona Library. At Florence Library, Dawn-Euphemia Township installed a power door to the washroom, improving accessibility.

Library Service Changes and Planning

Planning discussions began regarding library service in southern St. Clair Township, and focused on possible consolidation of services at Sombra and Port Lambton Libraries to better serve community needs by increasing library floor size in Sombra, renovating the building's interior and using the full building's footprint. A Town Hall meeting was held in Port Lambton, allowing community members to share their perspectives and help shape the direction of library service in the area. This process reflects the division's commitment to responsive, community-driven planning while maintaining equitable access to library resources across Lambton County.

Relocation of bookshelves at Florence Library to support an increased collection.





Laurie Webb, Manager, Museums, Gallery, Archives Department helps move collection items to prepare for a storage renovation at the Oil Museum of Canada.



The Chalmers Power House nears complete restoration with new footings and board and batten at the Oil Museum of Canada.



Restoration work completed on the jerker line system at the Oil Museum of Canada.

Cultural Facilities and Collections Infrastructure

In 2025, significant investments were made across Cultural Services sites to enhance collections care, preserve historic structures, and improve visitor experience.

At the Oil Museum of Canada, major restoration work continued on its historic buildings and industrial infrastructure. The Blacksmith Shop was repaired with new board-and-batten walls while retaining the original mortise-and-tenon structure, bricks in the forge and chimney were repointed, a cedar shake roof and interpretive signage were installed, and an audio tour point was added. The Jerker Line system was refurbished, including replacement of worn lines, reactivation of the North branch, and restoration of field wheels with new timber supports, ensuring these iconic structures remain operational for interpretation. The Powerhouse also received extensive restorative work, including a new concrete foundation, replacement of exterior walls while preserving the original late-1800s structural elements, and planned electrical upgrades to meet current codes.

Re-imagined Agricultural Hall at Lambton Heritage Museum

In 2025, major renovations began to the Agricultural Hall, formerly known as “The White Barn” at the Lambton Heritage Museum. These projects focused on improving visitor experience, enhancing collections care, and ensuring accessibility across the site. The renovations are scheduled for completion in 2026, with an anticipated reopening that will allow the public to fully explore the updated spaces and enjoy improved exhibitions and interpretation.



A new plowing exhibit in progress located in the Agricultural Hall at Lambton Heritage Museum.



New board and batten being installed on the Blacksmith Shop at the Oil Museum of Canada to help preserve the historic building.



A worker from Bill Dokter Masonry works on chinking the Canatara Cabin as part of restoration efforts.



CULTURAL SERVICES

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) Christina Sydorko, Education Coordinator at the Oil Museum of Canada teaches a family about rock layers and oil. 2) Lambton Heritage Museum surrounded by fall colours. 3) Young visitor, Claire Allen admires the *Pysanky* exhibition at JNAAG. 4) A patron shows off their artwork completed during a program at Lambton County Library. 5) Colleen McLean, Lambton County Archives Assistant, works with a resident to identify people in unidentified images at an X-Files outreach program at Albany Retirement Village in Petrolia.