



Outdoor displays at Depot

AITKIN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
20 Pacific Street S.W. / P.O. Box 215
Aitkin, MN 56431

We are located just 2 blocks south of the stoplights in downtown Aitkin, south of the railroad tracks and west of highway 169 on Pacific Street.

Phone: 218-927-3348

Email: achs3348@embarqmail.com

Web Site: www.aitkincohs.org

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2015

Aitkin County Fair

July 8th – July 11th

Volunteers are needed to staff our log building during the fair. Building will be open Wednesday from noon – 8pm, Thursday & Friday 10am – 8pm and Saturday from 10am – 4pm.

Annual Garage Sale

July 31st & August 1st

This event is our largest fundraiser of the year and is held at the Aitkin County Fairgrounds. Setup starts the Wednesday after the fair (July 15th).

Volunteers are needed to help move all the merchandise to the fairgrounds, setup, organize and mark all the merchandise. Help is required every Tuesday, Wednesday Thursday & Friday until the sale.

Many volunteers are needed to work during our two day sale. We fill two of the large buildings with merchandise. Donations of merchandise can be dropped off at the Depot Museum or call us for a pickup.

All donations are tax deductible!

JOIN ACHS TODAY!!

MUSEUM HOURS

June thru August

Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday &
Saturday 10am to 4pm

September thru May

Wednesday, Friday & Saturday
10am to 4pm

THE PRESERVATION OF
OUR HERITAGE
DEPENDS ON YOU

Editor: **GREGORY
LEACH**

AITKIN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

Business Members – 34, Individual Members – 28, Senior Members – 123, Family Members – 288, Life Members – 16, Perpetuity Members – 2
TOTAL MEMBERSHIP – 491 (NEW GOAL IS 500)

Board Members

Darlene Maciej – Pres.
Cheryl Meld – VP
Colleen Bremner – Sec.
Susan Benson
Carol Bailey
Ron Kemmett
John Hendrickson
Bob Lake
Lorraine Liljenquest
Joel Hyytinen
Allen Ladd Hakes
Russell Peterson
Mark Wedel – Co. Com.
Sherry Arvidson – Acct.
Greg Leach – Admin.

Members Lost

During 2015

John Young
8/5/1929 to 2/10/2015
Shirley Meyer
6/14/1927 to 1/11/2015

NEW MEMBERS

Ron Fox
Northern Air Plumbing &
Heating
Rodney & Kathy Sparks
Trix Wyant
Kimberly Heft Cook
Carol & Charlie Mills
Otto & Carol Harmon

Volunteers Needed!!

Volunteers are needed to staff our front desk at the museum to answer the phone and welcome guests to the museum. Contact Greg for more information.

BUSINESS MEMBERS

Aicota Health Care Center
Aitkin Auto Body
Aitkin Chamber of Commerce
Aitkin County Abstract Co.
Aitkin Family Chiropractic
Aitkin Flowers & Gifts
Aitkin Independent Age
Aitkin Iron Works
Aitkin Lodge #164 IOOF
Aitkin Motor Company
American Legion Post 86
Arvidson Tax & Accounting
Bremer Bank
D.Q. Grill & Chill
Eyecare Center of Aitkin &
McGregor
Garrison Disposal
Gobles Sewer Service
Gravelle Plumbing & Heating
Hasskamp Brox. Well Drilling
Hudrlik Carpet & Tile
Jim Blakesley Enterprizes
K & J C-Stores, Inc.
KKIN-KEZZ Radio
Lundberg Plumbing & Heating
Members Coop Credit Union
Mille Lacs Energy Cooperative
Neighborhood National Bank
Northern Air Plumbing & Heat
Paulbecks County Market
R & K Cabinets
Schwebel, Goetz, Sieben
Security State Bank
Sunset Bay Resort
The Tire Barn, Inc.
Woods & Shores Real Estate

**Please Support Our
Business Members!
They Support us.**

GOALS FOR 2015

1. Membership surpasses 500 members.
2. Sell over 3000 raffle tickets again
3. Garage Sale over \$10,000
4. Publish book about our Aitkin County Country schools.
5. Visitor count over 5500
6. Open Research facility - **DONE**
7. Find a Caboose or railroad car for display.
8. Publish and distribute Historic map of Aitkin County.
9. Publish GPS walking tour of the City of Aitkin.
10. Purchase land under museum display buildings.
11. Add 40' addition to building #2.
12. Build Cold storage building to the South of building #3
13. Collect enough model trains to fill up our display cases.

GARAGE SALE

I would like to remind you that we collect items for our Annual Garage sale all year long. When you are replacing furniture, cleaning out your garage, basement, shed or extra rooms in your house please consider donating those unwanted items to the Aitkin County Historical Society. Moved to a smaller home or apartment and find that you brought too much stuff? Donate your extra stuff. Items can be dropped off at the Depot museum in Aitkin or give us a call and we can pick your donations up. Remember, this is our largest fundraiser of the year. We need volunteers during the last half of July to unpack, organize, and mark merchandise. If you can help, please call the Depot museum for more details.

Donations are tax deductible!

AITKIN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
DEPOT HIGHLIGHTS NEWSLETTER
SPRING 2015 – Volume 20, Issue 2

I will be staying as your administrator for one more year. As what so often happens in life, one's situation changes and that change means I get the opportunity to stay one more year. It also means I will get to finish some projects that I started and start a few more new ones. I will be able to continue our membership drive, possibly settle an agreement with the railroad on the purchase of the land under our buildings, and work on making the museum more fun for visitors. It will also give me a chance to fine tune the Administrator Time table that will make this job easier for my replacement. It would be great if we could find us a caboose after our 6 ½ year search.

The **Country School book of Aitkin County** is progressing but, we still need help identifying some schools and locations. We are also searching for photos of some of the schools. This book project has been a huge research undertaking. The Thornblooms, Greg & Laura, have spent 100's of hours going through old records and assembling this book. Sometimes, information received does not agree with what we have so further research is required to find out which is correct. Please help us make this book a complete history of our Aitkin County Country Schools. Go through those old family photos for photographs of Country schools.

This year's **sixth grade tours** will take place on Wednesday May 13th. First tour will take place from 8:45-10:15 and the second tour 1:20-2:50. Tour guides will escort students from one area to the next. We provide a lunch for all volunteers that participate with this event. Areas of the museum that are toured are the railroad room, research room, main room (river boats), life in the lumber camps and one other. Six tour guides and timer are needed for each session. Would you like to be one of the presenters and explain one of the areas of the museum? Contact me at the museum for further information.

Garage Sale Set Up will take place from July 14th thru July 30th. On the 14th we will haul all of our tables and set up the two buildings for display. All merchandise will be moved to the fairgrounds on the 14th and 15th. All merchandise will have to be unpacked, sorted and marked by Thursday July 30th. Our sale starts on July 31st from 9am to 4pm. Our hours on August 1st are 9am to 3pm. On Monday August 3rd the two buildings have to be cleaned out and tables returned to building #3. We can use all the help we can get for the set up and sale. This is our largest fundraiser of the year so please consider helping. Contact me for further information.

The County Fair takes place on July 8th thru the 11th. We have moved 9 glass cases to our log cabin and will feature displays from different areas of the County. Many photographs and artifacts will be on display. It was decided to create different displays rather than one large one to hopefully create more interest not only at the fair but interest in visiting the museum. Our log cabin will be open on July 8th from noon to 8pm, July 9th - 10am to 8pm, July 10th - 10am to 8pm and July 11th from 10am to 5pm. Please help us by volunteering to staff our building during the County Fair. Last year we built the log cabin display and had photos of the Country schools on one wall. Visitors to the log cabin spent twice as much time looking at the school photos than at our log cabin display.

Greg Leach - Administrator

Photos Needed

We need photos of the railroad depots located in:

Grayling
Lansford
Rabey
Bain
White Pine
Cedar Lake

The Aitkin County Historical Society does not have photos of the depots located in the above locations. If you have a photo please share it with the society at the Depot Museum. We can scan the photo into our computer and give you back the original.

Riverboat Photos

Do you have any photos of one of the riverboats that traveled the mighty Mississippi from Aitkin to Grand Rapids? We do not have photos of the following riverboats:

Pokegama
1871-1877
White Swan
1878
City of Aitkin
1878-1883
George Houghton
1886-1889
Swan
1894-1898
Remnica
1903

When going through old family photos please watch for any photos or information about these early riverboats. We need your help in finding pieces of this part of our early Aitkin County history. A book about the riverboats that ran from Aitkin to Grand Rapids is planned for the future. Help us find these photos.

TRAINS NEEDED!

The Aitkin County Historical Society is still looking for model trains to put on display in our Depot museum railroad room. Do you have a model train of any size that could be donated for this permanent display? Not ready to get rid of it. Could you loan it to us for our display. We need seven more to fill our current display and fifteen when we build our third display cabinet. Please help us fill up our display. The trains have been a great addition to our railroad room.

SCRAP COPPER

The society is now **collecting scraps of copper as a fundraiser.**

Pieces of scrap copper pipe, connectors, or electrical wire. Do you have small pieces of wire taking up room in your garage or basement? Not enough to make it worth your while. Please consider donating it to the historical society. Wire or copper plumbing pieces can be dropped off at the Depot museum during open hours. (Wednesday, Friday and Saturday 9am to 4pm.)
THANK YOU!

THANK YOU

I want to thank everyone who helped with the Aitkin Commerce and Outdoor show. Also, a big thank you goes out to everyone who stopped by to say hello or buy one of our barn books. Close to 300 people stopped in our booth

ITEMS DONATED

Kay Olson	Desk Calendar, T.P. 409 & Sponges.
Ronald Fitch	Wrapped Chocolate Candies.
Shirley Barber	2 – Reams Copy Paper
Anonymous	2 cases copy paper
Greg Leach	3 cases of water
Shirley Davies	Baskets/racks
John Hendrickson	Folgers Coffee

Items that could be donated to help the museum

1. Toilet Paper.
2. Paper Towels
3. Cases of bottled water.
4. Get Well cards
5. 8.5 X 11" photo paper.
6. Folgers Decaf Coffee.
7. Regular Folgers Coffee.
8. Wrapped chocolate candy.
9. Cleaning supplies.
10. Mop heads.
11. Brothers LC103 Ink Cartridges

DEPOT MUSEUM GIFT SHOP

When doing your holiday shopping do not forget about our gift shop. Over 200 book titles and a variety of wooden toys are available for purchase. Members receive a 10% discount on all purchases, plus purchases help to raise funds for the society. We carry many books written by local authors. The store has books about history (local and national), nature, site seeing, railroads, Native Americans, and kids' books. Stop by the museum and check it out.

Missing AHS Yearbooks

The Aitkin County Historical Society is missing the following yearbooks for the Aitkin High School.

1911 thru 1934

(Do not know if there was any)

1972

1975

1979

2010 to Present

Do you have or know where we can find any of the missing yearbooks to add to our collection?

Interviews

Would you be willing to be interviewed about your life growing up in Aitkin County? Do you know someone that should be interviewed? Would you like to help us interviewing Aitkin County residents? Please help us record our Aitkin County history from the people who actually lived it.

Volunteer Benefit

As a member you receive a 10% discount but, if you also volunteer at the museum or one of our events you will receive a 15% discount on all purchases in our gift shop. The museum could not operate without volunteers so please consider volunteering.

Memorials Received

During 2015 For:

Allan Westerlund
Judith Arnold
Donnie Hanson
Betty Stromdahl
Robert Borg
Calvin Davies
Harvey Fairchild
Irene Betley

Membership Notices

Renewal membership notices will be sent out to most of our membership as a reminder that your membership ends May 31st. Most of our memberships run June 1st to May 31st. However, we now send out notices every month according to when people joined. Our membership has grown quickly during the past couple of years and we hope to maintain our current membership and continue to grow. Our current membership is 484 with a goal of surpassing 500 by the end of 2015. Buy a membership for a friend or relative.

Supporting Townships

Farm Island Township

Beaver Township

Lakeside Township

Libby Township

Pliny Township

Macville Township

Nordland Township

Idun Township

Supported by:

Aitkin County

Historical Map of Aitkin County

Our Historical Map of Aitkin County is currently at the publishers. This map project took a lot more time than I thought it would to research and assemble. Our map shows 82 historic sites in the county with its GPS location and a description of the site. When we receive the completed map back from the publisher we will start to distribute it around the county. If you know of a site that should receive this map to help tourism in our county, please contact us at the Depot museum. We want to distribute it throughout the county. We will also send some of our historical maps to other chamber of commerce sites outside of Aitkin County.



National Wooden Ware Factory – Hill City

**It was important news that headlined the August 4, 1910 issue of the Hill City News
“Construction work starts on Factory”**

“W.S. Cunningham, who has charge of the building operations for Armour & Co. arrived in Hill City Sunday with plans and specifications for the factory buildings.

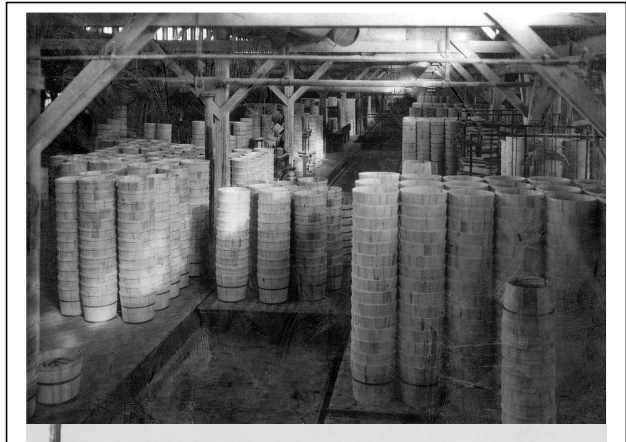
Plans for the factory call for a heading mill on the lake shore, 205 feet by 90 feet, a power house 72 feet by 90 feet, a fuel house 20 feet by 30 feet, a varnish house 30 feet by 30 feet.

The main factory building consists of a tub factory 222 by 72 feet, a warehouse 160 by 65 feet, a finishing room 80 by 72 feet and the dry kilns 110 by 154 feet.

These together with the present saw mill and office makes the entire plant consist of nine buildings. Aside from these there are the drying yards which cover a large area just west of the railroad and the barn. Mr. Cunningham also has plans for 25 more houses.”



Finished Product



Product ready to ship

Greetings,

Our annual meeting held this past January held a few emotional minutes. The resignation of our Administrator was mentioned along with plans for a farewell open house to be held close to Greg's last day as an Administrator, June 27. Bob Lake presented a resolution that read as, "Be it resolved that we thank and acknowledge Greg Leach on his tenure of six and one-half years as Aitkin County Historical Society Administrator. Under his leadership we have seen growth in membership. The displays have improved and our research room is a reality. The garage sale is growing. The Board and membership wish to thank Mr. Greg Leach." Voting was unanimous in agreement to this resolution. A few words were spoken by Greg on how much he enjoyed his work for the ACHS. Greg will be missed.

At the meeting Greg and Laura Thornbloom were present and gave an update on the book "Schools of Aitkin County". Greg and Laura finish the "Barns of Aitkin County" book and started in on with the schools. They have put in a lot of time in compiling these books.

Last issue I wrote in about preserving historical item I spoke on books and there is more to caring for books. Besides handling the books and proper storing there is the repair of books. Repair requires expertise and the right materials. Damage to books may range from minor (a few loose pages) to extensive (broken bindings, brittle paper). A few pages detached can be reattached by applying a thin line of adhesive. Instructions can be found in the Library Materials Preservation Manual by Heidi Kyle. This should not be attempted when the paper is brittle. The adhesive must be stable and non-damaging (starch paste). When a cover is detached, the book must be recased. A new cover will be necessary if the old cover no longer provides adequate protection. If old cover needs to be retained you should store the book in its cover in a box. Recovery from water damage requires patience and a gentle touch. Drying too quickly may lead to new disasters. Repairs are most successful when performed by those with experience, necessary tools and correct material. Assess the damage to a book. If contents are rated high in value you may transfer the information to computer or microfilm, produce a facsimile by photocopying, or replace the book with an edition in better condition. The wisest course for book repair is to consult a profession conservator before taking any measure that might ruin a book.

I was surprised at the number of books that were available for this county when the research room was near completion. A row of file cabinets were moved along one wall with the hope of a computer to check out the many, many websites. Anyone who stops in to do research will need a huge number of hours to do checking.

**Warm Wishes,
Darlene Maciej, President
Aitkin County Historical Society**

GOALS FOR 2015

14. Membership surpasses 500 members.
15. Sell over 3000 raffle tickets again
16. Garage Sale over \$10,000
17. Publish book about our Aitkin County Country schools.
18. Visitor count over 5500
19. Open Research facility - **DONE!!!!!!!!!!**
20. Find a Caboose or railroad car for display.
21. Publish and distribute Historic map of Aitkin County. **At publisher!**
22. Publish GPS walking tour of the City of Aitkin.
23. Purchase land under museum display buildings. – **Waiting on railroad.**
24. Add 40' addition to building #2.
25. Build Cold storage building to the South of building #3
26. Collect enough model trains to fill up our display cases.

2015 Completed Projects

1. Research Center moved into homestead room, setup, and is now operational.
2. Wi-Fi operational in Depot building.
3. Accession area moved from building #2 into Depot office area.
4. Moved cast iron stove from Depot to back display building.
5. Added two computers and copy machine to research room.
6. Cleaned out and organized roll-top desk.
7. Display table cloth with ACHS name purchased for events.
8. Artifacts displayed on walls of research room.
9. Photo of back drop in log cabin hung.
10. Organized the area upstairs in Depot above garage space.
11. Old light fixture hung in research room.
12. Finished painting research room.
13. Gardens cleaned up.
14. 4-display cases permanently moved to Log Cabin for displays during the County Fair.
15. Log Cabin display set up in Building #2.
16. International Flags hung.

2015 PROJECTS

1. Cut down trees south of building #3
2. Bring in clean fill for area south of building #3
3. Repair plaster walls in depot and repaint.
4. Clean out basement of the depot building.
5. Transfer VHS tapes to DVD.
6. Create a larger presence on social media.
7. Put list of all obits in our files onto our website.
8. Organize our research library.
9. Purchase Warren William movies.
10. Put wood seal on all wood artifacts outside.
11. Repaint flag poles.
12. Build shelf unit in basement of Depot to hold old light fixtures.
13. Clean out back room in log cabin.
- 14. Have prints of depots framed and hung in Railroad room.**
15. Frame old map of Aitkin County and hang in research room.
16. Clean out and organize old museum files.
17. Assemble more photo/info books for displays and rooms.
18. Repair back steps of log cabin.
19. Create a book featuring items on display in research room. (photo & description)
20. Label unique items on display in museum.
21. Put wheels under remaining cases that do not have them.
22. Work on copying obits located in the Aitkin Republican Newspaper.
23. Continue to collect photos and information about; churches, resorts & riverboats.
24. Repair windows in basement of Depot.
25. Repair cracks in outside walls of Depot.
26. Complete our set of AHS A-books
- 27. Create more hands on displays for children to interact with in museum.**

Do you see a project from the above list that you could help us complete? Call the museum. Maybe, there is a project not on the list that you think we should work on. Please let us know. Our future depends on the youth of today. How do we excite them to come to the museum?

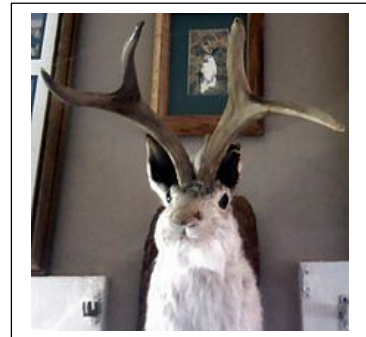
AITKIN COUNTY JACK-A-LOPE

Found in the Aitkin County Tourist Information booklet

Although his existence had long been suspected, it is not known when the first Jack-a-lope was discovered in Aitkin County. The first man to actually report seeing this elusive creature was an early Swedish-Norwegian trapper, Gunnar Barrel, living in Aitkin County about the time of the Civil War.

Barrel, who suffered from a severe case of polychromatic astigmatism, wore thickly lensed glasses during his work in the woods. Looking out his cabin window early one morning he saw a horned furry creature of considerable size moving swiftly through the grassy meadow below his cabin. His attention was arrested by the unusual manner of locomotion used by the animal a swift, graceful leap, transformed mid-air into a rabbit-like hop. He estimated the creature to be traveling at speeds faster than sound. He later explained his ability to see it as the result of the combined powers of his spectacles and the cabin window glass acting as a magnifying lens. Thus, enabling him to actually see this rarest of all land animals the Aitkin County Jack-a-lope.

Later in history, three early settlers saw these animals on several occasions just before sunrise after a bright moonlight night. In a year of short meat supply they devised a method to capture these animals. This method has remained a secret that has been passed down through the years to only a very few individuals. One of the known hunters has disclosed that the only weapons that will work is a special caller and a rubber hose. However, there is no record or knowledge of any being captured alive. The largest Aitkin County Jack-a-lope that we have ever heard of weighed 35 pounds



These photographs show several different views of our new research center. More artifacts will be attached to the walls and more information will be continually added to this room. Books written by local authors about Aitkin County are located here for research. Additional books about MN and the US is also here. Aitkin HS Yearbooks, phone books, newspapers on microfilm, census records, Naturalization records, obits, family histories, photographs, event files, township & city files, Church & cemetery files, school files, birth records, and individual person files. TV mounted on wall for viewing interviews. **Come in and check out our new research center.**



First Quarter Accession List

DATE	NUMBER	NAME of Donor	ITEMS DONATED
1/9/2015.	15.1	John Hendrickson	Booklet - American Legion
1/16/2015 .	15.2	Debbie Janzen	2 - Puzzles
1/16/2015 .	15.3	Allan Westerlund Estate	4 - school desks, clear plastic trays, 3 - ring notebooks
			1000's of clear page protectors
1/16/2015 .	15.4	Ardis Flowers	Globe, Atlas, R/R map
1/16/2015 .	15.5	Robert Pellerman	Logging contract, Auction flyer, Bog school photos
1/21/2015 .	15.6	Sally Bowser	U.S. Dept. of Agriculture pamphlets
1/23/2015 .	15.7	Leo Trunt	37 school photos
1/21/2015 .	15.8	Donald E. Marpe	1941 Aitkin County Land Use Study
2/13/2015 .	15.9	Lois DuChane	6 - LOL Hats, LOL Calendar, Knife, Check Book Holder
1/22/2015 .	15.10	Evon Pearson	1948 School Survey, Misc.
1/24/2015 .	15.11	John Hendrickson	2 - Cigar box ends, Wooden Plate & Butter Knife
2/13/2015 .	15.12	Sally Prill	History of the Horton Photo Studio
2/5/2015.	15.13	Milaca Area H.S.	3 - post cards of Ak-sar-ben gardens
2/14/2015 .	15.14	Christine Bailey	4 - photos Aitkin County Fair
2/14/2015 .	15.15	Toby Gabrio	Speed handle for steering wheel
3/6/2015.	15.16	Janet Miller	Photos
3/6/2015.	15.17	Mardell Fredrickson	Photos, post cards, commencement program, Outlet
3/18/2015 .	15.18	Elaine Hallbeck	School photos
3/19/2015 .	15.19	Jean Pricket	Tin windup train - 1940's
3/27/2015 .	15.20	Janet Miller	Photo - 1939 McGregor football team,
			Misc. McGregor advertising items

DONATIONS ARE IMPORTANT

As you can see we receive a wide variety of information and artifacts donated to the Aitkin County Historical Society. The donation of photographs, pamphlet's, flyers, advertising, booklets, contracts, surveys and maps, help the society to fill in gaps in our Aitkin County history. The artifact donations help us to create better displays showing our Aitkin County history. We are still looking for donations of books written by Aitkin County residents about Aitkin County to add to our research library located in the Depot museum. Donations of photos or information about our Country schools, is very important as we try to wrap up the assembly of our book about Country Schools.

AITKIN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY DEPOT MUSEUM EVENT SCHEDULE FOR 2015

May 13th – 6th Grade Tour – Volunteers guide the sixth graders to different areas of the museum where presenters explain the areas. Two shifts of children (8:45 – 10:15 and 1:20 – 2:50) come to visit the museum with a lunch provided for the volunteers.

June – County Commissioner Lunch - Every year we serve lunch to the County Commissioners and show them the progress made over the past year. The County provides around 40% of our Annual budget.

July 8th – 11th – Aitkin County Fair – Visit our Log Cabin, located on the S.E. corner of the fairgrounds. This year's display will feature photos from around the County. Volunteers will staff the building from 10am to 8pm during the fair.

July 31st & August 1st – Annual Garage Sale – Held at the Aitkin County Fairgrounds during Riverboat days. This is our largest fundraiser of the year and will again use two buildings on the fairgrounds. We have already started to collect items for the sale. **All donations are tax deductible.**

December 5th – Spirit of Christmas Open House/Cookie Walk/Raffle Drawing – Join us as we open our Depot Museum to cookie buyers and guests. Bake some Christmas cookies to be sold at our Cookie Walk. Our special Christmas displays created by member and volunteer Jo White are always a treat.

December 5th – Raffle Drawing – This year's drawing will take place at 2pm on December 5th. Consider donating a prize for this year's drawing. This is our second largest fundraiser of the year.

MUSEUM HOURS

Summer Hours – June, July & August

Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, & Saturday – (10am – 4pm)

Winter Hours – September thru May

Wednesday, Friday & Saturday – (10am – 4pm)

Phone: (218) 927-3348

Email: achs3348@embarqmail.com

Web: <http://www.aitkin.com/achs/>