



CULTURAL SERVICES

2024 Annual Report



Cultural Services Division

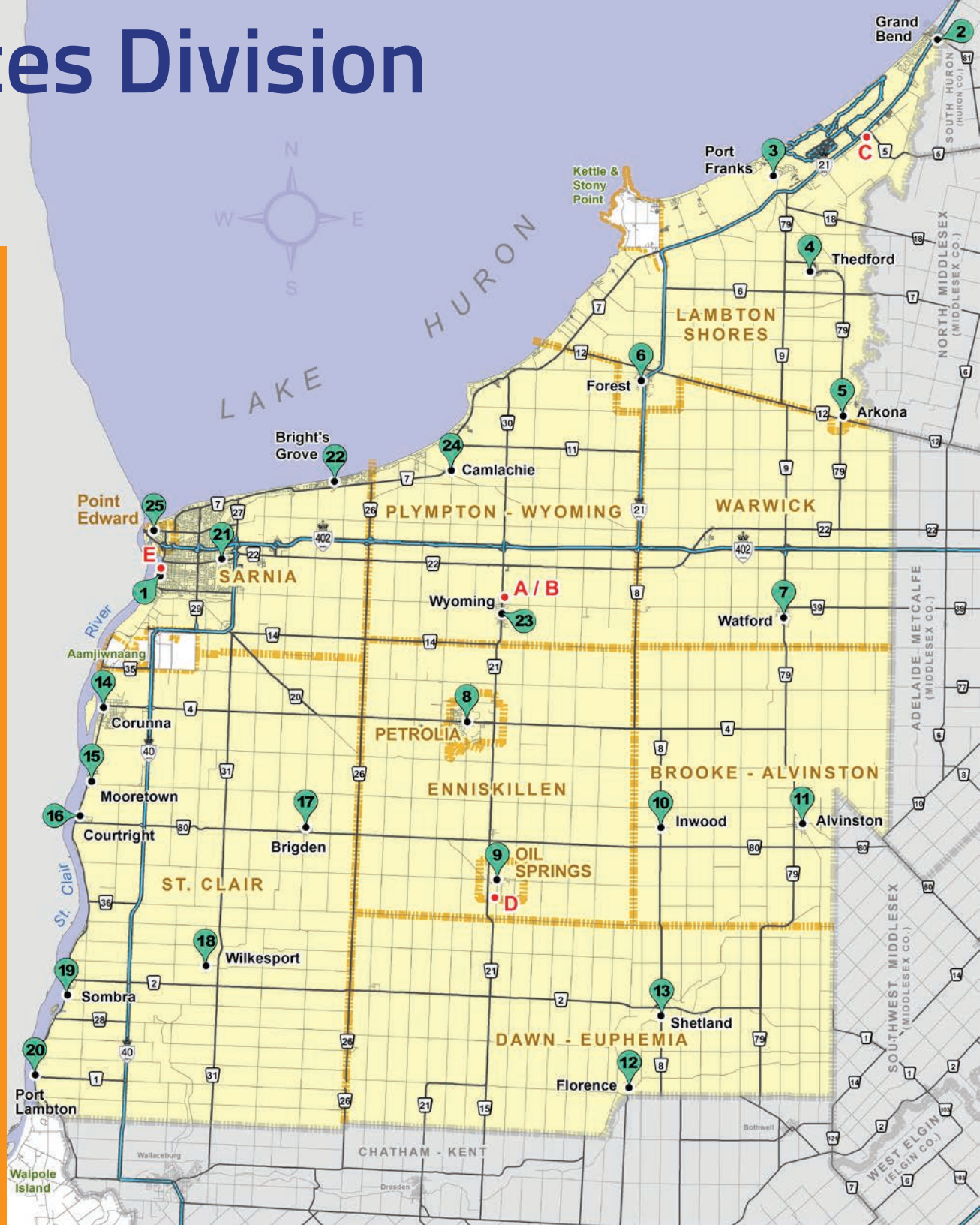
OVERVIEW MAP



Clearwater Library, 1400 Wellington St., Sarnia

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	519-828-3405	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	St. Clair
	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	Clearwater Library	519-542-2580	1400 Wellington Street	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



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A young patron makes a popsicle out of LEGO at Clearwater Library's Community Open House.



Teens play with light and photography at the Judith & Norman Alix Art Gallery as practice for the Teen Photo Contest.



Visitors look at the Canatara Cabin at Lambton Heritage Museum during the reconstruction stage.

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COVER IMAGES: Clockwise from bottom left - 1) Enbridge employees stand outside the Dawn Ontario Underground Natural Gas Storage Exhibit at the Oil Museum of Canada after planting trees as part of the 175th anniversary celebrations. 2) Lambton County Councillor and Plympton-Wyoming Mayor, Gary Atkinson reads to patrons at Camlachie Library during Local Government Week. 3) Kathy Hill poses with her portrait of Thomas Crooke next to one on display at Lambton Heritage Museum. 4) Archivist / Supervisor, Nicole Aszalos, gives a tour of the Lambton County Archives' vault to the Heritage Champions as part of the 175th Anniversary Celebrations. 5) Young visitor, Claire Allen, paints as part of the Family Saturday programming at the Judith & Norman Alix Art Gallery.

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 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 25,510 active cardholders include the ability to borrow traditional items like books, audio books, 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. 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 and electronic databases and research resources.

Judith & Norman Alix Art Gallery

Judith & Norman Alix Art Gallery is a free public art gallery located in downtown Sarnia. The Judith & Norman Alix Art Gallery 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 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.

Warden Kevin Marriott returns the hug of a young patron after helping lead the Toddler Tales program at Petrolia Library during Local Government Week.

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. 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 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 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 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 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.





Lambton County Celebrates 175 Years



Local bag piper, Griffin McGregor, leads Lambton County Council into Council Chambers ahead of the 175th Anniversary Ceremony.



Erin Dee-Richard, Curator / Supervisor of the Oil Museum of Canada, National Historic Site, stands with the Lambton 175 Exhibit featured at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario in Queen's Park.



Lambton County Warden Kevin Marriott and Indigenous Historian and Author David Plain stand in the newly named Ottissippi Room at Lambton Shared Services Centre.

Lambton County celebrated its 175th anniversary in 2024 with several milestone initiatives led by the Cultural Services Division. A ceremony during the June County Council meeting, attended by past and present council members and led by a piper's procession, honored 27 Heritage Champions for their dedication to preserving local history. Museums, archives and gallery sites offered free admission to residents throughout the year.

Environmental stewardship marked the celebrations with 600 native trees planted at the Oil Museum of Canada, including 175 commemorative tulip trees. The Show & Tell program preserved family histories through digitization, while Doors Open drew 2,000 visitors to architectural and cultural landmarks county wide.

The Lambton Heritage Museum featured *Hockey*, a Canadian Museum of History exhibition enhanced with local artifacts. The county's heritage reached Queen's Park through an exhibit at the Legislative Assembly, while the Virtual Wardens Exhibit digitized leadership records from 1852 onward. Museums enhanced access to their collections by launching Past Perfect, a digital database of items, photographs and artifacts.

The naming of the Ottissippi Room at the Lambton Shared Services Centre honoured Indigenous heritage. With support from Aamjiwnaang historian and author David Plain, this space—named for the Ojibwe term for "Clear Water"—features interpretive panels sharing the region's Indigenous history. To mark the conclusion of the anniversary year, a time capsule curated by Museums and Archives staff was placed in the Administration Building Lobby during the Warden's election.

These initiatives not only celebrated Lambton County's rich heritage but also strengthened community connections and showcased its commitment to preserving history for future generations. By blending traditional storytelling with modern innovation, the 175th-anniversary celebrations ensured that Lambton's legacy will continue to inspire and educate for years to come.



History in Action

6,396 Lambton residents enjoyed free admission to cultural sites to celebrate Lambton's 175th anniversary year.



Stories Preserved

Over **435** minutes of oral histories recorded at Show & Tell events.



New Treasures

Over 25,000 unique artifacts added to our archives and museums, including portraits, photographs, equipment, deeds and more.



Growing Together

600 native trees planted to create interpretive trails at the Oil Museum of Canada blending history and sustainability.



Doors Opened

33 historic sites featured, celebrating Lambton's architectural and cultural heritage.



Heritage Champions

27 individuals and groups honoured for their dedication to preserving Lambton's history.

Lambton County Archives Archivist / Supervisor, Nicole Aszalos browses photos with a resident at the Mooretown at Show & Tell.

Enhancing Access, Inclusion & Community Engagement



Welcoming Our Community

22,108 people visited museums, gallery and archives sites with 60% of walk-in visitors being Lambton residents.

Beyond Our Walls

Cultural Services reached **17,409 people** outside of our physical spaces through outreach efforts.

Digital Growth

601,785 eLibrary items accessed by cardholders, representing an increase of about **14%** in digital circulation.

A Million Stories Shared

Over **1.1 million** items were borrowed by 25,510 active library cardholders.



Promoting Lambton County Library at the Sarnia Lambton Chamber of Commerce's Business Showcase.



Patrons browsing the microfilm at Lambton County Archives for research.



Young visitors explore exhibits 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.

Valentines for Long-Term Care

Lambton County Library distributed blank Valentine's Day cards across its locations for patrons to create messages for residents in the County of Lambton's three municipally operated long-term care homes. In 2024, 2,635 valentines were distributed to long-term care residents and the story was featured on London's CTV prime-time news.

Community Outreach Success

In 2024, our cultural sites participated in events across Lambton County, bringing resources and information directly to the community. The Oil Museum of Canada joined 41 community events, connecting with 1,531 people. Lambton County Library staff took part in 26 local events, reaching 11,776 people. Lambton Heritage Museum engaged with 212 community members through various local gatherings, while the Lambton

County Archives participated in five events that reached 3,544 people. The Judith & Norman Alix Art Gallery connected with 346 people at community events. All five of our cultural sites actively supported community events throughout the year, helping us reach people where they gather and share our community's resources, stories, art, and history beyond our walls.

Connecting with Visitors

Lambton's cultural sites (excluding libraries) attracted 22,108 total visitors in 2024. The Judith & Norman Alix Art Gallery welcomed over 6,916 visitors, while the Oil Museum of Canada attracted 4,612. Lambton County Archives supported 930 researchers and Lambton Heritage Museum welcomed 9,650.

Library Circulation and Cardholders Rise

Library services saw significant growth in 2024, with 601,785 e-service items accessed by cardholders online, representing about a 14% increase from 2023. Patrons borrowed 545,688 items through in-person service, bringing the total circulation of items to 1,147,473, representing a 9% increase from the previous year. In 2024, the library saw an increase in its active cardholders by 22%, with 25,510 people currently holding active library memberships.



Elders at Lambton Meadowview Villa look at Valentines made for them by library patrons.



Young patrons browse through a picture book at Clearwater Library.



Isidore DiRezze stands beside his mother, Adelina's, dress, on display in the feature exhibit *Il Cammino: From Italy to Sarnia* at Lambton Heritage Museum.



Celebrating Lambton 175 curated by Lambton County Archives and Lambton Heritage Museum on display in Lambton County Council Chambers in Wyoming.



Jon Sasaki's *Homage*, showcasing the Group of Seven's tools, on display at the Judith & Norman Alix Art Gallery. The *Tom Thomson and Group of Seven* exhibit offers a glimpse through the doorway, inviting visitors to explore further.



Lambton Heritage Museum's featured *Hockey* exhibit on loan from the Canadian Museum of History, supplemented by local stories and artifacts curated by Lambton Heritage Museum.

Exhibitions that Inspire

Lambton Heritage Museum presented several significant exhibitions throughout the year. *Il Cammino: From Italy to Sarnia-Lambton* explored the immigration experience of Italian families to Sarnia-Lambton, documenting their journey, settlement, and cultural preservation. The *Hockey* exhibition, in partnership with the Canadian Museum of History, offered an interactive experience showcasing the sport's history enhanced with curated artifacts and stories of local significance. *S.H.E. Is Healing* by local artist Suellen Evoy-Oozeer presented spirit portraits exploring themes of Spirit, Humanity, and Earth, while *Hope and Healing Canada* featured an outdoor installation by Métis artist Tracey-Mae Chambers.

The Archives presented several exhibitions celebrating local history, including *Celebrating Lambton 175*, which highlighted early County governance, and *Petrolia 150*, exploring 150 years of Petrolia history. The collaborative exhibition with Lambton Heritage Museum *From District to County: Celebrating Lambton 175* showcased artifacts and documents spanning the county's administrative history was on display at the County of Lambton's

Administration Building then Sarnia Library.

The Judith & Norman Alix Art Gallery hosted diverse exhibitions throughout the year, including *Sculpting Life*, featuring the gallery's Inuit carving collection, and *Dark Ice*, examining climate change impact through the work of Leslie Reid and Robert Kautuk. The Gallery also presented *Lambton Through the Lens*, a juried teen photography exhibition, and several installations in the *ReView* series celebrating the gallery's tenth anniversary in its current location. Notable exhibitions included *Through sunset, slow dusk, and gathering dawn* by Natalie Hunter, *In the Garden of Exquisite Unknown* by Siobhán Humston, and *Homage* by Jon Sasaki, along with a special display of *Tom Thomson and the Group of Seven* with works from the permanent collection.



A drum circle ceremony taking place in Lambton Heritage Museum's featured exhibit, *S.H.E. is Healing*.

Part of the exhibition *In the Garden of Exquisite Unknown* by Siobhán Humston at the Judith & Norman Alix Art Gallery.





Collections / Preparator, Shelly Mallon, leads a vault tour at Judith & Norman Alix Art Gallery..



Behind the Scenes

In 2024, museums and gallery made special efforts to share our spaces and collections with the public. Beyond our regular open hours, we gave special behind-the-scenes tours that let visitors peek into our vaults and see how we prepare exhibitions. Lambton County Archives welcomed 112 visitors for tours, while the Oil Museum of Canada hosted 512 people. Lambton Heritage Museum gave tours to 342 visitors, and the Judith & Norman Alix Art Gallery showed 146 people around their spaces. These tours helped people learn more about what happens behind the scenes such as how items are stored and setting up new exhibits. They got to ask questions and learn directly from our staff about how we preserve and share our community's history and art.



Archivist / Supervisor, Nicole Aszalos gives a tour of the Lambton County Archives' vault.

Mobile Library

The Mobile Library brings books and other materials directly to people across Lambton County who might find it hard to visit our buildings. In 2024, our Mobile Library made 192 visits to participating long-term care homes and retirement complexes throughout the county, serving 1,638 people. This service helps ensure more people in our community can access library materials, regardless of their ability to visit our locations.



The mobile library van parked in front of Albany Retirement Village in Petrolia where it delivers library service directly to residents.

Digital Impact



733,470 website views.



250,534 website users.



1,672,825 screens reached through social



960 hours of video watched.



Email campaigns received approximately **298,617** engagements.

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

Creating & Delivering Great Experiences



Visitors explore art literacy and *Through sunset, slow dusk, and gathering dawn* by Natalie Hunter during Family Literacy Day at the Judith & Norman Alix Art Gallery.



Young patrons create interesting shapes at a Pixel Art program at Forest Library.



Patrons play retro video games on the Super Nintendo at Petrolia Library.

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.

Library in Action

Our libraries offered a vibrant array of activities throughout 2024, with programs drawing 59,901 participants across Lambton County. This strong attendance shows how our libraries serve as active community hubs, bringing people together for learning and entertainment throughout our branches.

Celebrating Literacy

The coordinated Family Literacy Day celebration in January across Sarnia Library and the Judith & Norman Alix Art Gallery attracted 726 participants, driving notable increases in library circulation and new memberships. This event strengthened our role as a literacy hub for families across Lambton County.

Winter Reading Program

Lambton County Library engaged community members through its seasonal reading initiative, providing opportunities to encourage literacy during the winter months. This challenge resulted in 14,732 books read by 467 participants.



Joel Armstrong, Director of Artificial Intelligence at Dig Insights, lead a session on understanding AI at the Sarnia Library Theatre for Ontario Public Library Week - Media Literacy.



A young patron prepares to race the zucchini car he built at the Petrolia Library as part of One Seed Lambton.



Dan the Music Man performs songs on the Sarnia Library Theatre stage as part of the Family Literacy Day Festival.

Art & Books Club

The Judith & Norman Alix Art Gallery and Lambton County Library team up for special book clubs. Readers discuss books that connect with art exhibitions at the gallery, then tour the exhibitions to see these connections come to life.

Local Beats with *Rhythms of Lambton*

The Rhythms of Lambton free concert series continued through 2024, showcasing local music groups. The series attracted 544 attendees across seven shows, enriching the community's cultural experience.

Ontario Public Library Week – Media Literacy

October's Ontario Public Library Week focused on Media Literacy, highlighting the essential role of libraries in providing access to trustworthy information. The initiative emphasized resources and programs designed to help community members navigate today's information-driven world.

Growing Together With *One Seed Lambton*

The 2024 program featured Dark Green Zucchini Squash as the selected seed variety. This initiative promoted sustainable gardening and seed saving across the community, making seeds freely available to all participants regardless of gardening experience. The program's success was demonstrated through the distribution of 2,748 seed packets and the participation of 100 individuals in related on-site library programming between May and October.

Summer Reading Challenge Sets Records

The Library's Summer Reading Challenge played a vital role in maintaining students' literacy skills during the summer break. With record breaking participants and books read, the *Tales Through Time* theme also connected young readers with local heritage. Through partnerships with Lambton County Museums, participants explored historical sites while completing their reading goals. The program by encouraging children to discover Lambton's stories not just through books, but through visits to heritage sites across the county.

Summer Reading Challenge



3,682 participants.



42,346 books read by children and adults.



107,605 minutes read by teens.



3,388 book prizes earned.



A Colourful Contribution

The Lambton Fall Colour & Craft Festival **raised \$20,517** to support ongoing exhibit development, collections work and education program costs.



Celebrating Literacy Together

726 people came together to celebrate literacy for the Family Literacy Day festival at Sarnia Library and Judith & Norman Alix Art Gallery.



Learning through Culture

3,504 people participated in educational programming in museums, archives and gallery spaces.

A young patron plays with bubbles as Dan the Music Man performs at the Sarnia Library Theatre as part of the Family Literacy Day Festival.

Museums, Gallery & Archives Bring History to Life

The Museums, Gallery and Archives department delivered educational and engaging programming across its sites. The Judith & Norman Alix Art Gallery reached 2,263 people, while Lambton County Archives served 98 participants. Lambton Heritage Museum engaged 961 people, and the Oil Museum of Canada connected with 479 participants through various programs for schools, community groups, and the public.

Black Gold Fest

The Oil Museum of Canada welcomed 453 people to Black Gold Fest, its signature community celebration of local oil heritage, featuring historical blacksmithing demonstrations throughout the day. A historical interpreter brought James Miller Williams to life through multiple daily performances, sharing the story of North America's first commercial oil well established in 1858. The event successfully combined educational elements with family entertainment, including crafts, demonstrations, and face painting, while local food and drink vendors and live music enhanced the visitor experience.

Group of Seven Day

On Sunday, July 7, the Judith & Norman Alix Art Gallery marked the first Group of Seven Day, a day to celebrate Canada's iconic painters. Visitors enjoyed guided 30-minute tours throughout the day to learn about the artists' techniques and importance. The exhibition *Homage* by Jon Sasaki added to the celebration by showing the Group's original paintboxes and tools, along with artworks from the Gallery's collection.

Fall Colour & Craft Festival

Lambton Heritage Museum's largest fundraising event, welcomed 3,422 visitors. The festival featured over 65 vendors, maintaining its position as one of the largest craft festivals in the Lambton Shores area. It raised \$20,517 to support ongoing exhibit development, collections work and education program costs.

Visitors participate in an art activity at the Oil Museum of Canada's Black Gold Fest.



Visitors shop beneath the fall canopy of oak trees at Lambton Heritage Museum's Fall Colour & Craft Festival.



Visitors take an in depth tour of the exhibition *Tom Thomson and The Group of Seven* during Group of Seven Day.



Developing Partnerships that Increase Participation in Culture

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.

Literacy Showdown with *Clash of the Classrooms*

The second annual Clash of the Classrooms partnership between Lambton County Library and Chatham-Kent Public Library brought 53 schools together for literacy challenges from February 5 to March 8. A total of 171 classrooms participated across Lambton and Chatham-Kent, reading an impressive 2,005,942 minutes collectively.

This initiative underscores a shared commitment to improving literacy and learning opportunities within school boards, while strengthening collaboration between bordering library systems that share district school boards.

Capturing Lambton with the *Teen Photo Contest*

The Teen Photo Contest, a collaboration between Lambton County Library and Judith & Norman Alix Art Gallery, encouraged youth to enhance their artistic skills and connect with their community. In 2024, teens were invited to capture “Lambton Through The Lens.” Over 122 photographs were submitted by 42 participants.

A panel of jurors—including Arden Mailhiot (music and portrait photographer), Richard Beland (renowned music photographer), and Sonya Blazek (Curator / Supervisor, Judith & Norman Alix Art Gallery)—selected 25 photographs for an exhibit. These selections highlighted excellence across the categories of local icons, abstract imagery, and the romance of ruin.

This contest provided a vital platform for young artists to share their perspectives, develop visual literacy skills, and contribute to Lambton’s cultural narrative.

Hockey in Lambton County

In 2024, Lambton Heritage Museum and Lambton County Archives aligned resources to gather community stories, documents, and artifacts on the history of hockey in Lambton County. This initiative resulted in 180 donations and contributions, enhancing the museum’s feature exhibit, *Hockey*, on loan from the Canadian Museum of History from July to November.

Additionally, Lambton Heritage Museum partnered with Tourism Sarnia-Lambton for the World U17 Hockey Challenge, hosting the tournament cup on-site during the exhibit.

Baby Bookworm

Lambton County Library supported Literacy Lambton’s Baby Bookwork initiative. Each Baby Bookwork Bag included materials and information to encourage early reading habits, fostering literacy from birth. Through partnership with Literacy Lambton, we helped to provide information to approximately 1,200 new families at Bluewater Health in 2024.



Classroom Reading Champions

Students read over **2 million** minutes during Clash of the Classrooms.



Community Powered Hockey History

180 community donations and loans helped form a local feature in *Hockey* loaned from the Canadian Museum of History at Lambton Heritage Museum.



Moments of Inspiration

121 participants living with Alzheimer's or dementia connected through art.



Celebrating Oil Heritage

10 episodes developed with Cogeco showcasing the rich oil history in Lambton County.



Connecting Through Transit

163 free trips taken on the Huron Shores Area Transit system by library patrons.



Lambton County Library distributed free eclipse glasses for April's historic solar eclipse, southwestern Ontario's first in the path of totality in 99 years.



Lambton Heritage Museum's Curator / Supervisor, Dana Thorne, browses through items with community members at Show & Tell at Florence Library.



Lambton County Warden Kevin Marriott shows Laurie Webb, Manager, Museums, Archives, Gallery and Meagan Sinclair, Archives Assistant his family artifacts as part of Show & Tell.

Free Travel With a Library Card

In partnership with Huron Shores Area Transit and the Municipality of Lambton Shores, Lambton County Library launched an innovative program offering free, unlimited travel on the Huron Shores Area Transit system with a library card. Patrons could borrow transit passes for up to five days. In 2024, these passes were borrowed 79 times and resulted in 163 free trips, supporting inter-community connections across Lambton Shores, South Huron, North Middlesex, Bluewater, Kettle & Stony Point First Nation, Sarnia, London, Goderich, and Strathroy.

EarlyON Pop-Up

Lambton County Library partnered with EarlyON to provide weekly pop-up programs at the Sarnia Library. These pop-up sessions offered parents and caregivers of children aged 0 to 6 various engaging activities and learning experiences.

A Festive Touch: NuSarnia Nutcracker

The Judith & Norman Alix Art Gallery participated in the NuSarnia Nutcracker initiative from November 18 to December 27, displaying a festive nutcracker named Papa Parol, painted by artist Cynthia Fay. The nutcrackers were displayed along Christina Street and auctioned to benefit the Women's Interval Home of Sarnia-Lambton. Proceeds from the initiative helped raise over \$1,700.

Expanding Access With Employment Ontario

A new collaboration with the County of Lambton's, Lambton Works Centre established drop-in employment support services at six library locations in 2024. This initiative connects job seekers with local employers and resources, expanding access to employment opportunities and fostering community resilience.

Show & Tell: Uncovering Lambton's History

In 2024, our Museums, Archives, and Library staff joined forces to deliver Show & Tell to celebrate the 175th anniversary. They visited communities across Lambton County to collect and preserve local history. Staff met with residents who shared their stories, family heirlooms, documents, historical objects, and photographs while connecting them with resources to help them continue to research and preserve their own history. These visits resulted in 435 minutes of recorded oral histories and helped us document thousands of images and items. This project helped us gather and preserve important pieces of our community's history that future generations will be able to explore.

Drilling into History with YourTV

The Oil Museum of Canada collaborated with Cogeco to create "Drilling into History," a 10-episode series that aired on YourTV Sarnia exploring Lambton County's oil history and its worldwide impact.



Maximizing the Value of Our Collections & Spaces

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.

Library Collections

The library system demonstrated robust engagement across both physical and digital platforms in 2024. Our community of 25,510 active cardholders, including 5,696 new patrons, reflected strong growth in library usage. Among these, 14,070 unique patrons actively borrowed materials throughout the year, demonstrating an increase in unique patrons of about 6% from 2023.

Our commitment to maintaining a comprehensive collection was evident with a total of 185,467 physical items. The digital collection saw significant expansion with the addition of 4,235 new titles (27,494 copies) to the Libby platform. Public computers were used 20,741 times

throughout the year. Our efforts to bridge the digital divide continued with our new wi-fi hotspot lending program, which recorded 134 loans. Our in-building wi-fi service numbers demonstrate a continued need for public internet access.

Enhanced Online Access to the Museum & Archives Collections

January 2024 marked a milestone with the launch of the Museums and Archives' collections database public-facing features. This digital initiative provided public access to 14,669 records from our museums and archives collections. The system's success was evident in the 21,273 searches conducted throughout the year, demonstrating strong public engagement with our digital resources. Ongoing additions to the database will increase the items available for search each year.

New Acquisitions and Research

The Museums, Gallery and Archives collections experienced significant growth in 2024, receiving over 200 donations that contributed thousands of individual items to the permanent collection. The

Show & Tell series proved instrumental in promoting our preservation and collection efforts while generating valuable oral histories for our archives. Our commitment to supporting research was demonstrated through the fulfillment of 627 research requests and by welcoming 930 local researchers to our facilities.

One Book Lambton

The 2024 edition of One Book Lambton featured Miriam Toews' novel "Women Talking," a work of fiction inspired by actual events that occurred between 2005 and 2009 in Manitoba Colony, a remote Mennonite community in Bolivia. The program was enriched through a partnership with Larry Towell, a locally-based, national award-winning photographer, who shared his extensive work documenting Mennonite communities.

Library's Battery Recycling Impact

Through its partnership with Call2Recycle Canada, Lambton County Library has helped divert 324 kg of batteries from landfills by hosting battery recycle bins in 12 locations.

(Left to Right) The Honourable Stan Cho, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Gaming, Bob Bailey, M.P.P. Sarnia-Lambton, Warden Kevin Marriott, Deputy Warden Brian White, Darlene Coke, Manager, Library Services, Laurie Webb, Manager, Museums, Gallery and Archives, Michael Rikley-Lancaster, Vice-President, Ontario Museum Association, Andrew Meyer, General Manager, Cultural Services at the AMO Conference.



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.

Oil Museum Hosts Ministry

The Oil Museum of Canada welcomed Deputy Minister Drew Vanderduim from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, along with the Ministry's Petroleum Operations Section (POS) staff, for an insightful tour of the museum. The delegation explored exhibits highlighting Ontario's rich oil heritage, providing them with a comprehensive understanding of the industry's evolution. Given their role in overseeing the Oil, Gas and Salt Resources Act, the visit offered valuable context to the advancements within the sector.

Showcasing Lambton's Culture

In March, Lambton Heritage Museum and the Judith & Norman Alix Art Gallery hosted hundreds of tourism professionals attending the Southwestern Ontario

Tourism Corporation (SWOTC) Conference in Sarnia. Participants enjoyed guided tours and curated activities, offering an immersive experience of Lambton's vibrant cultural scene.

Lending Lambton's Legacy

Judith & Norman Alix Art Gallery's *Spring Lower Canada (Maples, Early Spring)* by A.Y. Jackson was featured at the McMichael Canadian Art Collection for their *Jackson's Wars: A.Y. Jackson before the Group of Seven* exhibition. Throughout the year our museums and archives supported education through artifact loans: eight from the Oil Museum of Canada, five from Lambton Heritage Museum and five displays from Lambton County Archives.

Advocating for Cultural Services

Senior management from Cultural Services, accompanied by the Warden and Deputy Warden, engaged in a discussions with The Honourable Stan Cho, Minister of Tourism, Culture & Gaming. The delegation at the Association of Municipality of Ontario (AMO) Conference, advocated for increased provincial operating funding to support

Lambton County's libraries, museums, and archives, emphasizing the critical role these institutions play in preserving and promoting local culture.

A Sweet Collaboration with Global Donuts & Deli

During Ontario Public Library Week (October 20-26, 2024), Lambton County Library partnered with Global Donuts & Deli to promote media literacy. A special library-themed donut was offered at the popular Sarnia coffee shop, connecting with its diverse customer base and introducing library services to new audiences, effectively broadening outreach and creating awareness of Lambton's library service.

Sharing Our Heritage

Staff delivered engaging presentations about Lambton's 175-year history at the Lambton County Municipal Association Banquet, a Lambton Historical Society meeting and the Lambton Agricultural Hall of Fame connecting local leaders with our rich cultural heritage.

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.

Clearwater Library

Clearwater Library opened its doors on April 8, 2024, marking the successful transformation of a former Community Hall on the second floor of the Clearwater Arena into a public library space. This facility represents the effective collaboration between the County of Lambton and the City of Sarnia to address library space needs in the Sarnia community. The library's impact was immediately evident, recording 41,049 visitors and 69,747 physical loans between April and December 2024, demonstrating strong community adoption of this new resource. Partners, the City of Sarnia (building owner) and the County of Lambton (service provider) hosted a ribbon cutting celebration on April 8, and the library hosted a community open house on June 15, 2024.

Point Edward Library

December 2024 saw the completion of improvements at Point Edward Library with the installation of new flooring, reflecting the commitment of the municipality to maintain and upgrade its facilities in partnership with the County of Lambton to advance shared goals for library facility standards.

49,049 visits to the new Clearwater Library in the first nine months of operation.

Patrons read a book together overlooking Clearwater Arena's ice pad at Clearwater Library.



Updated flooring at Point Edward Library.





The restored roof is lowered onto Canatara Cabin at Lambton Heritage Museum.

108 logs put back in place as the 200 year old Canatara Cabin is restored at Lambton Heritage Museum.

Canatara Cabin

The restoration of Canatara Cabin progressed significantly in 2024, following a methodical approach to preserve this historic structure. The project began with the installation of a concrete foundation and a comprehensive assessment of the original logs. This evaluation led to the strategic sourcing of period-appropriate replacement logs where necessary, ensuring both structural integrity and historical authenticity.

Construction proceeded systematically, with the log walls rising progressively from the foundation. The completion of the second story and installation of new cedar shingles marked significant milestones in the restoration process. Following the roof installation and window placement, the structure was carefully winterized to protect the work completed thus far, with work scheduled to resume in the spring.

The project received substantial support through a \$60,000 grant from FedDev, complementing ongoing community fundraising efforts which have raised \$65,221 of the \$100,000 goal to date. This combination of federal support and community engagement demonstrates a collaborative approach to preserving our cultural heritage.



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) Retired NHL player Bill Locheid sits behind the penalty box door that was salvaged from the Forest Arena after it was demolished in summer 2024. Part of Lambton Heritage Museum's "Hockey" exhibit. 2) Warden Kevin Marriott, Darlene Coke, Manager, Library Services, and Judi Sowerbutts, Hostess, Global Donuts & Deli show off the special library donuts for Ontario Public Library Week. 3) Vanitia Campbell, Public Services Coordinator - Youth Programs & Outreach, teen photographer Alexis Brown, and Sonya Blazek, Curator / Supervisor, Judith & Norman Alix Art Gallery pose with a winning entry for the teen photo contest. 4) Heritage Champions pose with Warden Kevin Marriott after the council ceremony honouring them at a June Lambton County Council Meeting.