

Reps. Kooiman, Hildenbrand, Sak, Accavitti, Anderson, Baxter, Brown, Byrum, Caul, Clemente, Dillon, Elsenheimer, Farhat, Farrah, Garfield, Gillard, Gleason, Gonzales, Green, Hansen, Hopgood, Jones, Lemmons, III, Lemmons, Jr., Lipsey, McConico, Meyer, Mortimer, Murphy, Nitz, Palsrok, Pastor, Pavlov, Pearce, Plakas, Polidori, Proos, Robertson, Schuitmaker, Shaffer, Spade, Stewart, Taub, Vagnozzi, Van Regenmorter, Vander Veen, Ward, Waters, Wojno and Zelenko offered the following resolution:

House Resolution No. 25.

A resolution honoring the 150th anniversary of the Public Museum of Grand Rapids and the 10th anniversary of the Van Andel Museum Center.

Whereas, The Public Museum of Grand Rapids is a municipally owned educational institution whose mission is to collect, preserve and present natural, cultural, and social history for the benefit of its region and state. The Museum's long history of using permanent collections for educational purposes dates to November 17, 1854, when a group of amateur historians and scientists gathered to form the Grand Rapids Lyceum of Natural History. By 1868, the Lyceum opened an actual museum for "public inspection" in the city's Central High School. Over time, the Museum shifted from displaying natural curiosities and oddities, to acquiring systematic collections for use in studying and teaching about human culture and the natural world. A new name was adopted that emphasized the Museum's expanded educational role: The Kent Scientific Institute; and

Whereas, By 1917, the Museum occupied two adjacent mansions in the downtown area. It was a chartered department of municipal government and developed a major lending program whereby instructional materials, artifacts, and mounted specimens were delivered to schools for study. In 1936, the institution was renamed the Public Museum to reflect its citizen's ownership, operation, and multi-disciplinary, program-focused character. It had a professional staff that oversaw the growth of historical collections and the creation of programs, permanent installations, and exhibitions. In 1938, the Museum's board matched a WPA grant with a bequest and built an innovative, modern building that looked and felt more like a department store than a traditional museum. Inspired by the writings of Newark Museum director John Cotton Dana, it was populist in philosophy and presentation, marketing itself in 1940 when it opened as being "as convenient as your corner store, and friendly as your neighbor."; and

Whereas, By 1964, significant growth in service-oriented programming necessitated the construction of additions to the building and the Roger B. Chaffee Planetarium, along with the acquisition and development of the 143-acre Blandford Nature Center. The Voigt House Museum, an unusually well preserved late 19th century residence, was acquired in 1974 with all of its original furnishings and archives to be a house museum that would balance the didactic historical displays developed in the main museum, especially those focused on furniture design, manufacturing, and marketing. In 1971, it became the first museum in the nation to be accredited by the American Association of Museums, but it soon became evident that expansion was again necessary to maintain standards and better serve a growing audience; and

Whereas, In 1982, an extraordinary public planning process began that resulted in the creation of a master plan for the Museum's growth on a new site in the heart of downtown Grand Rapids. This culminated in 1994, on the Museum's 140th anniversary, with the debt free opening of the 155,000-sq. ft. Van Andel Museum Center, paid for with \$42,000,000 given by more than 25,000 public and private donors. Community based exhibition development and object conservation and program development were planned and implemented simultaneously with architectural design, resulting in multiple exhibitions exploring regional urban, social &

industrial history, ethnology, art, and environmental education. With growth came new opportunities and the professional staff was expanded. Citizens formed a private foundation in support of museum programs that now manages assets of over \$7,000,000. The city of Grand Rapids renewed its commitment to operations, while facilitating and encouraging the Museum to become entrepreneurial. In response, annual attendance climbed to double the city's population simultaneous with the Public Museum's third award of AAM accreditation (1996); and

Whereas, This growth culminated in its development and presentation of an exemplary, proprietary exhibition of the Dead Sea Scrolls, in collaboration with the Israeli Antiquities Authority, in 2003. That exhibition attracted over 235,000 visitors in 106 days and had an economic impact on the community of \$9,000,000. Subsequent severe operating budget cuts have reduced the size of the staff, but not the enthusiasm of its supporters. Currently, the Museum is nearing completion of its new 140,000 sq. ft. research center. This center will expand public access and provide a place for the excellent preservation of its permanent collections. The center will begin development of a master plan for the Norton Mounds National Historic Landmark it holds in trust, revitalize its education program, and it will continue to present major traveling exhibitions to its public; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That the members of this legislative body recognize and congratulate the Public Museum of Grand Rapids on its 150th anniversary and the Van Andel Museum Center's 10th anniversary.