

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **City of Manistee, Manistee Tourism Awarded \$50,000 America250MI Grant to Bring Local History to Life**

#### *New Project to Expand Manistee's Award-Winning Cultural Storytelling*

MANISTEE, Mich. (March 26, 2026) — Manistee Tourism and the city of Manistee have been awarded a \$50,000 America250MI History Grant, the program's highest Tier 3 award, to support a transformative expansion of cultural storytelling along the Downtown Riverwalk.

This project represents an extraordinary collaboration between Manistee County Tourism Authority, City of Manistee, Alro Steel, West Shore Community College, Manistee County Historical Society, and Little River Band of Ottawa Indians, bringing together diverse perspectives to elevate the Riverwalk as a destination for both residents and visitors.

The grant was provided in support of "Journeys: Our Story of Migration, Industry and Community." The project is expected to include four interactive displays along a half-mile stretch of the Downtown Riverwalk representing: tribal migration, fisheries, vessels and lumber. Each sculpture will be designed to recount Manistee's history of development, employing sensory activities to tell the story of the industries critical to the foundation of our community.

Building on the success of the award-winning Origins, the new installations, forged from Corten steel donated by Jackson, Mich.-based Alro Steel and welded by West Shore Community College students, will blend art and history to showcase the migrations, industries and cultural influences that shaped Manistee. The result will be an immersive, place-based experience that deepens connection to the river and the stories that define it.

"Tourism in Manistee is rooted in the 'Power of Place,' and nothing defines our place more than the river and its importance. Following the incredible reception of the Origins, Journeys allows us to expand our cultural, historical and storytelling footprint," said Sammie Lukaskiewicz, executive director of the Manistee County Tourism Authority. "This grant makes this project possible and allows us to dig deeper into the stories that make Manistee unique. By modernizing how we tell our history, we aren't just looking back at the last 250 years; we are building a legacy for the next 250."

"Projects like Journeys highlight the strong collaboration in our community and our commitment to preserving and sharing Manistee's history in meaningful, engaging ways," said Manistee City Manager Bill Gambill. "I want to recognize the leadership of the Manistee County Tourism Authority in coordinating and advancing this effort. This enhancement to the City's Riverwalk experience further reinforces Manistee as a place that values its heritage while continuing to look toward the future."

The project includes educational signage about the region and Riverwalk, as well as photo op installations, along four areas of the Riverwalk.

Funded through the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and coordinated by the Michigan History Center and the Historical Society of Michigan, the America250MI initiative supports communities

across the state in commemorating the nation's 250th anniversary through projects that celebrate local heritage and identity. For more information on Manistee County, visit [www.visitmanisteecounty.com](http://www.visitmanisteecounty.com).

### **About the Manistee County Tourism Authority**

The Manistee County Tourism Authority, operating as Manistee Tourism, is a private, not-for-profit organization dedicated to positioning Manistee County as a premier northern Michigan travel destination. Formerly known as the Manistee County Convention and Visitors Bureau, the organization leads the development and promotion of a thriving tourism economy through marketing, education and collaboration.

### **About America250MI**

In 2020, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer directed the Historical Society of Michigan and the Michigan History Center to coordinate the state's commemoration of the anniversary of the founding of the United States of America, the American Revolution's role in Michigan's history and the impact that these, and other historical events, have had on the people of Michigan. The two organizations created the America250MI Committee to aid and advise this effort.

Established in 1828, the Historical Society of Michigan is Michigan's oldest cultural organization and helps connect Michigan's past to its residents and organizations through programs and events, publications, awards, workshops, networking opportunities and support for local history organizations. The society is a member-supported educational 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and receives zero state-appropriated funding.

The Michigan History Center fosters curiosity, enjoyment and inspiration rooted in Michigan's stories through museums, historic sites, Michigan Historical Markers, heritage trails, archaeology and programming. The center, a part of the Department of Natural Resources, manages 11 museums statewide, museum and archaeology artifact collections and various educational programs.

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