



Becky Idstrom, Director of Communications and Marketing

bidstrom@vesterheim.org • 563-382-9681

For Immediate Release

More Info: vesterheim.org/media-kit

December 9, 2024

Vesterheim Museum Reaccredited by American Alliance of Museums

DECORAH, Iowa — Vesterheim, the National Norwegian-American Museum and Folk Art School, has again achieved accreditation by the American Alliance of Museums, the highest national recognition afforded to the nation's museums. Accreditation signifies excellence to the museum community, to governments, funders, outside agencies, and to the museum-going public. Vesterheim has been accredited since 1970. All museums must undergo a reaccreditation review at least every 10 years to maintain accredited status.

Alliance Accreditation brings national recognition to a museum for its commitment to excellence, accountability, high professional standards, and continued institutional improvement. Developed and sustained by museum professionals for over fifty years, the Alliance's museum accreditation program is the field's primary vehicle for quality assurance, self-regulation, and public accountability. It strengthens the museum profession by promoting practices that enable leaders to make informed decisions, allocate resources wisely, and remain financially and ethically accountable to provide the best possible service to the public.

Vesterheim President/CEO, Chris Johnson, said, "Achieving reaccreditation by the American Alliance of Museums is a rigorous process that involves the work of both Vesterheim's staff and its Board of Trustees. It serves as an important learning tool helping identify areas where Vesterheim can continue to improve and excel on a national level. The importance of being an AAM accredited museum cannot be understated. It proclaims to our visitors, members, and supporters that Vesterheim is an

organization that follows the museum field's best practices and professional standards in our day-to-day work.”

Of the nation’s estimated 33,000 museums, roughly 1,100 are currently accredited. Vesterheim is one of only 33 museums accredited in Iowa.

Accreditation is a very rigorous but highly rewarding process that examines all aspects of a museum’s operations. To earn accreditation, a museum first must conduct a year of self-study, and then undergo a site visit by a team of peer reviewers. AAM’s Accreditation Commission, an independent and autonomous body of museum professionals, considers the self-study and visiting committee report to determine whether a museum should receive accreditation.

“Accreditation is a monumental achievement,” said Marilyn Jackson, AAM President & CEO. “The process demonstrates an institution’s commitment to best practice and is flexible enough to be accomplished by museums of any size.”

Vesterheim, the National Norwegian-American Museum and Folk Art School, welcomes people of all ages and backgrounds to engage in the conversation of the American immigrant journey through the lens of the Norwegian-American experience. Vesterheim offers innovative and interactive exhibits, classes, and programs, both at the dynamic campus and park in scenic Decorah, Iowa, and online at vesterheim.org and Vesterheim social media. For more information on exhibits, classes, programs, tours, membership opportunities, and ways to donate and volunteer, connect at vesterheim.org, (563) 382-9681, and Vesterheim, 520 W. Water St., P.O. Box 379, Decorah, IA, 52101-0379.

The American Alliance of Museums (AAM) is the only organization representing the entire museum field, from art and history museums to science centers and zoos. Since 1906, we have been championing museums through advocacy and providing museum professionals with the resources, knowledge, inspiration, and connections they need to move the field forward. For more information, visit aam-us.org.