

# INDIANA ECONOMIC DIGEST

*Daily News on Business and Economic Events throughout Indiana*

Saturday, August 1, 2015

## Museum in Kendallville will raise funds to repair windmills

(Kendallville) News-Sun

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KENDALLVILLE — Since it opened in 1992, the [Mid-America Windmill Museum](#) has been a unique attraction for visitors to the area, and its Baker Hall has hosted numerous wedding receptions, family and class reunions, and other celebrations.

The annual Windmill Wonderland during the holiday season — with its thousands of lights and illuminated displays — has become a tradition for area families and visitors.

The museum at 732 S. Allen Chapel Road on the city's east side has 53 restored windmills. It's the largest collection of the historic machines east of the Mississippi River and the only known windmill museum in the United States open to the public. It was created and is operated by volunteers.

Since it opened, the museum has relied on income from renting Baker Hall and membership and admission fees to maintain the 16-acre property and the windmills. That has worked well for operating expenses, but volunteers have fallen behind in keeping the windmills in good repair, including all 13 [Flint & Walling](#) Inc. models.

About 60 percent of the windmills are in various states of disrepair, and the museum needs professional help restoring them, said Christine Howard, museum president. The museum has hired Jim Koch, owner of J.K. Windmills Inc. in Hoagland, to spend three days a week repairing all the windmills.

"We've been told if we don't repair the windmills, that in five to seven years they will be lost and can't be repaired," said Tom Burke, a museum board member.

The board is asking for donations to help catch up on the repairs. It has developed the following fundraising plan: one-time, \$1,000 donations; and donations of \$500 annually for four years, payable on April 1 each year.



Jim Koch, owner of J.K. Windmills of Hoagland repairs a Heller-Aller windmill at the Mid-America Windmill Museum on South Allen Chapel Road. Contributed photo

The Olive B. Cole Foundation has awarded the museum a \$50,000 matching grant that could double donations to the fundraising campaign.

"It's like an adopt-a-windmill fundraising campaign," Burke said.

A placard will be placed on a windmill to show who adopted it. Potential donors are welcome to visit the museum to see the windmills up close and the repair work that is underway, Burke said.

The museum is scheduled to host the International Windmillers' Trade Fair in 2017. The fair attracts windmill enthusiasts from around the United States, Canada and other countries. Museum board members hope the repairs can be completed before the fair.

Kendallville is an appropriate home for the museum. During the early 20th century, 76 companies that manufactured windmills were within a 150-mile radius of the city. Flint & Walling was a major manufacturer of windmills for decades.

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