

Grand Marais Heritage Committee for their ***East Beaches Heritage Wing*** Exhibition.

This exhibition is an excellent example of meticulous research, innovative community engagement, and is accessible and appealing to visitors.

The exhibits tell the unique story of the people of the East Beaches and how they adapted to the changes in the local economy from subsistence resource use, to a service industry economy. At the centre of what became a thriving tourism industry, was Grand Beach, a resort built by the railway. The railway left in 1961, taking much of the community's fame and fortune with it.

This is done with many different elements including static displays, touch screens and voice recordings. As one visitor noted: "*The exhibits walk a nice line between modern technologies for the younger generation but not so much that it alienates the community elders.*"

The exhibit tells the story of the East Beaches of Lake Winnipeg and how the community has coped with changes in with stories specific to the area and told by local community members while including universal concepts many people can appreciate.

- Extensive research was done in preparing exhibits, including interviewing community leaders.
- Some exhibits are designed like art installations to have a greater visual appeal. Other exhibits rely more on audio for visitors with visual challenges.
- The exhibits combine both new technology and traditional forms of exhibits for a wider appeal. As one visitor put it "The exhibits walk a nice line between modern technologies for the younger generation but not so much that it alienates the community elders."
- There is an ongoing way for visitors to contribute photographs and stories to refresh exhibits.
- The space is intimate and the exhibits talk directly to the visitor, engaging the audience.

In the future community museums will move away from large collections of "pioneer" artifacts with little uniqueness or storyline, to more professional and inclusive exhibits that tell their unique story.

The EBHW provides one example of how that might be accomplished. The multimedia approach, artistic design, intimate setting, and community involvement, contribute ideas to what might be a new direction in small community museums.