

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Andrew E. Masich
President & CEO

Innovation for the Next Generation

Western Pennsylvania has been the inspiration and birthplace for countless innovations. The History Center's *Pittsburgh: A Tradition of Innovation* exhibition is just one place we showcase cutting-edge ideas.

The entire museum embraces technology that makes learning more fun and engaging. From a synthetic interview with George Westinghouse (created in partnership with CMU's Entertainment Technology Center) to a searchable timeline database of hundreds of local innovations, our goal is to create meaningful learning experiences for adults and children within the same space.

As part of the History Center's long-range plan, we are developing new content that utilizes the reach of radio, television, and the Internet.

In the past few months, we've launched a series of five virtual tours on our website that allow online visitors to explore our exhibitions from the comfort of their own PC. By utilizing their mouse, online visitors can control the virtual tours to scan 360 degrees in each exhibit space. Clickable hot spots allow visitors to uncover new information, including enhanced audio and video related to select artifacts.

Our website now features virtual tours for several recent exhibitions, such as *Vatican Splendors* and *George Washington*, as well as long-term exhibitions, including the Western Pennsylvania Sports Museum and *Pittsburgh: A Tradition of Innovation*. We recently created a virtual tour for our *Benjamin Franklin: In Search of a Better World* exhibition, which closes to the public on July 31 but will live online for years to come.

Try out the virtual tours for yourself at www.heinzhistorycenter.org.



While you're scrolling through our site, be sure to click on the audio and video icons (🔊) sprinkled throughout the web pages. By clicking on these icons, you can access short "bytes" of local history related to everything from George Washington and the Ferris Wheel to the history of Meadowcroft Rockshelter and Maz's legendary homerun.

Or you can check out the History Center's YouTube channel for a breathless seven-minute lesson about 80 Pittsburgh innovations, follow us on Facebook and Twitter for the latest information on late-breaking history, or check out our new Ben Franklin videos to learn what people really know about the man who invented bifocals, lightening rods, and non-counterfeitable currency.

New technology has even been incorporated into the *Western Pennsylvania History* magazine you're holding in your hand. Beginning with this issue, you'll find two-dimensional barcode tags that will link you to additional photos, stories, and videos.

QR (Quick Response) tags store information that links those who access them to websites, Facebook pages, contact info, or even maps. All you need to access this new information is a smart phone and an app for your camera to read the tags.

For the codes in our magazine, you can download Microsoft Tags for free. Then just open the app, point your camera, and the link will automatically launch. Try it on my photo or on our History Center logo above.

Our goal throughout each of these technological advances is to reach new audiences with information related to Western Pennsylvania history, whether you live within the region or across the world.

History education is evolving as we pursue our mission of preserving and interpreting American history with a regional connection—and while we're at it, making a little history of our own.

