



# Dennos Brand Refresh

Public Presentation and Q&A



# Dennos Museum Center: A Brief History

1960s	1980s	1991	2015 - 2018	2019 - Now
Bernie Rink is the director of the NMC Library and begins selling and collecting Inuit Art for NMC.	<p>Paul Welch and the Dennos Family begin advocating for a community museum. The current building is a reimagined Phase II to the Fine Arts building.</p> <p>Gene Jenneman (founding director) is hired in 1988 to guide the construction and open the museum.</p>	<p>Museum is built at the campus entrance to increase community engagement and opens to the public.</p> <p>NMC's 500 works of Inuit Art are transferred to the Dennos for display.</p>	The museum undergoes an expansion that doubles the size of the building. Gene Jenneman oversees the completion of that project and retires in June 2019.	<p>Museum hires its second Executive Director, Craig Hadley.</p> <p>Staff collectively agree to work on becoming accredited*, meet the challenges of the Covid pandemic, and go through the PESR Program.</p> <p>*Dennos staff will apply for accreditation in Fall 2026 after seven years of self-assessment and peer review.</p>

# Dennos Operations

## Auxiliary Operation of NMC

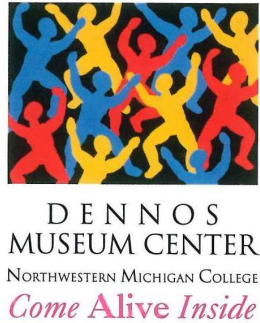
The Dennos is an auxiliary operation of NMC. While the Dennos receives indirect support from NMC, the museum is entirely self-funded and relies on various funding streams to support all operating expenses.

## Financial Overview

The museum is funded through four main revenue streams:

- Earned revenue from admission, memberships, ticket, and store sales.
- Donations from annual appeals and estate gifts (e.g., rebrand).
- Public and private grants
- \$8.25 million endowment

# Dennos Logo & Mission History



## 1991 Logo

### Museum Mission:

The mission of the Dennos Museum Center at Northwestern Michigan College is to provide high-quality educational, cultural and aesthetic experiences to the population of Northwestern Michigan. The Dennos Museum Center will use its collections and facilities to provide the public and the college community with a variety of programming in the visual and performing arts, and the sciences. As such it will play an active role in the overall cultural life of northwestern Michigan.



## 2000 Logo

### Museum Mission:

The mission of the Dennos Museum Center is to engage, entertain and enlighten its audiences through the collection of art; and the presentation of exhibitions and programs in the visual arts, sciences and performing arts.



## 2008 Logo (Current)

### Museum Mission (2008 - 2019):

The Dennos Museum Center seeks to engage, entertain and enlighten its audiences through the collection of art, and the presentation of exhibitions and programs in the visual arts, sciences and performing arts.



# Where Are We Now?

We currently use the 2008 logo in black and white, and in various solid colors in very limited circumstances. The museum's official brand colors are the burgundy and warm grey with the addition of the pink, orange, yellow, green and blue on the web.

The museum's current brand was developed in 2008, during which the mission statement changed very little from 2000 to 2019. Following the museum's expansion in 2018—coupled with new leadership alongside changes in the social, academic, and marketing landscape—resulted in the adoption of a new mission and vision to lead the museum into the future.

**Current Mission (2020):** The Dennen Museum Center builds community, sparks conversation, and inspires change for audiences of all ages through its exhibitions, programs, and the collection and preservation of art.

**Current Vision (2025):** The Dennen will serve as a vibrant hub for the campus and community to engage in dialogue, discovery, and connection through thoughtfully curated exhibitions and experiences.

# Who Is Developing the New Brand?

- The museum's brand refresh efforts are led by **Phire Group (Ann Arbor, MI)** and rooted in discovery work that has included one-on-one interviews with key stakeholders, survey input from community members, and competitive analysis with other comparable organizations.
- The brand refresh is guided internally by a steering committee comprised of Dennon staff, NMC PRMC, the NMC Foundation, NMC Academic Success, museum volunteers, and external stakeholders.
- Phire Group was selected by Dennon staff for its competitive proposal that highlighted their niche experience after leading the rebrand efforts for the University of Michigan Museum of Art (UMMA). Phire Group has an acute understanding of academic art museums, and the unique challenges and opportunities of celebrating the museum's distinct brand while also leaning into strategic tie-ins to the larger parent organization.

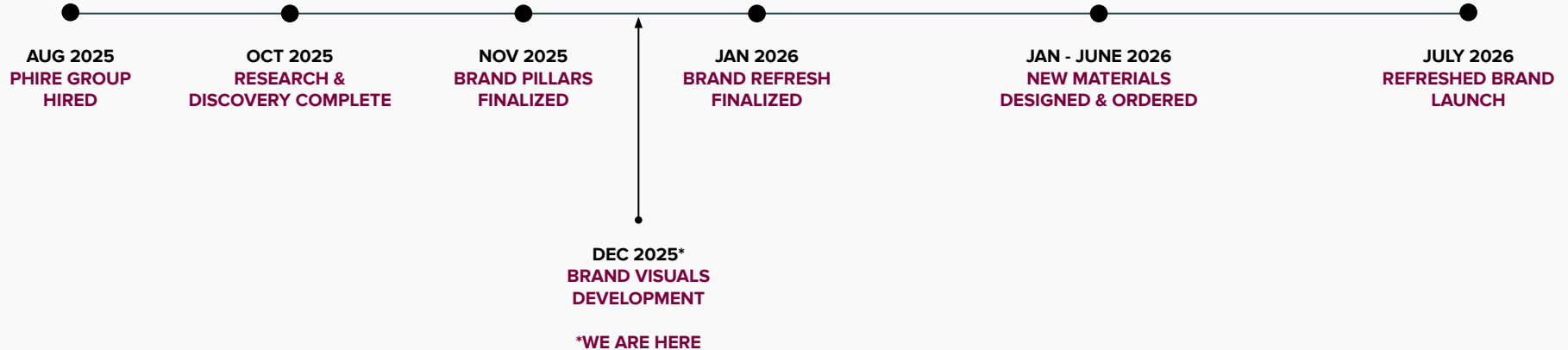
**Note:** The Dennon team also reviewed proposals from a local firm and individuals on the team for NMC's brand refresh. Ultimately, Phire Group sent in the strongest proposal for the most competitive price, and had the most relevant experience.



# Purpose of Brand Refresh

- Opportunity for alignment after NMC's brand refresh, our 35th anniversary, and NMC's 75th anniversary
- This initiative is identified as a core objective in the museum's 2026-30 strategic plan and closely tied to the findings and needs identified during the **Performance Enhancement and Sustainability Review (PESR)** process including:
  - Museum professionalization through the AAM Accreditation process.**
  - Donor and community engagement and philanthropic investment.
  - Program and partnership development aligned with the museum's mission and strategic goals.

# Brand Refresh Timeline



**A couple notes:** This is a phase 1 timeline and rollout for the refreshed brand. Phase 2 will cover more expensive projects like the museum website and permanent signage in and around the building.



# Questions?





# New Dennos Brand Pillars

Brand Pillars are our guide for messaging and ownable points of differentiation. These are not intended to be used literally. Rather, in combination with one another, they are our compass of intent.

PILLAR ONE

# Relevant

The Dennos is a vibrant space, intricately tied to the present. Our mix of historic and contemporary art invites a diverse range of visitors – students, faculty, community members, and beyond – to explore and learn in new and unexpected ways.





PILLAR TWO

# Engaging

We believe in creating memorable experiences for everyone who walks through the Dennos' doors, igniting curiosity, conversation, and wonder. With support and collaboration from NMC and external organizations, our exhibitions are designed to connect with a broad audience.



PILLAR THREE

# Community- Anchored

The Dennos is a vital gathering space where everyone – no matter their age or art background – can gain new insight and expand their perspective. We're a cultural community space for all walks of life within the region to come together for dialogue, discovery, and connection.



PILLAR FOUR

# Evolving

The Dennon lives, breathes, and continuously moves forward. With our rich permanent collection, rotating installations, and curated programs that offer new and exciting ways to broaden understanding, every visit is an opportunity to uncover new surprises.







# New Brand Personality

Brand Personality traits provide us with the DNA of the organization: how it speaks, how it looks, how it feels. All traits are to be used in concert with one another — never in isolation.

TRAIT ONE

# Inviting

The Dennos is a world-class museum with a wide-open door. We strive to curate an engaging environment that's simple to navigate and easy to be in, welcoming everyone to drop in, linger, and feel a sense of belonging.





TRAIT TWO

# Dynamic

The Denno is a museum that's always in motion. Where the energy of art and ideas abounds, and transformations take place. New stories should always be unfolding, ensuring every visit is as fresh as the last.



TRAIT THREE

# Inspiring

We believe in providing an environment that surprises, uplifts, and nurtures a desire for lifelong learning and exploration. The Dennos should be a spark in the community, igniting new ways not only for visitors to experience and share art, but also see the world.



TRAIT FOUR

# Curious

We are driven by a sense of wonder – and we want every visitor to be, too. This guides our desire to share new discoveries, ensuring the Dennos experience is impactful, relevant, and intriguing.







# Visual Identity Principles

The forthcoming logo and visual identity refresh will be grounded in strategy and incorporate the following branding recommendations.

# The Refreshed Brand Will Be:

- **Inclusive & Welcoming:** maintain black and white usage for accessibility purposes with pops of color for when it's appropriate to be more playful or to create visual interest.
- **Connected & Creative:** reinforce our visual connection to Northwestern Michigan College while introducing greater creative flexibility that expresses our engaging, inviting, and curious brand personality.
- **Academic & Artful:** reflect our dual identity as both an educational resource and an art museum, conveying intellectual curiosity, creativity, and the pursuit of learning through visual expression.
- **Shifting from the Dennos Museum Center to The Dennos:** to reflect the way in which the community actually refers to the museum in conversation and help with brand recognition.
- **Flexible & Adaptable:** capable of being co-branded with NMC and work for various uses.
- **Professional & High-caliber:** signaling the quality of exhibitions and programs at the Dennos.

# Questions?

