



- The 48th Annual Gallery of Trees (2026) overall theme: **“America the Beautiful”: Celebrating 250 Years**
- This year’s Gallery of Trees display will explore American identity, landscapes, history, and ideals, drawing from the classic song to encompass themes of nature, patriotism, diversity, freedom, and cultural reflection. Tree themes should respectfully honor the contributions of Americans throughout history. Get creative! Any event, person, group, place, or advancement can be considered as a theme for this America 250 Celebration. You can narrow it down to local figures/places/people/events or expand to the broader US. **NO DUPLICATES** – chosen themes will be accepted on first come, first serve basis. Spots are limited so register early. **NO ENTRIES WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER NOVEMBER 10, 2026.**

Important Dates

- The Gallery of Trees Preview Party will be held on **WEDNESDAY, December 2nd, 2026**. Hours are 5 – 7 pm (dinner is ready at 5:30 pm).
 - Kankakee County Historical Society members and their guests enjoy a night of kicking off the holiday season at the museum. **Your organization will receive ONE free ticket** with the option of purchasing an additional ticket. Spots are **NOT** automatically reserved. Names of ticket holders need to be provided to the museum no later than **November 21st**. Tickets must be paid in advance. No tickets will be sold at the door.
- The 2026 Gallery of Trees will open to the public **Thursday, December 3rd, 2026**.
 - **The museum’s hours during the month of December are Thursday – Sunday 9:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m.** The museum will **CLOSE EARLY** on Christmas Eve and New Year’s Eve (Hours **9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.**). **CLOSED Christmas Day.**
 - There may be dates that we will have special activities with pop up vendors, visits from winter characters and Santa, entertainment, and themed crafts and games.
- The last day the 2026 Gallery of Trees will be open to the public is **December 31st, 2026** (Thursday 9-2). All votes will be counted at the end of that day.
- The museum will be **closed** to the public following the Veteran’s Day ceremony on **November 11th, 2026, through December 2nd, 2026**, for decorating & Thanksgiving break.
- Tree locations will be selected by a representative of your organization on **Thursday, November 12th, 2026, at 9am**. Selections are made in a “lottery” style process.
- Trees may be decorated between **9 a.m. and 5 p.m. November 12th, 13th, 14th, 19th, 20th, and 21st**.
- Tree decorations are to be removed between **9 a.m. and 5 p.m. January 2nd and 3rd 2027**.

Fee:

- Entry fee is a \$50 non-refundable donation (prior to August 1, 2026).
 - ***Donation will increase to \$60 on August 1st, 2026.**
- *Check can be made to “Kankakee County Historical Society” or “KCHS”

Decorating Guidelines

- An artificial tree will be provided for you. Once selected, the tree must stay in its original location. You must supply your own lighting. **No candles or organic material are permitted including dirt, hay, straw, food, or live foliage.** If you choose to provide your own artificial tree, you may replace the provided tree **AFTER** final selections are completed (tree must be within reasonable parameters and needs to be approved ahead of time).
- Decorations are limited to the actual tree and area immediately under the tree.
- The museum cannot be responsible for lost or broken ornaments, or other materials associated with your tree or display area.
- The Museum will provide signage that will be placed under the tree.
- Please, be mindful that over 4,000 people will be viewing your tree.
- Any questions should be directed to the museum's Executive Director, Veronica Featherston.

Prizes

- Voting will be in two categories: the **adult** votes and **children** votes.
 - First Prize \$100
 - Second Prize \$ 50
 - Third Prize \$ 25

Volunteers

- We need volunteer assistance due to the number of visitors visiting the Gallery of Trees each year. This is to work at the front desk and make sure everyone signs the guestbook and to also help sell raffle tickets. Your assistance is greatly appreciated.
- During the tree set up we ask for volunteer names and dates for which they can assist. You can also email now to reserve your volunteer shift: kankakeecountymuseum@gmail.com
- We ask that each organization give **at least one shift** to volunteer. Each organization must sign up for their shift by **November 21st**.
- The shifts will be **10 a.m. – 2 p.m.** or **2 p.m. – 6pm** on **Thursday, Friday, Saturday, or Sunday. Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve shifts will be 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.**
- Museum staff will be taking dates and times at 815-932-5279.
- **CLOSED CHRISTMAS DAY 2026.**

*Gallery of Trees participant information can also be found on the Museum website: kankakeecountymuseum.com

Thank you for participating!! 2026 is going to be a spectacular year! We look forward to seeing your creative tree designs for our 48th Annual Gallery of Trees – “America the Beautiful”.