new bedford whaling museum
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For Immediate Release

New Bedford Whaling Museum Experiences Highest Traffic in a Decade in the First Quarter of 2025

Overall visits increased more than 16% from 2024; post-pandemic visitation is up 380%

NEW BEDFORD, MA – *May 2, 2025* – The New Bedford Whaling Museum is pleased to announce its highest visitor count since 2012 in the first quarter of 2025 with overall visits up more than 16% year-over-year. Some key data points:

- Total museum visitors were up 16.2% across all categories from 2024, with the most growth (27.9%) in school groups.
- Member households are up 26% in the last five years.
- The Museum Fund (annual fund) has increased 35% in the last ten years
- The post-pandemic visitation rebound is up 380%.
- January 1 - April 19, 2025 experienced a 17% increase over the same period last year.

The growth represents a confluence of factors: the successful execution of the Museum's strategic plan, including consistent marketing, advertising, and earned media efforts; the proactive work of the Head of Learning to draw field trips and homeschooled students; and an intentional investment in exhibitions and programs. For example, during the shoulder season and off-season, exhibitions and programs attract a hyperlocal audience, such as *Lighting the Way: SouthCoast Women's Lives, Labors, Loves*, celebrating the powerful stories of trailblazing women on the SouthCoast.

The 29th annual Moby Dick reading marathon in January also drew a record crowd, and public programs, such as First Fridays, the Sailors' Series, and the Portuguese & Lusophone-World Lecture Series consistently sold out for the first time. Additionally, the Museum traveled three shows in 2024, reaching more than 58,000 people around the country expanding the reputation of the region.

"While we can point to certain tactics that led to this success, what it comes down to is that we offer an incredible experience that resonates with visitors of all ages and backgrounds," said Amanda McMullen, President and CEO New Bedford Whaling Museum. "Great things are happening at the museum, and we are looking forward to exciting times ahead, including our celebration of Cape Verde's independence this summer through two incredible exhibitions, and breaking ground on our expansion."

About the New Bedford Whaling Museum

Anchored in the story of New Bedford's whaling industry, the Museum documents and shares the diverse stories of this vibrant maritime region and its people, both bygone and current. Founded as the Old Dartmouth Historical Society in 1903, the Museum's rich history reveals an intimate

relationship with the communities it serves. Today, the New Bedford Whaling Museum ignites learning through explorations of art, history, science and culture, rooted in the stories of people, the region and an international seaport. The New Bedford Whaling Museum is the leading cultural institution in the region, attracting more than 100,000 visitors annually.

The cornerstone of New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park, the Museum is located at 18 Johnny Cake Hill in the heart of the city's historic downtown. Between January 2-March 31, the institution is open from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm Tuesday-Saturday and from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm on Sunday. Between April 1-December 31, daily hours are 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. The Museum is open until 7 p.m. every second Thursday of the month (on AHA! nights) and closed on Christmas Eve, Christmas, and New Year's Day. Admission is free for Museum members; adults $23, seniors (65+) $21, youth $13. For more information, visit www.whalingmuseum.org.

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