

# Museum acquires Dale Chihuly piece

By TOM JACKSON, Sandusky Register, 8-10-2019

Register photos/ERIN CALDWELL



Left: The Milan History Museum recently received a glass sculpture by artist Dale Chihuly. It sits on display at the museum.



Right: Vaseline glass glows bright green under ultraviolet light at the Milan History Museum.

## MILAN

The Milan History Museum has fancy new artwork to show to visitors: a glass sculpture by renowned artist Dale Chihuly. If you want to check it out and see what else the museum has to offer on its seven-building campus at 10 Edison Drive in Milan, this weekend is an opportune time. The museum is offering free admission from 1-5 p.m. Sunday at its monthly community day.

After spending years renovating exhibits and acquiring new pieces such as the Chihuly, the museum is concentrating on becoming better known, museum executive director Ann Basilone-Jones said. The museum draws 5,000 visitors a year, but museum officials hope to lure in more people to view the museum's excellent glass collection, which has more than 1,000 pieces, its lace collection, its folk art collection and its historic artifacts, Basilone-Jones said. The Chihuly piece took several years to acquire and was paid for using grants and donations. Basilone-Jones did not reveal the price but said covering the cost took a long time. "We were actually raising the money for a solid three years," she said.

The Chihuly piece, "Capucine Orange Persian Set with Royal Blue Lip Wraps," shimmers with several colors and was made by an American glass artist known all over the world. "It came in five separate pieces," Basilone-Jones said. "It's wafer-thin in certain spots." It arrived in a giant crate, packed with foam laser cut to fit each piece, said the museum director, who carefully packed and assembled it with help from another museum employee. "It really was like Christmas. It was so exciting and nerve-wracking," she said.

The Chihuly isn't the only exciting new attraction at the museum. There's also the Everbright, which is not an art piece but is an interactive device. It has 244 round dials, each of which can be turned to activate it in a variety of colors. Visitors have figured out they can spell words and create various effects, Basilone-Jones said.

The museum has two year-round paid staffers and seasonal employees. It has an annual budget of about \$175,000 to \$200,000 a year and is privately funded through endowments, earned income, donations and memberships. The museum is a government recognized 501c3 nonprofit, meaning that donations to it are tax-deductible. The organization's 2017 Form 990, required from such nonprofits, lists total assets of about \$5.8 million. Basilone-Jones is a Milan native, but her knowledge of art isn't confined to the local area. She studied art history in graduate school and spent time studying in Florence, Italy.

It's time for the museum and its varied exhibits, appealing to a wide spectrum of people, to become better known, she said. "Now we're really in full swing of promoting the museum," she said. "We're in a small town, but it's an amazing museum."