In October 1998, a former warehouse in Saronno which repaired steam engines during the 1800s was made available by the Ferrovie Nord Milano to a group of industrialists and workers who had formed an Association which culminated in the inauguration of the Museum of Industry and Work in the area around Saronno.

It was set up for the conservation, education and valorization of the historical industrial patrimony that characterized Saronno and the surrounding area from the 1850s on. The civil, social and cultural mission of the initiative focused on much more than the mere economic aspect, and intended to focus on the continuity of the life and the history of the territory.

The open-air exposition area covers 1400 sq. meters and the enclosed area covers 800 sq. meters.

Saronno developed thanks to the birth of the first railroad line of the Ferrovie Nord which has connected Milan and Saronno since 1879. The open-air area displays historical engines of the Ferrovie Nord, from the first cargo train dating to the 1900s to the first electric cars from the late 20s with an engine from 1929, as well as the first electric trains with the engines at either end, examples of the first bidirectional trains.

The exhibition begins with photographs of all the industrialists who have made their industrial mark on the city of Saronno.

Other instruments, equipment and work tools of railroad workers are displayed in cases and on tables, featuring a reconstructed and partly functioning Max Judel equipment which thanks to levers and tubes maneuvered interchanges and signals for the Milano Cadorna station from 1895 to 1995. The first coal and then kerosene furnaces of the Warm Morning; the rims of cattle cars and motorcycles, cars and three-wheelers manufactured by Gianetti; the Parma safes which safeguarded our savings in bank vaults and which housed the golden altarpiece of the Saint Ambrogio Baptistry for about 100 years.

Enormous land and marine motors produced by Isotta Fraschini, including a restored tank which was used in the Battle of El Alamein in Africa, are also on exhibition.
One of the only ten F11 Cemsa Caproni cars ever built, of which only 2 have survived, was built by the Engineer Nicola Romeo, who later founded the car manufacturer. The cart full of sacks bearing the name of the Molitorea Canti, who together with Biffi and Carrozzi supplied the finely ground flour to the Lazzaroni baking company.

The industrial machines and the graphic school Padre Monti with an Intertype still partially functioning are the joy of young visitors. The gallery is dominated by a gigantic De Angeli-Frua-Cantoni (1922) machine for printing fabric from with the possibility of mounting 12 rolls at the same time; a selection of LUS fountain pens and ballpoint pens with their nibs; Borsani furniture locks; the delicate Torley laces; Poss towels; a Fusi stocking machine; tin containers and metalwork for Ape Piaggio by Ebi Butti.

Early radios, gramophones, recorders and small appliances manufactured by Lesa, Wundercart and Incis are displayed on shelves. In a special gallery displaying antique furniture for gramophones and radios made by Phonola (now known as Fimi Philips), there is also a prototype of a television whose twin is exhibited at the Guggenheim Museum in New York.

Finally there is a section dedicated to machines which were used to make cookies and the original amaretti di Lazzaroni during the second half of the 19th century. The entire production process is represented, from the processing of the raw materials to the ovens used for baking, including an ancient coal-fed one. Everything is surrounded by antique cupboards with glass doors with the coat of arms of the Real Casa company, housing a historical collection of containers for cookies, amaretti, wafer cookies and pastries which were serigraphed by famous designers for Desiner Italiano during the early 1900’s.