OUR MISSION
Conner Prairie is a unique historic place that inspires curiosity and fosters learning by providing engaging and individualized experiences for everyone.

OUR VISION
Conner Prairie will expand the boundaries of our historical and natural resources by exploring, celebrating, and improving the human experience.

DEAI PROMISE STATEMENT
Conner Prairie is a place where the doors are always open to a diversity of voices and limitless experiences.
In the past half century, Conner Prairie has developed into a world-renowned accredited Museum by the American Alliance of Museums and is recognized by the Smithsonian and others as one of the most important cultural assets in the country. This has been achieved through careful planning, visionary leadership, and by dedicated and passionate staff that have realized our mission to “inspire curiosity and foster learning by providing engaging and individualized experiences for everyone.”

As you can see in our annual meeting video (scan the QR code), for 50 years, Conner Prairie has been a difference maker in our community, and to the guests and students that have visited this “unique historic place.” Sometimes you need to look back to reflect forward. Our first fifty years have prepared us for the next fifty that we are beginning to celebrate in 2024.

This past year we completed our 2019-2023 Strategic Plan with goals that are helping us realize our vision “to expand the boundaries of our historical and natural resources by exploring, celebrating, and improving the human experience.” These goals will never be complete because we build on each strategic plan to find ways to change the way people view and use museums like Conner Prairie.

This 2023 Mission Impact Report reflects on our work to enhance our museum experiences by focusing on the sustainability of our natural and organizational resources, engaging with our community and land, and connecting with our community to create an engaged, collaborative, and inclusive culture at Conner Prairie. All this work, from preparing to open Promised Land as Proving Ground (PLPG) and the Trails at Conner Prairie to how we activated Prairietown during the winter season will be the catalyst to activating even more of Conner Prairie in 2024 and beyond.

Last year was a monumental moment in this fifty-year journey for Conner Prairie as we embarked on finding new and unique ways to better serve our community and ourselves. We look forward to you joining us on the first steps of Conner Prairie’s next fifty-year journey, and it all starts in 2024.

Best Regards,
Norman Burns
President & Chief Executive Officer
As a world-renowned Museum, recognized by the Smithsonian and others as one of the most important cultural assets in the country, we are putting into action ways to fully activate our 1,000+ acres of land including 3.3 miles of the White River to connect communities and further realize history and learning.

We changed the way the world views and uses museums in 2023 by:

- Launching This Is Problematic! Podcast.
- Partnering with cities on historic preservation projects, near and far (i.e. Midland Bridge and Whitney Plantation).
- Using History on Tap as our largest single-day fundraiser.
- Rezoning over 260 acres to teach about land and water conservation.
- Finished the sustainability project of converting Reynolds holiday lights to LEDs.
- Provided a location for Fishers High School’s Future Black Leaders Club to host Juneteenth Jubilee.
- Launched internal leadership and DEAI training to prepare future museum professionals to be more thoughtful leaders.
- Hosted paid interns to change the face of future museum professionals.

In September, we hosted a special tour of the Conservation Campus grounds, inviting potential stakeholders with the opportunity to view the construction and landscape plans while forming a deeper understanding of the expansion that includes 220 acres of protected land, new and engaging cultural and educational experiences, nature trails and access to the White River.
Education at Conner Prairie offered limitless, immersive experiences in 2023 that continued to provide opportunities and enhance the process of learning through observation, deep listening and thoughtful questioning that went beyond “doing” and experienced “being.”

**The Curious Life Research Visits**
Throughout the year, our exhibit development partners conducted playful research visits to Conner Prairie and across the state to better understand and synthesize the Museum’s mission, our educational philosophy, and to form a deeper connection with community. These visits informed the Museum’s direction along with our partner’s to develop Wellspring, the permanent installation to be constructed in the Museum Experience Center that combines curiosity with history through colors, texture, movement, and virtue and connects us to the living, natural world, the land, and the river.

**HSE Teacher-in-Residence Partnership**
Conner Prairie’s partnership with Hamilton Southeastern Schools to host a HSE Teacher-in-Residence program focused this year on utilizing our current activation of Promised Land As Proving Ground to engage in powerful conversations about the Underground Railroad and its impact on Indiana. Students were able to respectfully debate with historical interpreters and have authentic, age-appropriate conversations prior to their visit. The program allowed students to think about African faith traditions and allowed them the space and freedom to question, celebrate and acknowledge our Indiana history.

**Adventure Camp**
We partnered with Fishers Youth Assistance Program—an organization that provides professional, family-centered casework and referral services to students ages 3 to 17—for Spring Break Adventure Camp in 2023.

More than **43,000** students were heard on school trips in 2023.

Read our learning philosophy by visiting connerprairie.org/learning
Heritage Breeds
This year, our Heritage Breeds were more thoroughly incorporated into several public events to promote our agriculture program and further connect the community with rare breed livestock.

Heritage Breeds produce was offered at special events including eggs for Breakfast with the Bunny, pork at Mother’s Day Brunch, sausages for our exclusive Heritage Breeds Week speaker event, brats for Father’s Day Brunch, and in collaboration with the national Farm Aid festival, brats and chicken.

With a leading role in preserving and advocating for some of the rarest animals in the world, Heritage Breeds Week engaged guests with unique activities that educated and celebrated our five heritage breeds.

To reach people around the world, we hosted a live taping of our Curious Conversations online video series. Dr. Michael Sturek discussed his work with Ossabaw hogs and how they could hold the key to our understanding of diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

Using the Smithsonian to Breed at Conner Prairie
Our Agriculture Department procured underrepresented Arapawa genetics from the Smithsonian’s gene bank and partnered with Reproduction Specialty Group to breed several of our goats. A camera crew captured the excitement of the day for AgDay TV’s Harvest of Thanks broadcast that aired to viewers across the country.
As we look to the future stewardship of our land, our sustainability initiatives are guided by community-driven programming and environmental restoration of our more than 1,000 acres. These efforts included dedicated work to remove invasive species on our property, announcing our involvement in the Clear Choices Clean Water pledge and beginning construction of our newest nature experience, The Trails at Conner Prairie. The Trails will provide programming to educate guests about the natural world and sustainability practices they can lead at the Museum and home.

Duke Energy Holiday Festival Lights
Conner Prairie volunteers completed the conversion of our A Merry Prairie Holiday light fixtures to LED, a three-year initiative totaling 2015.5 service hours. By doing this, we anticipate energy costs from the festival lights to decrease by more than 90%. Volunteers from Duke Energy assisted with the installation of the lights on the festival grounds in early November.
40th Anniversary of Hearthside Supper

The Museum celebrated the 40th anniversary of one of Conner Prairie’s longest running programs. Hearthside Supper had another sold-out season, immersing together historic foodways, traditional hearth cooking, and the fellowship of the communal table. A special 40th anniversary meal was developed to symbolize different influences and events in the Conner’s lives.

Historic Trades

Our Historic Skills Classes and Armsmaking Workshops provided engaging opportunities to steward history through the preservation of historical methods of craftsmanship. These classes included blacksmithing, wheel-thrown pottery, knifesmithing, leatherworking, and more. The Museum also offered Historic Foodways classes that focused on culinary history like African American cuisine, historic brewing, and more.

Corn To Cocktail

This year, Conner Prairie debuted a new Corn to Cocktail series, focusing on the history and impact of corn to the Hoosier state and the origination of corn-based spirits. Sponsored by the Indiana Corn Marketing Council, each sold-out session in the series presented history and storytelling in new ways that catered to an adult audience totaling 160 historical cocktails mixed.
Conner Prairie’s longstanding festivals included the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Headless Horseman festival. Through festivals, Conner Prairie connects community together by offering unforgettable moments and lasting memories. Revenue generated from these prestigious events, along with generous philanthropic support, helped further Conner Prairie’s mission to create access and year-round opportunity for underserved families through the Access Pass Program. This vital ongoing program breaks down barriers and allows our events to be a welcoming experience for everyone.

**Headless Horseman Festival**

- **44,723** Attendance
- **3,015** Access Pass Families

**Free Days**

- **4,822** Attendance

**A Merry Prairie Holiday**

- **21,709** Attendance
- **2,689** Access Pass Families

**Symphony on the Prairie**

- **86,321** Attendance

**Jupiter Flights Balloon Festival**

- **7,629** Attendance
- **580** Access Pass Families

*Free days include Dr. Martin Luther King Day, Presidents Day, and Conner Prairie Free Day.

**Total attendance in 2023**

**366,867**
**Conner Prairie Alliance**

Through the Apple Store, the Alliance celebrated the 40th anniversary of the Headless Horseman festival with a specialty crafted apple.

Throughout the year, their fundraising efforts play a role in supporting major projects at Conner Prairie, including most recently Promised Land As Proving Ground.

In 2023, the Apple Store sold **17,407 apples** and served over **14,000 people**.

**Horizon Council**

2023 was also the celebration of the Horizon Council’s History on Tap. This group of energetic, young professionals who engage in strategic planning and impactful fundraising celebrated a record-breaking event that provides an entertaining and educational evening of craft beer and history.

The event drew **over 1,600 attendees and 26 brewers** making it the highest grossing single-night fundraiser in Conner Prairie history.

**Volunteers**

In 2023, our incredible volunteer team contributed more than **35,000 hours** of service.
A Welcoming Experience for Everyone
Conner Prairie is a place where the doors are always open to a diversity of voices and limitless experiences.
Since 2019, the Museum has been recognized as a Site of Conscience, one of only 370 member sites across 65 countries recognized by the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience (ICSC).
Conner Prairie prides itself on a deeper sense of empathy and commitment that make up the DEAI work that we do at the museum. These commitments are supported by partnering and amplifying our work with the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience. This partnership strengthens our connection to create more inclusive community connections and a safe space for difficult conversations.

Youth Empowered
Conner Prairie partnered with Youth Empowered, a nonprofit organization focused on future youth leaders through unconventional educational opportunities, to secure their very own We Can Camp weekend.

17 children were inspired by the weekend activities.

Examining Problematic History to Reach a Global Audience
Conner Prairie launched This is Problematic!, a podcast spotlighting problematic history and the ramifications still felt today. Led by our Curatorial team, the podcast was activated as a new way of telling a more complete history that has a global reach through downloads on popular podcast listening apps. This is Problematic! podcast is supported by Indiana Humanities in cooperation with the National Endowment for the Humanities.

This is Problematic! episodes were downloaded over 8,850 times worldwide in 2023.

Conner Prairie made an impactful contribution to Indy Pride, Juneteenth, and Deaf Heritage Day. Throughout the year, the Museum also offered Sensory-Friendly Hours and the dementia-friendly program, Memory Café.
ON THE HORIZON

The Trails at Conner Prairie
In 2023, the Museum began construction on its newest nature experience, The Trails at Conner Prairie. This experience wraps around the Oxbow of the White River and will allow guests to find a deeper connection with nature. The Trails are approximately two miles long and consist of two pathways: a more natural R.B. Annis Vista Trail and a paved Prairie Trail.
We will offer monthly nature-themed events and self-guided programs throughout the year to educate about our natural habitats and the history that surrounds them.
In addition, Conner Prairie partnered with the White River Alliance to become the home for many of the White River Art Canoes that were originally placed along the river from Muncie to Martinsville. The canoes will be installed throughout the Trails further connecting the river to the community.

Promised Land As Proving Ground
Construction activated the second phase of our newest permanent exhibit, Promised Land As Proving Ground (PLPG). Exhibits were completed in the Resistance Cabin and work is concluding on the modern Reclamation Building and Reflection Cabin. All buildings in Prairietown will have a test opening in summer of 2024 before completely opening in the spring 2025.
PLPG will allow Conner Prairie to further explore and accentuate the telling of more than 1,000 years of African American history, as well as illuminate contemporary African American stories and community. PLPG will use many different learning and interactive techniques to tell the story including augmented reality of historic figures from Indiana’s past.
Museum Experience Center

Construction will begin in 2024 and activate the transformation of the Welcome Center into a true Museum Experience Center.

Once completed, the Museum Experience Center will feature expanded exhibit space and the opportunity to host traveling exhibits including world-renowned exhibits by the Smithsonian. The building will also house incredible programming opportunities, an immersive play space created by The Curious Life, a brand-new entry onto the grounds, and the opportunity to display even more historical objects from our collections that contain over 27,000 artifacts.

Prairie Pathways Campaign

The Prairie Pathways Campaign concluded this year by exceeding fundraising goals that began in 2018, raising more than $40 million in philanthropic support. Donors to the Prairie Pathways Campaign are bringing transformational experiences to Conner Prairie that will enable guests to “step into the story” in new and creative ways for generations to come.

This exceptional accomplishment for the Museum not only funds the transformation of the Museum Experience Center, but other capital projects including the museum’s newest exhibit, Promised Land As Proving Ground, and the Trails at Conner Prairie.
## CONNER PRAIRIE MUSEUM, INC. (OPERATING FUND 10)

**Summarized Statement of Activities for the 12 Months Ending December 31, 2023**

*Preliminary figures

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<thead>
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<th>Revenue &amp; Support</th>
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<td>Endowment Support</td>
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<td>Admission &amp; Program Fees</td>
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<td>Rental &amp; Other Income</td>
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**Change in Net Assets**

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## CONNER PRAIRIE FOUNDATION, INC.

**Summarized Statement of Financial Position for the 12 Months Ending December 31, 2023**

*Preliminary figures

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<th>Net Assets</th>
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<td><strong>Total Liabilities &amp; Net Assets</strong></td>
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REVENUE & SUPPORT

Conner Prairie Museum, Inc.
(Operating Fund 10)

Endowment Support 40%
Gifts, Sponsorships & Grants 10%
Management & General 13%
Public Affairs & Marketing 13%
Fundraising 6%
Membership Services 1%

Food & Retail 10%
Rental & Other Income 12%
Admissions & Program Fees 22%
Memberships 6%

*Preliminary figures

EXPENDITURES

Conner Prairie Museum, Inc.
(Operating Fund 10)

Programs & Guest Experience 67%
Management & General 13%
Public Affairs & Marketing 13%
Fundraising 6%

Membership Services 1%
CONNER PRAIRIE MUSEUM
Steve Hageman, Board Chair
Brian Timmerman, Board Vice Chair
Suzanne Gaidoo, Secretary
Constance Brown, Treasurer
Reggie Henderson, Immediate Past Chair
Karen Arland, Conner Prairie Alliance
Jessica Bastin
Douglas Battaglia
Ryan Berry
Marvin Blade
Jessica Brand
Norman Burns, Conner Prairie President & CEO
Melissa Caito
Kip Chase
Geordan C. Coleman
Christina Hale
Clint Hangerbrauck
Ross Hendrickson
Leonard Hoops
Christine Johnson

Kerry Keffaber, DVM
Dave Kinard
Julia Church Kozicki
Naomi Kwang
Deon Levingston
Eric Lucas
Graham Melendez
Drew Miroff
Clarence G. Newsome
Jane Niederberger
Don Orr
Greg Schahet
Rebecca Shrum
Chris Simpkins, Conner Prairie Horizon Council
Denny Sponsel
Selina Stoller
Jon Stolz
Megan Wiles
Whitney E. Wolf

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