

<b>To:</b>	Warden Milne and Members of Grey County Council
<b>Committee Date:</b>	May 9, 2024
<b>Subject / Report No:</b>	EDTC-CW-01-24
<b>Title:</b>	Grey Roots Museum and Archives 2023-2024 Update
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<b>Reviewed by:</b>	Randy Scherzer
<b>Lower Tier(s) Affected:</b>	All
<b>Status:</b>	

## Recommendation

1. That report EDTC-CW-01-24 regarding Grey Roots Museum and Archives 2023-2024 Update be received for information.

## Executive Summary

This report serves as a progress update on the actions and priorities outlined in the Grey Roots Operating Plan, which was endorsed by Council through report EDTC-CW-06-22. An initial update for 2023 was received by Council through report EDTC-CW-11-23 and covered the period from January 1 to May 31, 2023. This report will cover performance measures for the period from June 1 to December 31, 2023, and outline expectations for 2024. This serves as the final report on the Operating Plan 2022-2023, which will be replaced by the Grey Roots strategy outlined in the Economic Development, Tourism, and Culture Master Plan endorsed by Council through report EDTC-CW-16-23.

## Background and Discussion

2023 was a standout year for the museum – Grey Roots rebounded to pre-pandemic visitor numbers with 24,574 through the door, an increase of 44% over 2022. We marked major milestones, like the opening of the Arnott General Store in Moreston Heritage Village and the launch of the Abundance section in the ongoing redesign of the exhibit in the Grey County Gallery.

Our team, along with volunteers, delivered 137 programs, events and exhibits, including the cherished Moreston by Candlelight evenings and operated Moreston Heritage Village at full capacity for 64 days. Village coverage this year by volunteers and staff reached its highest levels since 2019. The 7 main buildings (Log Cabin, Log House, Farmhouse, Schoolhouse,

General Store, Rice Blacksmith Shop and Bluewater Garage) were open for a combined 93.3% of the season.

**2023 Events Snapshot:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
January 28	Lunar New Year	100
Spring	Our Roots Are Showing concerts	260
May 27	Spring Into Moreston	624
August 4 &6	Emancipation Festival	135
September 23	Harvest Fest	569
October	Halloween - all events	381
December 2	Moreston by Candlelight	941
December 9	Moreston by Candlelight	1000
	<b>Total attendance</b>	<b>4010</b>

**2023 Programs:**

<b>Title</b>	<b># of programs</b>	<b>Visitation</b>
January Kids Programming	8	145
March Break	15	221
Kids Camp week	7	139
Education Programs	33	1243
Workshops/PA Day	18	93
Toddlers Take the Museum	12	600
Totals	93	2441

**2023 Exhibits:**

<b>Exhibit Category</b>	<b>Title</b>
Replica Heritage Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arnett General Store</li> <li>• Dress Maker's Shop</li> </ul>
Travelling Exhibit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refuge Canada – Museum of Immigration Pier 21</li> <li>• Leonardo Davinci: Machines in Motion -Evergreen Exhibits</li> <li>• Game Changers - Science North</li> </ul>

In-house Exhibit – long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sacred Splendor</li> <li>• Abundance (Grey County Gallery)</li> </ul>
In-house Exhibit – temporary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bronze Anniversary</li> <li>• Textiles of Remembrance: Souvenir Fabrics of the World Wars</li> <li>• Black History In Grey</li> <li>• Year of the Rabbit</li> <li>• Getting to the Core - Ontario Legislative Bldg, Queen's Park</li> <li>• What's in your Bag</li> <li>• Cruising the County</li> </ul>

**Rentals/Group Tours:**

Type	# of Bookings	# of Attendees
Rentals	29	1176
Group Tours	19	563

**Access to Archival Collections and Services**

In 2023, the Grey County Archives Reading Room saw a surge in research visits, surpassing 2022 levels in 11 out of 12 months. Municipal archival transfers were a top priority. Public donations resulted in 47 new acquisitions, adding roughly 21 linear feet of material to the collection. We extend our gratitude to the donors for their efforts in preserving Grey County's history.

Over 900 images from J. James's photographic work, spanning from 1905 to 1955, are now accessible on the Archives database. These images primarily showcase Owen Sound and feature businesses, street scenes, harbour views, and portraits.

Service Category	Number of Occurrences
Research Sessions	346
Inquiries	374
Requests from Municipalities	45

Research sessions at the Grey County Archives involve the utilization of collection materials by researchers. Inquiries encompass individuals who have either donated items, perused the collection, asked questions, or participated in a tour. Additionally, municipal requests often originate from lower-tier municipalities seeking access to past by-laws and resolutions, minutes and proceedings, and other pertinent records of council.

## Collaboration

**Indigenous Advisory Circle (IAC)** – Grey Roots continues to benefit from the patient guidance and support of the circle. With the support of the IAC, Grey Roots held a launch event for *the Saukiing Anishinabekiing Presents Our Stories* exhibit on June 2, 2023. Throughout the year we continued to focus on ways to respectfully represent Indigenous history and culture in Grey Roots initiatives such as the Grey County Gallery redesign content and refreshing of the medicine garden at the entrance to the museum.

**Grey County Community Cultural Initiative Fund (GCCCIF)** - In 2023, the GCCCIF supported projects that raised awareness of Grey County's diverse cultural history.

Recipient	Project
Anishinaabe Cultural Experiences	Inclusive Interpretive Display Development Project
Members of Saugeen First Nation	Minjimendaamin (We Remember) Memorial Project
Lili Anne Holding	Alpha to Omega – Owen Sound's Greek Community
Direct Descendants and Community Friends of Negro Creek	Negro Creek Community Monument Project
Old Durham Road Black Pioneer Cemetery Committee	Old Durham Road Black Pioneer Cemetery – improved signage
Gitche Name Wikwedong Reconciliation Garden	Community gatherings for National Indigenous Peoples Day, Red Dress, and Indigenous Veterans Day

**BWDSB SHSM Agriculture at Grey Roots** – In September of 2023, report EDTC-CW-16-23 brought forward the final agreement with the Bluewater District Schoolboard for Council consideration and endorsement. With Council approval, the agreement was signed in October 2023. The pilot project is going well. On May 2, the BWDSB organized an Open House event at Grey Roots to recognize the program and the community collaboration that brought about the move to the village.

**Forging ON: The Evolution of Blacksmithing in Ontario** - Grey Roots was one of five partner museums that collaborated on a project led by Pickering Museum Village. Pickering received a grant from Digital Museums Canada to develop a free virtual exhibit and educational resource aimed at students in grades 7 to 12, focusing on the evolution of blacksmithing in Ontario. The five partner sites across Ontario, including Fanshawe Pioneer Village, Westfield Heritage Village, Lang Pioneer Village, Fleming College, and Grey Roots, were each responsible for representing a specific era of blacksmithing from the 1860s to the present day.

## Accessibility

**Grey County Gallery Redesign** - The new design of exhibits in the Grey County Gallery will enhance accessibility, addressing current deficiencies in access and legibility. The existing reading rail, responsible for presenting interpretive text, graphics, and historic photographs, falls short of accessibility standards. In response, the new design incorporates current accessibility standards, influencing the placement, color, and size of text and graphics to ensure compliance.

Additionally, the adaptable design will empower Grey Roots to remain responsive to evolving community needs and interests, facilitating easier changes to graphics and artifacts for greater relevance and representation.

The following charts outline the expected increase in access to collections and stories:

Grey County Gallery (2004-2024)	New Grey County Gallery Design
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 94 artifacts</li> <li>• 24 archival materials</li> <li>• 79 graphics</li> <li>• 5 interactives (computer terminals)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 192 artifacts</li> <li>• 17 archival materials</li> <li>• 126 graphics (includes archival materials)</li> <li>• 23 interactives (6 hands-on activity carts, iPad stations, 2 collaborative interactives with seating for 10)</li> </ul>

**Comparison of Performance Measures**

The below chart outlines the numbers of visitors at Grey Roots through 2019-2023. “Through the Door” numbers include anyone that comes to the museum and includes those who come for tourism information, room rentals or washroom facilities. The paid visitation includes those who pay admission or a fee for programming or special events.

<b>Grey Roots Revenue</b>					
<b>Previous 5 Years: January 1 – December 31</b>					
<b>Description</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
Admissions	\$45,872	\$5,332	\$15,432	\$37,613	\$59,629
Building Rentals	\$6,577	\$0	\$0	\$904	\$4,893
Membership	\$20,569	\$6,330	\$3,800	\$16,547	\$22,965
Retail Sales	\$31,031	\$5,361	\$10,212	\$25,644	\$32,126
Admissions – Educational Groups	\$11,594	\$28	\$117	\$6,261	\$7,062
Admissions – Daycamp	\$28,303	\$0	\$1,522	\$24,167	\$29,781
Admissions – Special Events	\$24,424	\$731	\$342	\$13,251	\$15,849

Admissions – Group Tours	\$1,171	\$141	\$108	\$1,420	\$2,262
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$169,541</b>	<b>\$17,923</b>	<b>\$31,533</b>	<b>\$125,807</b>	<b>\$174,567</b>
<b>Visitation</b>					
Through the Door	34,328	3,537	5,904	17,059	24,574
Paid Visitors	23,300	953	3,743	12,796	21,151

**Other Sources of 2023 Funding**

<b>Funder/Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Contribution Amount</b>
Government of Canada – Grant	Canada Cultural Spaces Fund – Canadian Heritage	\$47,256
Province of Ontario – Grant	Community Museum Operating Grant	\$63,534
Government of Canada – Student/Youth Employment Grants	Young Canada Works Canada Summer Jobs	\$32,744
Wheildon Investments – Sponsorship	Arnott General Store	\$8,000
Fairmont Security – Sponsorship	Zooz’s Place Children’s Gallery	\$3,500
Event Sponsorship -	Moreston By Candlelight	\$6,000
Donations	- Support of Kid’s Camp lunch club (\$4100) - Private donations (\$7425) - Archives donations (\$5132.00)	\$16,657

**2024 Highlights**

Looking ahead, 2024 marks Grey Roots' 20th anniversary at our current location. We're excited to unveil a series of events, programs, and experiences, some annual favorites and some new, that bring us all together to celebrate our favorite community gathering place.

## What to Expect in 2024

### Events:

- Black History Celebration – Feb 19
- Spring into Moreston – May 25
- Multicultural Festival – June 22
- Emancipation Festival – Aug 2 & 4
- Car Show – August 25
- Harvest Fest – Sept 21
- 20th Anniversary Gala – Nov 8
- Moreston By Candlelight - Dec 7 & 14
- Lecture Series (Spring/Fall)
- Our Roots are Showing Concert Series (Spring)

### Programs:

- Skills Workshops for adults (i.e. canning, cooking, crafts)
- Summer Kids Camp
- Education programs
- PA day and March Break family programming
- Toddlers Take the Museum (monthly)

### Exhibits:

- *Erskine Brown: Carving Memories Feb 10*
- *Meaford 150th – Feb 10*
- *Carrying Culture: Newcomer Keepsakes from Home – May 1*
- *Inspiring Nature – Travelling Exhibit Canadian Museum of Nature – May 4*
- *Connection, Permanence and Hope – Grey County Gallery Redesign*

Guided by the new Economic Development, Tourism and Culture Master Plan, Grey Roots is aligned with current museum trends, emphasizing diverse perspectives, experiential learning, collaboration, and sustainability.

Staff will continue to collaborate with communities to enhance representation of Indigenous, Newcomer, and culturally diverse voices in programs and services. Grey Roots aims to provide diverse access points to hands-on learning through inclusive analogue and digital interactivity. Grey Roots is keen to explore opportunities to work with third-party groups to offer varied experiences and facilitate engagement with local talent and expertise. Additionally, it seeks operational efficiencies such as refining hours of operation, optimizing space usage, and increasing revenues through grants, sponsorships, and donations.

## Financial and Resource Implications

None.

## Relevant Consultation

- Internal (Grey Roots Museum & Archives Staff, Director EDTC, Finance)
- External (list)

# Appendices and Attachments

[Grey Roots Museum & Archives Operating Plan 2022-23](#)

[2023 Grey Roots Year in Review.pdf](#)