

2023  
ANNUAL  
REPORT





## OUR VISION

Breckenridge History is a community-supported, nationally recognized leader in local historic preservation, historical interpretation, and tourism.

## OUR MISSION

Breckenridge History enhances our community's future by discovering, preserving, and sharing our diverse and extraordinary history.



Alice G. Milne House Before



Alice G. Milne House After



## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



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Breckenridge, CO 80424

Administrative Office:  
102 North Harris Street  
Breckenridge, CO 80424

*Dear friends and supporters,*

*What do an 1854 revolver, early 20th century coins, spoon and wrench have in common? All of these items were found buried below ground and in the Milne House walls as contractor Randy Kilgore and his team worked to preserve the home's original features while also adding modern upgrades. Today, we're proud to call Milne Park a history hub. Updated spaces include a new exhibit highlighting the many layers of history exposed during restoration, staff offices, an exhibit processing room, as well as a new collections care facility for safe keeping of one-of-a-kind artifacts.*

*As work wrapped up at the Milne House last fall, contractor Ty Cortright was erecting a new, historically representative roof over the Jessie Mill to stabilize and protect the structure. A couple months prior, Ty discovered significant rot in some of the large vertical posts. Structural plans were adjusted and new strategies implemented to make sure the mill building was sound before continuing work.*

*The 1860s Iowa Hill boardinghouse presented its own set of challenges. Mike Zobbe and Scott Toepfer hauled all necessary tools and supplies up the trail by hand, then felled and prepped trees on site to replace several decayed boardinghouse logs.*

*These projects showcase incredible talent in our community - the contractors who are not only willing, but also excited to take on challenging historic preservation projects that are often full of surprises.*

*Encouraging our next generation of history buffs and historic preservation specialists, our staff led programs for more than 500 local children in 2023. A new after-school program immerses elementary age students in fun, history-based activities (there's even a Breckenridge history themed board game), and supports our community's working parents.*

*Alongside these new projects and programs, our day-to-day core business of sharing our extraordinary local history has not changed. Outstanding staff members, engaging exhibits, and accessible archival materials continue to connect us all to Breckenridge in new ways.*

*I'm proud to share 2023 highlights, statistics, and guest comments on the following pages.*

*Thank you for your support.*

Larissa O'Neil  
Executive Director



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Peter Grosshuesch, *Vice President*

Allyn Mosher, *Treasurer*

Larry Crispell, *Secretary*

Rob Dollars

Johanna Gibbs

Emily Lutke

Elisabeth Lawrence

Carol Saade, *Town Council Representative*

## ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Larissa O'Neil, *Executive Director*

Michele Chapdelaine, *Office Administrator*

Susan Gilmore, *Marketing & Community Outreach Manager*

Kris Ann Knish, *Archivist and Museum Collections Manager*

Sandra Rhodes, *Administrative and Marketing Assistant*

June Walters, *Manager of Public Engagement*

## HISTORY INTERPRETERS

Jim Bradley

Sherrie Calderini

Kathy Childs

Preston Cooper

Jen Couture

Suzanne Davis

Bob Dickman

Leigh Girvin

Renee Gutekunst

Brad Hackman

Sunny Hackman

Bob Hoppin

Susan Juergensmeier

Alison Leonhart

Gail Marshall

Ellen McAleese

Ron Miller

Faye Morin

Mariana Pereda

Andrea Reilly

Neil Rubinstein

Phyl Rubinstein

Kim Ruhland

Amber Salazar

Isaac Salazar

Jill Slater

Ray Smith

Sharon Smith

Sharon Trumbore

Rebecca Zobbe

Alice G. Milne Park



Welcome Center Museum



Archives



Hike the Golden Horseshoe



Lomax Gulch



Student Tour



## 2023 OFFERINGS

### MUSEUMS AND EXHIBITS

Welcome Center Museum featuring  
*The Seasons of the Nuche Exhibit*  
Barney Ford Museum  
Edwin Carter Museum  
Washington Mine and Milling Exhibit  
Breckenridge Sawmill Museum  
High Line Railroad Park  
Alice G. Milne Park Exhibit;  
*opened November 2023*

### TOURS AND ACTIVITIES

Walk Through History Tour  
Bawdy Breckenridge Tour  
Tombstone Tales Tour  
Hike Home with a Miner  
Hike the Golden Horseshoe  
Gold Panning at Lomax Gulch

### AND MORE

Breckenridge History Archives  
Student Tours and Afterschool  
Programs  
Interpretive Signs on Local Trails  
Special Events



## 2023 HIGHLIGHTS

- **24 professional history interpreters** offered more than **1,400 museum days** and guided tours to the public. Several of our frontline employees have studied and shared local history for **more than 20 years**.
- **114,253 visitors** experienced our museums, tours, outdoor exhibits, guided hikes and special events.
- **Installed “The Land of Glittering Gold” exhibit** at Lomax Mine, which follows the story of John Young, an early gold rush prospector. Using Young’s published diary for reference, the exhibit follows his journey and highlights the ups and downs he faced along the way.
- Installed the **“Seasons of the Nuche”** exhibit at the Breckenridge Welcome Center Museum, which follows the cultures, traditions and history of the Ute people. The temporary exhibit is generously on loan from the Aspen Historical Society.
- **Developed a new guided tour format at the Barney Ford Museum.** While the museum remains free of charge, visitors now hear Ford’s incredible story in a curated, small group setting with an expert guide. Tours are offered five times per day, six days per week.
- Led free student programs for **more than 500 local students**, ranging in age from 3 to 17.
- Worked with students from Upper Blue Elementary School and Snowy Peaks High School to **recognize 64 Veterans** interred at Valley Brook Cemetery.
- **Developed a new after-school program** in partnership with Project Thrive and Theatre SilCo. Over the course of six weeks, Silverthorne Elementary students learned about Breckenridge’s roots, starting with the area’s first residents, the Ute people, and covering the town’s development through the Victorian era.
- **Provided access to more than 1,800 digital objects** via the Breckenridge History Archives website, [breckhistoryarchives.org](http://breckhistoryarchives.org). This includes recently uploaded photos of the Big Snow of 1898-99, mine sites inventories, and architectural inventories for the properties in Breckenridge’s historic district. Many are available to download for free.



- **Automated the archives photo request system.** Researchers now fill out one simple form to request photos not available for free download, like the John A. Topolnicki Collection.
- Welcomed residents and guests to celebrate **Barney Ford Day on February 1st** with a museum reception.
- **Hosted 120 local Breckenridge frontline workers** on the Barney Ford Lawn for free VIP parade viewing and family activities.
- **Paired history-themed presentations with musical performances** at historical sites in partnership with the National Repertory Orchestra.
- **Managed more than 20 historical sites for public benefit.** Maintenance projects included re-staining the vintage wood floors in the Barney Ford Museum, protecting museum spaces from pests large and small, repairing masonry on the Ford Museum property, restoring log walls at the Gaymon Cabin, sealing the assay office at the Lomax interpretive site, stabilizing the foundation of the Iowa Hill boardinghouse, and installing UV window coverings at the Welcome Center Museum.
- **Installed new interpretive signs along the Iowa Hill trail** that tell the story of hydraulic mining around Breckenridge and its impacts.
- Cortright Enterprises constructed **a new roof for the Jessie Mill in Gold Run Gulch** to protect what remains of the stamp mill building for many years to come.
- **Completed the Milne Park Project** to preserve two historical, town-owned buildings and activate them with new uses, including educational programming and exhibit spaces, a collections care facility, interpretive center and an administrative hub.
- **More than 23,000 unique web users visited the new breckhistory.org** website to sign up for a tour, read our blog, connect to the archives portal and check out our latest preservation work.
- Published more than **300 posts to our Instagram** and Facebook profiles, **adding more than 600 followers** to our combined social media audience.

## BARNEY FORD MUSEUM

Born into slavery, Barney Ford endured racism and financial hardship to become one of Colorado's most prominent businessmen.

“Fascinating tour of the home and the story of an amazing man who was born [enslaved] and had a remarkable life of many achievements. Tours are on the hour and free. Very worthwhile.”

“Historical gem in downtown Breck... Check it out!”

“Very interesting story about an extraordinary man. Sherrie, our historian, was so welcoming, enthusiastic, and knowledgeable on the Ford history.”





## HIKE HOME WITH A MINER

“Our tour guide, Rebecca, was very knowledgeable and kept the hike fun and interesting. The restored boarding house really helped us picture what life there would have been like.”

## HIKE THE GOLDEN HORSESHOE

“We had a fantastic time on the trail. Our guide Jim was amazing, knowledgeable and shared great stories. The trail was an easy hike and my kids really enjoyed learning about mining. I definitely recommend guided hikes.”



## TOMBSTONE TALES TOUR

“I’d definitely take another tour to hear more about local pioneers. It’s safe to say I am now a taphophile (it means someone who appreciates burial sites, also learned that term), thanks June and Breckenridge History!”

## WASHINGTON MINE AND MILLING EXHIBIT

“Excellent outdoor, self-guided mining exhibit with great explanation of the milling process and equipment.”



## BRECKENRIDGE SAWMILL MUSEUM

“Not very big but a neat, quirky little step back in history. Completely free, an outdoor exhibit highlighting milling in the early 1900s. Spectacular scenery all around and walking trails for enhanced views.”

# 2023 FINANCIALS

## JANUARY 1 - DECEMBER 31

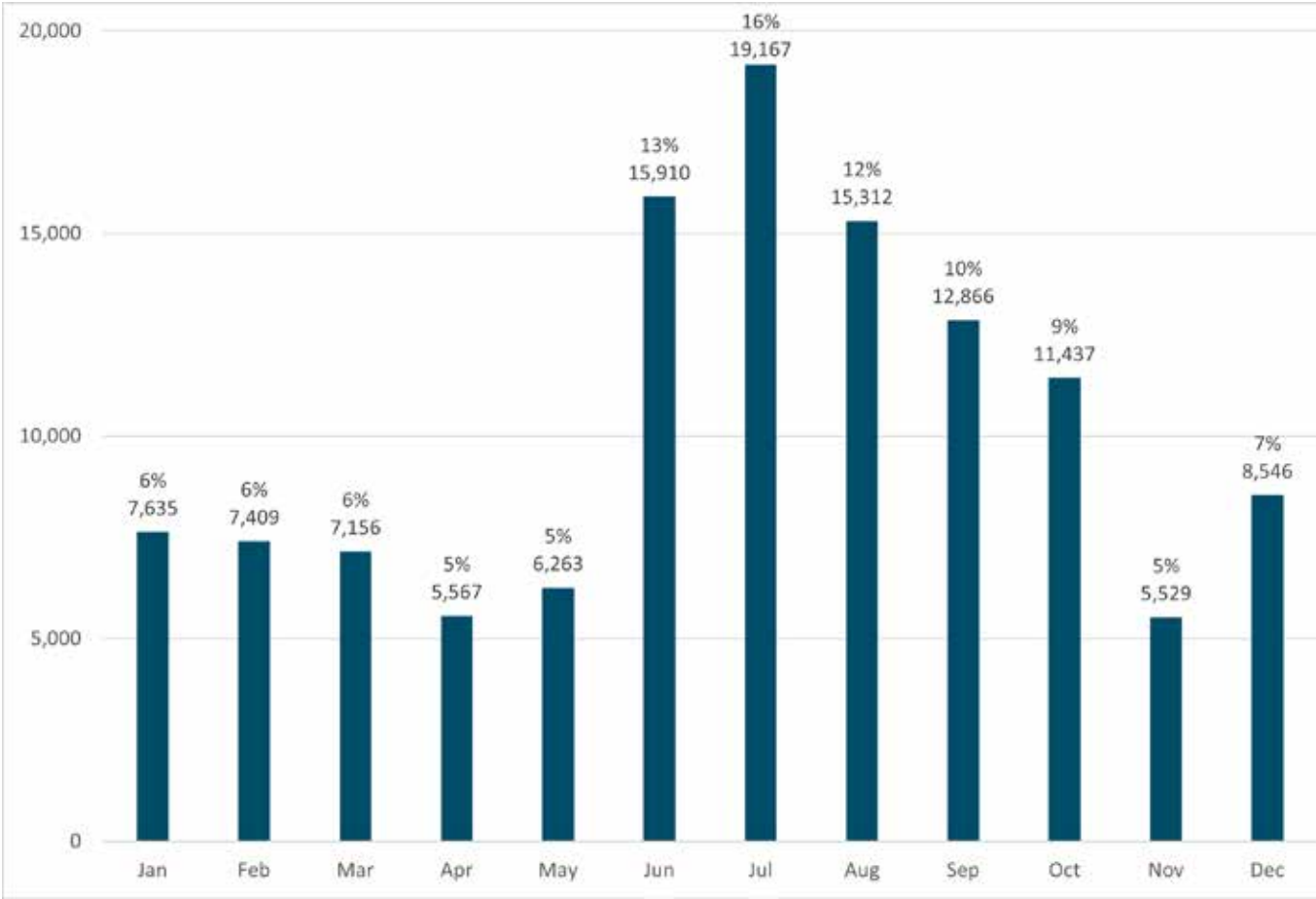
### INCOME

|   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| Operations Grants                         | \$ 8,500            |
| Town of Breckenridge Operating Support    | 700,000             |
| General Donations & Other Income          | 8,281               |
| Museum Donations & Tour Income            | 54,841              |
| Merchandise Sales                         | 2,910               |
| In-Kind Income (Operations)               | 28,125              |
| Total Operations Income                   | 802,657             |
| Completed Capital Projects Income         | 464,014             |
| Completed Capital Projects In-Kind Income | 800                 |
| <b>TOTAL INCOME</b>                       | <b>\$ 1,267,471</b> |

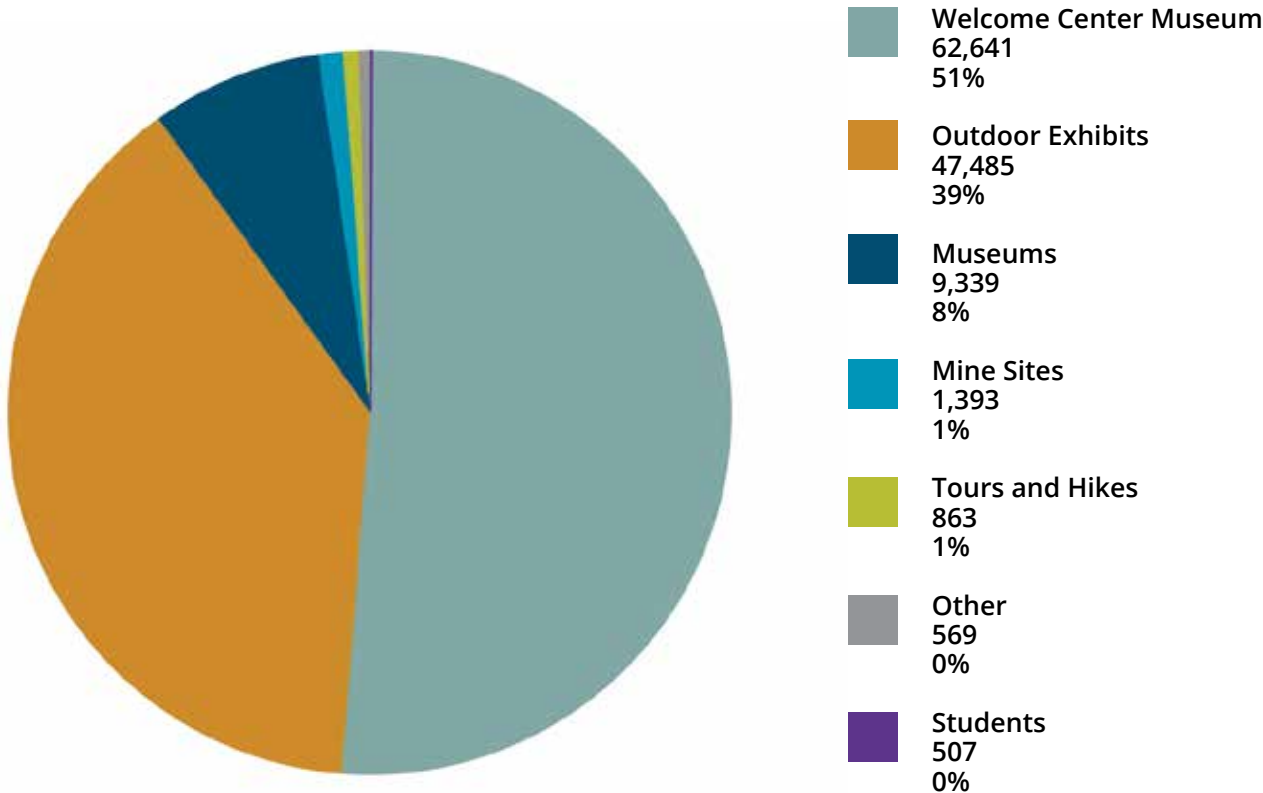
### EXPENSES

|  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
| Business Expenses                                    | \$ 37,039           |
| Inventory  | 1,721               |
| Museum & Site Facility Expenses                      | 69,904              |
| Program & Event Expenses                             | 3,183               |
| Payroll, Taxes and Benefits                          | 616,622             |
| Archives Expenses                                    | 21,739              |
| In-Kind Expenses (Operations)                        | 28,125              |
| Advertising  | 13,525              |
| Total Operations Expenses                            | 791,858             |
| Completed Capital Projects Expenses                  | 464,014             |
| Completed Capital Projects Expenses In Kind Expenses | 800                 |
| <b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>                                | <b>\$ 1,256,672</b> |
| <b>NET INCOME</b>                                    | <b>\$ 10,799</b>    |

# 2023 VISITORS BY THE NUMBERS



## 2023 TOTAL NUMBER OF VISITORS: 122,779



## WALK THROUGH HISTORY TOUR

“Alison was a fabulous tour guide! She told us fun, interesting stories about Breck’s past, and she even had photos to compare past views with present day.”

“We had such a great tour, learning so many interesting facts about Breckenridge, its history, mining and people! June was a wonderful tour guide. We loved her energy and excitement about Breckenridge!!”

“This is a MUST do in Breck! It was so interesting, we learned so much. Do it on your first day and your future strolls down Main Street will be a better experience!”



Our signature tour of Breckenridge’s National Historic District.



Learn about  
Edwin Carter's life  
and work and his  
original specimens.



## EDWIN CARTER MUSEUM

“So much history! We brought our kids aged 6 months to 8 years here, and they had fun learning about the history.”

“Such a great museum with so much preservation. Sharon is phenomenal, she has such a wealth of knowledge. I highly recommend the visit.”

“We saw this little museum randomly and decided to step in. What a lovely surprise. This place is believed to be the second oldest museum in all of Colorado. In my opinion it's must-see for everyone who's walking around downtown Breckenridge.”





Visit [breckhistory.org](http://breckhistory.org)  
to learn more about our  
museums, tours, archives  
and preservation projects.

Jessie Mill stabilization



## HIGH LINE RAILROAD PARK

“Great place for kids! My train-obsessed 2 year old was over the moon to see the trains and the train themed park and playground. A fun option for the whole family.”

“Unique railroad equipment with excellent interpretation with explanation and purpose.”



## BAWDY BRECKENRIDGE TOUR

“Jen is so knowledgeable and passionate about Breckenridge history, and obviously loves her work, which made our visit to your lovely town even better. We cannot recommend her and the tours enough. Thank you for providing a highlight to our vacation in beautiful Colorado.”



## GOLD PANNING AT LOMAX GULCH

“What a wonderful experience! Isaac and Jim were very knowledgeable and professional. And we even found gold! With all of the activities in Breckenridge this stop is a must.”

“Isaac and the whole team were great. We REALLY recommend this activity for both adults and kids! Lots of fun trying to strike it rich! We will be back on our next visit.”

