

2024 Annual Report

BRECKENRIDGE HISTORY



BRECKENRIDGE HISTORY

OUR VISION

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

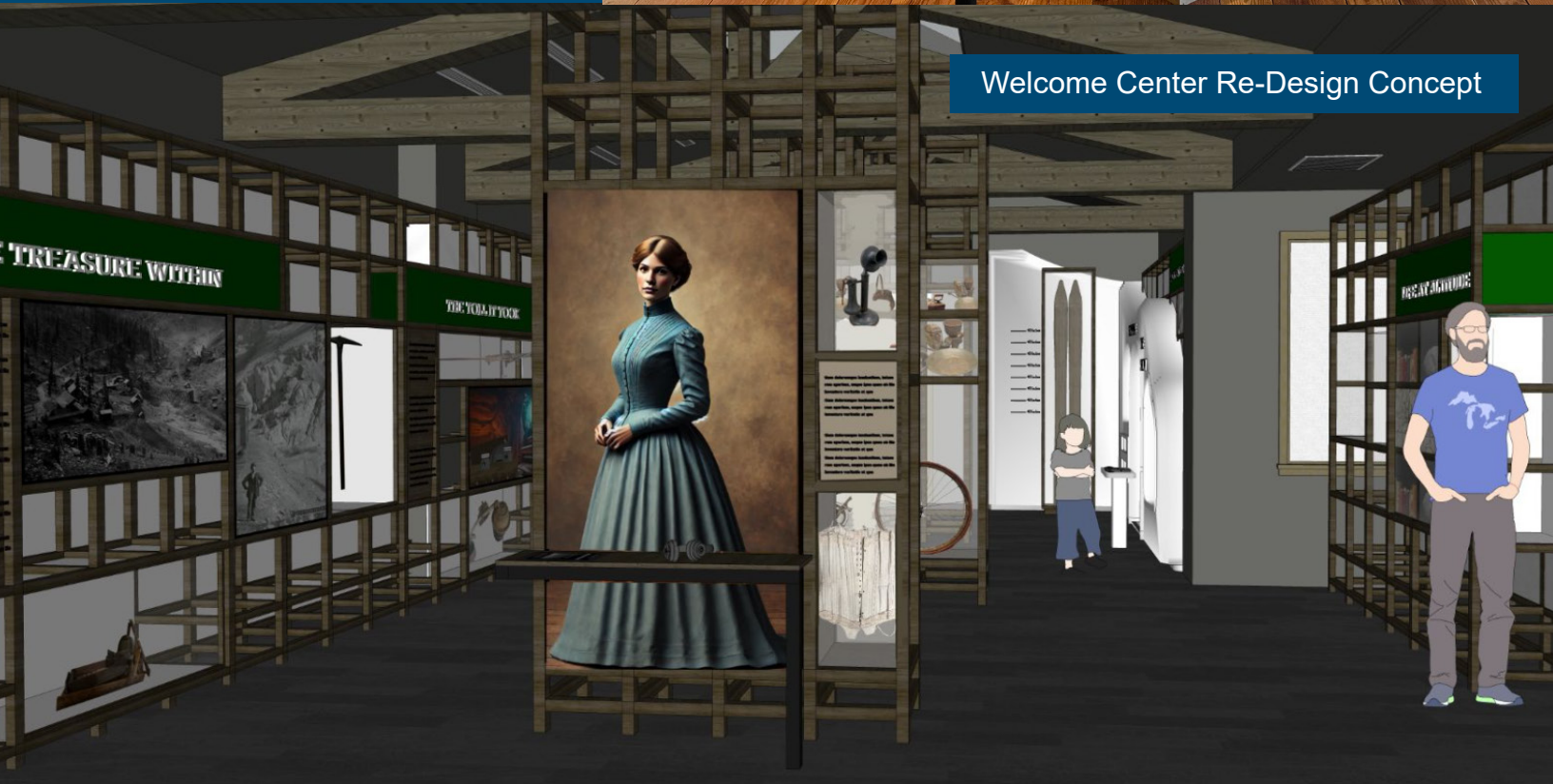
OUR MISSION

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

Current Welcome Center Museum



Welcome Center Re-Design Concept





FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



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Welcome Center

203 South Main Street
Breckenridge, CO 80424

Administrative Office

102 North Harris Street
Breckenridge, CO 80424

Dear Breckenridge History Supporters,

This past year, visitors to the B&B Trailhead east of Breckenridge were greeted by a new addition: the Keystone Drill. This artifact, which owners had moved from mining operations in Breckenridge to Fairplay and eventually placed in storage at the Como Roundhouse, was donated to Breckenridge History and installed under a permanent shelter near the trailhead last fall. The drill enriches the mining story of French Gulch, showcasing the innovation and determination of miners in their pursuit of gold. While its arrival was a highlight, ongoing care for the historic assets we steward remains a constant need. The 1880s Washington Mine shaft house—originally reinforced in the 1980s—showed signs of significant deterioration in recent years. Contractors worked to stabilize the structure, and new interpretive signs now guide visitors through the site's history.

Beyond preservation efforts and the tours and museum experiences that engage residents and visitors, a significant amount of work happens behind the scenes. In 2024, thousands of artifacts and archival materials were catalogued, many of which are available to view on our archives website. Our updated historic resources management plan serves as a blueprint for preserving historical sites on open space and in the National Forest, while condition assessments at several in-town properties provide critical insights for future repairs and restoration. We also engaged the community in reimagining the Breckenridge Welcome Center Museum, where we aim to present a more inclusive and compelling history of the community—one that reflects evolving relationships with the land, from the Ute people to today's residents.

My youngest son often asks to visit the archives, and I've overheard local elementary school students compare how many museums they've explored in Breckenridge. Parents and caregivers regularly share stories of their children returning home with tales from field trips to Iowa Hill, the Sawmill Museum, and Lomax Mine. These moments reflect the remarkable growth of our youth education program in 2024—a community initiative that provides free experiences to local students. Watching young people connect with the stories of this place and the generations who came before us inspires me every day.

It is my privilege to share the highlights, statistics, and guest reflections from 2024 on the pages ahead.

Thank you for your continued support,

Larissa O'Neil
Executive Director



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Jerry Dziedzic, *President*
- Peter Grosshuesch, *Vice President*
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- Larry Crispell, *Secretary*
- Rob Dollars
- Johanna Gibbs
- Mike Giller
- Emily Lutke
- Carol Saade, *Town Council Representative*
- Todd Rankin, *Town Council Representative*
- Mark Truckey, *Town Staff Representative*

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

- Larissa O'Neil, *Executive Director*
- June Walters, *Manager of Public Engagement*
- Susan Gilmore, *Marketing & Community Outreach Manager*
- Kris Ann Knish, *Archivist & Museum Collections Manager*
- Michele Chapdelaine, *Office Administrator*
- Scott Toepfer, *Fixer*

HISTORY INTERPRETERS

- Jim Bradley
- Sherrie Calderini
- Preston Cooper
- Jen Couture
- Jim Davis
- Bob Dickman
- Bob Ensign
- Carolyn Gentling
- Leigh Girvin
- Joe Heddings
- Susan Juergensmeier
- Jo Keats
- Alison Leonhart
- Ellen McAleese
- Ferol Menzel
- Emily Noble
- Mariana Pereda
- Phyl Rubinstein
- Amber Salazar



Bob Hoppin
(1937-2024)

- Isaac Salazar
- Koben Salazar
- Ray Smith
- Sharon Smith
- Jill Slater
- Sharon Trumbore
- Rebecca Zobbe

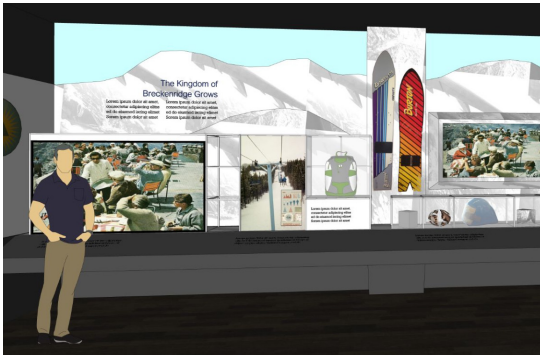


Edwin Carter Museum

150 years ago, Edwin Carter built a log cabin to house a museum, eventually showcasing an astounding collection of 3,300 taxidermied animals. A true pioneer, Carter was not only a gold prospector but also a naturalist whose passion for wildlife shaped Colorado's scientific heritage. His specimens became the foundation of the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, leaving a lasting legacy. Today, you can step into history at the same cabin, now the Edwin Carter Museum, where his story comes to life and a selection of his specimens remain on display.

“Amazing piece of history and spectacular staff who are eager to share about the contents of the museum.”





2024 HIGHLIGHTS

- **26 professional history interpreters** offered more than **1,500 museum days and guided tours** to the public. Several of our frontline employees have worked for Breckenridge History since its inception in 2006.
- **118,032 visitors** experienced our museums, tours, outdoor exhibits, guided hikes and special events.
- **Completed the new Collections Care Facility** in the lower level of the Milne house. The facility provides much-needed space for the care and long-term preservation of one-of-a-kind artifacts, including salt photographs, period clothing worn by past Breckenridge residents and historical furnishings from the area.
- Led free youth education programs for more than **1,900 local students**, ages 3 to 17. These programs took place in classrooms, at our sites, and after school at local elementary schools as part of Proyecto Thrive. To enhance the curriculum, staff participated in development courses focused on teaching underrepresented histories, including earning certification in teaching Native perspectives through a Smithsonian program.
- Led a **planning effort to redesign the Welcome Center Museum**, with a focus on telling a comprehensive history of the local area, from the formation of the Rocky Mountains to today. The timeline for the museum remodel is to be determined.
- Participated in the Breckenridge Tourism Office **Breck 101 orientation** program by providing free tours to local frontline employees.
- **Undertook condition assessments** at the Briggie house, Carter Museum and Dry Gulch property to identify preservation priorities for the future.
- **Stabilized the ca.1880 Washington Mine shaft house**, which had developed a significant lean.
- Updated our **Historic Resources Management Plan**, which serves as a roadmap for future capital improvements and interpretation at sites located on open space and in the National Forest.
- Provided access to more than **1,900 digital objects** via the Breckenridge History Archives website, breckhistoryarchives.org.



- The recently uploaded **Mary Marks Collection** features the photography of Mary and her husband, John, who together documented Breckenridge and greater Summit County from 1890 to 1910. **Many images are available to download for free.**



- Worked with the Montana Historical Society to bring an **1862 ambrotype of French Gulch** into the Archives.

- Hosted **120 local frontline workers** on the Barney Ford Lawn for free Fourth of July parade viewing and family activities.

- **Moved the 1800s wagon** located in Blue River Plaza to Milne Park for public viewing and preservation.

- Installed **interpretive signs at the self-guided Washington Mine site** to give visitors a glimpse into the history of the mine and the equipment that remains.



- 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 upgrading the Briggie house kitchen and bathroom so the home can be used for public programs and Breckenridge History events, installing UV film on windows in our museums to protect artifacts from harmful sun damage, and repairing the floor of the miner's cabin at the Lomax Placer Mine.



- Cortright Enterprises constructed an open air shelter at the B&B Trailhead to **house and protect the Keystone Drill**, which was donated to Breckenridge History in 2019.

- In partnership with the Town of Breckenridge, developed a **new grant program** to support stabilization of outbuildings in the historic district.



- **32,425 unique web users** visited the breckhistory.org website to sign up for a tour, read our blog, connect to the archives portal and check out our latest preservation work. A new plug-in allows all **Breckenridge History web pages to be viewed in Spanish.**

- Published more than **700 posts** to our Instagram and Facebook profiles, **added 1,200 followers** to our combined social media audience.

Hike The Golden Horseshoe

“The hike was beautiful and our guide Jim was amazing! He was very knowledgeable of the history and informative.”

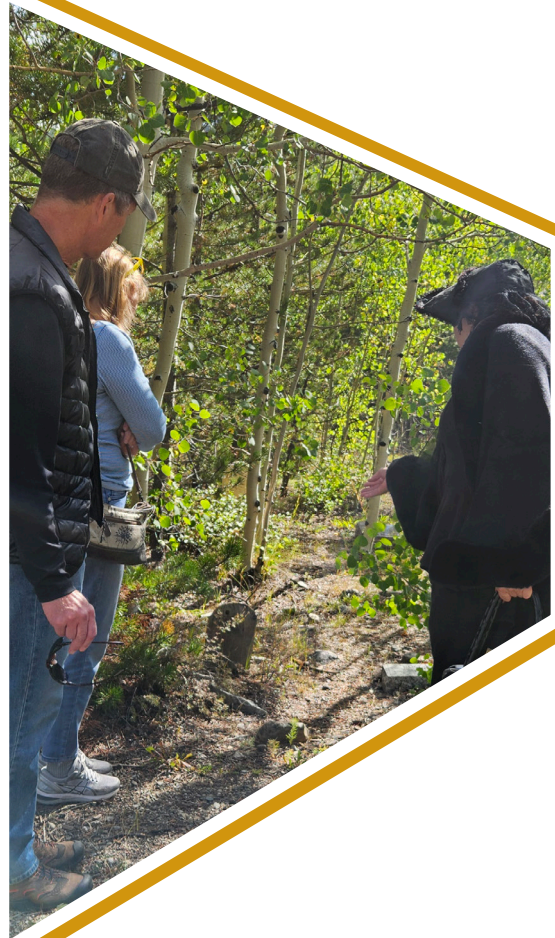


Hike Home With A Miner

“Top notch experience. I learned a ton of new stuff about the history of Breck. Great tour!”



Tombstone Tales Tour



“We did the Tombstone tour with Rebecca. She did an amazing job and tied so much into the history of Breckenridge. ...”

Walk Through The Darker History Tour



“... The rich tales of this city and its torrid past had me so enraptured as we walk around historical downtown Breckenridge ...”



Walk Through History Tour

Buckle up for a wild ride through Breckenridge’s past, where every road tells a tale of triumph, tragedy, and pure mountain grit! Imagine walking the same streets where fortune-seekers once stumbled, their pockets heavy with dreams and their spirits even heavier with disappointment, tracing the raw, unfiltered story of a town that refused to die. From red-brick homes that whisper of sudden wealth to weathered log cabins that echo with the ghosts of broken promises, our signature tour resurrects the spirits of the miners, settlers, and mountain mavens who transformed this rugged landscape into a legend. Dress for the elements and prepare for an outdoor experience because in Breckenridge, history is as unpredictable as the weather!

“My group totally enjoyed the Walk Through History Tour with Joe. Joe shared his enthusiasm for and extensive knowledge of Breckenridge history, presented in a conversational way, and had photos to show us as we went. I’ve done this tour before with a different leader, and each time I learn new information.”



Gold Panning at Lomax Gulch

“My husband and I truly enjoyed this tour!! A must if you’re into history and or curious on how Breckenridge came to be.”



High Line Railroad Park

“Maravillosa, un parque excelente para jugar en. La nieve, y tomar fotos”



Washington Mine and Milling Exhibit

*“Great little tour to do
when in the area.”*



Alice G. Milne Memorial Park

*“A very nice park!! Close
to downtown.”*



Welcome Center Museum

“The museum is very informative and the staff is friendly. Do stop in and get educated about everything in the area.”



Breckenridge Sawmill Museum

“It’s awesome to see old equipment preserved like this! Great spot to stop at the beginning, middle, or end of a hike.”





School Programs

“I just wanted to say that my U.S. History classes at SHS had an awesome time learning about Summit County in the 1920s and 1930s today with Susan. Her presentation, lesson plan, and teaching style were not just interesting but engaging. Susan set up a thorough and well researched lesson plan. Because of her professional and scrupulous work, students were engaged, interested, and thoughtful. She initiated excellent conversation and debate amongst students. It was super impressive and very well done. Students were more curious about the place they live than I have ever seen. They made great connections between our local history and the broader national story. Today was a great example of a successful community collaboration. Hats off to Susan.”

Breckenridge History offers school programs throughout the year at our historical sites and museums, and in the classroom. We also offer a free afterschool program which rotates to elementary schools throughout Summit County. Our programs are created to engage students while meeting state educational standards.



2024 VISITORS FINANCIALS

January 1 - December 31

INCOME

Operations Grants	\$ 12,500
Town of Breckenridge Operating Support	775,000
General Donations & Other Income	11,561
Museum Donations, Tour & Event Income	45,595
Merchandise Sales	3,086
In-Kind Income (Operations)	29,171
Total Operations Income	876,913
Completed Capital Projects Income	2,407,578
Completed Capital Projects In-Kind Income	11,000
Total Income	\$ 3,295,491

EXPENSES

Business Expenses	\$ 32,630
Merchandise Inventory	2,055
Museum & Facility Expenses	87,667
Program & Event Expenses	5,421
Payroll, Taxes and Benefits	659,689
Archives Expenses	18,035
Advertising	19,770
In-Kind Expenses (Operations)	29,171
Total Operations Expenses	854,438
Completed Capital Projects Expenses	2,407,578
Completed Capital Projects Expenses In-Kind Expenses	11,000
Total Expenses	\$ 3,273,016

Net Income	\$ 22,475
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2024 SOCIAL MEDIA BY THE NUMBERS

2,193

FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS

737,834

FACEBOOK REACH

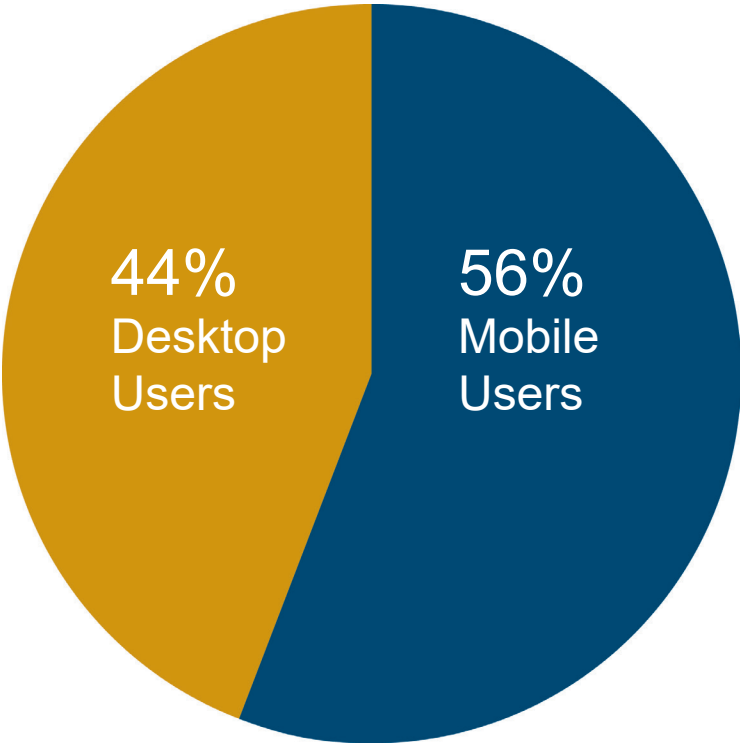
1,353

INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS

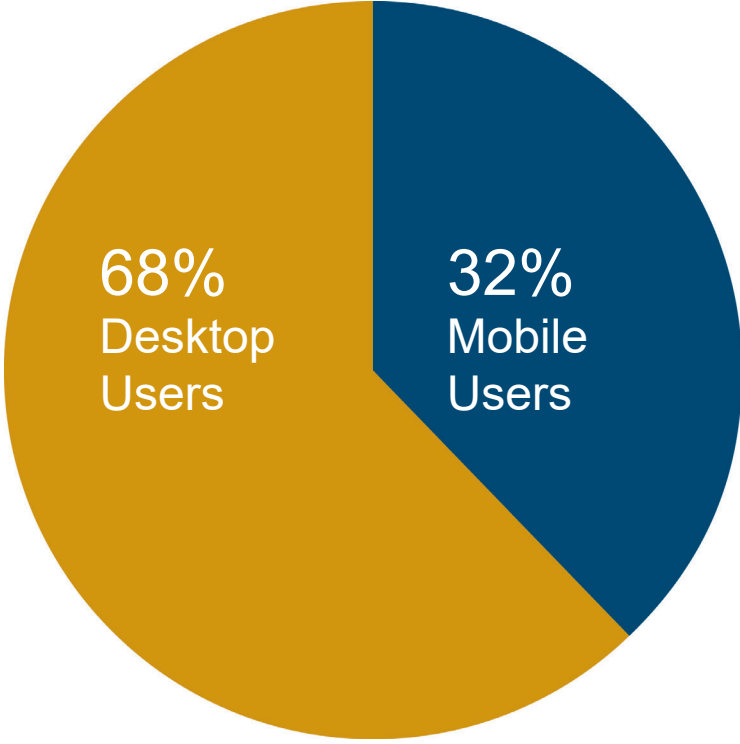
21,615

INSTAGRAM REACH

2024 WEBSITE VISITORS

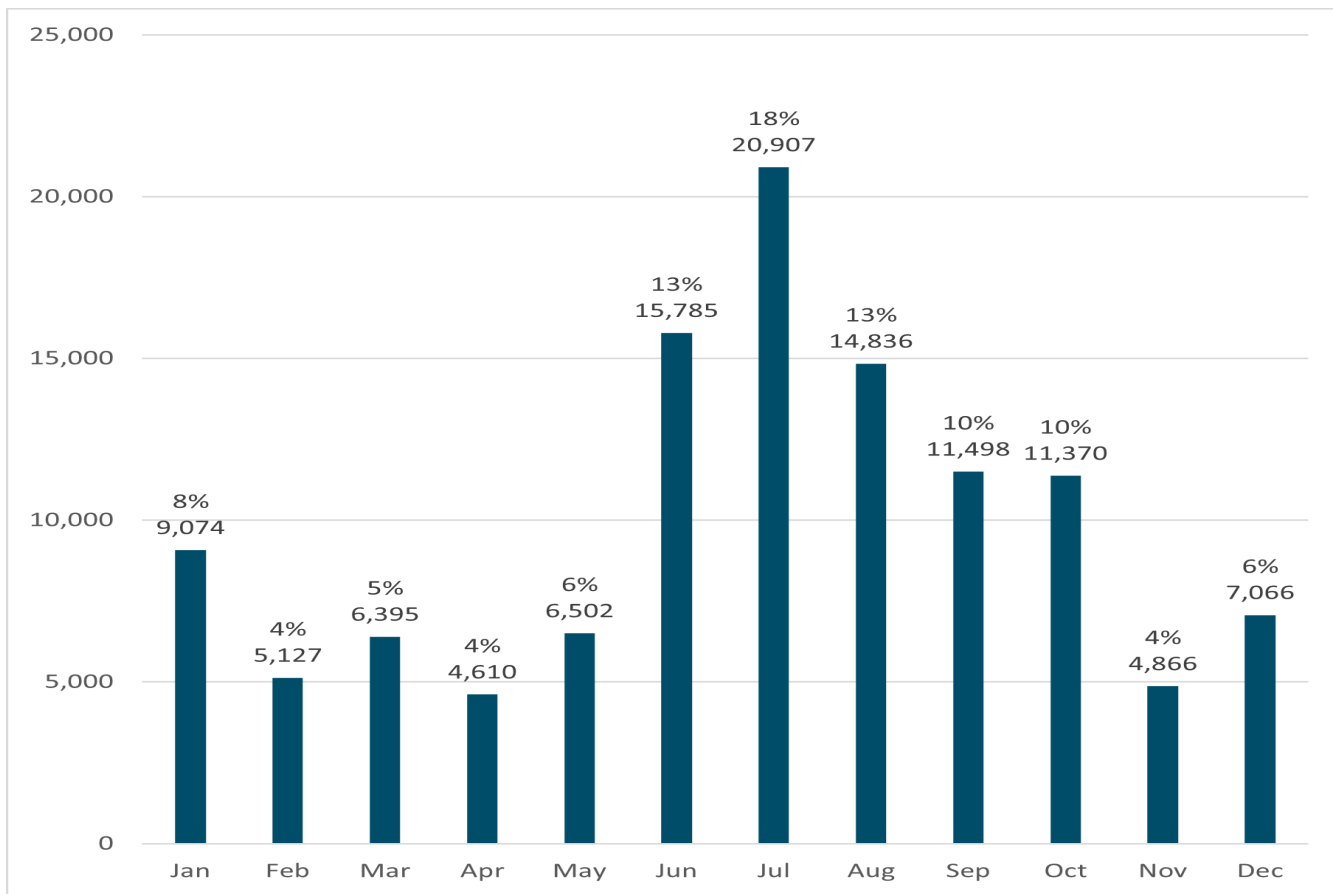


Breckenridge History Website
32,425 TOTAL USERS

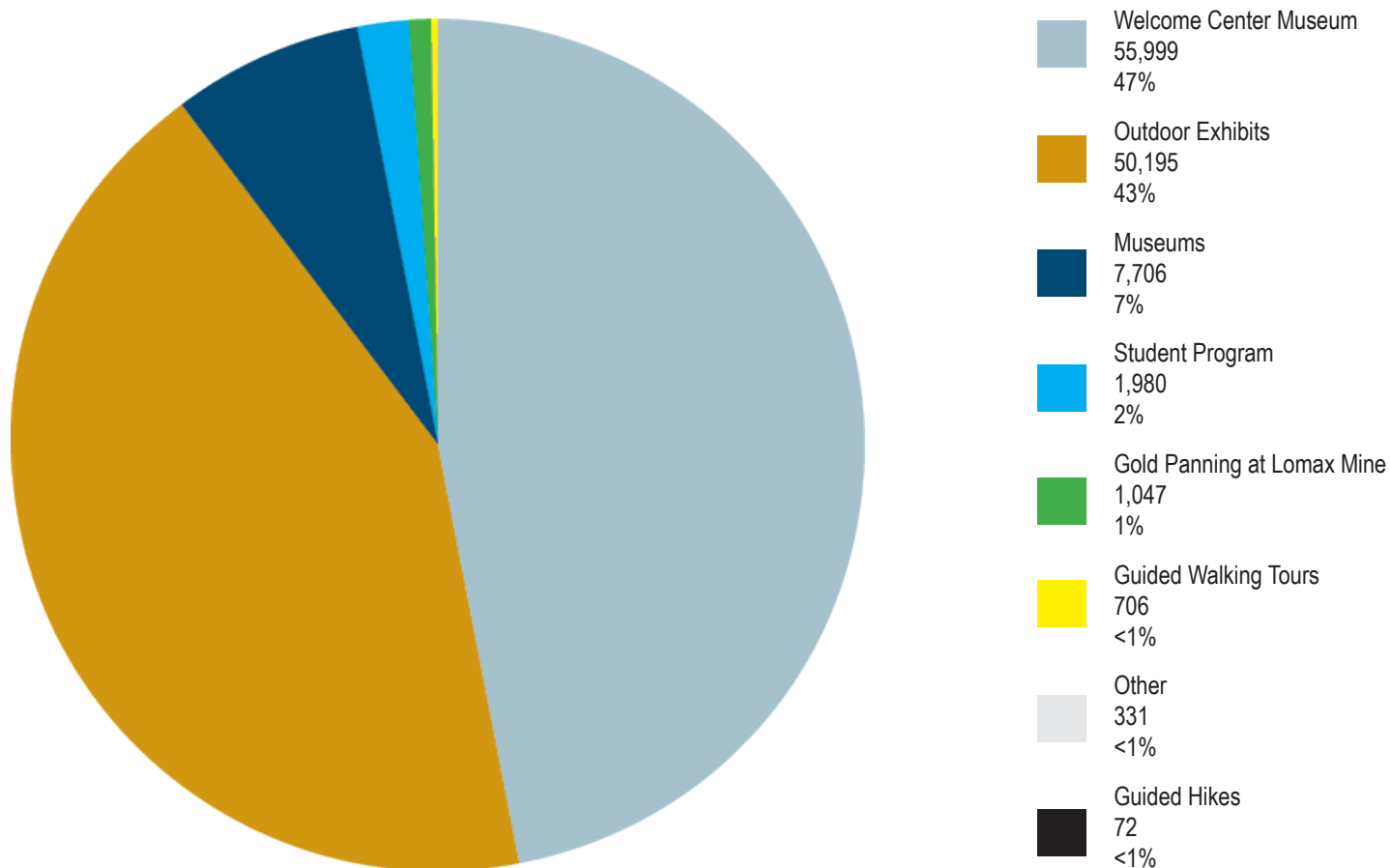


Breckenridge History Archives Site
8,068 TOTAL USERS

2024 VISITORS BY THE NUMBERS



2024 TOTAL NUMBER OF VISITORS: 118,036





Barney Ford Museum

Enslaved for the first 26 years of his life, Barney Ford fought through racism, fires and financial hardship to become one of Colorado's leading businessmen and civil rights pioneers. After advocating for his own freedom, Ford started businesses in places as far away as Nicaragua and as close as the lawn at the Barney Ford Museum. At age 60, Ford commissioned his stately Breckenridge home in the heart of town. The restored museum honors the remarkable life and legacy of Barney Ford.

"It is so beautiful how history is kept and told to the late generations. Such an authentic history and place."

