



2021

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ANNUAL REPORT

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**PRESENTED TO**

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# Table of Contents

**03**

A Message from the  
Executive Director

**04**

Strategic Framework

**05**

At a Glance

**06**

The Museum

**07**

Collections and  
Archives

**08**

Funding Resources

**09**

Marketing and Social  
Media

**10**

Partnerships

**11**

Sponsors

**12**

Contact Us

The Fort Museum of the NWMP and First Nations Interpretive Centre acknowledges that we are on Treaty 7 territory, the traditional territories of the Blackfoot Nation, including Siksika, Piikani, Kainai, the Tsuut'ina Nation and the Stoney Nakoda First Nations. We acknowledge all the many First Nations, Métis and Inuit whose footsteps have marked these lands for centuries.

# A Message from the Executive Director



The Fort Museum of the NWMP and First Nations Interpretive Center was successful in navigating through another year of tourism during the world pandemic. The museum was unable to open until July 2nd, which is significantly later than usual.

Although attendance was still down, we were able to welcome visitors from across Canada, and the United States in the later part of the summer.

Despite the challenges, there were accomplishments throughout the year. We were delighted to be awarded the Investment Readiness Program grant that secured funds to develop a new Sustainable Business Plan with the Hatlie Group. With this tool, the Board and staff were able to shift our focus and resources to optimize success.

As we enter into a new year, I must extend a sincere thanks to my Executive Board members for their support and dedication as we maneuvered the challenges of 2020 and 2021. I would also like to thank my committed staff for their efforts throughout this extraordinary year. Finally, I must acknowledge the extreme challenges faced by our tourism partners and commend them for their perseverance and resiliency. Although there is still difficulty, the Fort Museum of the NWMP and First Nations Interpretive Centre is committed to continue to work to ensure the recovery and growth of the tourism sector in our community.

Sandi Davis  
Executive Director





# THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

## Values

We are committed to amplifying truth through storytelling.

Our strength and resilience are based on inclusive relationships.

Our adaptability heightens our effectiveness and efficiency when faced with change.

## Vision

Making space to meaningfully connect with living history and culture.

## Mission

The Fort Museum of the NWMP and First Nations Interpretive Centre captivates and inspires its audiences through authentic storytelling, engaging experiences, and dynamic community connections

## Impact Statements

### Health

The Fort visitors, staff, and volunteers feel safe and at ease.

### Social

Community involvement in The Fort and by The Fort in the community contributes to mutually beneficial and positive social change.

### Environment

Consistency and well informed decisions at The Fort result in a positive public perception.

### Culture

The Fort's relationships, programs, and activities contribute to empathy and compassion, eliminating racism and cultural appropriation.

### Financial

The Fort is a trusted institution directly contributing to the economic health of our community.



# At a Glance



## Attendance

Total visitation 4,722

Increase of 1,515 from last year

All but one tour company canceled  
and no school programs were  
delivered

## Key Successes

Grant support increased including the  
Government of Canada Wage Subsidy and  
Canadian Heritage Emergency Support  
Funding

The development of a new Strategic  
Framework and Business Plan

New marketing initiatives were developed  
for both the museum and in collaboration  
with CHTA for Fort Macleod





# The Museum

The world pandemic continued to have a significant impact on the tourism industry. In the face of these challenges, the Fort successfully adapted our business model to open our doors, and offer a safe and enjoyable environment for our guests.

The first setback was the museum could not open in the Spring, and the education program was once again cancelled. Secondly, due to the limitations on staffing grants, the museum was closed on Monday and Tuesday, and hours decreased. The Musical Ride was shortened to three rides daily rather than four. Extreme heat and smoke from forest fires affected the ride availability as well. Staff and horses health were monitored daily to ensure safety, cancelling rides when necessary.

Visitation was limited to Canadian citizens in July due to international travel restrictions. By August the US and Canada border eased restrictions and we saw an increase in US visitors.

We were able to host two events in 2021, the Ride Finale and Truth and Reconciliation Day. The South Alberta Horse Artillery participated in the Ride Finale activities and we had a successful end to our summer season. Truth and Reconciliation Day was a new event at the Fort and we welcomed former employee, Carl Brave Rock, to come back to his Fort for traditional Blackfoot storytelling.

The Fort Museum Sustainability Project was completed between February and May 2021, during the COVID-19 global pandemic. The project included Strategy Development activities and Operational and Governance Reviews leading to the development of *Make Space: The Fort Museum Business Plan 2021 – 2023*. In the coming years, implementing the Museum's new Strategic Framework and Business Plan will mean focussing on deepening the staff team, investing in strategic partnerships and adjusting the program and service offering to increase earned revenue.

The Fort welcomed four new goats to the herd this year. Flip and Pearl are seniors and they were able to teach the newcomers how to get treats from our visitors.





In 2021 the Collections department took precautions in the museum galleries to prevent the spread of COVID-19 inasmuch as possible, while at the same time maximizing exhibit access. 13 new displays were curated for the season. 11 of these were considered temporary, including a new interactive detective-style display that encouraged guests to solve a real homicide case from the Fort Macleod area that took place in 1912. Two other displays are considered permanent installations and feature community oriented content. In addition to these, the Fort Museum was also featured a travelling exhibit that originated in our region. "Piikanikoan: Living Under a Blackfoot Sky" was guest curated by Ira Provost for the Galt Museum in Lethbridge, and was on display here in the Centennial Building for two months in July and August. In total, it was viewed by 4,153 people. Display case maintenance was also a priority, and five were dismantled and repaired before the open season.

In regards to artifacts, the Fort Museum's Collections Committee reviewed 60 donations from 8 different donors in 2021. Of these, 10 artifacts from 6 donors were accepted into various collections; the artifact/archive collection, the education collection, and the display support collection. The Collections department also conducted 4 large inventories of the museum's storage spaces. 213 artifacts were inventoried in the over-sized photography storage, vertical frame storage, and horizontal frame storage sections. The inventory of 'limbo' artifacts in the Collections department's primary storage room also began, and 797 entries were input during the year. Please note that this is not the number of artifacts entered, but of item groups/donation packages. Each donation package or item group has its own entry, but often includes more than one artifact. This inventory project is ongoing into 2022.

# COLLECTIONS AND ARCHIVES

ASHLEY HARDWICK  
COLLECTIONS MANAGER

There was also a large movement at the Fort Museum's offsite storage facilities in 2021. The First Ave Storage building was emptied between two occasions, by work parties that included museum staff, volunteers, and Board President Bob Gunn. In total, approximately 43 artifacts were removed from the building safely and relocated to a more suitable storage area.

The Collections department also had two important staff-related implementations in 2021. The first is the new fee schedule for staff-led research. The Research Request policy was amended to include a \$20.00/hour fee for staff-led research after a free initial 15 minute period, and brings the Fort Museum in line with the current practices of other institutions. Secondly, the Fort Museum received grant funding to hire four internship positions throughout the year, and one summer season position. All five of these experiences were successful. In addition to these paid positions, one volunteer also began work in the Museum's archives in November of 2021.

Adopt an artifact program earned a total of \$335 from individual 5 donors



# Funding Resources

The Fort Museum was successful in obtaining many grants throughout the year. Canada Summer Jobs and Young Canada Works supported staffing wages for seasonal employees and interns, while the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) supplemented the wages for the full time staff. All staff wages were subsidized by grants, significantly reducing the operational costs for 2021.

The Museum Assistance Program under the Department of Canadian Heritage also supported the museum with emergency funds, totalling \$42,788. These funds had no restrictions and could be put directly into operations as needed.

The Community Foundation of Canada approved two grants this year. The first was the Investment Readiness Program that supported funding to have the Hatlie Group develop a sustainable business model with the Fort Macleod Historical Association. The second grant was the Healthy Communities Initiative to fund an interactive kiosk in the main gallery.

The Centennial Building will receive a new roof in 2022 thanks to the support from the Community Initiative Program and the Community Facility Enhancement Program. Both grants were approved in 2021 but with lumber prices skyrocketing, the project was delayed.

Artsvest was a new program to the Fort this year.

Artsvest is Business / Arts signature mentorship training program designed to build capacity in Canada's cultural sector. Artsvest provided us with resources, expertise and training in marketing, board governance and sponsorship along with matching incentive funds and peer-to-peer networking.

Travel Alberta provided support with marketing this year with no matching component required. This was hugely competitive amongst the tourism industry and the Fort was grateful to be successful. Professional content was our focus with programming shifting online.





# Marketing and Social Media

The Fort Museum was able to complete many marketing initiatives in 2021. The museum received a grant through Travel Alberta that allowed us to hire Hektic Media Inc to produce a new video, high resolution images and a social media best practice guide for the Fort to use moving forward.

We were also able to have a billboard on the east side of town in July and the west side in August, thanks to Tony Walker from Community Futures subsidizing the cost for Chamber members.

In collaboration with the Cultural Heritage Tourism Alliance and On This Spot, the Fort developed a self-guided walking tour for the Barracks site. Other tours completed by CHTA are a historic main street tour, and historic churches and homes tour. A virtual tour of the Fort Museum was also developed with On This Spot, allowing us to use the program for virtual field trips for schools.

Social media engagement increased with new content consistently uploaded and a quick response time online. The new website had over 7,350 hits in 2021 with just over 80% of the viewers from Canada. The Facebook page had a reach of 24,535 viewers with 111 new likes and the Instagram page had a reach of 3,206 views and 57 new likes. The professional images and video contributed to the increase in our reach but the social media best practices guide was instrumental in keeping the messaging and brand consistent with seasonal staff assisting throughout the year.



# ACKNOWLEDGING OUR PARTNERS

We honour our partners and the collaborative work that has strengthened relationships leading us on the path to tourism recovery. We have made enormous strides thanks to the adaptability and ingenuity of the professional and community partners listed below. We gratefully acknowledge the Town of Fort Macleod, the Government of Canada and Travel Alberta for the continued investment in the Fort Museum.





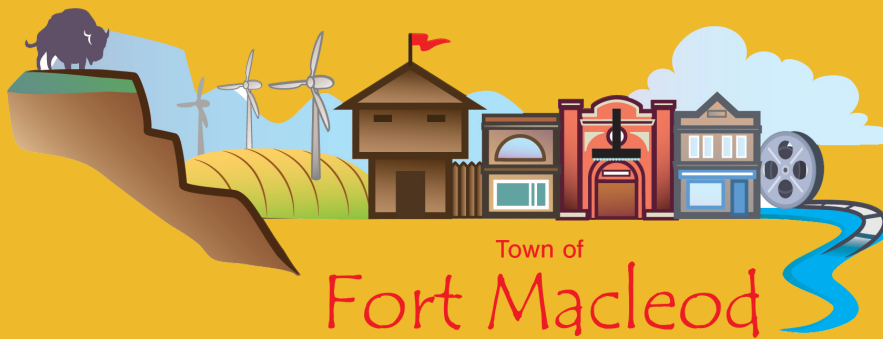
# ACKNOWLEDGING OUR SPONSORS

The Fort Museum is grateful to the following businesses for their continued support in 2021

Economy Lumber

BCD Enterprises

Don's Barber Shop







## 2021 Executive Director Report

**Questions? Contact us:**

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