2024 ANNUAL REPORT

RED LAKE REGIONAL
HERITAGE CENTRE

Prepared by
Trevor Osmond

OUR PURPOSE

MANDATE

The Red Lake Regional Heritage Centre is responsible for preserving, promoting and interpreting Red Lake's natural and social history.

MISSION

Working in partnership with the community, the Municipality, and key stakeholders, the RLRHC strives to be a leader in preserving, promoting, and celebrating the region's natural and cultural heritage. This mission is fulfilled through:

- Ensuring that the community of Red Lake's ongoing history is documented and represented through exhibitions, research, art, and events.
- Creating an environment of exploration, where education and growth bring together communities and provide opportunities for sharing knowledge and experiences.
- Together with community representatives provide opportunities to strengthen Red Lake's positive identity through exhibits, events, programming, and performances.

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REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

After reopening in June 2023, we anticipated a more normal year in 2024. But as mentioned in last year's Year End Report, the Main Gallery floor would need to be replaced or repaired. After talking to flooring experts in Winnipeg, it was decided that the floor would have to be replaced. This meant that the Main Gallery would have to be emptied of all displays before the work could go ahead. So, with the help of Evolution Mine Rescue Team and other volunteers the displays were taken down and moved into storage. We were fortunate to have two Ministry Fire Crews to help move the displays back into the main hall in early June. A big Thank You to Josh McDougall for the time he spent getting all the displays back up running.

As Well as trying to get the main hall back together, Trevor and his staff also continued to find time to keep the Temporary Gallery filled with displays. These included a two-week traveling display from Science North in February and March, followed by the summer exhibit on the Triple K Cooperative which was unique to Red Lake and played an important role in the development of woodland art. Halloween Fright Night and the Annual Red Lake Art Show: Local Spirits were very well received.

2024 also saw some personnel changes at the Museum. We welcomed Gaury Nair as a 1-year intern to the Museum in July. Lisa Hughes our Curator decided to take position with the Fort Frances Museum in August. We all wish her well in her new role as Director. In October, Stephanie Dermann was successful in her bid to take on the role as Curator. Stephanie started with the museum as a NOHFC intern. She gained experience working under in Collections. The Red Lake Regional Heritage Centre welcomed Jacinda Brisson to the Heritage Center Board in April. We look forward to her contributions in the coming months.

The RLRHC continues to look for innovative ways to attract visitors to the facility. As always, the challenge will be to continue to find new ways to engage our community and make it appealing for them to come back.

Like most public facilities the RLRHC is primarily funded by grants from the Province Ontario and an allocation from the Municipality of Red Lake. We appreciate and understand that both the province and Municipality are under cost pressures.

I would like to thank the other board members Hilary Reid (Vice Chair), Debra Geary (Municipal Representative), Josiah Meyer, Scott Macumber, Graeme Swanwick and Jacinda Brisson for their dedicated service to the board.

Finally on behalf of the board I would like to thank the Mayor and Council for their support and especially the public who have participated in the wide variety of events held at centre. We hope that we continue to offer a service that will attract your interest and encourage your participation in the future.

Gary Horne

Chairman

REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR

The Red Lake Regional Heritage Centre (RLRHC) continues to rebound after its disaster, the global pandemic and a few other small but significant disruptions. 2024 was marked by many possitive changes. In early 2024, the RLRHC finished its Strategic Plan which gave some much needed post recovery direction. Instead of just responding crisises, now the RLRHC is activly looking at growth in the tourism sector, communication, advertising, team unity, sustainability, standards & practices, and standards for the physical space.

2024 was also the beginning of planning for next year's 100 years of Red Lake. It marks 100 years since gold was discovered in Howey Bay. This process has involved a great deal of time and effort in seeking out potential partners and likeminded individuals.

Speaking of partners, the RLRHC has also been busy planning a several partnerships. In early 2024, the RLRHC worked with Science North to bring its travelling exhibit to town. The RLRHC continues to hold Age Friendly events, seek opportunities with the Francophone Association, participate in Orange Shirt day, and develop new projects that will strengthen currrent partnerships and create new ones.

One of the most important partnerships has been the growing bond between that of the Red Lake Indian Friendship Centre and the RLRHC. In 2023, siginficant conversations about artwork, including evaluation, preservation and documentation were had. The Friendship Centre lent many of pieces of artwork for the 2024 Summer Exhibit. Representatives were also improtant in the conversation about the RLRHC's Mural Project. By 2024, the project was planned, received funding, however, due to scheduling conflicts, the actual creation of the murals was extended to early 2025.

The partnership has also become important with respect to the RLRHC's temproary exhibit. Much of the art for the exhibit has come from the Red Lake Indian Friendship Centre's collection.

While there is still a great deal of work left to accomplish, I am happy to say that the RLRHC is beginning to look a lot more like it did, pre-Covid-19. It will be important to take what we have been developing throughout the year, and make possitive, long lasting changes as part of the RLRHC expereince.

Trevor Osmond
Director

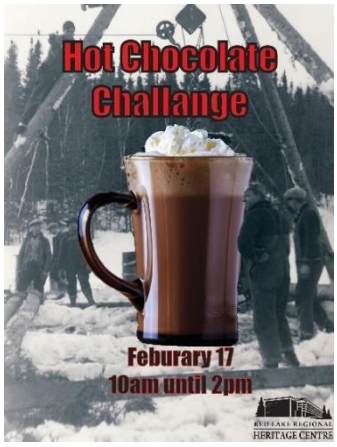
STRATEGIC GOAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Red Lake Regional Heritage Centre (RLRHC) went through some updates in 2024. Perhaps the largest update was the completion of its strategic plan. The update gave the RLRHC some much needed direction on the activities going forward. While past strategic directions were and are still important, the new directives provided updated deliverables.

Direction 1: Grow as an Active Tourism Destination

Now that the RLRHC has recovered and reopened, Covid-19 is well behind us, and the community is ready to begin with a blank slate, it is time for the RLRHC to begin functioning as intended. This means growing back into the role as a leader in tourism, culture and experience leader. Perhaps the most important aspect of taking on this challenge was simply getting people through the door. When compared with pre-covid statistics, attendance was below average in 2023. While this can be attributed to reopening woes and post Covid anxiety, it was important to increase activity in 2024. Through a variety of programs, exhibits, events and facility rentals, the RLRHC increased its total attendance more akin to pre-covid levels.

A big part of the success of 2024 was a return to varied events. Being a part of the Winter Carnival festivities, the Canada Film Day celebration and Truth and Reconciliation Day's educational board game event meant that visitors had a wide variety of events to attend. Likewise, a return to old favourite events like the Pub Quiz gave returning visitors a reason to come back.



One of the major aspects of this strategic direction is develop a plan that encompasses a formal promotional plan to allow the RLRHC to help share projects that otherwise might be too large for the organization to take on alone. Several partnerships were formed around small to medium sized projects. The Red Lake Indian Friendship Centre (RLIFC) has partnered with the RLRHC in order to work with local Woodland Artists who will create a large-scale image that will be adhered to the interior of the RLRHC's Indigenous exhibit, Anishinaabe: The People of the Land. The project will be completed in 2025.

No project epitomized planning for the future better than the 100 Years of Red Lake 2025 Celebration. In speaking with representatives from Chukuni Communities Development Corporation, Highway 105 Tourism, the Municipality of Red Lake and the West Red Lake Mining Museum it was clear that there was an interest in doing something to celebrate 100 years since the founding of gold, however, the RLRHC would need to take the role of project coordinator to get the project off the ground. The RLRHC was able to access a grant through the Canadian Heritage (Local Festivals and Community Anniversaries Grant) which both focused the upcoming project and will provide funds for a litany of activities.

The RLRHC will continue improving its promotional plan, social media plan and work on its place as a tourism centre. The RLRHC will continue to develop the solutions for working with tourism operators and providing tourism options. To begin the process, the RLRHC applied for and successfully received funding through the NOHFC program to hire a Tourism & Programming Intern. Despite advertising the position for more than 6 months, it has not been filled. The lack of staffing has slowed the progress of connecting with tourism operator's and further delayed tourism opportunities.

Direction 2: Communication and Promotion

The RLRHC must continue to make positive changes in promoting itself. During the past four years, promotion of the RLRHC waxed and waned depending on staff involvement. A promotional plan was necessary to communicate with stakeholders, to stay relevant and to ensure that its brand is recognizable to the community and tourists alike.

In order to accomplish these goals, the Director ran a series of preplanning strategy sessions. From these strategy sessions, it was clear that the RLRHC would need personnel who would target promotion. This includes actively working on advertising, social media, and membership managment.

The RLRHC applied for an NOHFC Intern position which was developed with social media in mind. In July Gaury Nair joined the team as its Public Relations Intern. Her first steps were to create a weekly schedule of the types of posts. Once the strategy was in place, she began releasing posts about gift shop items, historical content, upcoming events and museum news to stakeholders. Posts garnered little attention at first, however, they soon grew into a very successful series of weekly developments. Perhaps the most successful posts were the series of artist biographies done to promote the Red Lake Art Show.

Promotion was also developed in the gift shop. In an attempt to shop branding, the RLRHC began carrying products with the Heritage Centre logo. Several popular t-shirts were designed with the logo on the shirt sleeve. A water bottle was designed as both product and swag.

Perhaps the most active development over the year was the increase in membership sales. Sales finally hit numbers not seen since 2018 (pre disaster/pandemic). Memberships are broken down into annual and lifetime. Several long-time annual members decided to purchase a lifetime membership. The most prevalent memberships sold were the annual senior and annual adult memberships. A not for profit and two school memberships were also sold during 2024. As the RLRHC continues grow and to find its place within the community, the community has responded well and so membership has increased.

Direction 3: Team Unity

Since 2019, the RLRHC staff had operated in isolation until the reopening of the building in June of 2023. As the RLRHC team adapted to welcoming visitors, taking on new projects and planning with community organizations, a disconnect developed. To help alleviate the issue, a series of planning meetings took place in early 2024. These planning meetings were only partially effective.

During mid year, the RLRHC saw significant changes develop. For the first time since 2015, the RLRHC was without a Curator. The rest of the staff stepped up to meet the challenges of being down a team member during the busiest part of the year. Improved teamwork and a fresh outlook provided the team with some renewed energy. Olivia Harrington, a summer student, provided a much-needed boost to the RLRHC's summer programming and visitor services which allowed other team members time to plan.

The team began communicating more effectively and met more often during late summer and early autumn. The RLRHC utilized a shared Calander that made scheduling events, programming, meetings and days off much simpler.

Stephanie Dermann, recently promoted to a full time Exhibit position, took on the role of Curator in October. Fresh new ideas and positive interactions have allowed her to nurture a strong relationship with the rest of the staff.

Now the major hurdle the team faces is recruitment. Like the rest of the businesses in Red Lake, the RLRHC has had trouble attracting employees with the right set of skills. To make matters worse, post Covid-19 inflation has made internships much less attractive. Intern positions that once looked lucrative to recent graduates, no longer represent living wages. Since these internship positions are only possible through various grants, it is impossible raise wages under the current economic situation. The RLRHC was able to fill its Public Relations Intern position in July when Gaury Nair joined the team. Sadly, its Tourism and Programming Internship remains open as of the end of 2024. Both are year long internships through NOHFC. The RLRHC was also successful in receiving a Young Canada Works 30-week internship, however, it took until December to attract a candidate. They will begin the internship in January of 2025.

To create an effective work plan, the RLRHC requires employees. The RLRHC will be looking for staffing solutions in 2025. Once the RLRHC does have employees, work plans will be developed with direction from the Strategic Plan.

During the long hiatus of the RLRHC, its active volunteers dropped considerably. As the RLRHC restructures, it has begun the process of recruiting volunteers for events and programs. The RLRHC was particularly successful in attracting volunteers for its Halloween Fright Night event. A concerted effort was made to appeal to Red Lake High School students who required volunteer hours. The event also attracted volunteers who were new to town.

Direction 4: Comfortable and Inviting Space

Perhaps one of the strongest aspects of the RLRHC is its ability to be whatever is required of its stakeholders. It is a museum, meeting place, tourism destination and rental space all rolled into one. Since 2019, the RLRHC has struggled to maintain itself as an active participant in the community. Stake holders have identified this issue as a growing concern.

Ontario
Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation
Société de gestion du Fonds du patrimoine du Nord de l'Ontario

To improve the situation, the RLRHC has worked hard to develop several positive solutions. The RLRHC continues to be the host of the Age Friendly meetings every Monday. The meetings attract anywhere from 30 to 80 seniors each

week. Working with the Municipality of Red Lake, the RLRHC has improved its offerings for seniors. In November the Director presented the RLRHC's plans for the 100th Anniversary of the Discovery of gold in Howey Bay to a very interested audience. As part of the presentation the Director indicated that the RLRHC would be interviewing members of the public. Should any seniors be interested in being interviewed, they should contact the Director or the Curator. It is expected that staff will conduct a few dozen interviews in early 2025.

Interviews were conducted throughout 2024 to prepare for the upcoming summer exhibit on the Triple K Art Co-operative.

In January the RLRHC invited the Red Lake Indian Friendship Centre's PD Camp to watch a film in its Main Gallery. The RLRHC took part in the Winter Carnival in February. As part of the festivities, the RLRHC ran its Hot Chocolate Challenge, which is a perennial favourite. The RLRHC also hosted several school visits from Red Lake Madsen Public School, the Golden Learning Centre, Ear Falls Public School, and the Red Lake District High School. Science North brought in the 'Our Climate Quest' exhibit, which was very well received, and seen by a large number of students.

Throughout February and March. Kids and parents were treated to a fantastic program built around rocks and minerals. Although not new, it was the long awaited return of Rock Hounds. The program was run by the Director of the RLRHC and the Regional Resident Geologist Paul Malegus.

For Orange Shirt Day (National Day for Truth and Reconciliation), the RLRHC closed its doors to the public. Carolyn Spicer was kind enough to share her educational game, The Truth in Truth and Reconciliation, with a group of interested participants.

One of the major issues the RLRHC had been facing was its flooring in the Main Gallery. Despite getting redone in 2023, the epoxy flooring never set correctly, and as a result was extremely sticky, rough and covered in grime. In February, the Municipality and the RLRHC began looking for solutions. Finally, in May the flooring was stripped and redone. This was a costly, but necessary process. Funds were accessed through the RLRHC's emergency account which is held by the Municipality of Red Lake.

The RLRHC conducts a great deal of research as part of its day-to-day activities. Many interested students, families, professionals and educators contact the RLRHC each month to ask questions about people, places and events. Throughout the year people contact the RLRHC to speak to staff about former mines. Often people have shares, certificates or photos of these mines

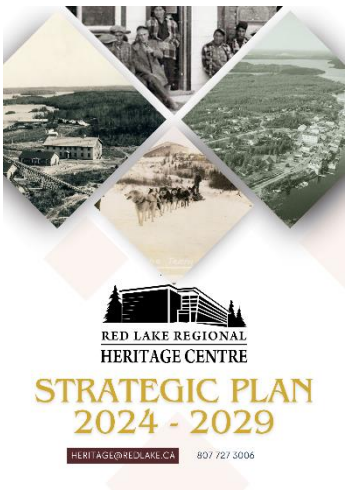
and are interested in finding out more. In November students from the Red Lake District High School visited the RLRHC to research various topics on the West end of Red Lake. The

RLRHC also provides a comfortable space for researchers who wish to conduct research in the archives.

As part of its strategic direction, the RLRHC is looking for opportunities for stakeholders to provide feedback. Social media provides a very quick and easy way to share thoughts and opinions, however, additional, more dynamic solutions are required. Going into 2025, the 100th Anniversary exhibit and subsequent exhibits require a method for feedback which must be a part of the exhibit design.

Direction 5: Sustainability

The RLRHC is an amazing community resource that needs to be resourced to be successful. Because it fills so many roles, the RLRHC requires staff with a wide range of skill sets, traditional museum supplies and exhibit supplies, event and rental furniture, technology and programming space. The RLRHC has operated with a very tight budget, stretched resources and too few staff over a long period of time. As the RLRHC returns to a state of Post Covid and reconstruction normalcy, it will be important to go into operations with a clear approach. The RLRHC needs to be sustainable.



One of the major issues over the last five years has been employee burnout. Staff have worked long hours under stressful conditions. Some of the issues have been related to the unique circumstances of the disaster and Covid-19. Other issues have come up because of a loss of direction. A strategic plan was vital in reintroducing much needed structure to the RLRHC. In April of 2024, the final revision of the strategic plan was reviewed and passed by the Board of Directors. Since that time the Director has been working at designing workplans for the Curator, and interns.

The loss of direction has also had an impact on the RLRHC's ability to deliver cultural experiences and historical content. The RLRHC was able to bring in Our Climate Quest through Science North and held its Annual Art Show. While these exhibits offered rich experiences, they require very little work when compared to a summer exhibit. The summer exhibit, the Kakegamic Legacy, a look at Triple K Art Cooperative, was much smaller than initially expected. Staff struggled to complete the exhibit on time, the project was not advertised well, and the opening was smaller than expected. The content of the exhibit was informative and the paintings were excellent, however, the lack of interactive components and diversified content meant that the exhibit did not make for a diverse and memorable experience.

The opposite can be said for the Art Show. A renewed energy, fresh ideas and excellent advertising meant that the Red Lake Art Show was extremely successful. Staff received over 40 submissions from 27 different artists, many of whom had never submitted work before. It also marked the return of well-known artists like Patrick Hunter and Cheryl Wilson-Smith. The

show was advertised in such a way where there was an artist spotlight each day leading up to the show. It includes an artist biography, a photo of the artist and one or two pieces of art that they had done in the past. In this case the art featured in the show remained a secret, rather than being revealed online. This was done as an attempt to build excitement. The advertisement paid off as 150 people attended the art show opening. This was the most people the RLRHC has ever had for the opening for these art shows going back to 2015.

The RLRHC is committed to continuing to grow and increase its offerings. There area three major developments that are required for growth. The RLRHC needs to increase its overall staff compliment. In the past, this was managed by applying for internship funding. It allowed the RLRHC to hire talented employees who had a strong knowledge of museums. Since hiring interns has been problmatic, the RLRHC needs to retain a third full time employee. In Janauary of 2024, Stephanie Dermann began her position as Exhibit and Research Assistant. This marked the first time the RLRHC had three permenant staff members. On July 31st, Curator Lisa Hughes left the RLRHC to seek new opportunities. This left a vacancy for the Curator role. By October 1st, the RLRHC had a new Curator, as Stephanie Dermann took over the role. It also meant that the RLRHC was back down to two full time staff. Finding funding in order to hire an additional person is vital to the organization, and the health of the RLRHC staff.

Since the RLRHC regularly requires specilized help as part of its exhibits, programs and events, the RLRHC is in need of assistance. Funding is tight, therefore the RLRHC regularly requires volunteers and partners to help allivate some

difficulties with running an organization with a diverse set of needs. The RLRHC has taken steps to connect with individuals and resources, and will continue that process into 2025. By inviting individuals and organization, to be a part of the RLRHC's process, it biulds a relationship between the RLRHC and the community. This in turn helps increase its membership, raise attendance, and allow for crosspromotion.

The final element of sustainable growth is related to accessing revenue. The RLRHC needs to diversify its revenue sources in order to stay competitive. Currently the RLRHC runs on revenue from gift shop sales, rentals, programs and admission. In addition it recieves grant money from the Community Museum Operatinoal Grant, the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation, and the Government of Canada. Its Main revenue source is the Municipality of Red Lake. Since 2020, the RLRHC has increasingly relied on the Municipality's contribution. If the RLRHC is to continue to operate, it will require a diversified funding strategy. This includes more local fundraising, garnering support from corporate sponsors, enhancing tourism, turning the

RLRHC's brand into a known commodity, offering bundle packages with other organizations, monetizing employees expertise,

Direction 6: Museum Standards and Practices

The RLRHC has long struggled to maintain museum standards and practices. As with most community museums it requires continual maintenance of a facility, purchase of equipment, specialized tools, materials, and storage areas with specific requirements. For years staff have been battling agents of degradation, pests and even the building itself.

In many ways the building is both the RLRHC's best feature and its worst. In January 2024, the archives room developed a leak in its HVAC system. Water began to overflow because of a simple blockage in the system. Staff quickly evacuated the shelves of the archives and relocated its contents. The problem was located and repaired; however, the damage was done.

Despite many setbacks, the RLRHC has been working towards making necessary improvements. These improvements started with a specialized storage area in the basement.

delivering online content, and focus on efficiency while minimizing waste.

The collection is slowly being rehoused into museum grade storage containers. Shelving is being lined with plastic sheeting, and the RLRHC is developing a plan to work with the Municipality of Red Lake to have a schedule for routine maintenance established to prevent disasters from occurring.

Year	*On-site Visitors*	*% Compared to 2024*	*Facebook Friends*
2020	*197*	*3.5%*	*1,330*
2021	*776*	*14%*	*1,502*
2022	*3114*	*56%*	*1,833*
2023	*4185*	*75.5%*	*1,956*
2024	*5543*	*100%*	*2.2K*

VISITORS

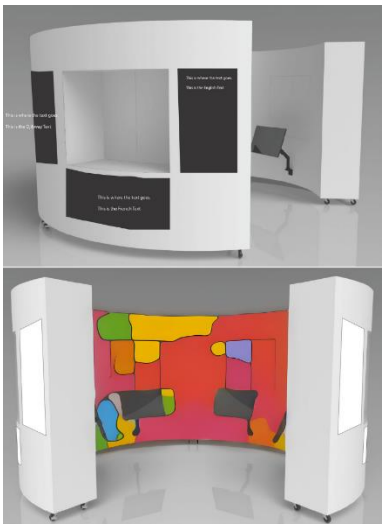
The RLRHC has struggled to get back to post covid activities, however, 2024 was the first time in years that visitors were plentiful and actively visiting. Attracted by exhibits, programs, events and the gift shop, visitors have been finding more reasons to drop in.

Significant effort was put into the ensuring that social media presence, community presence during activities and growth were all part of the strategic directions going forward.

EXHIBITIONS

PERMANENT EXHIBITS

The RLRHC poured in a great deal of effort over the last two years to create a fantastic experience that would keep visitors interested in the RLRHC's offerings for years to come. Sadly, the RLRHC has struggled to maintain its exhibits. Technology can be a double-edged sword. When it works, it is fantastic, when it does not, the experience is marred.



Airborne: Red Lake's Aviation History exhibit remains only partially active due to its flight simulator issues. As of the end of 2024, it has been identified as a hardware issue. It is hopeful that the hardware can be replaced, which would fix the issue. Staff are also planning for an additional video and have reached out to the Canadian Bush plane Museum for help.

The Clifford Harvey: Meet a Legendary Prospector exhibit ran into issues in early 2024. The video would activate without any interaction, playing the video at inappropriate times. Several attempts have been made, to fix the issue. The only recourse was to disassemble the videos and think about how to repair the interactive.

Beneath It All: Red Lake's Mining Story is also in need of repair. Since the exhibit has been moved so much over the years, work is required to ensure that it is repaired. Walls of the rock wall need to be painted. In addition, panels

have degraded and need to be redone. Staff are looking into choosing more hardy materials that would better stand the test of time. There are also issues with the technology of the exhibit as well. One of the monitors needs a replacement part, the blasting wall needs to be reprogramed and the cage buttons need to be properly secured. Considering all it has been through; the structure has held up extremely well.

Anishinaabe: The People of the Land has been well received by the public. It is an interesting mix of museum quality exhibit and video presentation. The original design was intended to give the display cases a modern art appearance, while providing a cultural

experience inside the unit. The RLRHC partnered with the Red Lake Indian Friendship Centre to apply for two grants (Ontario Arts Council and Canadian Heritage) in 2023 and received word that they were successful in early 2024. The grant money will go towards acquiring the talents of seven Woodland Artists who will create a mural. The Mural will then be digitized and printed onto sticker paper. The sticker paper will be adhered the interior surface of the exhibit.

Hell's Acres: The Gramma Gene Experience is performing well and will not require updates or revisions. A One-Way Ticket: Red Lake's Immigration Story received two battery run lanterns to increase the amount of light in the exhibit. The lanterns have a vintage aesthetic which makes them ideal for this exhibit. Three Centuries of Fur Trading: Hudson's Bay Co. Trading Post has not undergone any work since it was reinstalled after completing the flooring in the Main Gallery.

MAIN HALL EXHIBITS

Additional content was planned for Red Lake's First Resident Dentist: Dr. J.B. Aiken, M.M. Fromson Stockbroker and Mel White's Barber Shop. Some content was written for panels, and images were reviewed, however, no additional work was completed. Updates must now wait for 2025.

TEMPORARY EXHIBITS

The year opened with a visit from Science North's Climate Quest exhibit. The exhibit was extremely successful and attracted the attention of every school in the Red Lake community. Literally hundreds of students came to be a part of the

Science North experience. The Heritage Centre was lucky enough to have Science North from February 26 until March 19.

Since the Our Climate Quest was open throughout March, visitors were also able to come and visit during March break. During that time, they had a chance to learn about water & the environment, heat and carbon sinks, predicting climate, seeds, housing and building design, sustainable practices and composting (worms included).

The summer featured the amazing Kakegamic Legacy. This exhibit was both a visual representation of the amazing art of the region, and a historical account of the family's legacy in making Woodland the cultural phenomenon that it became. Featuring art from the Red Lake Regional Heritage Centre, the Red Lake Indian Friendship Centre and the Thunder Bay Art Gallery, the exhibit showcased the amazing array of talented artists from the region. Opening on July 12th, visitors were able to drop-in throughout the summer to see the exhibit. In September, a whole host of visiting groups were able to experience this amazing exhibit. Students from the Red Lake Madsen Public School, Ear Falls Pubic School, Golden Learning Centre, St. John's Catholic School took part in learning about an amazing piece of Red Lake history. Visiting groups weren't limited to students.

Margaret Cochenour Memorial Hospital Axillary, members of McDowell Lake, the Red Lake Indian Friendship Centre, and dignitaries from Evolution Mining, all took part in visiting the exhibit. The decade long tradition of the Red Lake Art Show continued. With so many amazing artists it was surprisingly easy to coordinate the exhibit.

Year	**Number of Entries**
2024	27
2023	18
2022	0**
2021	0**
2020	11*
2019	0**
2018	19
2017	17
2016	13
2015	10

**NWO Online Art Show*

*** Cancelled due to disaster*

After a slow start and a delay in hearing from artists, the RLRHC began to receive interest. Eventually 27 different artists submitted work for the art show. It marked a substantial increase in the number of total artists. In fact, there was more than a 70% increase when compared, which had previously held the title

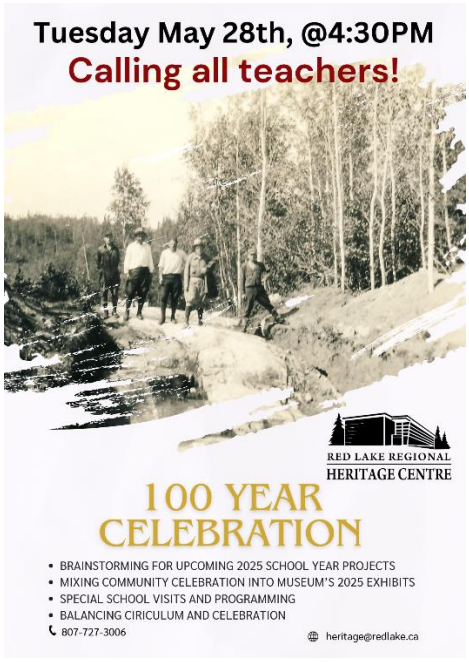
for the most artists involved in an art show. The art show was also a success based on the number of patrons who viewed the exhibit. Attendance generally drops off dramatically after the opening of an art show, however, 2024 was marked by many return visitors, significant interest in the Red Lake Art Show from word of mouth, and improved advertising methods.

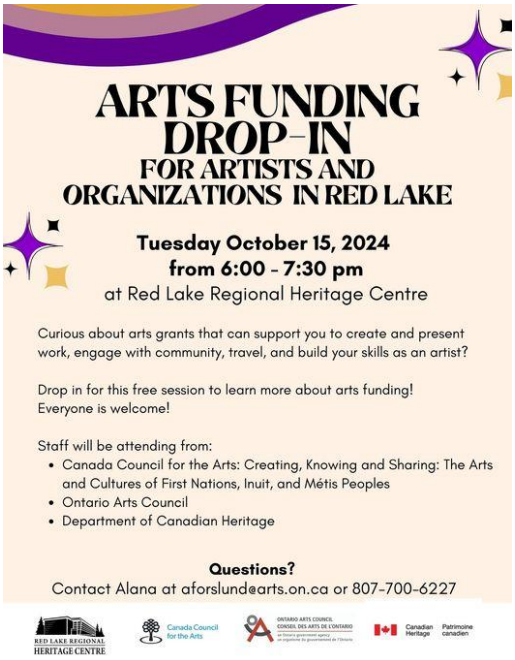
EVENTS & PROGRAMMING

2024 started out with a bang. Visitors hurried in for hot chocolate and crafts for the Winter Carnival Event, held on February 12th. The Francophone group got together on March 3rd for a celebration which saw music, video and lots of socializing. On April 17th, Red Lake enjoyed National Canadian Film Day, something that has been done for years. This time visitors got to enjoy Blackberry, the Canadian Film starting Jay Baruchel.

The Sunset Country Museum Information Network gathered in Red Lake for its spring meeting on May 2nd. Representatives from museums all over northwestern Ontario discussed accessibility, emergency preparedness plans, staff recruitment, and enjoyed hearing about one another's exhibits and events.

On May 28th, the RLRHC held a meeting for teachers to discuss the 100 Year Celebration planned for 2025. Since July 25, 2025, marks 100 years since the discovery of Gold in Howey Bay, next year warrants a big celebration. To help the celebration, the RLRHC is looking towards the schools for input. Sadly, the date selected was too near the end of school for teachers to be excited about joining in on the discussion. After the poor showing at the event, the RLRHC Director went to GLC and the RLDHS to talk to the educators directly. By early September, there was a much clearer idea of what would be offered in 2025. The RLRHC agreed to help staff and students with their celebration projects.



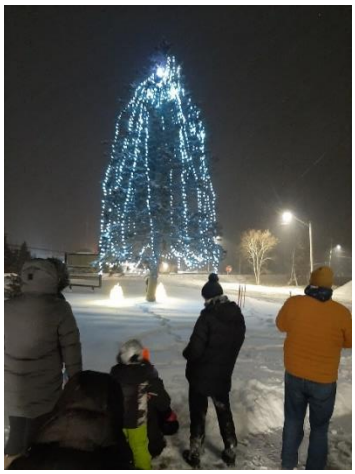


The RLRHC had many tour groups come through the gallery throughout the year. One of the more memorable groups was a large contingent of parole offers who were in Red Lake for training purposes. The group consisted of just under 30 individuals. A few of the people were locals and knew at least some of the history of the area, but for many, it was their first time in Red Lake.

The RLRHC hosted a drop-in session for arts funding. Guests included the Department of Canadian Heritage, and the Ontario Arts Council. Artists had a chance to come in and talk about potential projects, funding, engagement and developing strategies.

One of the biggest events, besides Winter Carnival and Norseman Days, is Halloween Fright Night. The event had always been known for its Fright Room, however, the RLRHC hadn't run the fright room since 2019, when it was held it the Red Lake Fire Department building. 2024 marked a return to the scare. Nearly 200 individuals dressed up in their Halloween costumes came to the RLRHC to enjoy the festivities.

The RLRHC enjoyed hosting its pub quiz event. Teams participated in a fun filled evening. Teams of five were challenged with questions about animals, wonders of the world, sports, celebrities, and local history. The event challenged participants with three rounds of questions, written, visual and audio. Despite the multitude of difficult questions, the teams did very well. With the success of the evening, the RLRHC will look to run similar events in the future.



The RLRHC hosted the Municipality of Red Lake's Christmas Tree lighting ceremony. The weather was cold and windy, however, visitors enjoyed hot chocolate and snacks while they looked on. The RLRHC looks forward to working with the Municipality to celebrate the holiday season in 2025!

FACILITY RENTALS

Significant strides were made throughout 2024, especially in regard to facility rentals. Even with struggles with readying the Main Gallery, due to flooring issues, the RLRHC made big strides. A remarkable revenue increase of 205% showed just how much the community needed a smaller, affordable space to run events.

The Municipality of Red Lake, Evolution Mining, AI North, Safety Bay Financial, Shared Spirits, Blue Heron Environmental, Headwater LLP and the Red Lake Margaret Cochenour Hospital all utilized space at the RLRHC.

Year	Revenue
2024	$5,872.31
2023	$2,862.99
2022	$300.00
2021	$470.00
2020	$0

Table 5: Income generated from rentals over the past five years.

GIFT SHOP

The During the 2024, there was a slight increase in giftshop revenue when compared to the previous year. It was marked by a 7% increase overall. Due to the current economic climate, there is an overall fall in expected revenue, however, advertising and an increase in foot traffic has made 2024 a successful year.

Year	Total Revenue
2024	$28,980.38
2023	$26,903.46
2022	$30,128.82
2021	$15,364.99
2020	$7,625.57

Table 6: Total gift shop revenue by year

Of the total revenue, 78% of the revenue was made up by non-consignment sales. Consignment Sales made up the other 12%. There has been a downward trend of consignment sales over the last five years. This partially due to an oversaturation of the market for some artists, an increase in local artists on non-consignment goods, and a decrease in new consignment products.

Year	Consignment Sales Revenue: Gift Shop	Portion of total revenue
2024	$5270.48	12%
2023	$5636.46	21%
2022	$6,043.00	20%
2021	$5,870.25	38%
2020	$2,928.00	38%

COLLECTIONS & CONSERVATION

- Archive reorganization
    - After the Archive leak in February 2024, the backlog of the archive was reorganized into bankers' boxes by accession number so that it is packed away more safely
    - This took several weeks as there were many items that are not associated with an accession and needed to be further organized into boxes where donors need to be contacted to sign forms etc.
    - The reason for reorganization is that there are not as many loose items being held on the archive shelves in case another leak happens.
    - One goal for 2025 is to cover all the collection storage shelving with plastic sheeting. This has already been started in the Art Storage area and will be continued throughout the Archive, Mezzanine and Basement. It is a cost-effective solution to any water damage that may occur due to the older AC and HVAC units.

- General Collections work
    - Stephanie continued to scan newspapers in January 2024 near the end of her contract. This was in continuation to the hundreds of newspapers scanned the year before.
    - Staff continued to work on cataloguing the backlog of donations and on new donations from this year whenever possible. Donations are documented into PastPerfect software and described, measured and its condition noted. The artefacts are then photographed and provided with semi-permanent numbers before storing them.
    - Notable donations include, a tikinagan in very good condition, 2 school desks with cast iron bases, a wedding dress of a local resident, and a pair of Elliott Brother plane skis.
    - More focus had to be spent on the summer exhibit featuring the Triple K Print Collective as it required several months of researching and developing. From August on, collections and exhibits were limited to one staff member and time was needed for preparations for the 2024 Fall Art Show.

FUNDRAISING AND DEVELOPMENT

The RLRHC is funded in large part by the Municipality of Red Lake. The municipality covers much of the cost related to personnel, occupancy and building maintenance. In addition, it supports the day-to-day functioning of the RLRHC through sharing human resources services, technical assistance and health and safety functions. In return, the RLRHC offers a welcoming space for special occasions and events.

The Canadian Museums Operating Grant (CMOG), bestowed by the Government of Ontario, helps to offset the costs associated with housing a collection. The Heritage Centre has been a proud recipient of the grant since 2005.

The Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC), provided by the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines has provided interns with the opportunity to gain experience in their field of study. In addition, those hired as part of this grant have frequently acquired prestigious positions after their employment with the Red Lake Regional Heritage Centre. During 2024, a concerted effort was made to hire three employees. In 2024, two positions were funded by the NOHFC grant (Public Relations Intern & Tourism and Programming). RLRHC also applied for the for a YCW Intern position for a Museum Accessioner position. After a great deal of searching for viable candidates, interviewing dozens of potential employees, only the position of Public Relations Intern Position was filled. Interviews will continue into 2025, however, it is likely that both the unfilled positions will close due to the timing of the contracts. The RLRHC also acquired $3,816.00 through the Summer Employment Opportunities Program.

The RLRHC was able to raise $5,300.00 through donor wall tile sales. In addition, the RLRHC was also able to accumulate $ 3,609.95 through cash donations, including funds donated through local businesses, and families. The RLRHC received $1,519.75 through its donation box for the year.

The RLRHC received a grant from the Community Museum Organization Grant (CMOG) in the amount of $20,071.00 for operating costs.

The RLRHC received $30,000 for its Mural Project from Canadian Heritage. In addition, the Red Lake Indian Friendship Centre acquired $15,000, which is also earmarked for the project. Besides the planning, most of the project will take place in early 2025.

MARKETING AND PROMOTION

The Red Lake Regional Heritage Centre has continued to explore methods for Marketing and Promotion. The RLRHC has worked with Highway 105 Tourism and purchases a Map Banner annually. In addition, the RLRHC runs and maintains its website. Through the website, visitors can gain access to programming, past exhibits, current content and upcoming events.

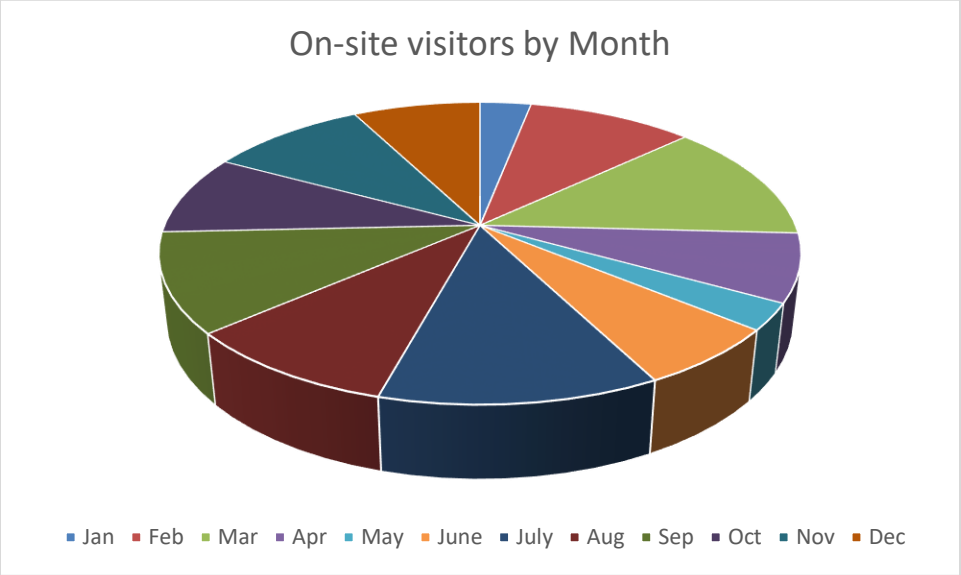
Most of its marketing is through social media including Facebook, and Instagram. More recently the RLRHC has been considering other social media platforms, however, promotion through Tik Tok, Twitter, and WhatsApp would require a considerable investment of time, and most of the RLRHC stakeholders do not utilize these aps. That said, in order to attract a younger audience, the RLRHC may be required to employee different methods in the future.

The RLRHC has seen a lot more success with regards to community recognition. Most of the initial recognition has been through the senior community, during the age friendly events. Several public-school visits for recent exhibits, and programs have also helped the RLRHC to restore a great deal of its recognition.

The RLRHC has worked hard to ensure that the recognition continues to grow. Social media has seen a great deal more visitors than in previous years. This is in large part due to the acquisition of NOHFC funds for a Public Relations Intern. Gaury Nair has been producing content for the last five months, and the increase is noticeable. Facebook reach growth has increased by 61%. The total number of views has increased to a staggering 1.1 million. Contact interactions are up 128% to 21,733. Followers increased by 348 people.

Year	On-site Visitors	Website Visits	Facebook
2020	154	15,748	67,854
2021	776	19,412	64,505
2022	3,203	20,278	168,217
2023	4,185	22,776	156,947
2024	5,543	32,003	255,244

2024 saw growth in the number of on-site visitors (25% growth), which is in line with the return the number of onsite visitors that staff were accustomed to seeing before the roof came off. Despite the success, there is room for growth. January was still low in terms of visitors; however, it is a vast improvement over 2023. February turnout was excellent, and March had the best turnout since the RLRHC opened in 2005! April showed solid visitor numbers. May was extremely poor and hadn't had such a low turnout since 2014. The number of visitors increased in the summer but were nowhere near the pre-covid numbers. September, October, November and December showed increased visitation when compared to 2023.


On-site visitors by Month
Jan
Feb
Mar
Apr
May
June
July
Aug
Sep
Oct
Nov
Dec

MEMBERSHIPS

The RLRHC membership program has struggled for years. Normally memberships are a very small part of the annual revenue. This is due in part to the lack of repeat visitors, change of exhibit content and limited programming. In the last ten years, predicted membership revenue has been budgeted between $2,500 and $2,000. Sadly, it has often missed its mark. In 2024, RLRHC staff made a concerted push in order to grow the membership program. Organic memberships were down throughout the first half of the year, however, as the RLRHC's advertising improved, the RLRHC began to push memberships. This culminated in a Membership Drive for November, when nearly 50% of all memberships were purchased in the year.

Memberships fit into the following categories:

Annual Membership
Individual $25
Senior/Student $20
Family (parents and children under 16) $40
Senior Couple (one member over 65) $30

Free admission to all exhibits

- *20% off all non-consignment gift shop items*
- *Advanced ticket sales for events put on by the Heritage Centre*
- *50% off educational programs*

Non-Profit Organization Membership
Annual Organizational Membership $50

Free admission to all exhibits

- *20% off all non-consignment gift shop items (Organization purchases only)*
- *Advanced ticket sales for events put on by the Heritage Centre*
- *10% off all facility rentals*
- *50% off educational programs*

School Membership
Annual School Membership - Cost dependent on the number of students attending the school

Free admission to all exhibits.

- *100% off all standard school programs*
- *10% off all facility rentals*

Corporate Membership
Annual Organizational Membership $150

Free admission to all exhibits

- *20% off all non-consignment gift shop items (Corporate purchases only)*
- *Advanced ticket sales for events put on by the Heritage Centre*
- *10% off all facility rentals*

Lifetime Membership
Individual $150
Family (two adults & children under 17) $300

Free admission for life (no expiry)

- *Free access to our digital and physical archives*
- *20% off all non-consignment gift shop items*
- *Advanced ticket sales for events put on by the Heritage Centre*
- *Member's name acknowledged in the lobby of the Heritage Centre*
- *50% off educational programs*

Membership Type	2021 Purchases	2022 Purchases	2023 Purchases	2024 Purchases
Lifetime Membership - Family	0	1	1	2
Lifetime Membership - Individual	1	1	3	1
Annual School Membership	0	0	1	2
Annual Non-Profit Organization Memberships	1	0	1	1
Annual Family Memberships	0	0	2	2
Annual Individual Memberships	1	1	2	3
Annual Senior Couple Membership	2	2	7	5
Annual Senior Individual Memberships	2	3	2	6
Corporate Membership	0	0	0	1
Total	**7**	**8**	**19**	**23**

Table 7: Membership types sold by year.

OUR TEAM

STAFF

Trevor Osmond continued his role as Director, surpassing the 10-year milestone in the role. Activities include fundraising, project planning, managing tasks, finances, and outreach. His role includes creating work plans, interviewing, and hiring staff, ensuring that staff have the proper training and monitors new staff during their orientation. Other roles include managing the gift shop and educational programming. Finally, the position is responsible for developing community partnerships, strategic planning, and evaluation. In 2024, additional responsibilities were also added, including payroll.

Lisa Hughes began the year as the RLRHC's Curator, however, she moved on in July which left the position vacant for a short time. Stephanie Dermann has stepped into the role in September 2024. The role of Curator focuses on collections, facilitating artefact donations, achieving, and maintaining museum standards. She ensures that staff have a clear focus when working with RLRHC collections. Exhibit planning, creation and maintained are integral to the RLRHC's continual growth. The Curator also monitors and evaluates volunteers ensuring that they are enjoying their work at the RLRHC while still accomplishing the goals set out for each project.

Gaury Nair joined the team on July 16th, as the NOHFC Public Relations Intern. This position was created to help spotlight the activities going on at the RLRHC, write historical posts, and feature gift shop products. This year long internship also includes the creation of a newsletter and several other tasks related marketing.

Olivia Harrington joined the team in early 2024 as its Tourism Docent. Olivia quickly put her teaching skills to good news as she began creating and running programming throughout the summer. The programs turned out to be wildly successful. Initially Olivia was scheduled to end her employment at the end of August, however, the RLRHC extended her contract into September in order to cover vacation time.

The individuals who contributed their energies to our team were:

Director	Trevor Osmond
Curator	Lisa Hughes/Stephanie Dermann
Exhibit Coordinator	Stephanie Dermann
NOHFC Intern, 2024 – 2025	Gaury Nair, Public Relations Intern
Summer Student	Olivia Harrington, Tourism Docent

VOLUNTEERS

Over the past little while the RLRHC has seen a downturn in the number of volunteers and overall volunteer hours. One of the major issues is directly related to the age of the volunteers. Our biggest supporters are seniors. While they are very interested in helping, they cannot perform physical tasks like they once did. While there was an overall downturn, the year ended on a high note as there was a great deal of help by other organizations, and through a new crop of volunteers.

Overview:

Number of Volunteers:

- 26 individuals in addition to:
- 4 employees of Evolution Mining
- 9 members of the Ministry of Natural Resources
- 6 members of the Red Lake Miners Hockey team
- 7 employees of West Red Lake Gold Mines Ltd.

Number of Co-op Students: 0

Volunteer Hours:	243.25
Co-op Hours:	0
Total Hours:	**243.25**

Volunteer Projects/Tasks:

This year, our volunteer accumulated hours through various tasks including:

- Drying and organizing artefacts after an emergency water leak
- Dismantling and installing exhibits
- Gift shop inventory
- Helping with special events (hot chocolate challenge, pub quiz, Halloween Fright Night, etc.).
- Inventorying our Reference Library
- Helping with research requests
- Gift shop inventory
- Painting and updating bench and sign outside
- Decorating for Christmas

Highlights:

The floor in the Main Gallery needed to be redone and the room needed to be cleared. We retained a lot of hands to help dismantle and reinstall the permanent exhibits once the floors were completed. Other highlights include the set up and decoration for the Halloween Fright Night where we were able to recruit a couple new volunteers from the community. Two of those volunteers now regularly come in to help in the Collections and Administration. One volunteer was also proactive by repainting and reinstalling one of our outdoor signs and also sanded and refinished our bench.

Balmertown, 1949
EXIT

CAUTION
WET PAINT
CAUTION
WET PAINT

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Our Board of Directors have stayed with the RLRHC through a difficult 2020. We count on their support, guidance and knowledge and it has been keenly displayed since the end of 2019.

Council Representative:	Debra Geary
Chair:	Gary Horne
Vice Chair:	Hilary Reid
Secretary:	Graeme Swanwick
	Josiah Meyer
	Jacinda Brisson
	Scott Macumber

MEMBERS

As the RLRHC begins to grow, we hope you will continue to take this journey with us!

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTORS

We are deeply grateful to the following contributors for their generous financial and developmental support of the RLRHC. We look forward to working with these community partners in the future:

Operating Grants

Canadian Museums Operating Grant (CMOG)
Municipality of Red Lake
Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation
Government of Canada

Project and In-Kind Donors

Balmertown Food Fair
Red Lake IGA
Evolution Mining
Science North
John & Marilyn Frostiak, Trout Forest Physical Therapy, Don & Cathy Nord, Canada Helps, Doug Gilmore, Loraine O'Neill, Ethel & Jim Dodd, Lucky Mutts

Project Partners & Affiliates

Chukuni Communities Development Corporation
Sunset Country Museum Association
Red Lake Indian Friendship Centre
Pimachiowin Aki UNESCO World Heritage site
Science North
Highway 105 Tourism and Marketing Board
Norseman Festival Committee
Ministry of Energy, Northern Development and Mines
Red Lake Airport
Red Lake Margaret Cochenour Memorial Hospital
Patrick Hunter
New Starts for Women
Southpaw Photography

We would like to thank the Municipality for their steadfast support throughout the year. Their efforts allowed the RLRHC to complete the renewal process and open the building.

FINANCIAL REPORT

EXPENSES

In many ways, 2024 was a more normal year for the RLRHC. While aspects of the budget were sometimes different from expected, they at least reflected what was expected throughout the year. The RLRHC spent just 88% its personal budget during the year. Building insurance, utilities, office and marketing and capital expenses were all within targeted guidelines. The cost of the audit was 143% of what was expected. Communications were 12% overbudget, while professional development was 24% over budget. Programs, exhibits and conservation were significantly under budget. Only 6% of the Conservation budget was spent for the year. The Custodial/Janitor budget line was 37% increase over the expected value.

REVENUE

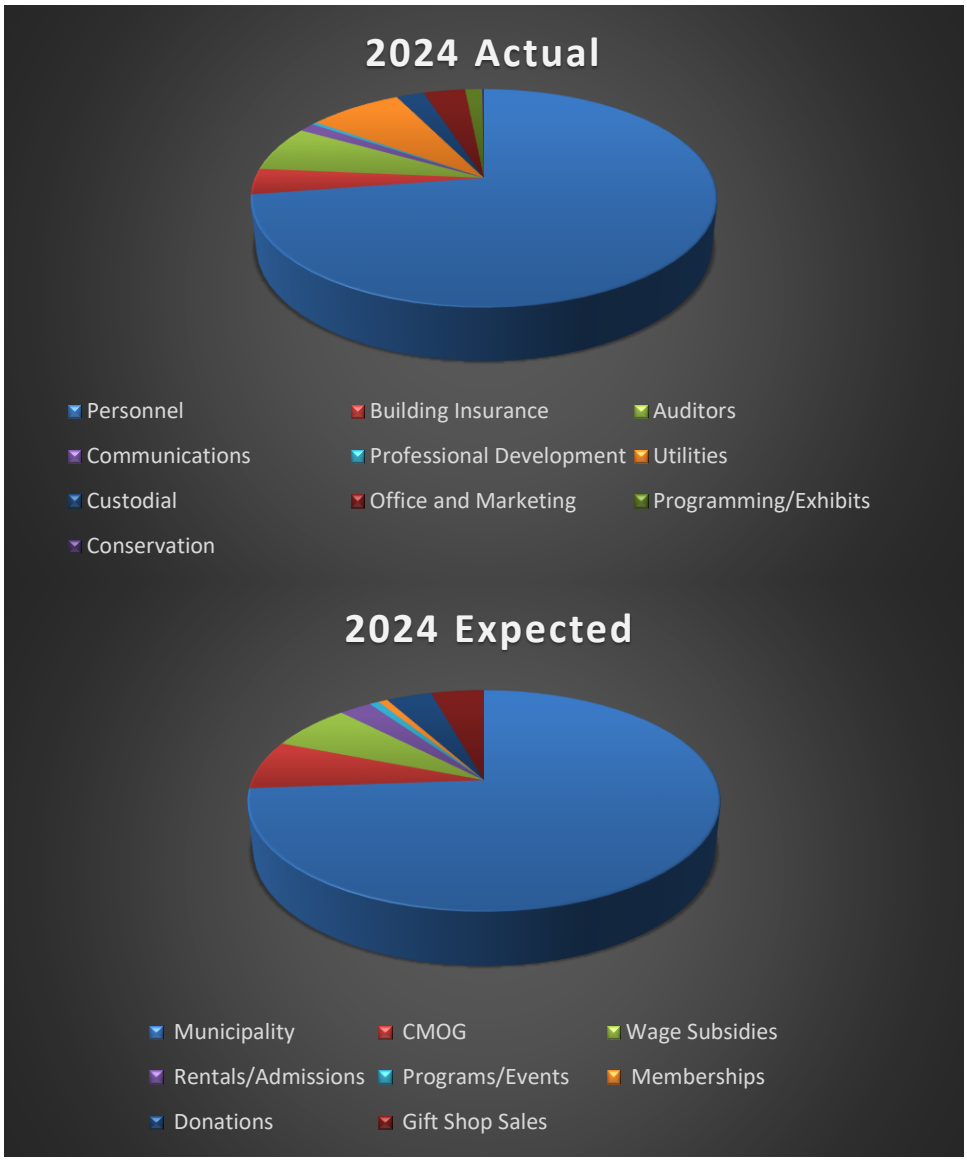
The Municipality, CMOG, rental fees and admissions were all on target for the 2024 budget. Wage subsides made up only 27% of the expected amount. Programs and events were significantly under the expected revenue margins at 38%. Memberships were much higher than expected at 131%. Donations were also higher than expected, at 149%. Net gift shop sales were lower than planned and only earned 68% of expected revenue. The RLRHC also received grant money for a project. Originally the project was to be run in 2024, however, based on the feasibility, of getting partners, acquiring artists and getting support, the projected will now be extended into 2025.

VARIANCE

One of the largest concerns throughout 2024 was staffing. Originally it was expected that the RLRHC would be able to have a full contingent of staff including two NOHFC Interns, one YCW Intern and a summer school. The RLRHC was able to fill one NOHFC position, however, the YCW and other NOHFC Internship remained unfilled at the end of the year. Despite the lack of staffing, the RLRHC utilized the additional room in the budget to maintain Stephanie Dermann's contract. The shortfall of wage subsidies is somewhat negated by the reduced cost of personnel.

The cost of the audit was significantly higher than years previous. This is partially reflected by the increasing costs associated with a post-covid world; however, it also seems to be associated with restructuring of BDO's office. A more complete understanding must be had between the RLRHC and BDO in order to determine what issues arose during the previous audit.

Janitorial costs have increased by 12% per hour which led to a large increase overall. Similar increases in gift shop products have led to less overall net revenue. In order to offset some of these major cost increases, conservation work had to be placed on hold. Only emergency materials were purchased during 2024. Programming and events did not attract as much revenue as anticipated. This issue is partly due to the lack of staffing, but also as the result of transition period into a fully open and running facility. It is also an issue that has arisen from the strength of the membership program. Increasing memberships mean that organizations and individuals who were formally paying for every visit, are not free under the membership.


2024 Actual
Personnel
Building Insurance
Auditors
Communications
Professional Development
Utilities
Custodial
Office and Marketing
Programming/Exhibits
Conservation
2024 Expected
Municipality
CMOG
Wage Subsidies
Rentals/Admissions
Programs/Events
Memberships
Donations
Gift Shop Sales