



Annual Report

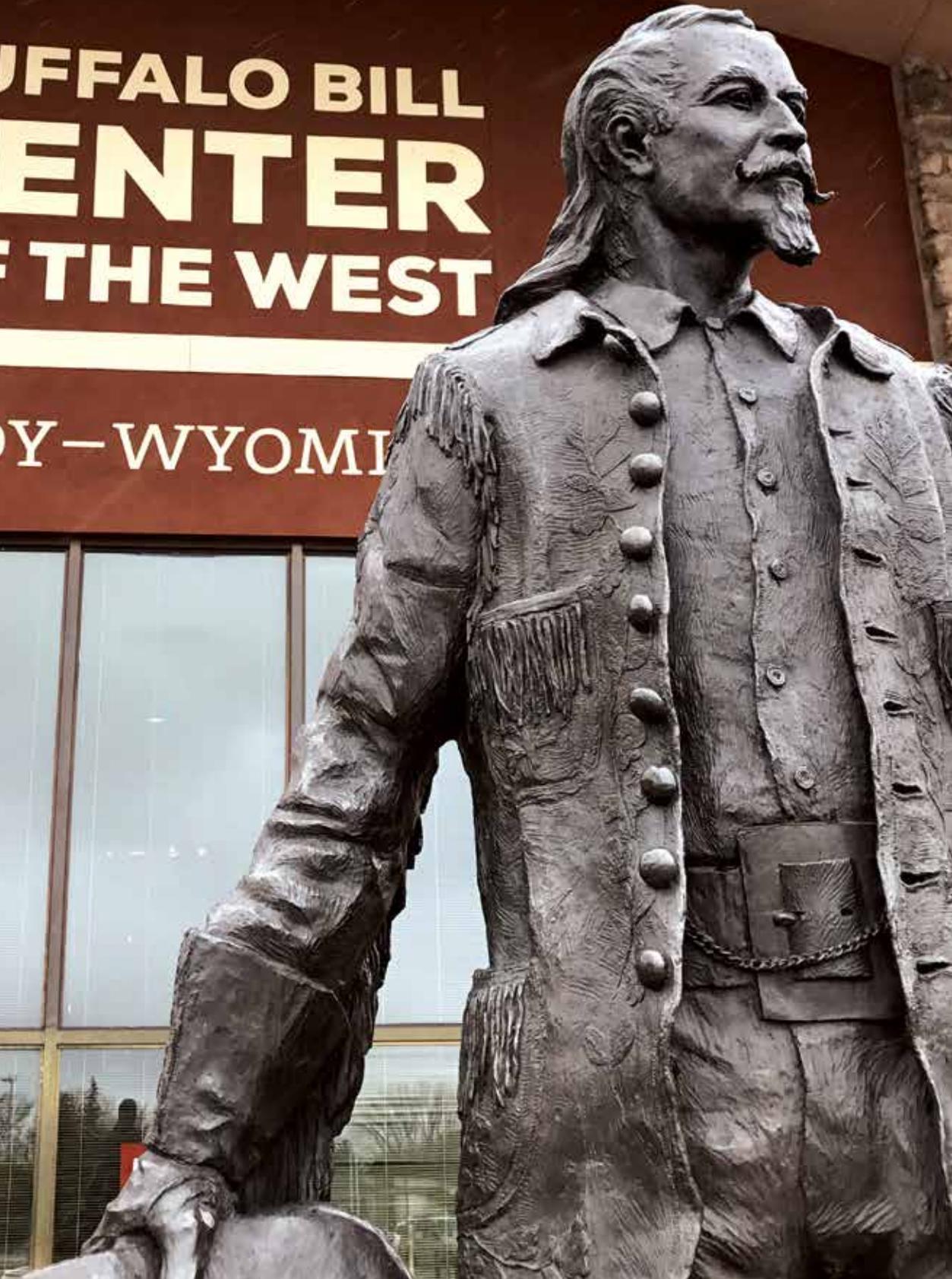
2017

BUFFALO BILL CENTER OF THE WEST

Bob Scriver (1914 – 1999).
Buffalo Bill – Plainsman, 1976.
Bronze. Museum purchase.
12.77

BUFFALO BILL CENTER OF THE WEST

CODY – WYOMING



Dear Friends of the Buffalo Bill Center of the West,

2017 marked 100 years since the founding of the Buffalo Bill Memorial Association, formed the year of William F. Cody's death by a small group of community leaders. As visionary as these Cody boosters were, even they did not envision that the modest organization they launched would become the nation's largest museum complex devoted to the American West: the Buffalo Bill Center of the West.

Special exhibitions, symposia, ceremonies, and, of course, parties celebrated our Centennial milestone, and we share many of them in these pages. One of the most important to us was a kind of "family reunion" held in conjunction with our June board meeting. Past trustees, museum advisory board members, staff members, and others who have been so important to the ongoing creation of the Center came back for the celebration, capped off with a Ranch Party at the home of former trustee Willis McDonald, who bequeathed the property to the Center in 2015. It was wonderful to see so many old friends.

2018 begins our next one hundred years. To ensure that we don't rest on our laurels, the Board of Trustees has embarked on the New Century Campaign. Begun in late 2015, the four-year campaign aims to raise \$50 million in three crucial areas: capital projects, programming, and endowment. We are so very pleased and grateful that, as of December 31, our supporters have made commitments bringing us to 94 percent of our goal.

The Spirit of the American West lives on!



Barron Collier II

Barron G. Collier II
Chairman, Board of Trustees



Bruce B. Eldredge

Bruce B. Eldredge
Executive Director & CEO



HIGHLIGHTS

How does a museum complex celebrate its Centennial? With exhibitions, of course!

Prize objects from each of our five museums as well as the McCracken Research Library were chosen for ***Cody to the World: Celebrating 100 Years at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West***. Buffalo Bill's buckskin jacket, a feather bonnet with ermine that may have belonged to Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce, and fossils from two species of dinosaur were among the many museum artifacts displayed in the exhibit. Period photographs of the city of Cody also were a highlight.

The opening of the Whitney Western Art Gallery in 1959 marked the first expansion beyond the Buffalo Bill Museum. The first director of what was then called the Buffalo Bill Historical Center was Harold McCracken, who was sixty-five when he took the job. Undertaking such a large challenge at an age when most people during that era chose to retire was not surprising if you knew McCracken's background. Early in his career he was a noted wilderness adventurer and wildlife filmmaker in Alaska, in addition to procuring large animal specimens for The Ohio State University. This exciting time in his life was documented in ***Out West Where the North Begins: Harold McCracken in Alaska and the Arctic, 1916-1928***, our other major Centennial exhibition.

Curators of the Buffalo Bill Museum, Draper Natural History Museum, Cody Firearms Museum, and

Whitney Western Art Museum hosted colleagues from other institutions and members of the public for academic symposia last year. Of particular note is the *Buffalo Bill Centennial Symposium*, which gathered leading Western American history scholars for the first major conference focused on William F. Cody in a generation.

The occasion of our 100th anniversary inspired our board of trustees to launch the **largest comprehensive campaign in our history** in the fall of 2015. Capital projects, programming, and endowment are the three major categories outlined in the \$50 million New Century Campaign, projected to take four years. As of the end of 2017, we had raised just under \$48 million! This early success is a testament to the commitment of our trustees, advisors, and good friends of the Center.

Jeremy Johnston, curator of the Buffalo Bill Museum, successfully defended his thesis and was awarded his **Doctor of Philosophy** from the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, Scotland. Through the *Papers of William F. Cody*, the Center has long collaborated with Strathclyde by sponsoring fellowships and editorial stipends. This collaboration reflects the transnational interest in the American West and continues to benefit the Center, including Johnston's graduate work. Johnston's dissertation on the enigmatic relationship between Buffalo Bill and Theodore Roosevelt will be published in the fall of 2019.



EXHIBITIONS



Special exhibitions and refreshes of permanent installations allow curators to share stored artifacts, “rest” pieces that have been on display, and, in many cases, bring in objects from outside sources to better tell a story. The Center of the West’s Centennial in 2017 provided a unique opportunity to tell the larger story of the Center’s development over the last 100 years in two major exhibitions.

Cody to the World: Celebrating 100 Years at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West featured unique and prized objects from each of our five museums and the McCracken Research Library, tracing the timeline of a growing institution and the Cody community. The exhibition was a collaborative effort among all Center curators. *Cody to the World* was both a celebration of our history, and a recognition of the Center’s unique and diverse offerings and many accomplishments as the prominent cultural institution of the West. Plains Indian Museum Curator Rebecca West oversaw the exhibition.

Harold McCracken was the first director of the Buffalo Bill Historical Center, created when the Whitney Western Art Museum was added to the Buffalo Bill Museum. McCracken presided over an era of expansion of the institution’s mission and footprint, consistent with a life that sought challenge and risk-taking. *Out West Where the North Begins: Harold McCracken in Alaska and the Arctic* explored McCracken’s youthful career as an adventurer and wildlife filmmaker in Alaska. Artifacts, photographs, and films accompanied text telling the



story of the impressive expeditions that brought him fame and resulted in important discoveries for science. The exhibition was curated by the Housel Director of the **McCracken Research Library**, Mary Robinson.

The McCracken also developed an outreach exhibition in honor of the Centennial. Thirty digital print reproductions from *Edward Curtis’s The North American Indian* is traveling for two years to public and academic libraries throughout Wyoming.

The Whitney Western Art Museum presented *That Day: Pictures in the American West* by Laura Wilson, more than eighty large-scale images of cowboys, high school football players, Hispanic families, Hutterites, artists, and other contemporary inhabitants of the American West. *Charlie’s Circle: The Art and Influence of Charles M. Russell*, which continues through mid-May 2018, consists of more than thirty works by the beloved artist and several of his friends.

Saddles belonging to western luminaries William Frank “Doc” Carver, William F. “Buffalo Bill” Cody, and Theodore Roosevelt, along with the flight jacket Amelia Earhart wore on her famous trans-Atlantic flight, were put on display in the **Buffalo Bill Museum**. Although not commonly associated with the West, Earhart spent time on a ranch south of Cody and was having a cabin built there when her plane disappeared somewhere in the Pacific. She often wore the flight jacket during her visits to the ranch.



PROGRAMS

The Centennial celebration of the Buffalo Bill Center of the West kicked off on February 24 with our annual *Buffalo Bill Birthday Bash*. One of our three annual free admission days for community members, the Birthday Bash celebrates one of Cody's town founders and the man who did more than anyone else to "brand" the American West.

There were other Centennial-related events, big and small, throughout the year. Scholarly symposia (see the **Scholarship** section in this report), two special exhibitions, and annual events such as our Patrons Ball gala had special Centennial twists.

Students in the Big Horn Basin were invited to submit entries in a special Centennial History Contest. *Taking a Stand in History in the American West* was the theme that students explored through writing an essay, creating a website, or making a documentary. Judged

on historical quality, relation to the theme, and clarity of presentation, each category had a winner, and a best overall entry was chosen as well.

We added summer programming for our youngest visitors in 2017. Northwest College Adjunct Professor Sarah Shearer taught three art camps, one for toddlers and two for elementary age children. During the school year, three to five-year-olds in Park County visited the Center for specially designed programs that generate excitement to learn about museum objects and the stories that go with them.

The **Draper Natural History Museum** hosted more than 200 students, teachers, and parents as they partnered with Science Kids Cody to present three programs: *Nature Photography*, *Winged Wisdom*, and *Migration*. The Draper also expanded and remodeled its mews, giving it enough room to comfortably house up to



sixteen raptors. The Raptor Experience, which features birds that have been injured or are otherwise unable to survive in the wild, continues to be one of the Center's most popular programs.

The Center organized and hosted multiple lectures in 2017. The Draper Museum conducted its eighteenth season of the monthly *Natural History Lunchtime Expedition* series as well as the more recent evening lecture series, *Draper After Dark*. Both series again featured some of the world's leading authorities in various scientific disciplines related to Greater Yellowstone.

BBC World News journalist Laura Trevelyan presented a talk on her new book, *The Winchester: The Gun that Built an American Dynasty*. Trevelyan is a direct descendent of Oliver Winchester and talked about the company's history from a family perspective.

Much of the research for the book was conducted at the **McCracken Research Library**. The McCracken also hosted Dr. Elizabeth Fenn of the University of Colorado at Boulder to talk about her Pulitzer Prize-winning book *Encounters at the Heart of the World* about the Mandan Indian culture.

Microsoft in Education's *Skype in the Classroom* continues to allow Center educators to bring the American West to students around the world. Classrooms in twenty-five countries connected to the Center, which now offers the lessons as early as 7 a.m. Mountain Time and into the early evening to reach students in most parts of the world. With a translation feature now available on the Skype platform, Russia, Sri Lanka, Ukraine, and Vietnam are just a few of the locales where schools with access to computers and the Internet learned about Buffalo Bill and the American West from one of our instructors—in real time.



SCHOLARSHIP

The Center of the West's Centennial provided many opportunities for scholarship as we honored the past and planned for the future. The **Whitney Western Art Museum, Cody Firearms Museum, Draper Natural History Museum**, and the **Buffalo Bill Museum** all hosted symposia which included scholars and other subject experts from around the country, and even a few international guests. Our curatorial staff also spoke at numerous conferences and other gatherings throughout the year. Here are a few highlights in Center scholarship:

The Buffalo Bill Centennial Symposium, hosted in August by the **Buffalo Bill Museum**, was the first significant scholarly conference to examine the life and legacy of William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody since the Brooklyn Museum Exhibition in the early 1980s. Emerging scholars doing current research on various aspects of Buffalo Bill's legacy joined leading experts in the history of the American West such as Patty Limerick, Paul Hutton, Christine Bold, Steve Friesen, Paul Fees, Peter Hassrick, Louis Warren, Robert Rydell, Frank Christianson, and Arthur Amiotte. Presentations explored the many ways Cody and Buffalo Bill's Wild West shaped current perceptions of the American frontier and the West. Video of the lectures will be made available to the public online, and an anthology of the articles presented at the symposium is being compiled to be published in the *William F. Cody Series on the History and Culture of the American West*.

The Cody Firearms Museum organized *Arsenals of History: Firearms and Museums in the 21st Century*. Bringing together firearms historians and museum professionals, the symposium was an opportunity to discuss both practical and philosophical issues surrounding firearms in museums, as well as acknowledge the need for more scholarship on firearms' roles in history, culture, and economics. A new association for museum curators and academics focused on firearms is being formed to continue the work begun at the symposium. Attendees included representatives from the Smithsonian Institution, Chicago Art Institute, U.S. Marshals Museum, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Institute of Military Technology, Britain's Royal Armouries, and more.

Five art historians, five contemporary artists, and two conservation scientists made presentations at the **Whitney Western Art Museum's** *Forged and Founded: Western American Sculpture, a Centennial Symposium*. The day-long symposium was the third in as many years, and was partially funded by Wyoming Humanities.

Taking advantage of the Wyoming Archeological Society's spring meeting in Cody, the **Draper Natural History Museum** and the Park County Historic Preservation Commission sponsored a day-long symposium, *Recent Advances at High Elevation*, which explored various



Beaded leather gauntlet belonging to William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody, undated. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Willard Hanson. 1.69.4874

topics in archeology, including previously unknown artifacts released from melting ice high in the Rockies.

Whitney Curator Karen McWhorter and Director Emeritus Peter Hassrick contributed scholarly essays to *The Best of Proctor's West: An In-depth Study of Eleven of Proctor's Bronzes*, the second volume of the *Whitney West* series. McWhorter served on a National Endowment for the Humanities grant review panel, and both she and Hassrick lectured at various venues.

Draper Museum staff published four articles in peer-reviewed scientific journals. New Assistant Curator Corey Anco was lead author of a paper tracing mitochondrial diversity in African leopards revealed by archival museum specimens; Senior Curator Charles Preston was lead author and co-author on two publications related to the Draper's long-term study of golden eagles in the Western United States; and Curatorial Assistant Bonnie Lawrence-Smith co-authored a paper documenting the creation of latex

molds of petroglyphs at Wyoming's Legend Rock and Torrey Lake for *Wyoming Archeologist*.

Plains Indian Buffalo Cultures: Art from the Paul Dyck Collection by **Plains Indian Museum** Curator Emerita and Senior Scholar Emma I. Hansen is complete and set to be published in mid-2018. A great deal of research on the extensive collection has been conducted by staff since it was acquired in 2007. Staff also conducts ongoing research into the archeological collections held by the museum.

In conjunction with the Centennial exhibition *Out West Where the North Begins*, **McCracken Research Library** director Mary Robinson wrote a two-part article on Harold McCracken's career in Alaska entitled *Alaska Man* for the Center's *Points West* magazine. McCracken staff assisted researchers looking into broad-ranging topics, including two scholars who did extensive research on the Model 95 for a *Winchester Collector* magazine cover story. The authors gave high praise to the McCracken and Cody Firearms Museum staff in the article. Library staff assisted numerous institutions in 2017, including the Franco-American Museum of Blerancourt, the John B. Stetson company, Denver Art Museum, Joseph Smith Papers, the History Channel, Dublin Institute of Technology, and Johns Hopkins University.

Ford Model T Depot Hack, 1913.
 Gift of the Paul and Patricia
 Anselmi Family



Josh Elliott (b. 1973). *Morning Blue*,
 date unknown. Oil on linen. Muse-
 um purchase from William E. Weiss
 Memorial Fund. 118



AQUISITIONS

The Buffalo Bill Center of the West acquires many new objects every year through the generosity of donors, from Center acquisition funds, and from research in the field. Here are a few of the objects added to our collections in 2017:

More than sixty new scientific specimens were added to the **Draper Natural History Museum's** research collection, building its reputation as one of the premier scientific repositories of higher vertebrate specimens found in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. The museum's collection of 170 gray wolf skulls is the largest of its kind and provides an important source of genetic, morphological, and historical information for the scientific community.

The Draper also maintains a collection of video and audio recordings that document wildlife behavior, landscape changes, and human perceptions of the Yellowstone ecosystem. More than 1,000 clips were added to the collection, which now numbers more than 5,000. Some of the collection is currently available online through the McCracken Research Library, with the rest of the collection soon to follow.

Nearly 500 historic western maps were donated to the **McCracken Research Library**. Artist James Bama donated more than 200,000 working photo prints, and two scrapbooks related to artist Charles M. Russell also were given to the library.

A very exciting library acquisition is a set of twenty-two glass plate negatives of Indian performers from Buffalo Bill's Wild West. Author and photographer Steve Horan recently published a book of portraits of people who live and/or work in Yellowstone titled *The People of Yellowstone*. One of his subjects, park maintenance worker Fred Ersepke, told Horan about a set of negatives from a photographer's studio that had been housed in a Chicago building shared by Ersepke's grandparents. The performers' names are etched into the plates, allowing McCracken staff to date the negatives from a 1907 run of the *Wild West* in Chicago.

1913 FORD MODEL T DEPOT HACK

A "small world" chain of events led to a 1913 Ford Model T Depot Hack being gifted to the **Buffalo Bill Museum**. The stepson of one of our trustees was working out at a gym in Salt Lake City and began talking with another fellow. Somehow, the conversation turned to the Buffalo Bill Center of the West. The fellow mentioned he knew someone in Rock Springs, Wyoming, who had a Depot Hack they were looking to donate. The stepson called the trustee, who called the fellow, who put her in touch with the owner. After a visit by the Center's executive director, all agreed that the hack would make a great addition to the Center's collection since it dates to the early days of Buffalo Bill's Irma Hotel. Hotels used the hacks to ferry guests to and from train stations, and we have a photograph of Buffalo Bill at the Irma standing next to a depot transportation schedule. Both the station hack and the photo are on display in the lower level of the Buffalo Bill Museum. (Pictured on facing page.)

The Akta Lakota Museum & Cultural Center in Chamberlain, South Dakota approached the **Plains Indian Museum** (PIM) to see if several non-Lakota objects in their collection were of interest. The PIM purchased a Hidatsa beaded belt, an important addition to our limited Hidatsa artifacts; a Blackfoot baby bonnet with a beaded checkerboard design; and a very unusual Crow sun shade that may have been used in a Sun Dance or other ceremony. More research is needed, as the use of ochre, eagle feathers, and celestial designs on the piece indicate it was an object of great importance. A full size, painted tipi by Crow artist Kevin Red Star also arrived as a donation from William Oley Sr. and was exhibited at the Center's entrance during Rendezvous Royale week in September.

Bill Schenck's *Waco*, gifted to the museum by Terry Winchell and Claudia Bonnist, and *Morning Blue* by Josh Elliott (pictured on facing page) are two paintings added to the **Whitney Western Art Museum** collection. Both paintings align with the Whitney's goal of acquiring the best of contemporary art as well as historical masterworks.



Four-barrel .50 cal.
Pepperbox, G. Goodwin
& Co., London, England,
ca. 1800. Gift of Olin
Corporation, Winchester
Arms Collection.
1988.8.980

NEW & IMPROVED

Barcoding to the rescue

One of the first tasks confronting Senior Registrar Greta Russell when she joined the Buffalo Bill Center of the West in June 2016 was organizing the de-installation of the Cody Firearms Museum when it closes for a complete renovation in fall 2018. With more than 5,000 firearms and other ephemera on display—all of which must be inventoried, removed, and stored in multiple locations throughout the Center—it was a daunting project for the three-person registration staff.

Being able to locate every item in a museum's collection, whether it is on display or in storage, is, of course, essential—and more difficult than it sounds. We've all seen an empty space on a museum wall or in a display case with a form documenting who moved the object, when, to where it was moved, and why. This information also must be added to the collections database every time an object is moved to or from storage, to conservation, sent out on loan, or for a special exhibition in-house. To do that for thousands of objects, all by hand—well, who could blame someone for taking early retirement instead?

Although she had never used it, Russell knew some museums have instituted barcoding systems. Her

research led her to conclude that barcoding would not only greatly streamline the Firearms Museum de-installation process, but would increase the ease and accuracy of inventorying and tracking the more than 100,000 objects in the Center's five museums and the McCracken Research Library.

The Center's Information Technology Department custom built an app for tablet devices and automated the creation of unique barcodes for each object. Barcodes are assigned to an object, then printed on polyethylene stickers using a special thermal transfer printer. The stickers are affixed to hangtags, which are then attached to or placed near each object. Registration and collections staff researched all materials to ensure they would not harm objects, and the ink used would not fade over time. Barcodes also have been created for any locations within the Center where an object might be placed. Handheld scanners and inexpensive tablets complete the equipment list.

A unique barcode is associated with each object's identification number in the database, a number assigned when it was accessioned into the collection. Each object file also has descriptive and other recorded information. To move an object, registration scans the object's barcode, and then its new location's barcode. The

app fills in the date and the name of the person doing the scanning. This information is then uploaded to the database.

The inventorying and barcoding of all objects on display in the Cody Firearms Museum was completed in 2017, with the new system working exactly as intended. Russell feels confident that her staff can meet the tight deadlines for tracking objects as they are moved off display in the Firearms Museum, and relocated to various temporary display areas or storage.

Russell shared her new knowledge at the Western Museums Association annual meeting in September 2017, presenting “Barcoding for Location Tracking: Uniting Best Practices” along with colleagues from two Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, museums who also use the system.

While it will take years to complete, Russell’s goal is to barcode every object in the Center’s collections. She also wants to create a consistent lexicon for object names, origins, and other information to make searching the database easier, particularly for the public researching our collections online.

Partnership with Wyoming Public Media

There’s a new recording studio in the Buffalo Bill Center of the West that’s home to Kamila Kudelska, a graduate of the Columbia School of Journalism. In a partnership arrangement between the Center and Wyoming Public Media (WPM), Kamila reports on northwest Wyoming for WPM and produces multi-media content for the Center.

The collaboration allows WPM to better cover the Greater Yellowstone region, a challenge with its home base in Laramie, some 400 miles from Cody. With the western cultural resources available at the Center, stories can take on the additional richness of a uniquely western perspective.

Kudelska also produces content for the Center and its museums. Enhancing exhibition interpretation, recording lectures and symposia, and creating video and audio pieces telling the behind-the-scenes stories of the museum are primary functions of her responsibilities to the Center. New content is available on both the WPM and Center web sites.

The collaboration is made possible through the generosity of the Hal R. and Naoma J. Tate Foundation.

Annie Oakley
wool jacket and
skirt, ca. 1898.
Gift of Terry
and Gaye Lynn
MacDonald.
1.69.5795.1&2





LEFT TOP: Bobcat (*Lynx rufus*). DRA.305.137; LEFT BOTTOM: Pair of brass and silver spurs, patented by William F. “Buffalo Bill” Cody, May 7, 1912. Mary Jester Allen Collection. 1.69.5; CENTER: Ghost Dance shirt, ca. 1890. Chandler-Pohrt Collection, Gift of The Searle Family Trust and The Paul Stock Foundation. NA.204.5; RIGHT TOP: James Bama (b. 1926). *A Contemporary Sioux Indian*, 1978. Oil on panel. William E. Weiss Contemporary Art Fund Purchase. 19.78; RIGHT BOTTOM: Winchester Model 1866, crafted by master artisan Conrad F. Ulrich, ca. 1873.

PARTNERS

Great cultural institutions cannot work in a vacuum. Exchanges of ideas, expertise, and scholarship; joint research projects and exhibitions; and the lending of objects are all important ways to keep institutions vital. Here are some of the partners with whom we worked in 2017 – there are many more!

- A.P. Proctor Foundation
- American Museum of Natural History
- Art in Embassies program of the United States Department of State
- Brigham Young University
- Charles Redd Center
- The Explorers Club
- Hawkwatch International
- Institute for Digital Intermedia Arts (IDIA Labs)
- National Museum of Wildlife Art
- Prelinger Archive
- Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation
- Producers Library
- The Ricketts Art Foundation and the Museum of the Mountain Man
- Royal Armouries
- SAGEWEST (Scientific Communications Network for Sagebrush-steppe Ecosystem)
- Science Kids Cody
- Smithsonian Institution Arctic Studies Center, and the Office of History and Culture
- University of Alaska Museum of the North
- University of Wyoming
- Utah Museum of Fine Arts
- Western Golden Eagle Team – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Western Writers of America
- Wyoming Humanities
- Wyoming Public Media



LEFT TOP: Winchester M1 Garand, .30 cal. Presentation model for General George S. Patton, 1941. Gift of Olin Corporation, Winchester Arms Collection. 1988.8.2471; LEFT BOTTOM: White Swan's painted muslin, ca. 1887. Crow. The Paul Dyck Plains Indian Buffalo Culture Collection, acquired through the generosity of the Dyck family and additional gifts of the Nielson Family and the Estate of Margaret S. Coe. NA.702.40; CENTER TOP: Cheyenne-Deadwood stagecoach, 1867. Abbott Downing and Company. Gift of Olive and Glenn E. Nielson. 1.69.2726; CENTER BOTTOM: Frederic Remington (1861 – 1909). Coming Through the Rye, 1907. Bronze. Gift of Barbara S. Leggett. 5.66; RIGHT TOP: Windlass crossbow, ca. 1600 – 1650. Gift of Olin Corporation, Winchester Arms Collection. 1988.8.527; RIGHT BOTTOM: Santee Dakota wood bowl, 1870. NA.106.159

AWARDS

We are proud of the many positive comments we hear from visitors each year. We are especially grateful that they take the time to write online reviews and vote in polls by western publications and organizations, sharing their enthusiasm with others.

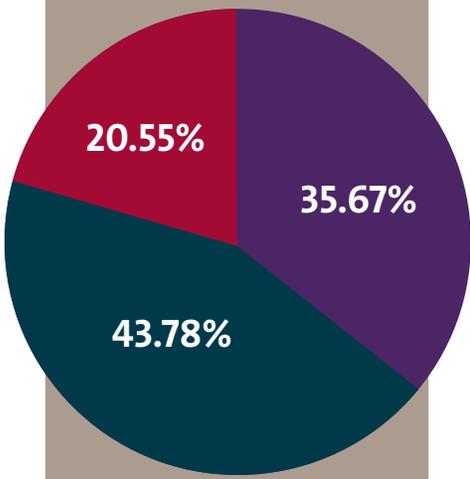
Here are some of our honors from 2017:

True West magazine once again named the Buffalo Bill Center of the West its **Top Western Museum**. The Center received top museum honors in 2015 as well.

Early in 2017, *True West's* "Best of the West" awards crowned the Buffalo Bill Center of the West as the Readers' Choice **Best Western Museum** as well as **Best Western Art Gallery** (Whitney Western Art Museum). The Plains Indian Museum received the Editor's Choice Award as **Best American Indian Collection**, and our Centennial Rifle was chosen as **Best Commemorative Rifle** in both the Editor's Choice and Readers' Choice categories.

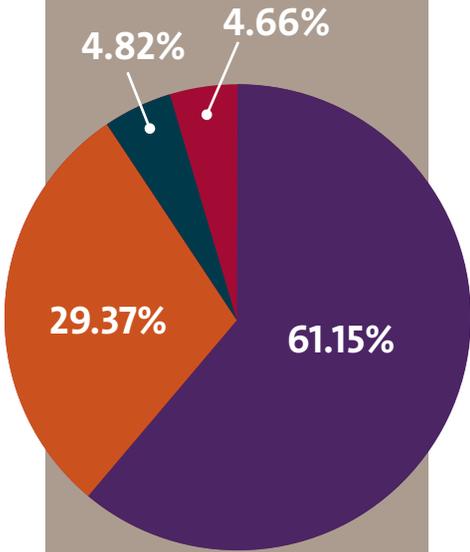
For the **fifth year in a row**, the Center earned the **Certificate of Excellence Award from TripAdvisor**, the world's largest travel review website. The Certificate of Excellence is presented only to establishments that receive consistently high ratings from travelers.

Cody Firearms Museum Curator Ashley Hlebnsky received the Grits Gresham Shooting Sports Communicator of the Year Award for 2017. The Professional Outdoor Media Association and the National Shooting Sports Foundation sponsor the award. Hlebnsky also was chosen as one of *Wyoming Business Report's* 2017 "40-Under-40," a group of young professionals singled out as the next generation of leaders in the state.



2017 OPERATING SUPPORT
(budget basis)

- Earned revenue
- Donor funding and grants
- Endowment funds withdrawn



2017 EXPENSES
(budget basis; excludes capital projects)

- Personnel
- Operating expenses
- Capital expenditures
- Programs and exhibitions

FINANCE

Financial Report | Fiscal year ended December 31, 2017

Lynn Rodgers, Chief Financial Officer

Bruce Sauers, Director of Revenue & Enterprise

Earned Revenue

Earned revenue continues to be a focus, with ongoing efforts to improve current revenue streams and the exploration of new opportunities consistent with our mission and facility. We are aggressively pursuing the group travel market, with a 2.25 percent increase in this segment. The Dan Miller Cowboy Music Revue, in its second year at the Center, increased sales by 45 percent over 2016.

Food and beverage revenue was lower, as expected, due to a major kitchen renovation in the first quarter of the year, but met budget. Decreases in program fees were expected as planned programs and exhibitions finished their tours in 2016. Gift shop sales declined about 5 percent, attributed to inventory adjustments and the sale of two high-priced items in 2016 that were not repeated in 2017.

Expenses

Expenses were well controlled, with many areas coming in under budget. Two large unbudgeted expenses were incurred. The exterior wall of the Plains Indian Museum was found to be in need of major repair due to improper sealing when it was built more than forty years ago. Initial estimates for the work were \$500,000, however the project was completed for \$415,000. This issue, in part, led the Board to commission an infrastructure review and an Engineered Systems Master Plan (last updated in 1998) to inform capital project budgeting for the next decade. Just under half of the cost of the review was expensed in 2017.

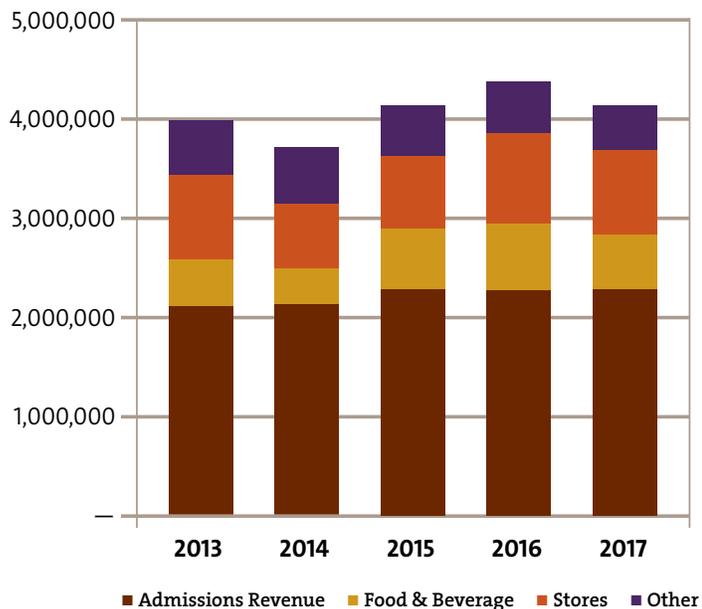
Endowment

The New Century Campaign continues to exceed expectations, adding more than \$5.6 million to our endowment in 2017. Investment results added another \$9.4 million, and effective cash flow management allowed us to keep over \$1 million in budgeted withdrawals invested.

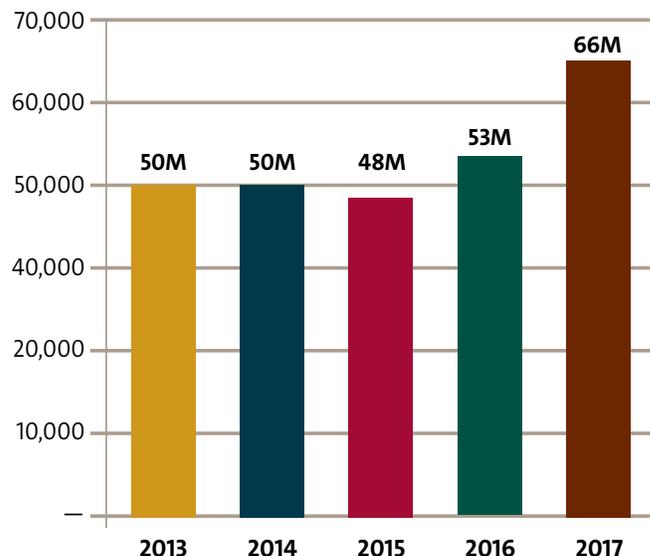
Overall, the Center remains in a strong financial position.

Please note that the following numbers are unaudited. The 2017 audited financial statements are expected to be available on our website in June 2018 at www.centerofthewest.org/about-us/annual-reports/.

Total Earned Revenues



Endowment Value Over Time



Financial Activity – GAAP basis (in thousands)

	2017	2016
REVENUES		
Earned revenues	4,818	5,849
Contributions and grants	14,957	12,292
Investment income (loss)	9,583	3,013
Total revenue	29,358	21,154
EXPENSES		
Personnel	7,159	6,796
Programs & Operations	4,275	5,258
Capital expenses (including depreciation)	1,452	1,613
Total expenses	12,886	13,667
Increase in net assets from operations	16,472	7,487

Financial Position (in thousands)

	2017	2016
ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	3,116	2,281
Accounts and interest receivable	262	320
Inventories	1,730	851
Prepaid expenses	140	220
Contributions receivable	4,226	3,267
Investments	64,985	51,867
Property and equipment, net	33,564	32,691
Collections	88,896	88,670
Total Assets	196,919	180,167
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	730	450
Net assets	196,189	179,717
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	196,919	180,167

Irving Bacon (1875 – 1962). *Cody on the Ishawooa Trail*, 1904. Watercolor on paper. Bequest in memory of Houx and Newell families. 20.64.



DEVELOPMENT

The end of 2017 marked the second full year of the *New Century Campaign*, our endeavor to ensure the second hundred years of the Buffalo Bill Center of the West builds on the successes of the first. The campaign's goal is to raise \$50 million for capital improvements, programs, and the endowment.

We are delighted and proud to report that we have received cash and pledges totaling more than \$47.7 million through December 31, 2017. With two years left to go in the campaign, we fully expect to exceed our goal.

We also are pleased to report that once again, we have received a four-star rating (the highest) from Charity Navigator, scoring over 96 percent. Charity Navigator looks at a variety of factors, including financials, transparency, trustee involvement, and program versus administrative costs.

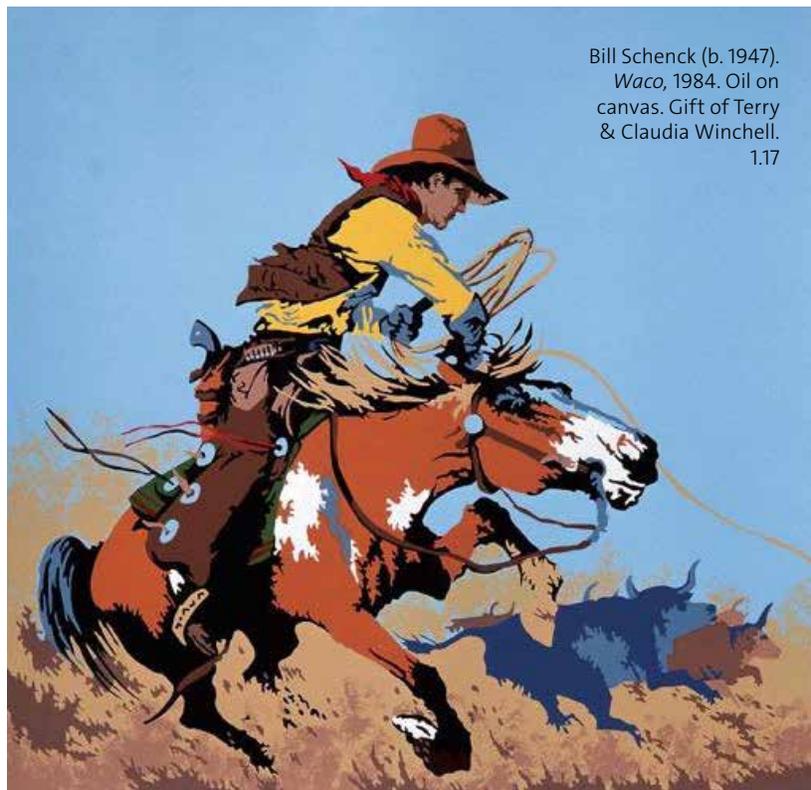
Many show their support of the Center by purchasing memberships. We have more than 4,000 individuals, families, and businesses who have made this commitment. They reside in all fifty states and eleven countries ranging from South Africa to Sweden. We are grateful to have them in the Buffalo Bill Center of the West family.

Our heartfelt thanks to the many donors who made gifts to the Center of the West this past year. Whether you support us through membership, an annual operations contribution, or a special gift for a particular project, know that your generosity is much valued—and very needed.

Here is the list of donors who made outright gifts, confirmed pledges, and/or gifts-in-kind during 2017. Thank you for making the Buffalo Bill Center of the West one of your philanthropic priorities.

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Bill Schenck (b. 1947).
Waco, 1984. Oil on
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1.17



Alexander Phimister Proctor, (1862 – 1950), *Indian Warrior*, 1896 – 1899. Bronze. Gift of A. Phimister Proctor Museum with special thanks to Sandy and Sally Church. 4.08.2

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Southern Arapaho Ghost
Dance dress, ca. 1890.
Chandler-Pohrt Collection,
Gift of Mary J. and James R.
Jundt. NA.204.4



Tanned buffalo hide coat with beaver fur trim, ca. 1870, owned and worn by Buffalo Bill. Garlow Collection. 1.69.768

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The Buffalo Bill Center of the West is blessed with a large cadre of dedicated volunteers that serve as trustees and advisors. Accomplished in both their professional and personal lives, their commitment is demonstrated by their active participation in helping to shape and steward the Center and through their generous gifts to our New Century Campaign.

Coming from across the United States, the one thing all our trustees and advisors have in common is a love of the American West. Their expertise and perspectives are an important component of the Center's continued growth as a leading American cultural institution.

In all, our volunteer leadership numbers more than 100 individuals. We are truly fortunate to have so many passionate and talented people dedicated to the success of the Buffalo Bill Center of the West.

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Buckskin jacket belonging to William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody, ca. 1912. Museum purchase. Mary Jester Allen Collection. 1.69.2026



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