

# FRIENDS OF DRAKE WELL, INC.

## ANNUAL MEETING NOVEMBER 20, 2024

Featuring the  
FY 2023-24

# Annual Report



# FY 2023-24 ANNUAL REPORT FOR FRIENDS OF DRAKE WELL, INC.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 3 Looking Back: FY 2023-24**
- 4 Our Team**
- 5 FDW Financial Highlights, FY 2023-24**
- 6 Drake Well Updates, FY 2023-24**
- 8 Events & Programs**

## OUR MISSION

Friends of Drake Well, Inc., is a non-profit community based organization that actively supports Drake Well Museum and Park in partnership with the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.

Drake Well Museum and Park uncovers, preserves, and shares Pennsylvania's rich petroleum history, connecting past to present through a diversity of perspectives and inspiring our global audience to strive for a sustainable energy future.

## CURRENT FDW BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Barry Cressman,  
President

Emily Altomare,  
Vice President

Megan Sternagel,  
Treasurer

Alfonso Rickerson,  
Secretary

Joseph Carter

Robert Felton

Lawrence Fledderman

Gerald Knickerbocker

Tamera Ochs Rothschild

Jason Ruggiero



# LOOKING BACK: WHAT A YEAR IT WAS!

The 2023-24 fiscal year was a year to remember as visitation numbers continued to climb back to pre-pandemic levels. Thanks to our new Admission & Transportation Scholarship Program, we saw a special increase in school tours with over thirty different school groups visiting Drake Well Museum and Park. The Admission & Transportation Scholarship Program provides free admission for school groups and certain summer programs/daycare centers. It also offered school groups the opportunity to have their transportation costs covered; many of the groups took up this offer.

Friends of Drake Well funded the program through grants received from the John K. Henne Charitable Trust, Bridge Builders Community Foundations & the United Way of Venango County, the Oil Region Alliance of Business, Industry & Tourism, and Crawford Gives. The grant from the Oil Region Alliance was financed in part with a C2P2 grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation through grant funding from the Heritage Area Program and the Environmental Stewardship Fund. In total we paid for \$17,869 worth of school tour admissions and transportation – all covered by the grant funding sources listed above! We are planning to implement the program again for 2024-25, and we already have schools scheduling tours for spring.

In addition to an increase in tours, many of our events saw an increase in attendees, plus we had a special event in April for the 2024 Solar Eclipse. The museum and grounds were open that day, despite it being a Monday, and we offered “buy one, get one free” admission. We had a total of 339 visitors which included recreational visitors. Other successful events were the Lantern Tours at Pithole with 486 tickets sold, the Oil Creek 5 & 13 Stacked Trail Races with 139 runners, and Discovery Day Camp which featured a total of 67 campers – all increases from the previous fiscal year!

The grounds of both Drake Well Museum and Park and Historic Pithole City were also improved during the past year. Drake Well Museum is in the process of developing its new “Business of Oil” outdoor exhibit area which includes a new pedestrian bridge across Mill Run as well as a new blacksmith and cooper shop, a major endeavor that will greatly improve the educational aspects of these two major trades during the oil boom. Historic Pithole City had over twenty new interpretive signs installed on its grounds with an additional twenty-six planned to be installed in 2025.

Our goal for 2024-25 is to continue the increase in visitation, to provide quality events and educational programming, to improve our outreach efforts through the hiring of an outreach coordinator, and to continue improving the interpretation of both sites through updating exhibits and signage. Thank you to everyone who helped to make this past year a success! We are excited to see this new year unfold, and we hope to see you all at “the Well”!



# OUR TEAM

We have an amazing and unique team here at Drake Well Museum and Park with two different entities making up our staff – Friends of Drake Well and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC). After some transitions in the past couple years, we have reached a moment where we are “firing on all cylinders,” and it is great to see everyone working together to make Drake Well successful.

During the last fiscal year, Friends of Drake Well welcomed its bookkeeper, Mark Entwistle, to the team in August 2023. Mark has settled into his role which includes payroll, processing sales from the Museum Store, keeping the financial records for FDW, and submitting monthly financial reports. We also welcomed a new Pithole Coordinator for the summer of 2024, Parker Los, a student at Allegheny College. Parker did a wonderful job welcoming visitors to the site and taking admissions and gift shop sales. New staff for the PHMC included the hiring of Sarah Bell as the Curator for Drake Well Museum in November 2023. Sarah’s job has been busy with research requests, acquisitions, and becoming familiar with Drake Well’s collections. The PHMC said goodbye to its seasonal Semi-Skilled Laborer, Larry Moore, but recently welcomed a new seasonal laborer, James “Jeb” Becker in the late summer of 2024.

Friends of Drake Well continues to have success in finding student interns to help with education, interpretation, and collections. Abigail Vinson and John Hetrick both served as interns under Friends of Drake Well during the summer of 2023. FDW hired three interns for the summer of 2024: Alex Huffman, Anne Schwanke, and Alyssa Shick. The PHMC hired its 2024 Keystone Intern, Damon Navaroli, to help specifically with collections and curatorial work. All the students were outstanding in their work and a huge help to both Drake Well and Historic Pithole City!

We are planning to hire a new Outreach Coordinator for 2025. This position will work on developing and implementing an outreach program for Drake Well Museum and Park. The last major outreach program was the popular MEET-U trailer, which ended in 2019. The new outreach program will not be as elaborate as the MEET-U trailer – at least not initially – and it will focus more on outreach at public events such as fairs, trade shows, festivals, and more. The PHMC’s clerical assistant position remains vacant as the Commission works on updating the job description. The position is expected to open for applications in 2025.

## Current FDW Employees

- Emily Weaver, Executive Director (FT)
- Toni Brown, Visitor Services & Curatorial Assistant (FT)
- Mark Entwistle, Bookkeeper (PT)
- Vickie Ruppensburg, Museum Store Manager (PT)
- Frances “Corky” Fulton, Museum Store Clerk (PT)
- Seasonal Replica Operators (PT)
  - Gene Hale, John Hetrick, David Mock
- Parker Los, Seasonal Pithole Coordinator (PT)
- Summer 2024 Interns: Alex Huffman, Anne Schwanke, Alyssa Shick

## Current PHMC Employees

- Michael Knecht, Site Administrator
- Sarah Bell, Museum Curator 2
- Sarah Goodman, Museum Educator 2
- Stewart McKinley, Facility Operations Supervisor
- Thomas Lindsay, Maintenance Repairman 2
- James Becker, Semi-Skilled Laborer (seasonal)

# FDW FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

## FY 2023-24

### GRANTS

Grant funding received during FY 2023-24 was used for educational programming, student interns, site support, promotional needs, and the design and printing of the *OilField Journal*. NOTE: Some grants are received within one fiscal year but are used for needs during multiple fiscal years.

FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24
<b>\$90,000</b>	<b>\$110,000</b>



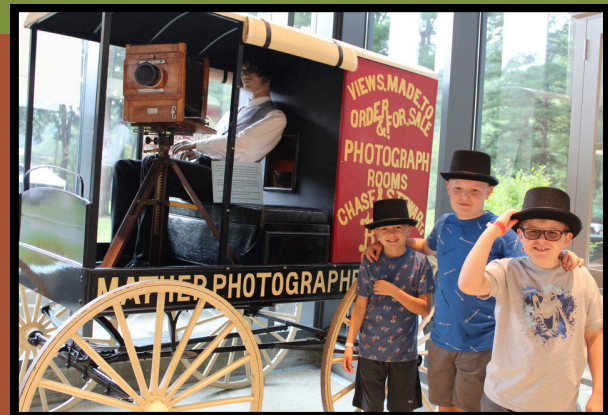
### FDW MEMBERSHIP

Beginning in May 2023, the FDW executive director updated the membership application, replacing a flyer with a brochure that could be better displayed in both the Museum and the Museum Store. Since then the brochures have been handed out at events, programs, and outreach activities for both Drake Well and Historic Pithole City. A membership drive was conducted in November 2023, which included sending renewal letters to memberships that had been expired since 2022. Proceeds from memberships go directly to Friends of Drake Well, Inc., for unrestricted use in support of Drake Well Museum and Park.

FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24
<b>\$4,369</b>	<b>\$6,975</b>

### FDW TOTAL DIRECT SUPPORT

FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24
<b>\$27,550</b>	<b>\$16,587</b>



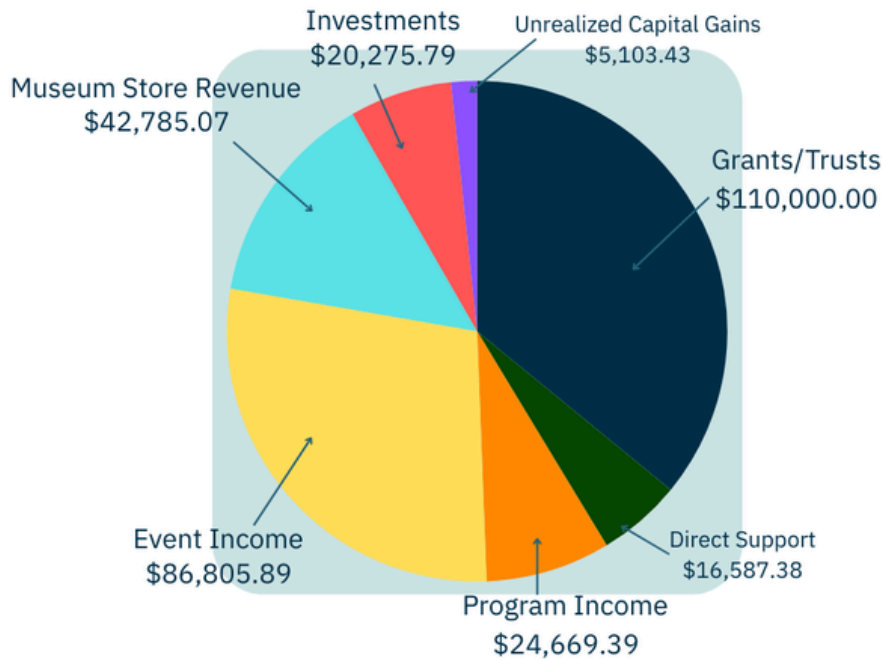
Direct Support includes Annual Appeal, Corporate Donations, and Memorials/Donations.

# FDW FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

## FY 2023-24

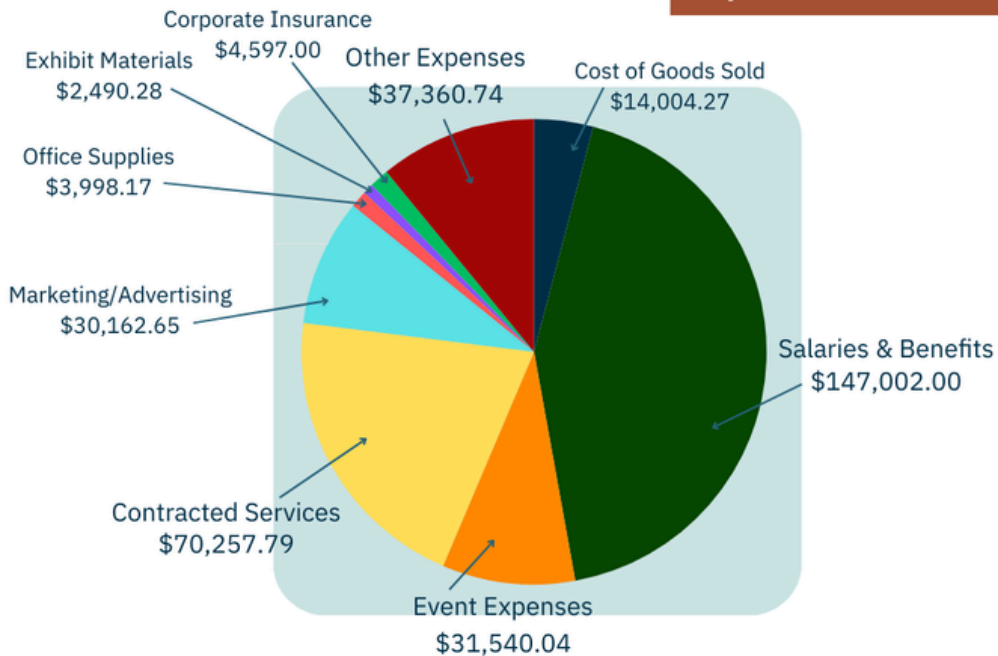
### FY 2023-24

#### Revenue



### FY 2023-24

#### Expenses



# DRAKE WELL UPDATES FY 2023-24

## MUSEUM VISITATION

YEAR	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24
VISITORS	16,815	16,837
SCHOOL STUDENTS	1,016	1,867

## VOLUNTEERS

YEAR	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24
VOLUNTEERS	100	90
VOLUNTEER HOURS	2,889	2,722

## FACILITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

- Twenty-two new interpretive signs were installed at Historic Pithole City. An additional twenty-six signs were researched, designed, and produced. They are scheduled to be installed in the spring of 2025.
- Seven light poles were installed in the Jersey Bridge Parking Lot, greatly improving the safety and security at the lot which is used extensively by recreational visitors throughout the year.
- Drake Well Museum's "Business of Oil" outdoor exhibit area is coming along with the new pedestrian bridge across Mill Run completed and open (see left). Staff have made significant progress on the development of the Blacksmith and Cooper Shop. The anticipated opening of the shop is late 2025.



## PHMC EXPENDITURES AT DWM, FY 2023-24



Keystone Preservation Projects: \$300,144  
General Government Operations: \$622,416  
Total: \$922,560

# EVENTS & PROGRAMS

over

# 1,742

event and program attendees during FY 2023-24!



# 13

Special Events & Educational Programs held at Drake Well Museum and Historic Pithole City



# 255

visitors during the 2024 Solar Eclipse!



# 486

tickets sold for Pithole Lantern Tours '23

# 139

runners at the '24 Oil Creek 5 & 13 Stacked Trail Races



## SAVE THE DATE

*\*all dates subject to change\**

- Winter Academy, Jan-Feb (multiple dates)
- Cabin Fever Party at Historic Pithole City, Feb 8
- Pennsylvania's Birthday, March 9
- Wisdom & More Series, March (multiple dates)
- Behind the Scenes: Members Only, April 10
- Engine Start Up Day, May 4
- OC 5 & 13 Stacked Trail Races, May 17
- Discovery Day Camp, July (multiple dates)
- Drake Day, Aug 10
- Drake Well Marathon & Half, Aug 17
- Fall Gas Up, Sept 13
- Oil Boom Historic Dinner, Sept 25
- Historic Pithole City Lantern Tours, Oct 4



# THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING FRIENDS OF DRAKE WELL, INC.!



# **FRIENDS OF DRAKE WELL, INC.**

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