



# HYRUM CITY MUSEUM

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Jami J. Van Huss, Director

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## 2024 End of Year Report:

The following report demonstrates that the Hyrum City Museum continues to flourish as a resource for our community as more people attend activities, stronger partnerships are cultivated, and professionalism, capacity, and sustainability steadily increase. In order to meet the needs of our growing community, the volunteer work of the museum board, docents, and the Hyrum City Youth Council was essential, particularly with staff hours being cut in 2024. Looking ahead, it is necessary to fund another position at the museum to maintain our current level of programming and resource offerings to our community members, which is crucial for us to fulfill our mission.

It's also imperative for staff and volunteers to continue fostering strategic partnerships to ensure the authenticity and credibility of our exhibits and programming. For instance, museum staff prioritizes working with the Northwestern Band of the Shoshone Nation by attending the annual massacre memorial, joining the monthly tribal council meetings, and providing service through planting days and other events. This, and other such relationships are non-negotiable in order to provide a better history of our region that includes multiple perspectives and meets our responsibilities as a reputable historical organization. We appreciate the City's continued support of the museum's efforts to synergize with community partners, which provides a meaningful and impactful resource for Hyrum City citizens.



## Exhibits

This year the museum displayed fourteen permanent exhibits, two with major digital components, and one that is entirely online. We also hosted several traveling and community exhibits, including artwork from students in the South Cache Art Club entitled *History & Me* and *100 Years of Filmmaking* from the Utah Film Commission. Our dedicated Community Exhibit space displayed artwork from students at Lincoln and Wellsville Elementary Schools who participated in their school's Reflections contests and artwork from our Passport to Summer Fun participants, which was inspired by the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Jim Bridger exploring Cache Valley this year.



Museum staff installed new platforms with museum-quality barriers for the *Hyrum's Heroes* and *Heart of Hyrum* exhibits. This provides greater protection for the artifacts on display while offering a more professional look to the exhibits. Plus, the online component of the veteran exhibit is now accessible



on a high-quality digital kiosk, which Utah Humanities gifted to the museum following our 2022 *H2O Today* partnership, saving the museum about \$2,000. The website received 2,964 views.



## Educational Programming

Thanks to the support of volunteer board and youth council members, our two part-time staff were pleased to offer a robust calendar of in-person programming in 2024. We organized eleven Super Saturday events throughout the year and continued to join forces with community partners to provide substantial resources for our visitors. In January, we partnered with the Utah Historical Society to host a Scan-and-Share as part of their statewide Peoples of Utah Revisited Project. Then in February, we invited Sema Hadithi African American Heritage & Culture Foundation to facilitate activities including “Utah’s Black History Game Show,” art projects, games, and readings with discussions. Then in July, we collaborated with Jump the Moon to offer accessible art activities, in August hosted a school supply drive for the Cache Refugee & Immigrant Connection, and in November invited a representative from the Rocky Mountain Veterans Center to educate local veterans about resources.

Other Super Saturdays included celebrating the Jim Bridger Bicentennial, using our 1920s printing press to make personalized Western “Wanted Posters” for visitors, a Memorial Weekend open house, Hot Wheels in Hyrum, and partnering with the Hyrum Historic Preservation Commission to offer guided driving tours of historic Hyrum and a cemetery tour, which highlighted five founding women of Hyrum. Overall, we hosted 365 visitors during our Super Saturday events, which demonstrates that being open one Saturday each month with specific programming drives intentional attendance and is a very efficient use of staff time.

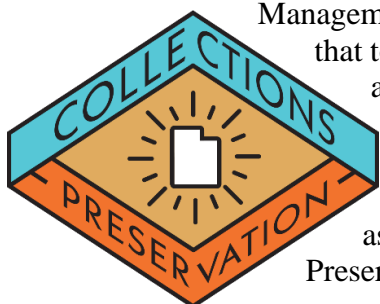


Our children’s programming continues to be the most well-attended, including our Back in Time children’s activities throughout the school year and our summer-long Passport to Summer Fun with accompanying drop-in activities. We had 301 children participate in Back in Time, 649 came to drop-in summer activities, and over 75 kids completed the Passport to Summer Fun program (meaning they completed at least nine challenges---we handed out over 250 passports total). We also showed five movies at the Elite Hall that 240 people attended. This is important because it introduces new audiences to the historic Elite Hall while providing visitation numbers that demonstrate support, which is essential to securing grants and donations for planned restoration work.



## Collections

The Hyrum City Council and Museum Board reviewed and approved a comprehensive Collections Management Policy on February 1st. This is an extensive and important document that took an incredible number of staff hours and consultation to complete, but is a game-changer for ensuring that our collections are properly cared for, that we maintain public trust, and that we operate according to the highest professional, legal, and ethical standards. Additionally, the museum curator continued to participate in statewide collections work and trainings as a member of the Utah Division of Arts & Museums Utah Collections Preservation Team (UCP), a cohort of collections stewards across the state.





We completed final construction on our large secure storage area, and have moved most of the museum's collection into the space. New shelving, cabinets, pallets, and an art rack have all been installed to make certain that all artifacts are protected from the agents of deterioration. This storage room will have an important and long-lasting impact on the care of the museum's collections. Moving all of the collections into this space has also created the opportunity to build better storage housing, update records, and ensure that we are excelling at professionally caring for our collections. The UCP also selected the Hyrum City Museum as the location for their hands-on workshop on September 5th and were able to show attendees the new storage room as an excellent example of proper collections care.

### Special Projects

The museum advisory board and staff were particularly honored by our second opportunity to partner with the Utah Cold War Veterans Association to host a Utah Cold War Victory Medal pinning ceremony on September 12th for forty-two veterans in our community. The medal is awarded to veterans who served between Sept. 2, 1945 and Dec. 26, 1991 and recognizes their honorable service to our country. We are grateful for this continued partnership to honor local veterans and for Mountain Crest High School for providing the venue.



The museum received a \$3,000 grant from Utah Humanities to pay for transcription and exhibit development of a community oral history project called "Hyrum, my Hometown." Aiming to capture what gives Hyrum its "hometown" feel, seven people in two groups were interviewed about their experiences as life-long residents of Hyrum. The first group included Leon Savage, Zada Clawson, and Mary Sue Lundahl, who were all children in the 1940s and the second group consisted of siblings Nancy Allen and Craig Brown and their respective spouses Brent Allen and Gayla Brown. All four of them grew up in the 1950s and early 1960s. Many other candidates have been identified and we hope to continue collecting the histories of additional Hyrum citizens so we can preserve and share their stories.



The museum director also secured a \$20,000 matching grant from the Utah State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to make structural repairs and refinish the surface of the spring-loaded dance floor at the Elite Hall. Once completed, museum staff organized a community dance party on November 9th to introduce the new floor to the community, with over 100 people attending and providing encouraging feedback. One person noted that we should, "hold a dance every week!" Others commented on how beautiful the floor looks. Hyrum resident Larry Johansen attended for a short time because he, "couldn't resist coming and seeing the shiny floor and watching everyone bounce on the dance floor." He tearfully recalled the time he met his wife at a dance there and was moved to see so many people still enjoying dancing on the remarkable floor.



The Utah Museums Association awarded its Public Service Award to Craig Rasmussen on October 9th at their annual conference, which was in Logan this year. Craig was recognized for rendering vital assistance and support to Utah's museum community while serving in a governmental capacity. Craig consistently goes above and beyond to support the staff and board of the museum in their efforts to fulfill the museum's mission to be a professional, sustainable resource for our community.

Hyrum Museum staff is very involved in national, state, and local boards and committees. Jami serves with the American Association of State and Local History, the Utah Museums Association, and Sema Hadithi. Courtney serves with the Cache Valley Historical Society, Bear River Heritage Area, Utah Museums Association, and the Conference of Intermountain Archivists (CIMA). Courtney received a \$500 travel grant from the Utah State Historical Records Advisory Board to attend CIMA and present about our new collections policies and storage room as a model for others. Both staff members presented at conferences, attended professional development trainings, and were asked to present for large groups, which is tremendously beneficial because the staff is able to build relationships, increase professionalism, and improve efficiency.



### Fundraising, Grants, and Awards

In its eleventh year, the museum's annual car show fundraiser, Hot Wheels in Hyrum, continues to be both a favorite community event and a very successful fundraiser. The museum netted nearly \$6,000, 125 cars registered, and 7 food vendors came. Based on food sales, we estimate that about 1500--2000 attended the event (this number is not included in any other visitation reporting).



We received a \$14,070 grant from the Utah Division of Arts & Museums, funded by the Utah Legislature to help pay staff salaries and benefits. It also ensures continued exhibit development and that all of our educational programming is high-quality and free to our community members.

### Conclusion

Overall, the museum hosted 4,238 total visitors during 2024. Special events and programming attracted 1,863 visitors, including a significant increase in field trips from several local schools and community groups. Additionally, the museum is followed by 1,346 people and reached 52, 531 people through Facebook and followed by 351 people and reached 2,149 people through Instagram.

Part of our regular procedure is to evaluate our exhibits and programming. The feedback we receive from visitors and community partners drives our future efforts and helps us meet our mission to create a sense of belonging while providing a relevant, long-lasting service to our community. One visitor noted, "We love the museum and having things to come do together. It helps us try new things!" Another said, "We love the opportunity to meet new people and have meaningful experiences in our community."

I am very pleased that our efforts are creating a sense of belonging, helping our visitors feel connected to the community, and effectively teaching many types of visitors. Looking ahead, with increasing visitors and the expressed community desire for the museum to be open more hours, I respectfully ask the City Council to seriously consider hiring a third employee, a Museum Educator. This position would manage the bulk of educational programming and be able to increase our outreach and connect with classrooms. Regardless, none of this would be possible without the Hyrum City Council, Mayor, administration, and advisory board members and I appreciate your continued support.

Thank You,

*Jami J. Van Huss*  
Jami J. Van Huss

Hyrum City Museum Director