



## Narrative of 2024-2025 Annual Activities Prepared for Norman Parks & Recreation Board

Our Mission, Vision & Values

**OUR VISION:** *A community connected  
through shared artistic experiences*

**OUR MISSION:** *to create, curate, and present quality arts programs to connect  
and enrich our community*

**OUR VALUES:** *Community,  
Creativity, Inclusion, Representation, Intentionality, Quality*

### We are Music

2025 marked the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Norman's beloved Summer Breeze Concert Series in Lion's Park featuring 8 Sunday night concerts where 1500-2000 of our neighbors bring a picnic and we bring the band. At the Depot, we are also a fantastic listening room for our Depot Concerts featuring the best in touring and local music.

**TOTAL AUDIENCES FOR MUSIC:** 28,500 (includes Summer Breeze, Concert, Comedy, and Poetry Attendees, and the over 16,000 views of our Depot TV music videos on YouTube)



**Summer Breeze** - In 2025 our incredible lineup included the return of Grammy winning polka band Brave Combo, local legend Mike Hosty with his son Liam's band Wet Muscles, Tulsa icon John Fullbright, Handmade Moments, Jazz Night with Kendrick McKinney, Jahruba and the Jahmystics, and our Homegrown Finale featuring Keirston White and friends.

This series continued to draw huge crowds of people of all ages and diverse musical preferences. Lion's Park is the perfect concert venue and we love the partnership with the City of Norman Parks and Recreation department. The park is always ready for us and we appreciate the support with power, trash receptacles and trash service. Our Summer Breeze Green Team helps collect and transport recyclables from the parks for each concert, as we encourage our audiences to remember that our parks belong to all of us and to leave it better than we found it.



**Depot Concerts** - Deeply rooted in local connections, and sprinkled with national attention, Depot Concerts continue to showcase the best of what The Depot is about. We are a unique space for a show - in a historic train station, with gorgeous art on the walls, hosting musicians and audiences that are excited to be there. We are continually surprised at the numbers of our guests coming from out of town, and from out of state to see the shows we produce. Our rooms were packed last year with concerts from In the last year we hosted touring artists Seth Glier, John Calvin Abney (he might be an internationally touring star now, but we

call him friend), Radoslav Lorkovic, and Crys Matthews alongside Oklahoma musicians Peggy Johnson (pictured here), Miss Brown to You, Tim Grimm, Kendrick McKinney, and many more. Depot Concerts feel like a family of music lovers and sound beautiful in our historic listening room and we are working on plans to make this musical experience available to many more of our neighbors.

**We are Art.** The Depot Gallery hosts Oklahoma artists or artists with strong Oklahoma ties for six exhibits each year in our main gallery. The gallery is free and open to the public. Our gallery has worked diligently over the last 5 years to become the premiere gallery in Norman with annual sales averaging \$20,000 and art provided for viewing for over 25,000 patrons including our gallery guests, rental patrons, train customers, and the groups hosted by our venue.

Our gallery in 2024-2025 hosted the works of:

Judy Osburn - one of the finest oil painters in Oklahoma

Ron Tarver - Pulitzer Prize winning photographer's travelling exhibit "The Long Ride Home" featuring Black Cowboys on it's first stop on a national tour.

Our Small Works holiday show, and our Emerging Artists Exhibition featuring 12 Oklahoma artists whose works have never been in a gallery show.

"Drawing the Line" line drawings from artists Don Schooler, Galadriel Alethea Lynn, and Nathan Price.

We have also opened our Whistle Stop Shop to give local artists, makers, and authors an outlet for sales, and access to our audiences! It is our plan to come to the parks board to ask permission to add permanent shelving in the South Room of the Depot to add to our retail space, adding a revenue stream for the Depot and improving our ability to display and store products.



September 12 – November 1  
Opening Reception  
September 12, 6-9pm  
2nd Friday Art Walk

*Entangled Voices*  
the fiber practices of  
Irmgard Geul  
and  
Darcie Lenker



Gallery Hours: 8am to 2pm, Wednesday to Saturday  
200 S. Jones Avenue – [www.normandepot.org](http://www.normandepot.org)



**We are Education.** We offer art clinics, chats and workshops working with the stellar artists who show on our walls. The experiences we provide are unique, intimate, and impactful. This year we embarked on a partnership with the Oklahoma Visual Artists Coalition and the Paseo Arts District in Oklahoma City to provide seminars for emerging artists, hosted watercolor workshops with Connie Seabourn, and a felting workshop with Darcy Lenker.

**We are Comedy.** Our now annual Polar Sketchspress show features local sketch, standup and musical comedy for the holiday season for several definitely adults-only evenings full of uproarious laughter.



**We are a Community Partner** The Depot is excited to become home to Norman Winterfest and we regularly partner with a multitude of community organizations who might need headquarters for a festival, a home for a fundraiser, a room for a meeting or space for a classroom including Mardi Gras (our Director Shari Jackson even got to be queen in 2025!), Pride Parade, Oklahoma Storyworks, Norman Music Festival, Norman Arts Council Roundtable, Sierra Club, Cimarron Opera, Songwriters Association of Norman, Norman Next, Food & Shelter, Inc, Jacobson House and so many others. We are also the premiere event rental venue in the heart of the Walker Arts District.

**We are Poetry.** Our poetry program has grown in the last year as we produce evenings of multiple poets around a theme organized by amazing Oklahoma author, poet, actor and director Paul Austin. Spoken word and quiet reflection is a respite and inspiration that seems to be resonating with our audiences. Admission for poetry is always free. The past year included:

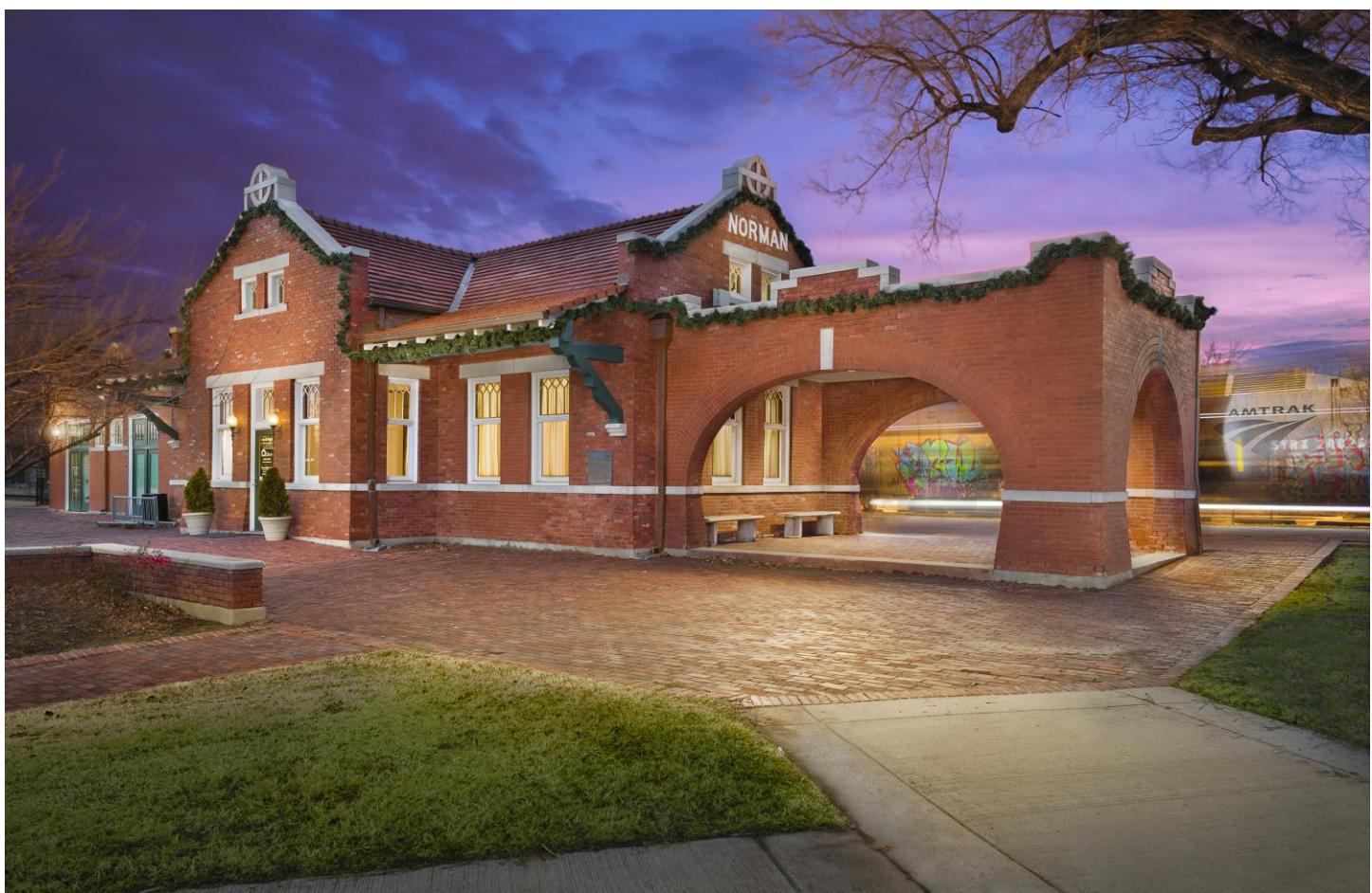
"Explorations": Ways of Seeing. Three celebrated poets Sly Alley (OK Book Award winner), Mary Gray (OK Book Award winner), and Quinn Carver Johnson (Tulsa author) read poems that reflect their own unique views of the theme.



**"Influences: People, Places and Things"** - Three poets named Paul (Paul Austin (actor and author), Paul Bowers (writing teacher at Northern Oklahoma College in Enid), and Paul Juhasz (Pushcart nominated author) read poems that explored their own unique experiences of how people, places, and things influence us.

**"Explorations: New Voices"** – Durell Carter, writer and teacher; Ky George, Gallup, NM writer and educator; and Zachary Scalzo, writer, translator and theatre maker read poems that explore their own unique way of seeing the world around us.

**We are a Depot.** As caretakers of this historic facility, we welcome the opportunity to serve as host to passengers boarding Amtrak's Heartland Flyer from 8 to 9 a.m. - 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Hosting consists of ensuring that passengers have required ticket information, luggage tags, parking information and comfortable waiting room with clean, stocked restrooms. In addition, our staff prints schedules and answers questions and phone calls daily for potential train customers and communicate with parking services for passengers whose vehicles are left overnight in designated spaces.



Our social media and YouTube reach have extended our audiences – We reached over 200k people on Facebook/Instagram with our posts and reels with almost 4900 (Facebook) and 2005 (Instagram) followers and 17,298 views of our Depot TV episodes on our YouTube channel.

**Audience Numbers:**

**Summer Breeze – 20,000**

**Concerts – 1847**

**Gallery Guests (includes rental patrons) – approximately 23,000**

**Train Passengers – 7,320 passengers boarded the Heartland Flyer at the Depot during the 2024-2025 fiscal year. (this number does not include the patrons who stop by the Depot daily for information about how to book AMTRAK tickets, website assistance, etc.)**

**REVENUE SOURCES: The Depot is 501c3, registered as a charitable organization with the State of Oklahoma and the IRS, filing an annual 990 return available on request.**

**Depot Rental – \$37,680**

Rental revenue is our most important revenue stream to assist in covering the administrative expenses of offering our programs. Rental income must cover salaries, insurance, phone, office supplies and other administrative costs.

Rentals Monday through Thursday are \$100/hour and rentals on Friday to Sunday are \$150/hour, and rentals include use of the entire space and all tables and chairs. This still keeps us the most reasonable rental venue in town but allows us to continue to keep pace with inflated costs. Rentals must be a minimum of 2 hours and have an additional \$60 cleaning fee.

**Membership – \$10,687**

The Depot offers a membership program with a variety of benefits including discounts on art and rentals and members-only events. Annual membership levels are currently at \$60 for a Basic Membership which includes pre-sale ticket purchases, and a calendar of events. The Premier Membership is \$180 and offers basic benefits and 25% off a Depot rental, a 10% Gallery Discount, and we have added a Sustaining Level Membership that adds the member's name to our listings on Press Releases and Social Media posts.

**Program Partners – \$47,680**

The Depot's programs are beloved by the community and both in-kind and cash partnerships make up a substantial portion of our program budgets for Summer Breeze, Winter Wind, and the Gallery.

**Art and Ticket Sales – \$27,749**

In the last fiscal year, we sold only \$12,000 in art as the Depot was closed for much of November and December 2024 for mold remediation, this also impacted our concerts and ticket sales resulting in an estimated \$7-10k revenue loss for The Depot. We should also note that 65% of art sales goes back to the artist in commissions, and our concert tickets are split 80% to the artist, 20% to the Depot. Beginning this fiscal year we have changed concert commissions to keep 25% of ticket sales.

**Responsible Parties: The Depot has an active Board of Directors and 4 part-time employees who accomplish an extraordinary slate of activities with the help of community volunteers.**

**Officers who authorize expenditure:**

David Whitaker, Board Chair

Shari Jackson, Executive Director

Danielle Tipton, Events Director

Danielle and Shari are responsible for keeping the books and working with Board Treasurer Keith Reames to provide reporting to the board and coordinate the timely filing of all payroll taxes and annual 990 filings.

### Planned Expansion & Improvements:

At the Depot we have BIG hopes for improvements to our programming and ability to provide services to the community and in order to achieve those goals we sincerely wish to see some much-needed repairs to our facility, improvements to our internal space, and closer and more robust communication between the Depot and City/Parks staff.

**Building Issues:** As a historic building, and one of the oldest in town, we expect to have building issues from time to time. These are the issues we currently face at the Depot.

**AMTRAK Platform** – A planned AMTRAK ADA improvement project for the Depot platform and driveway is several months beyond its schedule and has faced potential rail stoppage, some very dangerous actions by the sub-contractor (resulting in their replacement), and damage to the West side of the building causing extreme basement flooding resulting in the loss of supplies and materials that belonged to the Depot. Although we have access to the AMTRAK construction project meeting notes, we would love to be in closer conversation with city officials overseeing this project to gain a greater understanding of the changing scope of work and project completion dates.

**HVAC** – Our HVAC system has a difficult time properly heating or cooling the building in extreme heat or cold temperatures and is a source of significant noise disruption to the point that we must turn it off during concerts, poetry reading, and events so that participants can hear the artists. We look forward to resolution with the city on this issue.

**Mold** – We have recurring mold issues in the new construction in the South room, after a complete closure in November of 2024 for several weeks, the mold issue recurred in late spring of 2025 in the south room and also mold was remediated in the basement after the flooding due to ongoing construction. Our total losses due to the mold and flooding are approximately \$10,000 to date.

### Building improvements:

**Shop cabinets** – The Depot will be proposing soon to the Parks Board the installation of custom display and storage cabinets for our Whistle Stop Shop to allow us to create a robust retail presence with adequate storage to allow us to put products away for community use of the building. The Depot intends to raise the funding for these cabinets and will consider them a gift to the city as an improvement to the space.

**Gallery Lighting** – The Depot installed directional gallery lighting in our North Room and we would like to continue that lighting in the South Room and add additional directional lighting in the North Room to help facilitate lighting for concerts and poetry events. Again, The Depot intends to raise the funding necessary and follow guidance from the city regarding installation as a gift in gratitude for our continued use of this beautiful space.

We believe that the programming we provide through the stewardship of this structure on the National Registry of Historic Places not only aids the growth of Downtown Norman and supports its designation as a cultural district by the Oklahoma Arts Council but promotes a strong and healthy community and makes Norman a great place to live and visit.

As you hopefully all know, The Depot offers an intimate listening room for concerts and poetry, an art gallery, Summer Breeze Concerts in Lions Park, Depot Poetry, the Whistle Stop Shop and a rental venue for private and community events, plus Amtrak service each morning, all in a beautiful historic building, fulfilling our mission *to create, curate and present quality fine arts programs for the enrichment of our community working toward a vision of a community connected through shared artistic experiences.*

Thank you for your consideration and attention,



Shari Jackson  
Executive Director  
The Depot