

A Comprehensive Institutional Plan
CARSTAIRS HERITAGE CENTRE
2025 to 2030



To Be Ratified at the 2025 CDHS AGM (April)

Current:

Updated March 2025

Note:

1. *The 5-Year Plan is to be reviewed and updated annually during the first Quarter of Society and Museum operations. The original 5-Year Plan was developed in February 2011 and has been updated annually since this original edition.*
2. *Additional planning documents (work plan and/or action plan) may be required to actuate the 5-Year Plan and will be created/ reviewed as necessary.*

BACKGROUND

Profile

The Carstairs & District Historical Society (CDHS) is a non-profit, registered charity incorporated under the Alberta Societies Act in 1986.

It is a membership organisation, and membership is open to all individuals, families and organisations with an interest in Local, Regional and Western Canadian History and Heritage. The CDHS operates **The Carstairs Heritage Centre** to help fulfill its Mandate & Mission:

To collect, preserve, record, and interpret objects and materials relevant to Carstairs and District from the time of the first settlement to the present day; to preserve cultural traditions and maintain the local knowledge of the community.

Further supporting the Museum's and CDHS key values/principles*:

The collection will be presented with integrity and relevancy to the community and without bias, for educational and cultural enjoyment for present and future generations.

**Note: Please see Policy Manual A-1, Schedule 1 for "Commonly Held Values."*

Vision Statement:

The vision of the Carstairs and District Historical Society is to be a relevant, unbiased community asset that provides inspiration, knowledge and curiosity to the individuals, organisations, and businesses of the Carstairs area

The CDHS is supported by its membership, the Town of Carstairs, Mountain View County, and the Alberta Museums Association. Additional funds and support are provided through various grants; generous individual, corporate, and private donations; and annual fundraisers.

The Society and Museum has enjoyed steady expansion over the years primarily due to the dedication of countless volunteers and the support of the community.

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Governance

The Carstairs Heritage Centre is operated by a Curator/Manager, who is employed by the Carstairs and District Historical Society (CDHS). CDHS is operated by a Governance Board. The Board consists of a President, a Vice President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and elected Directors.

5-Year Plan

The 5-Year Plan is the key planning tool for the CDHS and Carstairs Heritage Centre. It is both an institutional plan and year-to-year operations guide – combining strategic objectives and operational goals.

The Plan is renewed annually by the board of the CDHS and the Carstairs Heritage Centre Curator/Manager. A provisional 5-year plan is presented to the Town Council during the CDHS's council delegation. This is an opportunity for review and input from council members. It is then reviewed annually by Society membership and further voted at the AGM (February) which is open to the public. After approval by the Board and Society, the 5-Year Plan is published online, and hardcopies are made available at the Carstairs Heritage Centre for any interested party. A follow-up presentation (per request) with Q&A to Town Council and/or County Council is the final step for approving the document for the year.

Museum & Grounds

The present facilities include: Visitor Information Centre (Administration Building), Main Museum (Roulston Hall, Knox Church, Ing Gallery, Pointen Gallery, & North Gallery), 3 carriage houses (each about 560 square feet, suitable for large displays in the summer), The McCaig House (pioneer homestead) and garage (250 square feet).

The Carstairs Heritage Centre collection includes:

- 3847 Artifacts
- 2092 Newspapers, dating back to 1905
- 804 folders of Textual Archival Material
- 5,098 Archival Photographs

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Operations & Programming

Museum Open Hours

Summer Hours (June, July, August): Monday through Sunday: 10am-4pm

Winter Hours: Monday-Friday: 10am-4pm

**Additional hours available by appointment.*

Current Programming

- **Educational Programs**
 - *The Five Things*– onsite program
 - *Grade 2 Edu-Kit* – outreach program
 - *Grade 4 Edu-Kit* – outreach program
 - *Grade 5 The Great Depression* - onsite program
 - *The Home Front (Remembrance Day)* – onsite or outreach program
 - *Our community* – taking the museum on the road
- **Outreach**
 - *Antiques in the Attic*
 - *What is it?*
 - *Carstairs - 1883-1903*
 - *Good News, Bad News & No News.*
 - *Chinook Winds Lodge Visits*
- **Entertainment**
 - Reminisce Speaker Series – a guest speaker series based in personal experience in a topic area
 - Concert Series
 - Pointen Art Gallery - Art Galas.
 - Pop up Yoga

Events & Activities

- Pioneer Supper (February)
- Carstairs Block Party (May)
- Carstairs and District Historical Society Open House (May)
- Aggie Days (May)
- Carstairs Heritage Festival (June)
- Canada Day (July)
- Beef & Barley Days (July)
- Carstairs Horticultural Show (August)
- Walk the Block (August)
- The Carstairs Show and Shine (August)
- Mountain View Indigenous Culture Days (September)
- Night at the Museum (October)
- Remembrance Day (November)
- Crazy Carstairs Christmas (December)

2024 YEAR REVIEW

Projects & Operations

- ✓ Visitor Information Centre re-accreditation (annual)
- ✓ Completed Museum's Operational Health and Safety Policy
- ✓ Received grants to support two summer students.
- ✓ North Gallery
 - Created an improved Military Exhibit in a dedicated space
 - Improved general store exhibit
 - In the process of developing a public utilities display

Collections Management

- ✓ Continuing accessions, cataloguing, or deaccession of Orphaned Items
- ✓ Inventory location and cataloguing – (data entry to new database)
 - Ongoing cataloguing work
 - Ongoing renumbering and relabeling of the Collection to bring up to a Museum Standard
- ✓ Ongoing collection audit
- ✓ Ongoing storage facilities re-organization planning/mapping
- ✓ Ongoing database reconciliation

Programming

- ✓ Partnered with local organizations for events including, Mountain View Moccasin House, The Chinook Winds Lodge, Carstairs FCSS, Mountain View Country Family Resource Network, The HSS Leadership group, the Carstairs AG Society, the Carstairs Horticultural Club, and The Carstairs Library,
- ✓ Educational Programming for the Grade 2s and Grade 5s. Developing new programing for grade 9s.
- ✓ Hosted 5 concerts
- ✓ Hosted 4 reminisce speaker events

Exhibits & Display

- ✓ Maintaining the museum's social media presence
- ✓ Continued the redevelopment of the North Gallery
- ✓ Art Gallery
 - 12 Months of Art Programing with a specific Focus on Central Alberta Artists.
- ✓ Offsite (Library Exhibits)
 - Bob Clark
 - Carstairs Baseball
 - Local film History
 - Arbor Day
 - Christmas Bird Count

Facilities & Maintenance

- ✓ Pest control
- ✓ Replaced emergency lighting.
- ✓ Improved water drainage
- ✓ Prepared for an Engineers assessment of the church foundation.
- ✓ Planted an additional 32 new perennials/bulbs into the garden

2025 YEAR OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES

In 2025 the Carstairs Heritage Centre will complete its redevelopment of the North Gallery. This will include final edits to the Sports, Public Utilities and Telephone exhibits. Moreover, the museum will complete its Indigenous history exhibit. The museum has developed a good relationship with Grant Many Heads, a lead programmer for the Blackfoot Crossing Museum who has offered knowledge and advice on this display. Our museum will continue this partnership as we look to improve our interpretation of Carstairs's 19th century history. This includes a period when the present location of the town was used as a NWMP station. The museum has acquired a series of NWMP reports from that era.

The museum is renewing its Alberta Museum Association accreditation, which occurs every 5 years. In that time the museum board and staff will conduct a formal policy review to make sure the museum's policies are in accordance with best practices.

The museum is creating great headway in our collections management. In 2024 the museum saw great improvement in this respect by updating 1128 artifacts in the collections database. For 2025 we plan on building that momentum. In this we will conduct an audit of our food service items including teacups, plates, bowls, and utensils to make sure that our collection is relevant to the community.

The museum plans to move forward with facility maintenance plans that were put on delay in 2024 due to budget constraints. This will be primarily focused on the condition of the church foundation but will also include painting the trim around the museum to improve weather proofing.

Category 1: Projects and Operations

Category 1 Activities/Goals	Resources (B = Board; C/M = Curator/Manager; VT = Volunteer Team; SS = Seasonal Staff; Com = Committee)	Timelines (end of fiscal)				
		2	2	2	2	2
		0	0	0	0	0
		2	2	2	2	2
		5	6	7	8	9
Restorative Conservation of the Knox Presbyterian Church	Primary – B , C/M Secondary – VT	X	X	X		
Improving tracking volunteer hours Using Track it Forward	Primary – C/M Secondary – VT	X	X	X	X	X
Increasing Society Membership (membership drives, perc sect)	Primary – B , C/M Secondary – VT	X	X	X	X	X
Increasing Board of Directors	Primary – B , C/M	X	X	X	X	X
Continue Phase 1 Regional Signage	Primary – VT Secondary – C/M	X	X			
Town of Carstairs Heritage Signage	Primary - C/M Secondary – VT; SS			X	X	
Grow Volunteer Program – develop volunteer job descriptions.	Primary – C/M	X	X	X	X	X
Museum publication series	Primary – VT, C/M			X	X	X
Maintain museum's online presence (website, Facebook, etc.)	Primary – C/M, SS	X	X	X	X	X
Conduct a formal policy review	Primary - C/M, B	X	X			
Improve museum's accessibility	Primary - C/M Secondary – VT; SS	X	X	X	X	X
Develop a one-page sustainability plan	Primary - C/M, B					

Category 2: Partnership and Funds Development

Category 2 Activities/Goals	Resources (B = Board; C/M = Curator/Manager; VT = Volunteer Team; SS = Seasonal Staff; Com = Committee)	Timelines (end of fiscal)				
		2 0 2 5	2 0 2 6	2 0 2 7	2 0 2 8	2 0 2 9
Annual Fundraising Event	Primary: Com	X	X	X	X	X
Strengthen and explore community partnerships – library, playschool, 4H, etc.	Primary – C/M	X	X	X	X	X
Develop and implement Marketing and Promotion Plan	Primary – C/M Secondary - B	X	X			
Develop Signage for the QEII			X			
Partner with local businesses to synergize local tourism	Primary – C/M Secondary - Com	X	X	X		
Research and source new granting opportunities	Primary – C/M	X	X	X	X	X
Reference organizational structure plan to hire second staff member	Primary- B , C/M			X	X	
Develop and execute Fundraising Action Plan	Primary – B Secondary - Com	X	X	X	X	X

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Remain agile to seek and meet new fundraising opportunities	Primary – B Secondary - Com	X	X	X	X	X
Grow relationship with Local Indigenous Community	Primary – C/M Secondary - B	X	X	X	X	X

Category 3: Collections Management

Category 3 Activities/Goals	Resources (B = Board; C/M = Curator/Manager; VT = Volunteer Team; SS = Seasonal Staff; Com = Committee)	Timelines (end of fiscal)				
		2	2	2	2	2
		0	0	0	0	0
		2	2	2	2	2
		5	6	7	8	9
Archives Cataloguing	Primary: SS, VT, C/M	X	X	X	X	X
Ongoing collections work – and upgrading to Museum Standard	Primary: C/M Secondary: VT	X	X	X	X	X
Ongoing database and paper gift record reconciliation	Primary: VT Secondary: C/M	X	X			
Photo scanning	Primary: SS	X	X			
Pursue newspaper digitization/ preservation project (as able to be funded)	Primary: C/M, Secondary: VT			X		
Collection Inventory	Primary: VT Secondary: C/M	X	X			
Audit of food service items	Primary: C/M, Secondary: VT	X	X			

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Audit storage facilities and develop plan	Primary: C/M	X	X			
Upgrade storage facilities	Primary: C/M Secondary: VT			X	X	

Category 4: Programming

Category 4 Activities/Goals	Resources (B = Board; C/M = Curator/Manager; VT = Volunteer Team; SS = Seasonal Staff; Com = Committee)	Timelines (end of fiscal)				
		2	2	2	2	2
		0	0	0	0	0
		2	2	2	2	2
		5	6	7	8	9
Improve Advertising and marking	Secondary: C/M	X	X	X	X	X
Continued development of upper grade (grade 5-12) programming	Primary: C/M Secondary: VT	X	X	X		
Formal review of educational programming	Primary: Com	X	X			
Continue guest speaker series	Primary: Com	X	X	X	X	X
Build out Carstairs Oral History Project	Primary: C/M Secondary: B, VT	X	X	X	X	X
Annual fieldtrips	Primary: C/M	X	X	X	X	X
Grow performing arts series	Primary: Com	X	X	X	X	X
Develop a general public tours and interpretive theme (adult and youth – e.g. scavenger hunt)	Primary: C/M Secondary: SS	X	X			

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Develop public programming and increase number of in-house events. (incl: summer programming)	Primary: C/M Secondary: Com	X	X	X	X	X
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Category 5: Exhibits & Display

Category 5 Activities/Goals	Resources (B = Board; C/M = Curator/Manager; VT = Volunteer Team; SS = Seasonal Staff; Com = Committee)	Timelines (end of fiscal)				
		2 0 2 5	2 0 2 6	2 0 2 7	2 0 2 8	2 0 2 9
Add object labels/contextual information into existing displays as needed	Primary: C/M Secondary: SS	X	X			
Develop plan for Ing Gallery Space – rotating/traveling	Primary: C/M	X	X	X	X	X
Pointen Gallery Space – rotating art	Primary: C/M	X	X	X	X	X
Create A Public Utilities Exhibit for North Gallery	Primary: C/M Secondary: SS	X				
Create an Indigenous History Exhibit in Partnership with the Black Foot crossing museum.	Primary: C/M	X	X			
Implement North Gallery Interpretive Plan and begin creation/installation of new exhibits	Primary: C/M Secondary: SS	X	X	X	X	X
Develop a Satellite Exhibit at the Memorial arena	Primary: C/M Secondary: SS	X	X			
Edit and update Sam Scarlet Text panels in South Gallery	Primary: C/M Secondary: SS	X	X			

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Develop 3 new exhibits (Annually) for the Library Satellite display	Primary: C/M Secondary: SS	X	X	X	X	X
Develop a Satellite Display at other Third-Party Sites (I.e. Curling rink)	Primary: C/M Secondary: SS		X	X	X	X
Develop Exhibits for Special Events	Primary: C/M Secondary: SS	X	X	X	X	X
Develop an online Photo archive	Primary: C/M Secondary: SS		X	X	X	
Improve Grounds, specifically the garden path and controlling weeds	Primary: C/M Secondary: SS, VT	X	X	X		