

2014 ANNUAL REPORT

THE FERNIE AND DISTRICT
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

WHAT IS A **MUSEUM**?

“[museums are] institutions created in the public interest. They engage their visitors, foster deeper understanding and promote the enjoyment and sharing of authentic cultural and natural heritage. Museums acquire, preserve, research, interpret and exhibit the tangible and intangible evidence of society and nature. As educational institutions, museums provide a physical forum for critical inquiry and investigation. Museums are permanent, not-for-profit institutions whose exhibits are regularly open to the general public.”

International Council of Museums

Museums often perform many other functions in communities, such as building community pride, increasing tourism, fostering economic development and providing entertainment.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the FDHS 2015 Annual General Meeting.

Since we last gathered at our 2014 AGM, the Society's Board of Directors, together with staff, have done much to move the Museum's business forward. This has been an exciting transition year.

The new Museum and its main floor exhibit – part of retired Director Mike Pennock's legacy – continues to draw ever increasing numbers of visitors. Most were greeted by Nick Giuliano, who this spring retired after manning the Downtown Visitor Information Centre front desk for years.

Programming was a priority this year. In August, Lori Bradish's "*Fold it Up and Put it Away*" curse raising commemoration gathered crowds Chautauqua-style under tents set outside our doors. There was music, dance, poetry, photographs, artifacts and a video installation by artist Gwen MacGregor.

This winter, newly hired Director-Curator Ron Ulrich brought the travelling exhibit "*Olympic Spirit – Canada's Sports Heroes*" to the Museum. Olympic Spirit examined the role that sport plays in individual lives as well as in the telling of community and national stories. Olympians Mark Tewksbury, Kevin Martin and Beckie Scott made multiple appearances at well-attended events organized by staff and community partners. A gallery portrait exhibit of Canadian Olympians drew adults and youths alike, and portraitist Gordon Milne gave painting clinics to school groups.

Ron Ulrich, who started in August, brings to us a lifetime of achievements in all areas of museum management. He has translated the Board's strategic direction into an ambitious business plan. Ron and Lori have secured grants from new sources, widened our partnership network, and increased our operational efficiency. Your new quarterly e-newsletter will keep you apprised of these and other developments, as does the Museum's revamped website.

In 2015-2016, expect your Board of Directors to fine-tune the strategic direction, to refine the governance model and to update the policy framework. We will certainly make the most of every opportunity to carry out the Museum's mandate and to engage in significant ways with community.

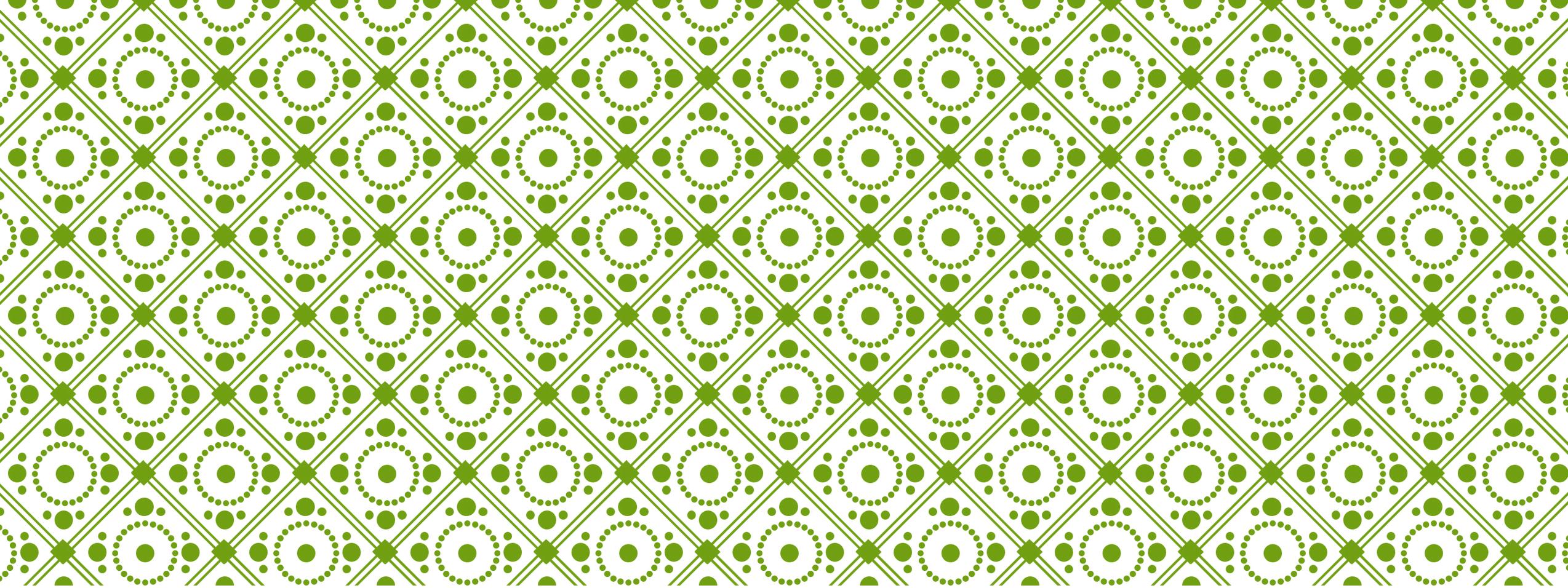
This year will bring more opportunities for member volunteers. If you have a passion or an interest that might be met through volunteer activity, please chat about it with Museum staff.



Dave O'Haire
President

GUIDING **STRATEGIC** PRINCIPLES

- Build **Community** Support, Engage and Empower
- Build **Place** Foster a positive community identity
and visitor experience
- Build **Memory** Preserve community memory
Create authentic meaning



IN REVIEW

2014

2014

A YEAR OF TRANSITIONS

Transition from Capital to **Operations**

Between 2009 and 2014, the Society, with the support of 55 volunteers and 22 local businesses, generated over \$565,000 to rehabilitate and restore the 1909 Home Bank building located at 491 Victoria (2nd) Avenue in the heart of historic downtown Fernie, as well as develop and install its ongoing core exhibit, *This Is Our Fernie*, on the main floor.

With the few remaining capital components completed in 2014, the Board has shifted its focus to community engagement; enhancing the visitor experience to the Museum and to Fernie; and making our collections as broadly accessible to the public as possible.

Transition in **Governance**

Laura Nelson, after serving as the driving force behind the Museum Project for over five years, stepped down as President in 2013. Dave O'Haire, with experience as Administrator at the Art Station, stepped into this role in 2014 as the Board shifted its focus to operations.

In preparation for hiring a new Director-Curator, the Board reviewed the 2009 to 2015 strategic plan and affirmed the strategic direction desired for the Museum. The Board created a Governance Committee to develop governance policies to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of both the Board and its Director-Curator. In Fall 2015, the Board will continue the work of policy development and will be developing a 2016-2020 strategic plan.

2014 A YEAR OF **TRANSITIONS**

Transition of **Leadership**



LEFT: After serving as Director of the Museum for over 15 years, Mike Pennock retired in Summer 2014. A retirement party for Mike was held at the Museum on June 26, attended by the many organizations and people touched by Mike during his tenure.

RIGHT: Following an extensive selection process, the Board welcomed Ron Ulrich on August 5 as the Museum's new Director-Curator. Ron was raised in the Crowsnest Pass and brings over 30 years of museum experience to the position.

2014

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Completed the Museum Project: refinished remaining exterior woodwork and installed final components of the facility's computer network, telephone and security systems.
- Commemorated the 50th anniversary of the Curse Raising with an exhibit and series of community events.
- Developed branding strategies with key stakeholders and partners, including the City of Fernie, Tourism Fernie, and the Fernie Chamber of Commerce.
- Developed an exhibit and program strategy for 2015. Installed the *Olympic Spirit: Canadian Sports Heroes* exhibit, on loan from Canada's Sports Hall of Fame in Calgary, Alberta.
- Streamlined internal accounting and information management systems and purchased new office furnishings to increase administrative efficiency.
- Delivered a Christmas program based on the Victorian version of *A Christmas Carol*.
- 2014 Museum attendance included 15,431 walk-in visitors and 571 program participants.

STRATEGIES IN ACTION

BUILDING **COMMUNITY**

INITIATIVE: OLYMPIC SPIRIT - CANADA'S SPORTS HEROES | NOV 26 2014 to MARCH 31 2015



STRATEGIES IN ACTION

BUILDING **COMMUNITY**

SUPPORT:

Canadian Tire, Fernie was a presenting sponsor of the exhibit. In turn, the Museum supported Canadian Tire's sponsorship of the Canadian Olympic Team by facilitating an in-store visit with Kevin Martin. Martin spoke passionately about teamwork and how Canadian Tire's sponsorship program helped his team reach the 2010 Olympics.

ENGAGE:

Local artists and high school students alike challenged their understanding of portraiture through gallery-based workshops with exhibiting artist, Gordon Milne.

A total of 700 people were engaged through exhibit programming; walk-in attendance from November 28, 2014 to March 31, 2015 totaled 4,500.

EMPOWER:

Fernie Secondary School has a persistent bullying problem. During his visit to Fernie, Olympian Mark Tewksbury spoke to over 300 students and teachers about diversity and the importance of accepting each others' differences. He later spoke on the traits of great leaders to a sold-out audience of Fernie Museum, Fernie Rotary Club and Fernie Chamber of Commerce members.

STRATEGIES IN ACTION BUILDING PLACE

INITIATIVE: FOLD IT UP AND PUT IT AWAY: THE FERNIE CURSE RE-EXAMINED | JUNE 1 to SEPT 30



STRATEGIES IN ACTION

BUILDING PLACE

IDENTITY: The story of the Fernie Curse and the Ghost rider symbol are important facets of Fernie's identity and branding. The *Fold It Up and Put It Away* exhibit examined the story of the Fernie curse and explored how the story has woven itself into our sense of place and identity. The exhibit featured a video installation by Gwen MacGregor, an internationally acclaimed artist, that explored the meaning of the 1964 curse raising event in which her grand father, Fernie Mayor James White, played a prominent role.

EXPERIENCE: The Museum hosted a speaker series in conjunction with the exhibit that explored the Fernie Curse story from multiple perspectives. A Chautauqua-style event featuring an original play, a community dance, and a luncheon celebrated the 50th anniversary of the "lifting of the curse" including a formal ceremony with Ktunaxa elders.

Programming events attracted more than 500 attendees and attracted 8,783 walk-in visitors.

STRATEGIES IN ACTION

BUILDING **MEMORY**

Austro-Hungarian internees at the Morrissey Internment Camp, 1918. FM3884-DO



RESEARCH

MORRISSEY INTERNMENT CAMP

The camp was in operation from September 28, 1915 until October 18, 1918.

Working in partnership with local researcher Daniel Ste. Marie and Sarah Beaulieu, a PhD candidate from Vancouver, BC, the Museum launched a major long-term research project on the Morrissey Internment Camp operations.

Ongoing work includes development of a database of internees and research into the operations of the camp and daily life for internees. With our research partners, the Museum has gathered a number of important source archival documents from the Library and Archives of Canada and the Swiss Federal Archives related to the Morrissey camp.

STRATEGIES IN ACTION

BUILDING **MEMORY**

Picariello's ice cream wagon, Fernie, FM 1222

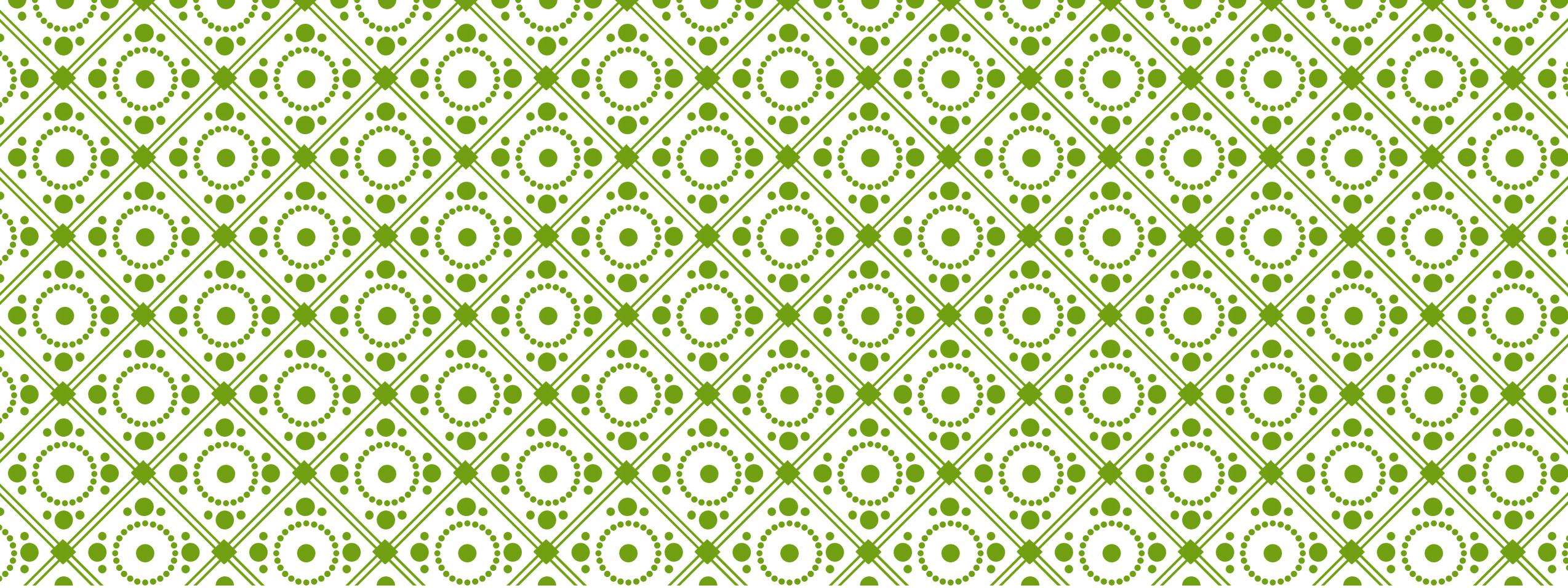


RESEARCH

PROHIBITION and EMILIO PICARIELLO

In 2014, the Museum launched a second social history research project on Prohibition and one of Fernie's notorious businessmen and bootleggers, Emilio Picariello. Information is being mined from local archives, Glenbow Archives, BC and Alberta provincial archives and the Library and Archives of Canada.

Picariello was an Italian businessman who operated a number of legitimate businesses in Fernie between 1911 and 1917 and worked as an agent for the Pollock Wine Company. He moved to Blairmore in 1918 to operate the Alberta Hotel, running booze between "wet" Fernie and "dry" Blairmore until 1922. He gained infamy across Canada when he was tried and hung in 1923 for the murder of Constable Steven Lawson of the Alberta Provincial Police.



OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

2015

2015

OBJECTIVES

- Deliver programs and events that engage students, residents and visitors with Fernie's history in partnership with community organizations, groups and businesses.
- Curate two temporary exhibits in the 2nd floor gallery: *Fernie At War: The Morrissey Internment Camp* and *An Immigrant Story: The Rise and Fall of Emilio Picariello*.
- Develop a volunteer program to recruit, train, and engage volunteers in the work of the Museum and the Society.
- Make the museum's photograph collection accessible by publishing an online searchable database; in 2015, the Museum will make over 750 images available online for public research and enjoyment.

2015

OBJECTIVES

- Implement a collections management software system and procedures which assist in the ongoing management of artifact and archival collections.
- Develop operational policies for core museum functions, including collections management, museum exhibitions and museum programming.
- Develop governance policies that define the role of the Board and its relationship with their primary staff member, the Director-Curator.
- Develop a business model that aligns the museum with City of Fernie and other stakeholders' values with a focus on community engagement and organizational sustainability.

2014

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Fernie & District Historical Society would like to extend thanks to our many project sponsors, funding partners, community partners and volunteers, without whom the operation of the Fernie Museum would not be possible.

Sponsors

- Canadian Tire, Fernie
- Claris Media
- Community Listing Service
- Fernie Alpine Resort
- Fernie Lodging Company
- Home Building Centre
- IGS Group
- Island Lake Lodge
- Kooacanusa Campsite
- Mow and Snow
- Oolichan Books
- Overwaitea, Fernie
- Patti's Party Rentals
- Starbucks, Fernie

Funding Partners

- City of Fernie
- Province of BC | BC Arts Council, BC Lotteries Fund
- Columbia Basin Trust | CKCA

Community Partners

- Programs: City of Fernie Public Works Department, Fernie Alpine Ski Team, Fernie Curling Club, Fernie Firefighters, Fernie Freestyle Club, Fernie Nordic Society, Fernie Rotary Club
- Tourism: Fernie Chamber of Commerce, Tourism Fernie
- Culture: Fernie Arts Station, Fernie Heritage Library, Crowsnest Museum, Frank Slide Interpretive Centre

Volunteers

The Board wishes to thank all those who have volunteered on the Board and have assisted with events and exhibits in 2014. Volunteers contributed 1,046 hours in 2014.

A special thank you to Daniel Ste. Marie and Sarah Beaulieu for your generous support of the Morrissey research and exhibit project.