



FRIENDS OF DRAKE WELL, INC.

ANNUAL MEETING OCTOBER 29, 2025

Featuring the FY 2024–2025 Annual Report



FY 2024-25 ANNUAL REPORT FOR FRIENDS OF DRAKE WELL, INC.

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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**

**Tamera Ochs Rothschild,
Secretary & Acting
Treasurer**

Joseph Carter

Robert Felton

Lawrence Fledderman

Kelly Anderson Gregg

Gerald Knickerbocker

Donald Rog

Jason Ruggiero

Megan Sternagel



LOOKING BACK: ANOTHER GREAT YEAR!

The 2024-25 fiscal year was another great year for Friends of Drake Well, Inc. (FDW) and Drake Well Museum and Park! Visitation was strong, continuing with numbers like before the pandemic. The Free Admission and Transportation Program for schools brought in 2,599 school students, which was over 700 more than the previous school year. Events were also well attended, bringing in over 1,900 visitors/attendees – also more than last year. Event sponsorships increased as well, bringing in \$16,675 total.

The Admission & Transportation Scholarship Program, coordinated by FDW, provides free admission for school groups including public and private schools, homeschool groups, cyber school groups, and more. It also provides these groups with the opportunity to have their transportation costs covered. During FY 2024-25, Friends of Drake Well funded the program through grants received from the John K. Henne Charitable Trust and Crawford Gives. In total, FDW paid for \$22,630 worth of school tour admissions and transportation – all covered by the grant funding sources listed above! We are proud to be able to continue this program for the current school year, 2025-26, with 494 students from sixteen different schools having already benefitted from this great opportunity.

Drake Well Museum's events during the FY 2024-25 were well attended, including Drake Day: CIRCUS! (426 attendees) and the 40th Annual Fall Gas Up (315 attendees). Both events outdid their numbers from 2023. Drake Well Museum brought back its Engine Start Up Day for the first time since the pandemic on May 4, 2025. While the numbers were not as high as our larger events, the day still brought in 80 people, which greatly helped to increase numbers for the spring. The Oil Creek 5 & 13 Stacked Trail Races, in its fourth year, performed very well in 2025 with 139 runners and close to \$7,000 in net profit for Friends of Drake Well.

Historic Pithole City also had a successful season, both in 2024 and 2025. The summer of 2024 saw Pithole's final Wildcatter Day as both staff and volunteers felt it was time to try something different. Instead of one day of living history demonstrations, it was decided to have smaller demonstrations throughout the 2025 summer season at Pithole. The site hosted a total of 10 demonstrations on different weekends including copper smithing, wood carving, spinning and weaving, and more! Pithole ended its Summer 2025 season with a total of 639 visitors, a twenty-five percent increase from 2024 despite not having Wildcatter Day! The 2026 season will see the return of demonstrations as well as the inclusion of speakers throughout the summer at Pithole – stay tuned for a full schedule!

Our goals for fiscal year 2025-2026 is to boost visitation numbers at both sites, continue providing quality events and educational programming, increase outreach initiatives and secure grant funding for the revitalized Outreach Program, and improve Drake Well Museum's outdoor interpretative signage. Although we are stepping into this new fiscal year with challenges of rising costs and an economy that is greatly influencing how much people travel and spend, we are willing and ready to meet those challenges to succeed in the goals we have set.

Thank you to everyone who helps in making Drake Well Museum and Park such a beautiful and fascinating place year after year – our staff, our volunteers, our members, our supporters, and our community at large. By working together, we continue to succeed in maintaining the site's mission to uncover, preserve, and share the rich petroleum history of Pennsylvania!



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). Although we do not all report to the same employer, we still work together as one team with one goal – to help Drake Well Museum succeed in its educational mission!

The last fiscal year saw some staff changes at Friends of Drake Well. We bid farewell to former part-time bookkeeper Mark Entwistle at the end of 2024 as he moved on to other ventures. A new bookkeeper, Mark Southwick, was hired in February 2025. Mr. Southwick hit the ground running and has done a great job at keeping our finances well organized, especially with the Museum Store which is operated by FDW. We also welcomed a new Pithole Coordinator for the summer of 2025, Alyssa Shick, a student at Ashland University and a former student intern for FDW. Alyssa did a fantastic job in her new role, working at Pithole every weekend over the summer and keeping the site clean and welcoming for visitors. FDW also hired another former student intern, Alex Huffman, as an operator for the Drake Well replica at the beginning of the 2025 summer season. Huffman replaced former Replica Operator John Hetrick, who was hired in May 2025 as FDW's new Outreach Coordinator. Hetrick is spearheading the site's Outreach Program which was dormant since 2019 when the former MEET-U outreach program ended. Hetrick attended various events and festivals throughout the summer of 2025 and plans to continue building outreach initiatives to promote Drake Well Museum to potential visitors and tour groups.

New staff for the PHMC included the hiring of Gary Plappert in the spring as the seasonal Semi-Skilled Laborer, replacing James Becker from the previous season. Gary resigned his position in August 2025, and, although his time with us was short, he did a wonderful job with maintaining the site. His position will be filled in spring 2026.

Friends of Drake Well continues to have success in finding student interns! Chloe Preston and Nick Ferzetti both served as interns under Friends of Drake Well during the summer of 2025. Chloe focused on non-profit management, assisting Emily Weaver in maintaining the membership database and helping with marketing. Nick worked closely with Sarah Goodman, focusing on museum education and assisting with the planning and implementation of the Discovery Days Camp. The PHMC hired its 2025 Keystone Intern, Maya Giles, 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! FDW plans to hire two student interns again for Summer 2026 as well as a third intern under the new David L. Weber Internship program, a position that will focus solely on historical research and assisting with the *OilField Journal*.

The upcoming fiscal year will see the departure of Michael Knecht, PHMC Site Administrator, as he is set to retire in April 2026. Michael will be greatly missed but also remembered for his many contributions to the success of both Drake Well Museum and Historic Pithole City. Thank you, Michael, for everything you have done for our sites, staff, and volunteers during your time at Drake Well!

Current FDW Employees

- Emily Weaver, Executive Director (FT)
- John Hetrick, Outreach Coordinator (FT)
- Toni Brown, Visitor Services & Curatorial Assistant (FT)
- Mark Southwick, Bookkeeper (PT)
- Vickie Ruppensburg, Museum Store Manager (PT)
- Frances "Corky" Fulton, Museum Store Clerk (PT)
- Alyssa Shick, Seasonal Pithole Coordinator (PT)
- Seasonal Replica Operators (PT): Alex Huffman, David Mock
- Summer 2025 Interns: Nick Ferzetti, Chloe Preston

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
- Summer 2025 PHMC Keystone Intern: Maya Giles

FDW FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

FY 2024-25

GRANTS

Grant funding received during FY 2024-25 benefitted educational programming, the free admission for schools program, student interns, site support, and promotional/marketing needs. NOTE: Some grants are received within one fiscal year but are used for needs during the next fiscal year.

FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25
\$110,000	\$98,774.00



FDW MEMBERSHIP

Memberships remain steady with applications available in the Museum Store and at

FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25
\$6,975	\$5,958

Pithole throughout the regular operating seasons as well as at the front desk area of the Museum. The annual membership drive was conducted in October and November 2024, which included sending membership information and applications to over 1,000 different non-members within the FDW database. Members due for renewal receive reminders in the mail which greatly encourages renewal. Proceeds from memberships go directly to Friends of Drake Well, Inc., for unrestricted use in support of Drake Well Museum and Park.

FDW TOTAL DIRECT SUPPORT

FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25
\$16,587	\$11,845

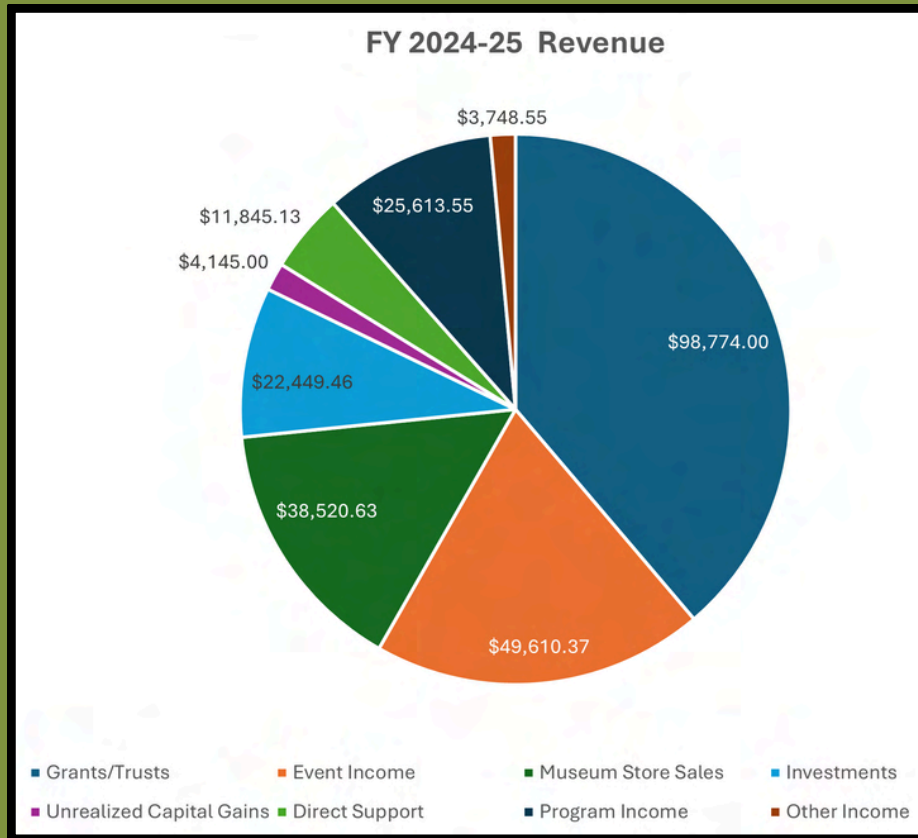
Direct Support includes Annual Appeal, Corporate Donations, and Memorials/Donations.



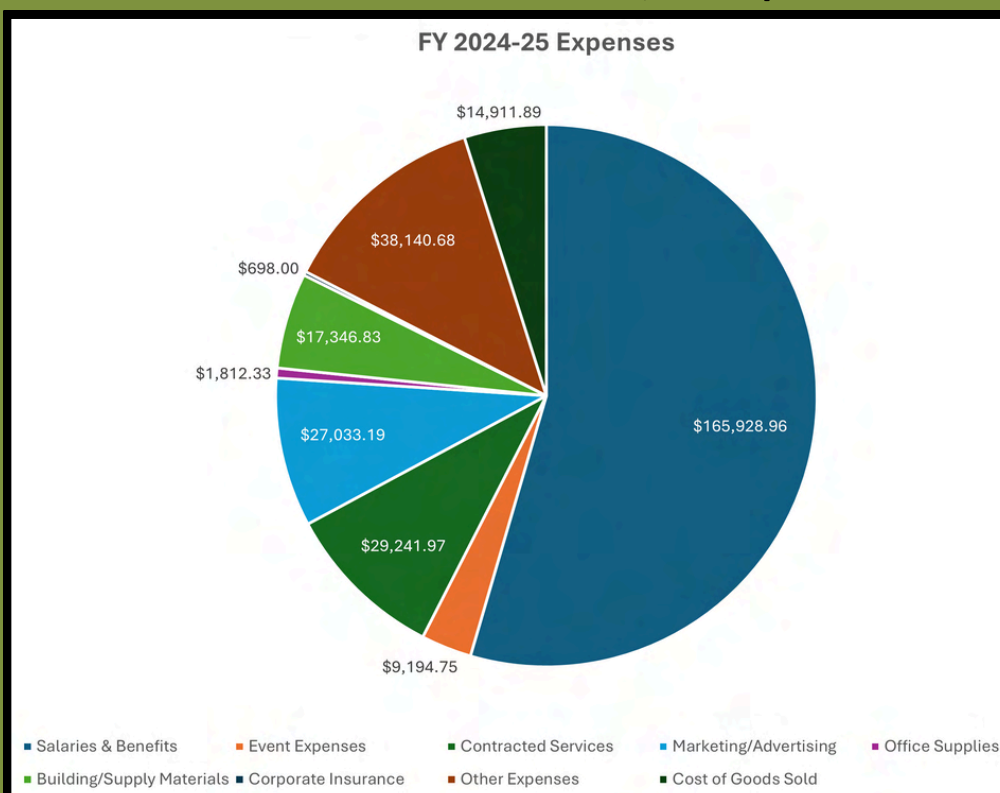
FDW FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

FY 2024-25

GROSS PROFIT FY 2024-25: \$235,649



TOTAL EXPENSES: \$288,698



Friends of Drake Well, Inc., has been operating on an approved deficit budget for the last two fiscal years as it worked to spend down funding left over from the pandemic. Examples of this would be funding for internships, which was not used during the pandemic, and the restart of the Outreach Program.

It is also important to note that some of the grant funding received for FY 2024-25 was reported during FY 2023-24, skewing the numbers for that fiscal year.

The organization's largest expense continues to be wages and salaries, although a substantial portion of the salaries of FDW employees are paid completely or in part by grant funding.

Marketing and advertising also increased in expense due to rising costs. Staff will continue to reevaluate the organization's marketing strategy to better accommodate these costs.

DRAKE WELL UPDATES FY 2024-25

MUSEUM VISITATION

FY 2023-24

16,837 VISITORS
1,867 STUDENTS

FY 2024-25

18,098 VISITORS
2,599 STUDENTS



VOLUNTEERS

FY 2023-24

90 VOLUNTEERS
2,722 VOLUNTEER HOURS

FY 2024-25

60 VOLUNTEERS
3,095 VOLUNTEER HOURS

FACILITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS



- Pithole Visitor Center was repainted and stained on the exterior. A full survey of the entire site was also completed.
- Staff made significant progress on the Blacksmith and Cooper Shop this year. The exterior of the building is completed and inspected. It is now connected to electric. Work continues on the interior.
- The restoration of the Otto Cupler Torpedo truck is nearly complete. It will be ready for use for outreach and education in 2026.
- The exterior of the Museum Store was repainted along with its doors and the doors of the outside restrooms.
- Staff dismantled and moved a Bovaird & Seyfang engine along with its engine house and eccentric from Bradford to Drake Well Museum. It is currently in storage until it is ready to be set up within the Business of Oil outdoor exhibit area.

PHMC EXPENDITURES AT DWM, FY 2024-25



Keystone Preservation Projects: \$271,930
General Government Operations: \$628,045
Total: \$899,975

EVENTS & PROGRAMS

over

1,940

event and program attendees
during FY 2024-25!



86

attendees at
Wisdom & More!

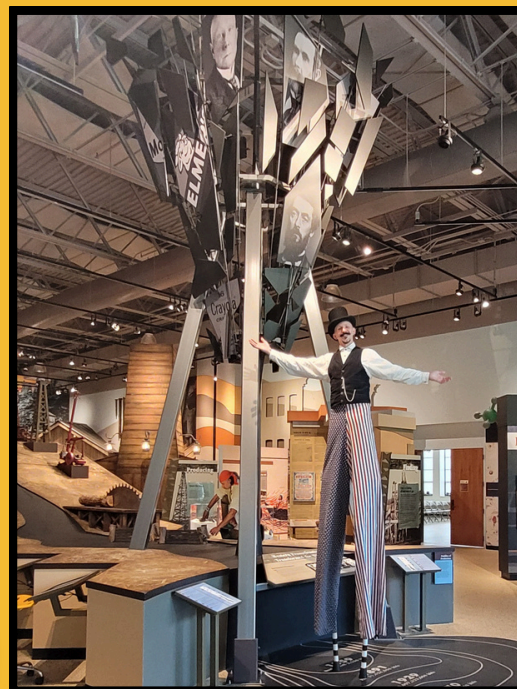


67

campers at the 2024
Discovery Days Camp!

315

visitors during the 40th
Annual Fall Gas Up!



426

paid attendees for Drake Day: CIRCUS!

SAVE THE DATE

all dates subject to change

- Winter Academy, Jan-Feb (multiple dates)
- Cabin Fever Party at Historic Pithole City, Feb 7
- Pennsylvania's Charter Day, March 8
- Wisdom & More Series, March (multiple dates)
- Behind the Scenes: Members Only, April 9
- Engine Start Up Day, May 3

- Oil Creek 5 & 13 Stacked Trail Races, May 16
- Discovery Day Camp, July (multiple dates)
- Drake Day: Celebrate America 250!, Aug 9
- Drake Well Marathon & Half, Aug 16
- 42nd Annual Fall Gas Up, Sept 12
- Oil Boom Historic Dinner, Sept 24
- Historic Pithole City Lantern Tours, Oct 3

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



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