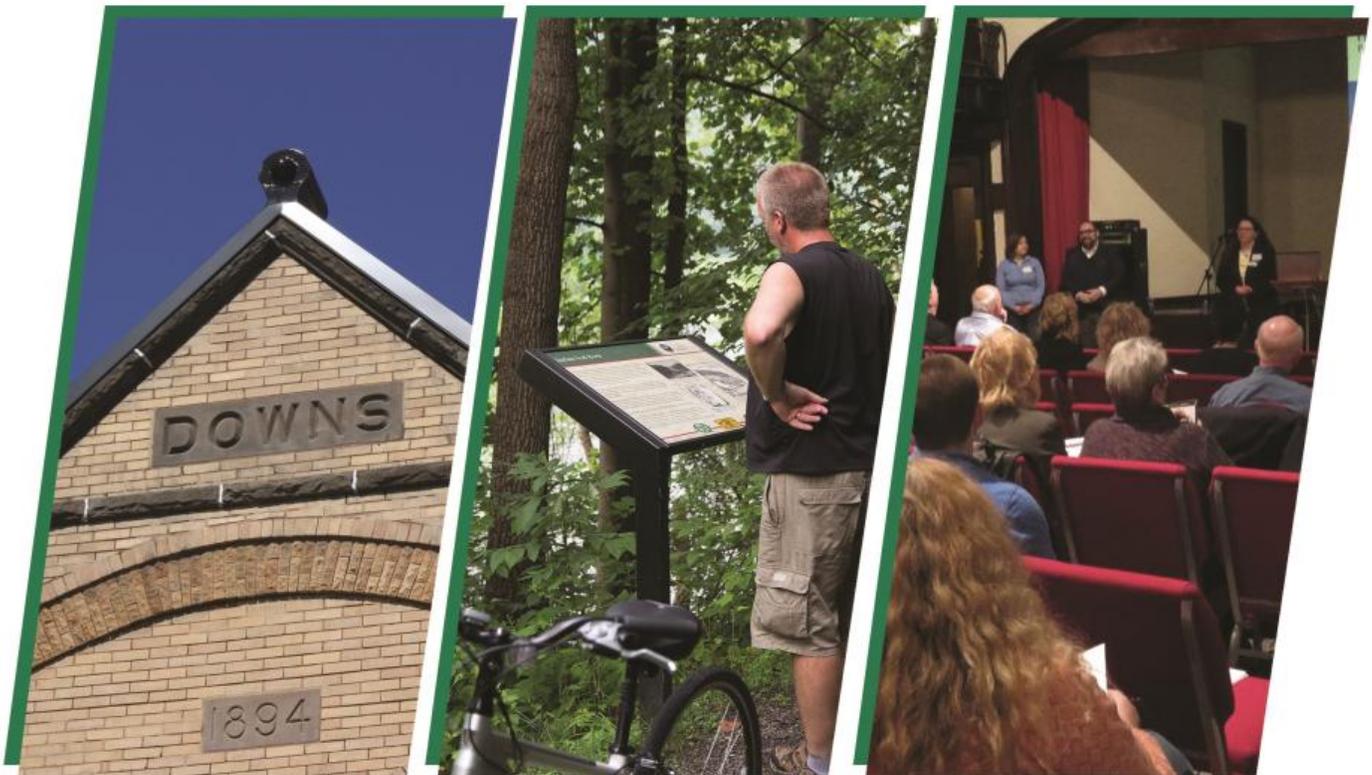




# Annual Report 2020



## Our Mission

The Mission of the Oil Region Alliance of Business, Industry and Tourism is to manage the Oil Region National Heritage Area and to increase the prosperity of the Oil Region by enticing all people to live, work, learn and play in “*the valley that changed the world*” through the preservation, promotion, development and support of historical, educational, natural, recreational, residential, commercial and industrial destinations.

## A Message from our Leadership

September, 2020

Dear Friends of the Oil Region Alliance:

In a year repeatedly described as unprecedented, the Oil Region Alliance has fortunately weathered the storm well.

Despite sporadic closure of our office, staff members often working from home, and conducting much business and most council meetings by teleconference, we continued to move ahead with our management of the Oil Region National Heritage Area and continued our ongoing efforts to increase the prosperity of the Oil Region by enticing all people to live, work, learn and play in “the Valley that Changed the World” through the preservation, promotion, development, and support of historical, educational, natural, recreational, residential, commercial and industrial destinations.

It has certainly not been business as usual, and, indeed, things maybe never be quite the same again. Our hearts go out to business owners facing closure, families who have lost loved ones, essential workers keeping us going, and everyone negatively impacted by the pandemic.

We have stood with community leaders, encouraging public safety and rallying our local economy.

The accomplishments at right highlight the Alliance’s activities since last year, including the sale of the Allegheny Overlook Apartments, the receipt of a \$300,000 brownfields grant from the EPA, the purchase of a new brownfield site, the completion of the fully redesigned OilRegion.org website, the beginning of an ATV trail study, and the initial phase of a strategic plan for the organization and ORNHA.

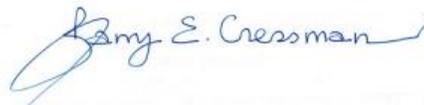
Perhaps the greatest achievement of the last twelve months is the reauthorization of our region as a National Heritage Area through September 30, 2022. With future budgets uncertain amid this tumultuous economy, it is more important than ever for us to advocate for all heritage areas and extension of our own authorization and funding.

The history we preserve and the economic impetus we provide are too important to leave to chance. This year has shown how unpredictable many of the things we take for granted really are and how necessary organizations like the Oil Region Alliance can be in times of troubling uncertainty.

We need your continued support and your input.

The Board of Directors and Staff of the Oil Region Alliance thank you for your ongoing dedication to the Oil Region National Heritage Area, its mission and initiatives. Your membership and donations for economic advancement, heritage enrichment, tourism promotion, and recreational development are vital to our ongoing efforts. You make the achievement of our goals possible.

Sincerely,



Barry E. Cressman, Chair



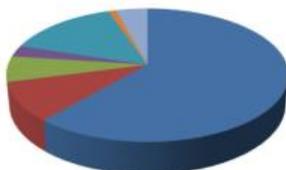

John R. Phillips, II, President/CEO



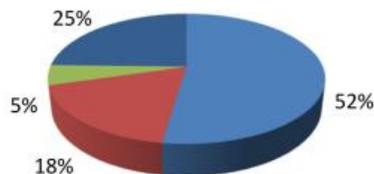
## Financial Summary

Based on 2019 financial statements. Year ending Dec. 31, 2019.

Revenue	
Grants	\$918,431
Hotel Occupancy Tax	141,839
Membership Dues	93,100
Contributions	40,756
Rentals	223,929
Fees	15,502
Other	62,633
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$1,496,190</b>



Expenses	
Program	\$709,487
Management	245,622
Fundraising	67,440
Property Manag.	333,156
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$1,355,705</b>



### Assets

Cash & Equivalents	\$42,044
Accounts, Rents & Grant Rec.	\$371,827
Building & Improvements	\$1,778,071
Office Equipment	\$122,418
Buildings Held for Investment	\$1,526,511
Development Projects	\$1,052,271
Other	\$45,200
Depreciation & Amortization	(\$903,298)
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$4,035,044</b>

### Liabilities

Accounts Payable	\$103,984
Payroll Liabilities	\$16,618
Unearned Revenue	\$754,735
Other Long-term Liabilities	\$19,386
Notes Payable	\$340,818
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$1,235,541</b>

### Net Assets

### Total L & NA

**\$2,799,503**  
**\$4,035,044**

**On the Cover:** (left to right) Rehabilitation of the ORA-owned Downs Building, at the corner of Elm and Center streets in Oil City, continues. A cyclist stops to read an interpretive panel along the trail. Six new panels were added on the Queen City Trail in Titusville. A Town Hall meeting held January 2020 in Franklin brought members of the faith community together with local leaders to discuss partnerships and opportunities for preservation with Partners for Sacred Places of Philadelphia.

## Accomplishments of the Oil Region Alliance ~ September 2019 through September 2020 ~

**William H. Scheide House** rehabilitation continues with the kitchen, accessibility, and building stabilization projects.

**Coal Oil Johnny House** held a day-long open house.

**Tarbell House** hosted several student-led and private teas in the fall and one in spring. New tenants moved into the upstairs apartment. Participated in Crawford Gives fundraising opportunity.

**Downs Building** Progress on the Downs Rehabilitation Project in 2019 included Phase 7 first floor plumbing and general construction with additional general construction, electrical, HVAC, and exterior improvements scheduled for 2020-2021.

**Tourism** New website at OilRegion.org, went live October 2019. Developed with Bull Moose Marketing, this website serves both the Oil Region Alliance and the Oil Region National Heritage Area.

Produced the 2020 Oil Region Guide with assistance from Lunar Cow Publishing. Due to complications from the pandemic, this issue will serve for 2021, as well. Hard copies of the Guide are available at local Chambers of Commerce, Visitor Centers, Welcome Centers across the state and the ORA office. An interactive digital version of the Guide is available at [OilRegion.org/tourism/visitor-guide/](http://OilRegion.org/tourism/visitor-guide/). Users can turn pages and click on ads and events to be taken to the organizations' websites.

Developed the new Oil Region Visitor Center to be housed inside the Franklin Area Chamber of Commerce with HW Exhibits.

**ORNHA / Heritage** Installed six new interpretative panels along the Queen City Trail in Titusville. Installed two new interpretative panels in Justus Park in Oil City. Updated panels in Titusville (Scheide House) and Emlenton (Emlenton Mill).

Encouraged federal legislation to extend the National Park Service funding authorization period for the ORNHA beyond its sunset date of December 8, 2019. Received reauthorization until September 30, 2022. Continue to work toward reauthorization and funding for long-term sustainability of the ORA and all National Heritage Areas.

Hosted a public Town Hall Meeting with Partners for Sacred Places to discuss the futures of and opportunities for historic houses of worship within the region.

Participated in Titusville Historical Society's Virtual History Camp.

Completed a Preservation Plans for the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church and its former school building in Oil City.

Attended annual ANHA meeting in Washington, DC in February and met with several legislators and federal government agencies.

John Phillips presented U.S. Representative Glenn "G.T." Thompson with a Heritage Champion Award from ANHA.

Created new Oil City Walking and Driving Tour Brochure.

Distributed free Victorian Architecture Sketchbooks to regional school districts and OC&T RR for elementary school aged children.

Began ORNHA Strategic Plan with The Walker Collaborative as consultant.

Chose designer to update ORA literature cabinets.

**Staffing** Marilyn Black, 15-year VP of Heritage Development, retired from the ORA in June. Marilyn was influential in the designation of the Oil Region as both a State and National Heritage Area, as well as with the preservation of historic properties including the Tarbell and Scheide Houses.

Promoted Selina Pedi, part-time Allegheny-Clarion River Valley Region Blueprint Community Coordinator, to full-time Redevelopment Manager. Selina will continue to manage the Blueprint Communities program, but will devote a large portion of time to developing the ORA's new brownfield redevelopment program. She will be a liaison with the EPA and DEP.

Promoted Jennifer Burden, Historian-Educator, to Heritage Program Manager. Jenn is responsible for all grant administration, budgeting and programming for the heritage arm of the ORA, including oversight of historic properties, education and preservation efforts. She will be a liaison with the National Park Service, DCMR, Heritage PA and the Alliance of National Heritage Areas.

Grace St. Claire worked for a second consecutive summer as an intern through the Northwest Pennsylvania Job Connect program.

**Economic Development** Upgraded the security system at 217 Elm Street, Oil City to include video doorbells and entry key cards for every staff member.

Continued to market ORA-owned and other commercial properties, which have seen significant increases in activity.

Continued to advocate for and technically support region-wide infrastructure expansion in multiple communities within the Oil Heritage Region.

Partnering with Clarion University Workforce Training and Development and addressing ongoing workforce needs across all sectors.

Received a \$300,000 EPA Brownfield Community-Wide Assessment grant to assess and begin remediation efforts on six identified brownfields across the region, with work to begin October 2020.

Began distribution, through The Progress News and The Derrick, of a weekly redevelopment-focused newspaper column to publicize and celebrate successful adaptation and redevelopment efforts throughout the region.

**Outdoor Recreation** Provided nearly \$12,000 in funding for mini grants that leveraged an additional \$18,000 toward five projects in the region that ranged from education, trail repairs, and beyond.

Began a feasibility study for an all terrain vehicle trail.

Held the 2019 Get on the Trail Business Plan Contest. Awarded three winners a total of \$9,000 in October 2019. The 2020 contest kicked off in June; winners will be announced in December. Details available at [www.ORAGOT.com](http://www.ORAGOT.com).



### Oil City Main Street Program

The Oil Region Alliance serves as the fiscal agent and provides office space and staff for the Oil City Main Street Program (OCMS). OCMS is a community-driven initiative dedicated to the revitalization of the Oil City central business district. Highlights since September 2019 include:

Designated as a Keystone Main Street Program by Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development

Secured \$50,000 in façade grant funding from Pennsylvania DCED

Named 2019 Partner in Business of the Year by the Venango Area Chamber of Commerce

Continued facilitation of ARTS Oil City’s artist relocation and revitalization initiative

Co-organized (with Oil City Arts Council) the annual Oil Heritage Festival Art Show

Provided focused assistance to downtown business in light of the Covid-19 pandemic, including loan & grant programs and re-opening guidance

Engaged in a renewed and re-energized campaign to promote locally owned downtown businesses, including creating detailed guides of hours and policies for restaurants and retail operations during periods of altered regulations

Events included OOctoberFest, Oil City Christmas Past, and Music on the Square outdoor concerts throughout the summer season.

The Oil City Main Street Program (OCMS) follows the Main Street Four Point Approach® and is nationally accredited by Main Street America. OCMS is supported by the City of Oil City, the Oil Region Alliance, Pennsylvania Downtown Center, Pennsylvania DCED, and numerous businesses, organizations, and individuals. Its momentum continues to build in 2020 and beyond.



### Allegheny—Clarion River Valley Blueprint Community Initiative

Coordinated a clean-up event in Parker, Foxburg, and Emlenton to prepare the Valley for the 2019 holiday season and leveraged those resources into a Blueprint Community Tool Trailer.

Organized a youth-arts contest, the winners of which worked together as a team to design a seasonal series of banners to be hung throughout the Valley for the next five years.

Designed a community farm to be developed on A-C Valley school district property. Installation of the first phase of the farm was delayed by the pandemic, but expected to begin in October.

## 2019 Major Members



County of Venango



SPECIALTY FABRICATION AND POWDER COATING



City of Franklin



City of Oil City



LEADING THE WAY



National Fuel



VENANGO

### Our Staff

John R. Phillips, II - President and Chief Executive Officer

Dan Twombly, Executive Vice President

Emily Altomare, Communications & Tourism Manager

Stewart Armstrong, OCMS Artist Liaison/  
Marketing Coordinator

Kathy Bailey, Oil City Main Street Manager

Jenn Burden, Heritage Program Manager

Chris Clifton, Office Administrator/Finance Assistant

Jessica Gorman, Administrative Assistant

Kim Harris, Project Manager, Outdoor Recreation Specialist

Selina Pedi, Redevelopment Manager/  
ACRVR Blueprint Community Coordinator

### 2019 - 2020 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dr. Barry Cressman, Chair - Retired Clergy

Maureen James, Vice Chair - Artist/Oil City Main Street Program

Neil McElwee, Secretary - Oil Creek Press/McElwee Associates

Debra Sobina, Treasurer - Clarion University

Betsy Kellner, Assistant Secretary/Assistant Treasurer - Venango Museum

Rodney C. Griffin, Immediate Past Chair -  
Specialty Fabrication & Powder Coating

Matt Beith - Beith Associates

Samuel Breene - Venango County Commissioner

Leah Carter - Titusville Renaissance, Inc.

Lance Hummer - Keystone Community Education Council

James O. "Jimmy" Johnson - City of Franklin

Matt McSparren - Cranberry Township

William P. Moon, Jr. - City of Oil City

Greg Wilson - Komatsu

Vincent Witherup - Retired Venango County Commissioner



217 Elm St., Oil City, PA 16301

814-677-3152 or 800-483-6264

OilRegion.org