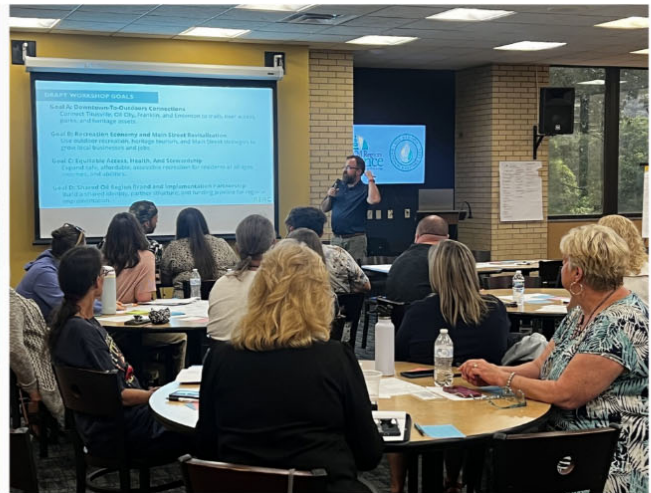




2025 - 2026 ANNUAL REPORT

OIL REGION NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

A Message from our Leadership

Dear Members, Friends & Stakeholders of the Alliance,

Having now almost completed my 20th year with the Oil Region Alliance, I want to offer a heartfelt thank you for your continued support. Your membership and project/program-specific donations are imperative to advancing the mission of the organization, helping and supporting multi-partner projects and initiatives, and providing technical support to our counties and municipalities of the region. Your support enables us to step in and tackle complex issues that could pose detrimental effects on our region and its residents. Working on an asset-based approach to economic development is the overarching umbrella of every endeavor the Alliance undertakes as a rural development hub organization.

As we reflect on 2025/26, I continue to be amazed at the goals the team accomplishes from our strategic plan while working within the requirements of our grantors at the state and federal levels. It is so satisfying when our hard work to make this beautiful area even better results in new residents moving here and in the expansion of entrepreneurial investment. I have always maintained that, comparatively speaking, our region seizes more opportunities than other rural communities within the state and outside it. Please take time to look at all the major initiatives that the Alliance has taken on and when you see one you are passionate about, please let us know how you want to get involved.

Recognized at the state and national levels for the high quality and execution of our projects, we feel our standards of excellence are the only way to do business, and our success would not be possible without our partners' and members' support.

We welcome your assistance and appreciate your support to help us achieve our mission to increase the prosperity and population of the Oil Region by enticing all people to live, work, learn, and play in "the Valley that Changed the World!"

Warm regards,



John R. Phillips, II
Oil Region Alliance President/CEO



Dear Members, Friends & Stakeholders of the Alliance,

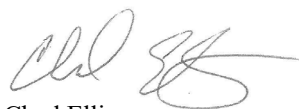
From historic preservation to outdoor recreation, the Oil Region Alliance of Business, Industry & Tourism (ORA) embodies our region by incorporating a vast knowledge of history into economic development, environmental preservation, and outdoor recreation.

Reflecting on my second term as chairman has only deepened my appreciation for this organization. I have been a part of many boards in the past, but none that truly capture and understand this region and its needs like the ORA. As John approaches an incredible milestone of 20 years with the Alliance, it is obvious that he has built a well-oiled machine. He leads an amazing team that excels as a rural development hub, utilizing an asset-based approach to secure unbelievable funding opportunities that many times only the ORA can access. The amount of funding that ORA brings to the Oil Region is substantial, but what the staff does with those funds to drive entrepreneurial investment and attract new residents is far more impressive. Every monthly meeting is filled with projects and programs that each manager facilitates with absolute passion.

It has been a true honor to serve alongside John and the entire board to protect our past while investing heavily in our commercial, industrial, and recreational future. Our standards of excellence have rightfully earned national recognition, but as John noted, none of this is possible without the vital support of our members, friends, and stakeholders.

Thank you for another unforgettable year of helping us entice people to live, work, learn, and play in "the Valley that Changed the World."

Sincerely,



Chad Ellis
Oil Region Alliance Board Chair

Oil Region Alliance Accomplishments from September 2025-September 2026

ORNHA / Heritage

- Awarded six Oil Region Historic Preservation Awards to organizations and individuals in May 2026.
- Attended Alliance of National Heritage Areas' annual meeting in Washington, D.C. in February 2026.
- Attended Alliance of National Heritage Areas' Spring meeting in Niagara Falls, NY in May 2026.
- Attended Heritage PA Fall meeting in the Lumber Heritage Region in October of 2025 and Heritage PA Spring meeting in Harrisburg in April 2026.
- The ORA is in the process of issuing an RFP to hire a consultant to complete the Emlenton Visitor Center and Pumping Jack Museum redesign. The designer will modernize and add additional security measures to allow the Pumping Jack Museum to be open to the public at all times the building is open.
- Compiled photos and research for updates to interpretative panels for the Emlenton community and Allegheny Valley Trails Association.
- Completed research on the ORNHA's historical connections to Azerbaijan for a partnership book project with the U.S.- Azerbaijan Chamber of Commerce. This book will be published in late 2026 with a book launch occurring in Oil City and Washington, D.C.
- Completed Cultural Resources Survey of the ORNHA focused on rentable space within historic buildings owned by non-profits and municipalities. A new page will be added to the ORA's website, OilRegion.org, to present this information to the public.
- Developed a Wayfinding Signage Plan in 2025. Consultants have been hired to create and assist ORA in enacting an implementation plan.
- Interpretive Strategies derived from the ORNHA Interpretive Plan (2025) will be used to implement new interactive museum exhibits which will be installed in the Tarbell House and the Oil Region Heritage Center & Scheide Library beginning this winter. Partial funding for the project was raised during Crawford Gives, a fundraising campaign of the Crawford Heritage Community Foundation August 19-21, 2026.
- Sponsored events held by Washington's Trail 1753 and PA Greenways and Trails Summit.
- Activities sponsored by the Barbara Morgan Harvey Center for the Study of Oil Heritage included a lecture by Scot McFarlane entitled: "Fire and Ice: The Allegheny River's American History." A book, entitled *American Odyssey — The History of the Allegheny River from Warren to Emlenton* will be published with funding from the National Park Service and the Barbara Morgan Harvey Center for the Study of Oil Heritage in early 2027. This foundation also funded a reprint of the Oil Region National Heritage Area Driving Tour in 2026.



- Convened the Heritage Advisory Committee quarterly meeting at varying locations throughout the ORNHA each year.
- Received a Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grant in September 2025. The goal of the grant is to foster economic development in rural communities through the rehabilitation of historic buildings. As the prime grantee, the ORA will sub-grant the \$750,000 through a competitive grant process to appropriate historic revitalization projects within the ORNHA beginning in late 2026/early 2027.

Preservation Properties

- **Oil Region Heritage Center & Scheide Library** — A \$21,648 grant from the Heist Trust administered by PNC Charitable Trusts allowed for the installation of a new boiler and the installation of an outdoor spigot in Spring 2026. The stone side porch was also sealed.
- **Coal Oil Johnny House** — Hosted 1,753 visitors during Open Hours in October 2025, and July, and August 2026 coinciding with the OC&T train being in station at Rynd Farm.
- **Tarbell House** — Titusville Area School District held student-led teas Fall 2025 and Spring 2026. ORA hosted several private tours throughout the year in addition to guided tours in coordination with OC&T train trips, a public open house in August during Titusville Oil Fest and creative workshops. The house was also rented for multiple private events. Extensive carpentry repairs to the exterior, as well as an entire repainting of the exterior of the house will occur in late fall 2026.
- **Downs Building** — This project was selected for a Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency Community Revitalization Fund Program Grant of \$800,000 to complete four upper story apartments, the stockroom, ADA accessibility, and the façade. Architectural drawings are being solidified, and the construction project will go out to bid in Fall 2026.



Oil Region Venango Campus

One hundred and twenty acres of developed and wooded property on the west end of Oil City made up of the former PennWest Clarion Venango Campus (1801 West First St), the former Venango Catholic High School (1505 West First St), and the former student housing (1950 West First St) that now comprise the Oil Region Venango Campus. Boasting five academic and professional buildings including two gymnasiums, an auditorium, café and lounge, numerous classrooms, meeting spaces, and offices, as well as five residential buildings, the Oil Region Venango Campus is an interdisciplinary facility that is well poised to expand and strengthen the community's access to critical resources including personal and professional growth, workforce development, and housing. Furthermore, the campus has the resources to continue to create opportunities for the community to benefit from access to the arts, heritage, and indoor and outdoor recreation.

- The deed for the campus was recorded April 15, 2026 officially conveying ownership from the Commonwealth to the ORA.
- With state funding supported by Senator Hutchinson, the exterior of Suhr Library and the sidewalks were redesigned and will be constructed for ADA compliant accessibility.
- Federal funding supported by Representative GT Thompson was secured to update technology and simulation equipment to support classroom and program development.
- Continued work with partners and employers to develop employer-driven education with industry-recognized credentials in Medical Assistant, Manufacturing, Wireless Infrastructure Technician, Brownfield Job Training, Orphaned and Abandoned Well Plugging, Welding, and Pre-Skilled Trades Academy.
- The Barbara Morgan Harvey Center for the Study of Oil Heritage sponsored author and historian Scot McFarlane on campus as a part of the Barbara Morgan Harvey Center Lecture Series.
- Support of youth sports in partnership with school districts and private sports organizations.
- The first cohort of Paramedic training students with Indiana University of Pennsylvania began in January 2026. Courses are offered in the Suhr Library.
- Partner with Community Playhouse Inc., to offer performances in the Rhoades Center Auditorium.
- Housing the Venango County Bell as part of the Bells Across PA program celebrating America 250.
- Key partners include our elected officials, State Representative R. Lee James, Senator Scott Hutchinson, and Congressman GT Thompson, the Strickland Global Leadership Institute, Keystone Community Education Council, Venango Area Chamber of Commerce, Bridge Builders Community Foundation, PNC Charitable Trusts, and the McElhattan Foundation.



Economic Development

- Received a new \$500,000 EPA Community-Wide Assessment Grant on future targeted brownfields in Reno and Franklin areas.
- Partnered with Clear Lake Authority, Allegheny Valley Trails Association, and Friends of the Riverfront Pittsburgh for strategic recreational and economic development initiatives.
- Marketed Alliance-owned industrial parks in Sandycreek, Seneca, Sugarcreek, and Barkeyville for new projects.
- Organized and hosted separate visits for representatives from DCNR, DCED, DEP, PA Fish & Boat Commission, Environmental Protection Agency, and legislators to tour and focus on potential projects and needs for the Oil Region as the Rural Development Hub Organization for the area.
- Worked with partners to address absentee ownership of various buildings and properties, pushing for divestiture or improvement and utilization.
- Prioritized improvements to the Crawford Center in Emlenton to create opportunities for economic development incubation and rehabilitation of auditorium.
- Kraft-Dahlstrom brownfield reuse visioning and contamination clean up will continue through 2027.
- Developed final remediation and demolition plan for Fuch's Lubricants site in Emlenton, which will occur in 2027.
- Continued to market Sandycreek Industrial Park with three prospective purchases pending.
- Acquired the Levi Building in Oil City, which has a retail tenant on the first floor; continue to seek funding to redevelop the upper floors.
- Continue to work with partners to assist the Colonel Drake Cultural Alliance on the Lyric Theatre restoration project in Oil City.
- Acquired the former JM Eagle brownfield site in Franklin and will continue the assessment of containments and assembled partners to reimagine and redevelop the site.
- Continued to advocate in Harrisburg and Washington, D.C. for projects in the Oil Region on behalf of our many partners.

- In September 2025 the Oil Region Alliance received a \$750,000 Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grant through the National Park Service, named in honor of the late preservation leader from Vermont. The goal of this grant program is to foster economic development in rural communities through the rehabilitation of historic buildings. As the prime grantee, the Oil Region Alliance is charged with sub-granting out the \$750,000 through a competitive grant process to appropriate historic revitalization projects within the boundary of the Oil Region National Heritage Area.
- The ORA accepted transfer of the digital operations of the local newspaper, *The Derrick*, to support continuation of local independent news in the region. Effective May 1, the legacy media outlet moved its online publication to the ORA's platform, *TheDerrick.com*. Weekly print editions published as *TheDerrick.com Roundup* began in September.

Outdoor Recreation

ALLEGHENY WILD & SCENIC RIVER / WATER TRAIL

- Continued Advancement of the Allegheny Wild & Scenic River Management Plan from Kinzua Dam to Emlenton, including Scope of Work development and coordination with municipal emergency-response partners.
- Coordinated, facilitated, and completed the America250PA "Epic Allegheny Odyssey" Sojourn, a major A250PA regional water-based heritage/recreation initiative.
- Strengthened statewide leadership through PTAC participation, trail/grant reviews, and hosting the PEC Statewide Water Trail Managers Meeting at Oil Region Venango Campus.

WATER TRAILS & PRIMITIVE ACCESS

- Advanced Oil Creek Water Trail management and stewardship in partnership with Venango and Crawford Counties.
- Completed the new Oil Creek Water Trail Map, supported by a \$1,500 PEC Water Trail Mini-Grant; new trail guides were also received and distributed.
- Advanced the Jersey Bridge Primitive Launch through partnership with Drake Well Museum/Friends of Drake Well, including engineering solicitation for stabilization and hand-launch improvements.

RIVER ACCESS & RECREATION INFRASTRUCTURE

- President Township: Advanced formal engineering, environmental/PNDI coordination, archaeological review, permitting, and construction preparation for a new primitive public launch.
- Fisherman's Cove: Advanced alternative parking/access planning and required PHMC/SHPO archaeological review toward future development.
- Cranberry Township: Outlined initial planning, design, funding, permitting, regulatory coordination, and



community engagement for a proposed primitive river access.

LAKE, POND & AQUATIC RESOURCE REHABILITATION

- Justus Lake: Supported and assisted in County-led rehabilitation efforts, including alluvium/precipitate engineering, permitting and cost analysis, environmental restoration planning, and potential ADA fishing/kayak access.
- West End Pond: Advanced ecological and stormwater rehabilitation through watershed analysis, a Stormwater Restoration Master Plan, DEP-required Emergency Action Plan, and C2P2 funding efforts.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION / RESOURCE PROTECTION

- Wyattville Levee: Facilitated multi-agency assessment and development of a short-term remediation strategy; supported Venango County Conservation District's 2026 Growing Greener funding application and PFBC habitat coordination.
- In 2026, Oil Creek Memorial Landing will see the mitigation of invasive Japanese knotweed, as well as the planting of native plants and pollinators to alleviate erosion and enhance the ecological diversity of the property. The Alliance will expand the cultivation of native pollinator plants along the multiuse trails in the Oil Region, incorporate an educational component for both children and adults, and promote the Pollinator Resolution and Pollinator Pledge.

LAND TRAILS AND OTHER OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL ASSETS

- Erie to Pittsburgh Trail - Secured \$31,000 for Clear Lake Authority toward self-building 1 mile of trail and

completed the \$500,000 DCNR-funded Sportsman Bridge rehabilitation—a major structural milestone for the corridor.

- Partnered with other regional entities to prepare and submit a U.S. DOT BUILD funding request for planning on the Erie Pittsburgh Trail.
- Secured funding for AVTA to tar-and-chip the Sunny Slopes bypass along the Allegheny River Trail, improving a key segment for users.
- Funding is secured and gravel riding routes under development. Will result in online maps with a brochure for marketing.
- Prepared a railbanking agreement and formally approached Norfolk Southern about licensing or purchasing the unused Oil City rail corridor—opening the door to future trail and economic reuse.
- Assisted Allegheny GNAR with securing funds to develop a bouldering gym to be housed in the former Venango Catholic, now part of the Oil Region Venango Campus. This can be used to train for outside bouldering in the region.

REGIONAL & STATEWIDE OUTDOOR RECREATION LEADERSHIP

- Participated in Pennsylvania Trails Advisory Council activities, including Trail of the Year evaluation, 2027 PA Greenways & Trails Summit host-site review, served on the planning committee for the 2026 Western PA Trail Summit, and statewide trail grant review.
- Expanded coordination among municipalities, county agencies, PFBC, DCNR, PHMC/SHPO, USACE, conservation organizations, engineering firms, and community partners.
- Attendance and participation in the Western PA Trails

Summit in Indiana, PA.

- Continued positioning ORA as a regional facilitator for water-based recreation, access development, environmental restoration, and outdoor recreation investment.
- Earned selection as 1 of just 20 communities nationally (from 200 applicants) for the EPA's Recreation Economy for Rural Communities program, bringing planning assistance to connect the downtowns of the four largest communities in the Oil Region (Titusville, Oil City, Franklin, and Emlenton) to outdoor recreation assets.
- Provided technical assistance to the ORATV Association supporting motorized recreation access.
- Serves on the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan Community & Economic Development Work Group

Tourism

- Continue to serve as Venango County's designated destination marketing organization (DMO).
- Distributed the 2025-2026 Oil Region Guide and began development of the 2027-2028 Oil Region Guide. Guides were available across the state at Welcome Centers, AAA offices, and attractions as well as segments of the I-90 corridor. Individual Guides were mailed in response to hundreds of direct requests.
- Advertising in conjunction with the state tourism office, Visit PA, included a full page ad in the state's annual guide publication, featured deal emails in March and May, a custom article on VisitPA.com, and a custom email featuring the Oil Region and specific amenities including Drake Well Museum & Park and ARMA Fest in May to the state's 125,000 subscribers.
- Advertised in print and digital campaigns through Compass Ohio magazine, Trib Total Media including their *On the Clock* commemorative publication for the NFL Draft in Pittsburgh, Global Heroes supplements to the Wall Street Journal, and paid social media campaigns on Facebook and Instagram.
- Supported numerous tourism-related non-profits and events (including the Roughneck Gravel Roubaix, Oil Creek 5 & 13 Stacked Trail Race, International Bowhunting Organization's second leg of the Triple Crown, Allegheny Gnar USA Cycling Downhill State Championship Series, Drake Well Marathon, and Ten Miles 4 Two Mile Jeep Run) through sponsorships and/or marketing efforts including Hospitality Flyers and on-site displays.
- Supported more than a dozen special events and tourism amenities with sponsorships, Tourism Event Support Grants, and Marketing Matching Grants for printed materials.
- Supported the Epic Allegheny Odyssey kayak sojourn in celebration of America 250 by promoting the event along with daily programming open to the public from July 27-31.
- Continue to participate in monthly virtual meetings with other DMOs to discuss a variety of hospitality issues



including homeshare legislation and ongoing branding and marketing efforts by the state tourism office as coordinated by the PA Restaurant and Lodging Association (PRLA).

- Developed programming and hosted a second annual Homeshare Education event for those in the community who own or work in non-traditional lodging and an inaugural Restaurant Roundtable for those in the food and dining space. A third annual Realtor Roundtable was held for members of the real estate industry to share what is motivating buyers moving into the Oil Region and to help further familiarize them with key themes used when marketing the area for tourism.
- Ongoing cooperation with the PA Great Lakes Region, comprised of Crawford, Mercer, Erie, and Venango counties, includes a Google-grant funded digital Ad Words campaign, paid social media posts, and updates to the design and seasonal content refreshes of the website PaGreatLakes.com.
- Participated on the steering committees for the Northwest Commission's Outdoor Recreation Toolkit and the DEP's Recreation Economy for Rural Communities program.
- Held the sixth annual Oil Region Tourism Awards. The public provided nearly 100 nominations for the eight categories, which received votes from nearly 850 participants. Winners will receive signs and certificates at an upcoming reception with extensive social media coverage.
- Posting to Facebook and Instagram daily and producing a weekly Constant Contact newsletter to 785 subscribers in addition to regular news releases and updates to OilRegion.org and ExperienceTheOilRegion.com.
- Convened the Tourism and Promotion Advisory Council bi-monthly meetings to review and discuss local hospitality topics and projects.



The Oil City Main Street Program (OCMS) is a volunteer-driven, community-based initiative dedicated to strengthening and revitalizing downtown Oil City, PA. Focused on enhancing the economic vitality, historic character, and overall appeal of the central business district, OCMS works in partnership with residents, businesses, nonprofit organizations, and local government. The Oil Region Alliance serves as the program's fiscal agent, providing staff, office space, and organizational support along with the City of Oil City.

Strategic Planning and Program Recognition

Since September 2025, OCMS has achieved significant milestones that position the organization for continued growth and impact. The program earned accreditation through Main Street America, recognizing its success in meeting established standards of performance. Designation by the PA Downtown Center is still pending.

A major accomplishment this year was the development of a new five-year strategic plan, which identifies three key priorities:

Establish Oil City as a premier arts and cultural destination.

Position Oil City as a regional outdoor recreation destination.

Preserve and restore downtown buildings and streetscapes.

Historic Preservation and Design Initiatives

This committee continues to advance downtown revitalization through façade improvement projects funded by a \$100,000 Main Street Matters grant. Nine projects are currently underway.

In June, OCMS received the Pennsylvania Downtown Center's Townie Award for the second consecutive year. The award, presented in the Anchor Building category, recognized the historic preservation and adaptive reuse of 100 Seneca, home of The Exchange restaurant. Co-recipients included the Venango County Economic Development Authority and The Exchange.

Marketing and Community Engagement

OCMS continues to expand its digital outreach through the "Meet Me on Main Street" video series. The program's Facebook audience has grown from approximately 2,000 followers to more than 7,600, significantly increasing engagement and visibility for downtown businesses and community initiatives.

The Promotions Committee experienced a highly successful year, highlighted by the spring Uncorked event on the South Side, which generated a record profit exceeding \$8,000.

Events and Festivals

The last year was a busy one with expansions across all events including Curb Market & Oil City Night Market, First Fridays and Music on the Square, BridgeFest, and ARMA Fest, which incorporated the northside Oil City Uncorked and inaugural bicycle poker run and half marathon. OCMS also supported downtown events spearheaded by partners including First Fridays and the first Mural Fest.

Grant Support

OCMS remains grateful for community and financial support that makes its programming possible. During the year, the organization received:

\$5,000 from the Jack Rowley Charitable Trust

\$8,000 from Take Pride Oil City

\$2,000 from Venango County Tourism for advertising support

Additional grant requests have been submitted to the Samuel Justus Fund to further strengthen future events and community initiatives.

Safe, Clean and Green

During the annual spring cleanup, volunteers collected approximately 250 bags of litter and removed large amounts of storm debris from parks and public spaces.

With support from Take Pride Oil City grants and the Venango Technology Center, seasonal flower plantings enhanced both the North and South sides. Oil City Rotary also contributed by maintaining city planters on the North Side.

The newly formed Native Pollinator and Invasive Species Task Force, working with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and the City of Oil City, is advancing efforts to encourage native pollinator

habitats and combat invasive plant species.

Members of the indigenous group Little Turtle from the East partnered with the task force to establish and maintain a Three Sisters Garden, demonstrating a traditional Indigenous companion planting method that cultivates corn, beans, and squash together. The City of Oil City has embraced and encouraged expansion of this project.

Volunteer Development and Organizational Growth

The Organizational Committee hosted a successful volunteer open house that attracted new participants interested in committee service and hands-on community projects. One newly formed volunteer group regularly identifies and addresses maintenance by conducting neighborhood walks.

Economic Vitality

The committee continued efforts to support business recruitment and downtown investment. Key accomplishments include developing a mock storefront and business plan concept for an outdoor outfitter in the Downs Building, maintaining an updated business directory, and showcasing available commercial properties to prospective investors and entrepreneurs.

Looking Ahead

With strong volunteer engagement, growing community partnerships, successful events, and continued investment in preservation and economic development, the Oil City Main Street Program has built significant momentum over the past year. OCMS remains committed to advancing its vision for a vibrant, welcoming, and prosperous downtown and looks forward to continuing this progress in the year ahead.





ARTS Oil City is focused on leveraging the visual, performing, and literary arts for community revitalization and economic development. We market Oil City as prospective home for relocating artists throughout the country. We manage the rental of dedicated artists' studios in the historic National Transit Building in downtown Oil City. And, we work hard to provide a supportive network for native and relocated creative professionals, and help to promote ongoing arts-related engagement with the community, as well as partner organizations that play a role in Oil City as an Art Town.

We invest in the understanding that the arts are an important component of our community revitalization and economic development. We understand that artists, writers, musicians, actors, and craftspeople see the world and our sweet little river town through a different lens. Our mission is to shine a bright light on the arts in Oil City and our region.

ARTS OC was originally formed in 2007 as an initiative of the Oil City Arts Council, a commission of the City of Oil City. In 2017 ARTS Oil City restructured to become a program housed within the Oil Region Alliance. Since 2022, the ARTS Oil City program has had a renewed and expanded emphasis on building local and regional partnerships that support and provide business opportunities for creative professionals. ARTS OC continues to receive support from the City of Oil City.

Accomplishments for the year include:

- Through our partnership with Pittsburgh's Bridgeway Capital, in fall of 2024 we launched the ACRE Oil City Program (Alliance for Creative Rural Economies), which provides a significant capital investment to the creative professionals in the community. After a yearlong, immersive program, fifteen local creative

professionals successfully graduated the program.

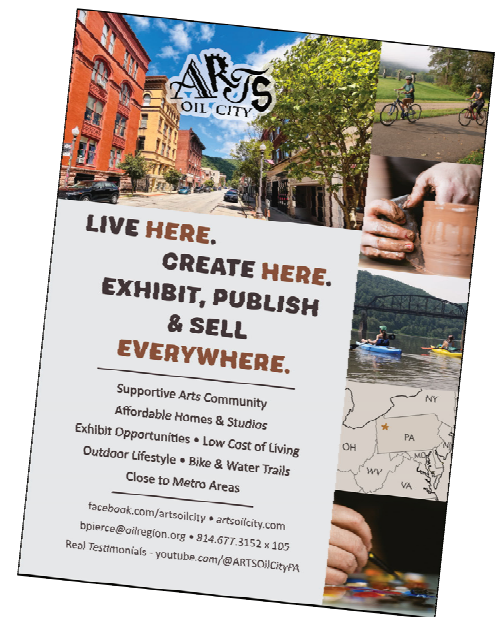
- Joined the newly formed Erie Arts & Culture Regional Advisory Council (RAC). This will help to ensure that Oil City and Venango County have a strong voice at the table. The 10 member RAC will work closely with EAC to define the needs of the NW PA 6-county region, and ensure those needs are addressed and reflected in the EAC programs, outreach, and strategic direction.

- Participated in the Bridgeway ACRE annual symposium – a convening on rural creative economies. The 2026 ACRE Symposium, taking place at press time of this publication, examines how the arts, outdoor recreation, and heritage-based enterprises can work together to create stronger local economies, attract investment, and build vibrant communities. We serve as a Workshop Experience Leader on the topic of "Attracting Creative Entrepreneurs to Your Community."

Continued our advocacy and education/mentorship efforts within the creative community to expand on the applications submitted for Erie Arts & Culture grant funds. EAC grant awards continue to increase locally, with Oil City Creative Professionals among the grant recipients in each cycle.

- Our role in advocacy and mentorship has expanded, as grants and other funding opportunities evolve, with the PA Council on the Arts rebranding of its operational and public-facing framework to PA Creative Industries. PA Creative Industries is focusing more heavily on economic development, workforce integration, and measurable impact across the state's \$30 billion creative sector, and ARTS OC/ORA is playing a larger role in helping to ensure creative professionals in our community are poised to be competitive in the new models of funding.

Continued to expand Artists Sunday as a city-wide event with more host businesses and participating creative professionals. The Oil City Mayor, once again, issued a Proclamation for Artists Sunday, showcasing the recognition that the visual, performing, and literary arts



enhance the fabric of our community and that our creative professionals are an important part of the economic development of our region.

Expanded and further strengthened the strategic partnership with the OC Civic Center to help advance the arts revitalization efforts in the community. We continue to widen the studio artist application process to allow for a broader range of creative mediums. We are also encouraging young professional, emerging artists to apply and be accepted for studio rentals. This initiative supports the local and regional effort to attract and retain youth in the area, and aligns with our efforts to recruit younger creatives through our Artist Relocation Program.

- Broadened our new Artist Studios Private Tour Program for local businesses to enhance engagement between the professional creative community and the business/non-profit community.

- Expanded our participation in the Penn West McElhattan Foundation Grant Internship Program with two arts interns in the community during Summer 2026, offering additional opportunities for young creatives who wish to explore careers at home rather than big cities.

Check out video interviews with local artists on YouTube using this QR Code.



2026 Major Members



County of Venango



National Fuel®



City of Oil City



KOMATSU



UPMC | NORTHWEST



**Central Electric
Cooperative
City of Franklin
City of Titusville**

**Heath Oil
Herbert, Rowland &
Grubic
Kapp Alloy**

**LSSE Civil Engineers &
Survey
Matric
Moody & Associates**

**Route 8 Storage
Webco Industries**

Oil Region Alliance Members

AA NAGY Excavating & Construction, Inc.
Allegheny RiverStone Center for the Arts
Allegheny Valley Trails Association
Amy's Closet
Barr's Insurance
Barrow-Civic Theatre
John Bartlett
Bill Brice
Bison Construction
BlackWolfe Communications
Bridge Builders Community Foundation
Caboose Motel
Career Concepts
Leah Carter
Central Electric Cooperative, Inc.
Christ Episcopal Church
City of Franklin
City of Oil City
City of Titusville
County of Venango
Cranberry Township
Current Environmental, LLC.
Dale, Woodard, Gent, McFate Law Firm
DeBence Antique Music World
Sharon & George Dorogy
The EADS Group, Inc.
Edward Jones— Rakow Wealth
Management Group
Emlenton Borough
Jennifer Feehan
First United National Bank
Franklin Area Chamber of Commerce
Franklin Fine Arts Council
Franklin Industrial & Commercial
Development Authority
French Creek Valley Conservancy

Friends of Drake Well
Gleeful Bee
Lee Ann Glowzenski
Great Eastern Cutlery
Gustafson General Contracting
Carole Hall
Heath Oil
Hepler General Contracting
Herbert, Rowland & Grubic
Jim Hibbard
Hydetown Borough
Jacob A. Weaver, LLC.
Maureen James
KJ Consulting & Environmental Services
Kapp Alloy & Wire, Inc.
Betsy Kellner
Komatsu
LSSE Civil Engineers & Surveyors
Debra Lutz
Matric
May and Co. CPA PC
Moody & Associates
National Fuel
Northern PA Regional College
Oil City YMCA
Oil Valley Gravel
Piovan Group
PNC Bank
Richmond Real Estate Service Inc.
Rossbacher Insurance
Route 8 Storage
Runway Ristorante and Lounge
Sandy Creek Township
Sassy's Clothing & Gift Boutique
Seneca Printing Express & Label
Senator Scott Hutchinson

Specialty Fabrication & Powder Coating
State Representative R. Lee James
Cecile Stelter
Stifel
Sugarcreek Borough
Svetz Consulting Services, LLC.
George G. Thompson
Titusville Area Chamber of Commerce
Titusville Community Development
Agencies
Titusville Historical Society
Titusville Renaissance, Inc.
Trails to Ales Brewery
UPMC Northwest
Venango Area Chamber of Commerce
Venango County Fair, Inc.
Venango County Historical Society
Venango Museum
Victorian City Art & Frame
Voyten Electric & Electronics, Inc.
Webco
Wildcat Mansion
Wilson, Thompson & Cisek, LLC.
Vince Witherup
James and Janet Zehner

ORNHA Members

John Bartlett
Jim Hibbard
Kellner's Fireworks
KJ Consulting & Environmental Services
Allan Montgomery
Oil Creek Railway Historical Society
Trails to Ales Brewery

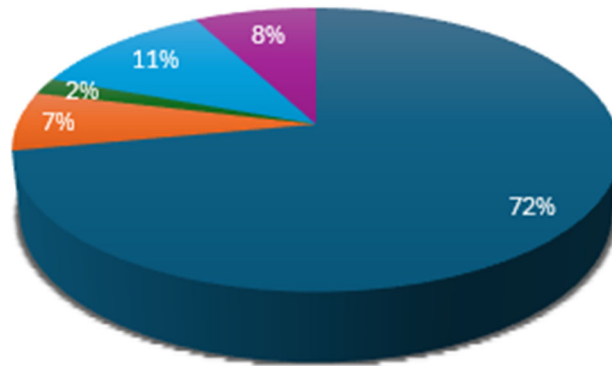
Details on membership including a form to join the ORA can be found at OilRegion.org/the-alliance/membership.



Financial Summary

REVENUE

Grants	\$2,644,389
Hotel Occupancy Tax	\$247,642
Membership Dues	\$69,075
Rent-Managed/Owned	\$425,859
Main Street, Other	\$284,668
Total Revenues	\$3,671,633



ASSETS

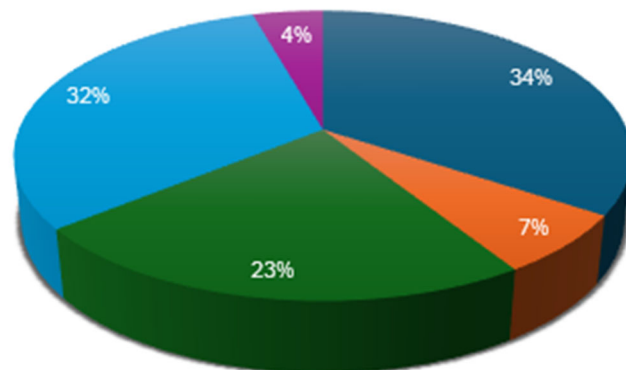
Cash and Equivalents	\$494,649
Accounts, Rents & Grant Rec.	\$2,474,136
Building & Improvements	\$1,406,970
Long Term Investments (Trail)	\$79,710
Office Equipment	\$94,959
Buildings Held for Investment	\$2,652,185
Development Projects	\$1,317,312
Other (Joint Venture, Notes Rec.)	\$19,494
Depreciation & Amortization	(\$269,820)
Total Assets	\$8,174,636

LIABILITIES

Accounts Payable	\$157,539
Accruals Liabilities	(\$10,323)
Short Term Notes Payable	\$921,313
Long Term Liabilities	\$928,962
Short Term Liabilities Other	\$1,067,797
Custodial, Sec. Deposits	\$73,520
Total Liabilities	\$3,138,808
Net Assets	\$5,035,828
Total L & NA	\$8,174,636

EXPENSES

Programs	\$1,339,310
Management	\$261,371
Gen & Admin	\$903,336
Properties	\$1,228,516
Main Street, Other	\$170,916
Total Expenses	\$3,903,449



Financial Summary

Based on unaudited internal Financial Reports. Year ending December 31, 2025. Audited financials for 2025 will be available after October 31, 2026 at OilRegion.org/the-alliance/public-reports/





Our Staff

John R. Phillips, II, President and Chief Executive Officer
 Debra Sobina, Executive Vice President
 Emily Altomare, Communications & Tourism Manager
 Chris Clifton, Director of Staff
 Kody Ealy, Custodian, Crawford Center
 Jessica Gorman, Executive Assistant/IT Support
 Kim Harris, Outdoor Recreation Program Manager
 Dr. Seth Herrick, Executive Director, Oil Region Venango Campus
 Todd Ifft, Fiscal Support
 Mark Kerr, Outdoor Recreation Project Manager
 Raven Nespor, Project Coordinator
 Barbara Pierce, ARTS Oil City Coordinator
 Stevette Rosen, Oil City Main Street Manager
 Abigail Watson-Popescu, Heritage Program Manager

2025 - 2026 ORA Councils & Committees

Economic Development/Energy — Jennifer Feehan, Chair
 Executive Committee — Chad Ellis, Chair
 Heritage Advisory — Betsy Kellner, Chair
 Outdoor Recreation — Chad Ellis, Chair
 Tourism Advisory — Maureen James, Chair
 Campus Advisory — Matt Craig and Stacy Ginkel, Co-Chairs

2025- 2026 ORA Board of Directors

Chad Ellis, Chair - Rossbacher Insurance
 Stacy Ginkel, Vice Chair - KJ Consulting Environmental Services
 Betsy Kellner, Secretary - Cranberry Township
 Jennifer Feehan, Treasurer - Northwest Commission
 Maureen James, Immediate Past Chair - Artist/Oil City Main Street Program
 Vincent Witherup, Executive Committee - Retired Venango County Commissioner
 Samuel Breene - Venango County Commissioner
 Rhonda Clark - PennWest University — Clarion
 Matt Craig - Webco Industries
 Rodney C. Griffin - Specialty Fabrication and Powder Coating
 James O. "Jimmy" Johnson - City of Franklin
 Michael Knecht - Drake Well Museum & Park
 Matt McSparren - S and S Farm
 Kaitlyn Schiffer - Komatsu
 Amy Whitehill - Amy's Closet, Emlenton Borough
 Craig Westover - Sugarcreek Borough

On the Cover: Abbe Popescu and John Phillips met with Congressman Glen Thompson at the Alliance of National Heritage Areas Congressional Reception in Washington D.C. (upper left), stakeholders participated in a focus group as part of the Recreation Economy for Rural Communities Program through the EPA (upper right), the Epic Allegheny Odyssey set off in Tidioute on Day 3 of the five-day, 107-mile sojourn.



OilRegion.org



814.677.3152



A MEMBER OF THE
**National Heritage
 Area System**

217 Elm Street, Oil City, PA 16301