



## Downtown Arts & Culture Impact Grants

Downtown Missoula welcomed three new murals this summer through the Foundation's Arts & Culture Impact Grants Program. These vibrant works showcase local creativity and add to the growing collection of public art in the Heart of Missoula.

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## Seasonal Happenings in Downtown Missoula

As the air turns crisp and the leaves begin to fall, Downtown Missoula comes alive with celebrations that bring our community together in meaningful and magical ways. From the Festival of the Dead to Santa's Flyover, the season is filled with traditions that unite us in joy, reflection, and connection.

The Festival of the Dead, a beloved tradition for more than 30 years, offers space to honor loved ones and culminates with a vibrant procession through Downtown on November 2. Holidays on Higgins follows on December 6, when floats, festive storefronts, and a tree lighting ceremony mark the start of the holiday season.

The celebrations continue with Teddy Bear Tea Parties on December 13 and 14, inviting children to enjoy crafts, treats, and a special visit with Santa. And of course, the magic soars with Santa's Flyover, a cherished tradition that fills the Missoula Valley with joy each December.

Together, these events capture the creative, compassionate, and community spirit that makes Downtown Missoula the heart of the season.

# From the MDF Board President:

## Rob Fleming, Synergy One Lending



As we move into another beautiful fall season in Missoula, the time is right to reflect on the first nine months of this year, evaluate our goals and achievements thus far, and get ready for a wonderful last quarter of 2025!

The Missoula Downtown Foundation(MDF) has been hard at work this year raising funds for the continued improvements and upgrades to our city center and community gathering places. As Missoulians, we all feel a sense of pride in our city which is reflected in full force when you visit our downtown!

Our main goal this year was a big one. After 28 years of incredible service and wonderful memories, the canopy at Caras Park is well beyond due for an upgrade.

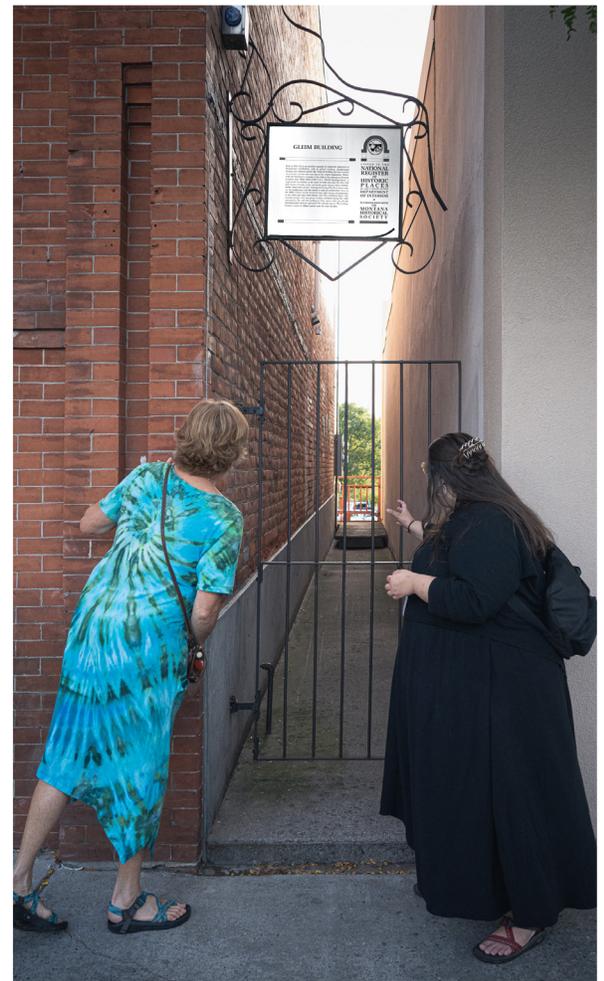
The cost to replace the canopy and repaint the structure came in at just over \$500,000, and we made this our number one fundraising priority at the beginning of the year. We are happy to report that we met our goal by early summer, and work on replacing the canopy and repainting the structure will begin in the fall of 2025 and be completed by spring of 2026!

We want to thank all of our incredible donors for their contributions to this very important project! These incredible gifts kickstarted the campaign, and other gifts came in fast! It's no surprise that our community rallied behind this very important project. Caras Park is our gathering place and will continue to shine for years to come!

The MDF continued its mission of supporting the arts in Missoula by sponsoring two more amazing murals downtown this year, one at Worden's Market and the other at The Wren. We also sponsored the Missoula Art Museum's "Teen Art Project" for the fifth year in a row. The TAP can be viewed outside the Adventure Cycling building- stop by and check it out! In addition to these art-focused initiatives, the MDF supported the expansion of Downtown flower baskets on the Beartracks Bridge and banners onto the Orange Street Bridge, bringing even more color and vibrancy to the gateways of our community.

The Foundation kicked off the fall fundraising campaign with our Past to Plate dinner tours of historic Downtown Missoula. These tours are a great way to see Missoula through a historic lens, learn things you didn't know about our downtown, and share an evening of delicious food with great company!

This has been another great year for our Downtown, and we look forward to carrying this momentum into 2026! Thanks again to all of our donors and volunteers who continue to make the experience of Downtown Missoula special. Have a great fall and see you Downtown!



*Rob Fleming*

# A Special Thank You For Supporting the Missoula Downtown Foundation in 2025

As autumn settles over Missoula and our downtown comes alive with crisp mornings, golden leaves, and bustling community events, the Missoula Downtown Foundation is reflecting with gratitude. This season, we are proud to recognize and celebrate the incredible donors whose generosity makes our work possible.

Your charitable giving directly advances the Missoula Downtown Foundation's mission to enrich and sustain the Heart of Missoula. By supporting projects and programs that build community connection, celebrate creativity, and enhance the vibrancy of our downtown, you help create a thriving, welcoming place that will inspire and engage generations to come.

## 2025 Gifts

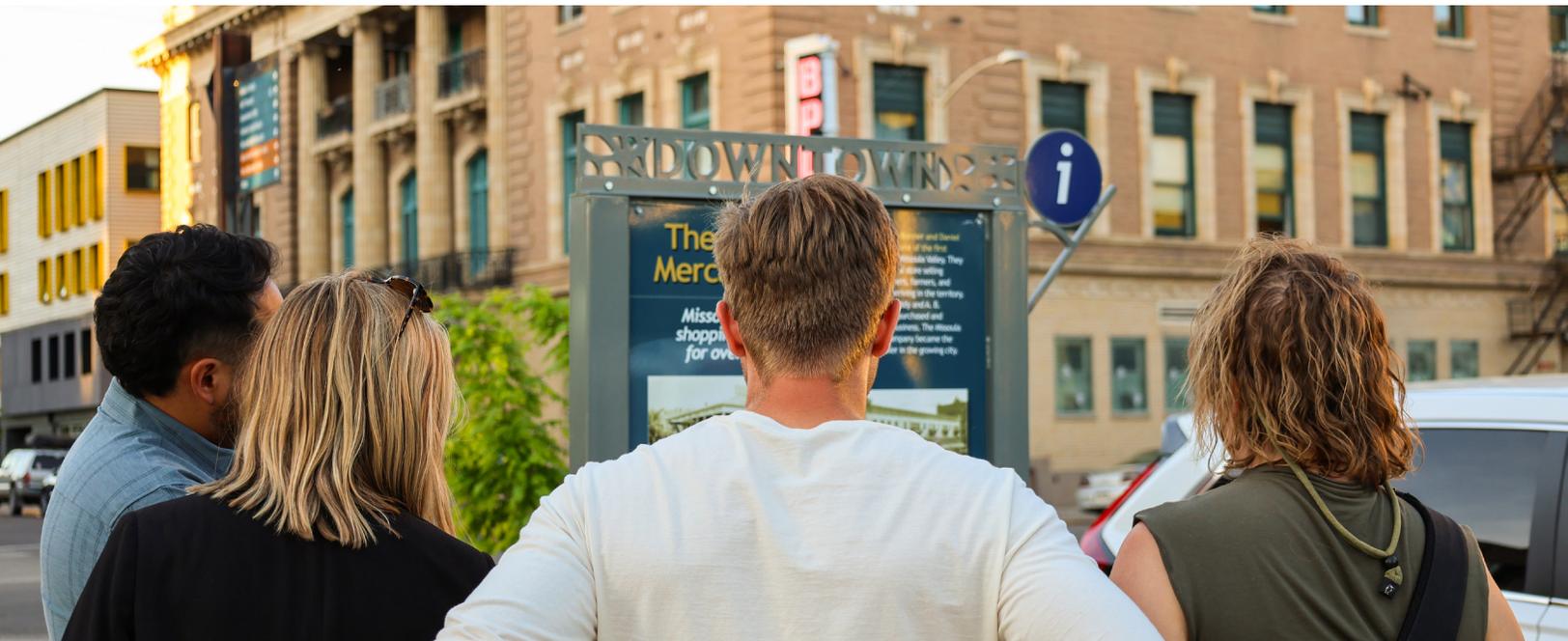
Dick Anderson Construction  
Downtown Business Improvement District  
Missoula Downtown Association  
Missoula Parks and Recreation

Bill and Rosemary Gallagher Foundation  
Destination Missoula and Tourism BID  
First Interstate Bank  
First Security Bank  
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Morrison Maierle  
Northwestern Energy  
Pattee Street LLC  
Rocky Mountain Development Group  
Worden's Market and Deli  
The Wren Missoula

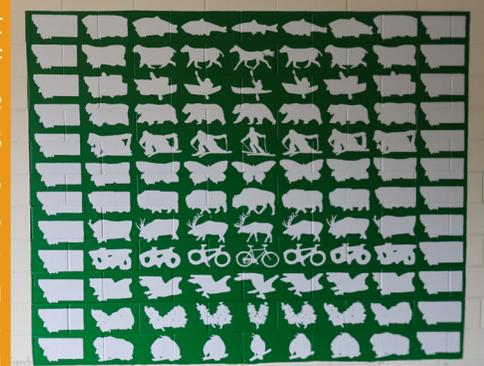




## 2025 Downtown Arts & Culture Impact Grants

Downtown Missoula welcomed three new murals this summer supported by the Foundation's Arts & Culture Impact Grants Program. *Alive with the Land*, spanning 1,250 square feet of wall space at Worden's Market & Deli (451 N Higgins), was brought to life by Montana artist Madison Perrins. Her new addition to the Heart of Missoula includes a mountain landscape and starry night sky drifting up from a wine bottle held high by a Greek-inspired Maenad; a female follower of Dionysus, the Greek God of wine and wine making. The depiction is viewed as homage to the world-class wine selection within Worden's Market, where Missoulians can find the perfect wine for dinner parties, gifts or to simply broaden their home wine cellar. The project was completed during the month of June and celebrated on First Friday in August with building owner Tim France and business owner Matt Muhsam in attendance.

The second project completed this summer was Abby French's *What Makes Montana* mural at The Wren (201 E Main). French, a graduate of the University of Montana with a BA in Fine Arts, produced a 100 square foot symmetrical mural that showcases signature elements of Montana's culture and ecosystem. Silhouettes of rainbow trout, western meadowlark, elk, bitterroot flower, western tiger swallowtail, grizzly bear, lupine, osprey, skier, horse, kayaker and buffalo transition from the iconic Montana outline, into the symbol and back again in a way that draws the viewer into a sense of state pride and connection. The mural was completed from mid-June to mid-August, working heavily on the weekends, when French could spend time outside of her regular position as an early childhood educator for Spirit at Play.



For the fifth year in a row, the Missoula Downtown Foundation supported the Missoula Art Museum's Teen Art Project. Missoula teens, working closely with professional artists, Indigenous leaders, scientists and museum educators, came together to create a 14ft x 10ft public mural that celebrates Montana's ecosystem heroes including bison, beavers and prairie dogs. The original piece, with intricate paint and beadwork, is on display inside the Missoula Art Museum with a replica banner hanging on the outside of the Adventure Cycling Association building for the public to enjoy.

Our board and staff encourage all to enjoy these beautiful new creations and support the implementation of more art in Downtown Missoula in the years to come. 2026 applications for the Grants Program will open January 1, 2026. Visit [missouladowntown.com/missoula-downtown-foundation/grants/](https://missouladowntown.com/missoula-downtown-foundation/grants/) to learn more.

# CARAS TERRACE COMPLETED

One of the most exciting projects of 2025 was the completion of the riverfront terrace at Caras Park. The project was years in the planning and a primary component of the North Riverside Parks & Trails Plan. Dick Anderson Construction was the lead contractor, and the project was completed in June.

The terrace is part of the larger Clark Fork River Restoration & Access Plan, restoring riverbanks throughout Downtown and providing more formalized river access sites where there are restrooms, parking, and garbage receptacles.

The \$1.68-million-dollar project was primarily funded by a \$1.2 million dollar grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration. Additional funding was provided by the Missoula Redevelopment Agency, the 2018 Open Space Bond Funds, the Park Maintenance Fund, and the Missoula Downtown Foundation.

The improved access in Caras Park creates new opportunities for people of all abilities to connect with the Clark Fork River,” said Nathan McLeod, Senior Landscape Architect at Missoula Parks & Recreation “This project serves as a corner of the broader efforts to restore the riverbanks in Downtown Missoula.”

Other river access sites are being enhance at Toole Park, the southside of the Beartracks Bridge, and the northside of Madison Bridge. The new terrace is a gift to Missoula and highlights opportunities for everyone to enjoy the Clark Fork River year-round.



## What's Next In Caras Park?

The permanent pavilion in Caras Park was built in 1997, and the fabric canopy on the structure has lasted an incredible 28 years! Nearly 2,500 community events, festivals, wedding, reunions, conferences, banquets, and memorial services have taken place under the canopy in Missoula's beloved Town Square. Following a successful \$500,000 campaign in the spring, the Missoula Downtown Foundation is funding the replacement of the canopy and painting of the pavilion structure with a more modern color palette.

Work will commence in October with local contractors Fabricon and Staggs Painting, and the project should be completed in late April of 2026. Fabricon will remove the pavilion walls and the canopy on the bandstand first, then Staggs painting will prep and paint all the steel components. Fabricon will return in the spring to install the brand-new, white fabric canopy, then last-round paint touchups will take place after that.

Close to 30 businesses, non-profit organizations, grantors and individuals have contributed to the project, managed by the Missoula Downtown Association and Missoula Parks & Rec staff member Garrick Swanson.

“We are really fortunate to have local service providers here in Missoula to do this specialized work, and our community members really stepped up on this project,” said Linda McCarthy, Executive Director of the Downtown Missoula Partnership. “This project would not be possible without the generosity of our business community and partners. We are so grateful!”

# MDF Fiscal Sponsorships

## DRAW Project

After five years of planning and fundraising, Phase 1 of the Downtown Riverside Art Walls (DRAW) Project is now complete. As one of the major goals of the North Riverside Parks & Trails Plan, the project transforms the NorthWestern Energy substation on Pattee Street into a public art landmark. Once finished, the 4,700-square-foot installation will feature murals, drawings, and poetry by Native artists from across Montana, providing free and accessible art for the community.

The first completed section, the east wall, pays tribute to the buffalo. A poem by Vic Charlo, translated into Salish by his daughter April Charlo, offers a prayer for the buffalo's survival, while Debra Magpie Earling's words extend an invitation to join them in dance. Their voices are interwoven with Frank Finley's striking print Buffalo Charge, creating a layered celebration of resilience and cultural memory.

Funding for the DRAW Project has been made possible largely through private

donations, with the Missoula Downtown Foundation serving as fiscal sponsor. Support has come from organizations such as Art Associates of Missoula, Blackfoot Communications, Destination Missoula, the Downtown BID, and many others. The remaining walls will be completed in spring 2026.

"This project came to life because of the generosity of our Missoula community members," said project manager Karen Sippy. "We are grateful for the opportunity to showcase our indigenous population and the amazing artwork and poetry they have created."

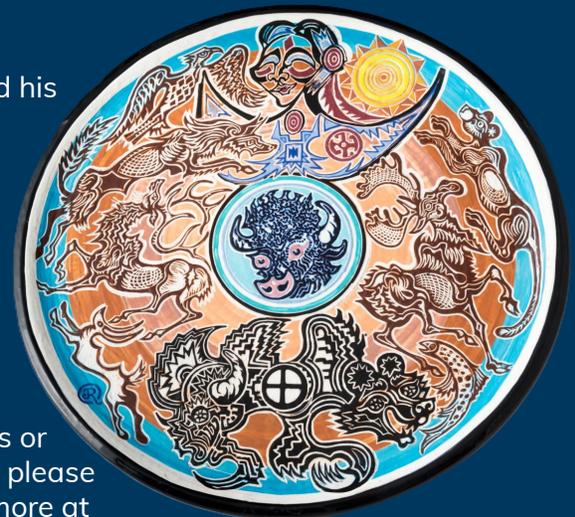


## Jay Rummel Documentary

Jay Rummel, the folk artist of the American psychedelic West, is the subject of a feature length documentary currently in production. The Missoula Downtown Foundation is pleased to announce a recent partnership with local filmmakers Elizabeth Stegmaier and Ben Zeimet, who will share Rummel's story and showcase his awe-inspiring local art.

The film will celebrate the legacy of this legendary Montana artist and his work, as he is remembered through the culture, people, stories and history of Western Montana. They also have an ambitious goal to elevate Missoula on the map of American art by showcasing and celebrating Rummel's work.

"In the Dim Light of Obscurity" is currently in production and will wrap in November 2026. The team is actively fundraising, with long time arts supporter Brian Sippy as an Executive Producer and MDF as the fiscal sponsor. Elizabeth and Ben invite you to help preserve and share the story of this iconic Missoula artist. If you have any leads or Jay Rummel stories for the team or if you want to support their effort, please email the film production team at: [jayrummelfilm@gmail.com](mailto:jayrummelfilm@gmail.com). Learn more at <https://www.missouladowntown.com/missoula-downtown-foundation/fiscal-sponsorship/>





## Keep the Heart of Missoula Beating Strong 2025 Fall Campaign

Downtown Missoula has always held a special place in my heart. It's where we gather for festivals and farmers markets, where we bump into neighbors on the Beartracks Bridge, and where countless memories are made under the lights of Caras Park along banks of the Clark Fork River. Downtown truly is the heartbeat of our community. At the Missoula Downtown Foundation, my role and my passion is to help keep that heartbeat strong.

Over the years, I have seen firsthand the power of community support. Together, we have created the Caras Terrace riverfront access, built Caras Park, brought life and color through murals, expanded our flower baskets and banners, and filled our winters with the magic of holiday lights. These projects aren't just improvements to our streets and parks, they are testaments to what we can achieve when we come together with vision and generosity.

As we launch our Fall Fundraising Campaign:

Keep the Heart of Missoula Beating Strong, I invite you to be part of the next chapter. Your support will help us add lighting and skating features to the Beartracks Underbridge Playspace, welcome visitors with new Downtown gateway signage, expand our holiday décor, and continue vital beautification efforts.

This season of giving, I ask you to join me, your friends, and your neighbors in supporting the Missoula Downtown Foundation. With your partnership, we'll continue to make Downtown a place where families celebrate, artists create, and our community thrives.

*Together, we can keep the Heart of Missoula beating strong.*

Make your gift today at [missouladowntown.com](http://missouladowntown.com).

*Carrie Harper*

Director of Giving

If you would like to support, please return the section below with your donation in the enclosed envelope.

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**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Here is my contribution:** \$500, \$200, \$100, \$50, Other

**For:** General Fund, Caras Park Improvements, Beartracks Underbridge Playspace, Holiday Décor, Hanging Flower Baskets

Please make checks payable to: Missoula Downtown Foundation

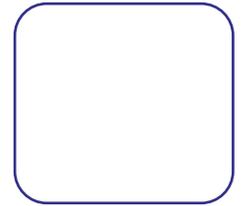
MDF is a 501(c)(3) and all donations are tax deductible

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# MISSOULA Downtown

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COMMUNITY

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# Fall

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REDEEM. REPEAT.**

Turn your card into cozy sweaters, warm meals, and local finds. Join in, support local, and help redeem \$50,000 in Downtown Missoula Gift Cards throughout October.



[missouladowntown.com/downtown-gift-card](http://missouladowntown.com/downtown-gift-card)