2016 ANNUAL REPORT

Located on Interstate 70, Green River, Utah, is both an ideal sightseeing hub and home to 952 residents. We're within an hour of the famous Arches National Park and minutes from one of Utah's best-kept secrets, a beautiful canyon river beach. At the intersection of the scenic Green River and a transcontinental railroad, the town began as a safe crossing and continues to be a waypoint. Epicenter strives to keep prosperity here rather than see it pass through.

To accentuate Green River's rural pride and pioneering spirit, Epicenter provides housing and business resources and promotes the arts. A passionate, multidisciplinary team of young professionals, we engage, collaborate with, and learn from our community. Through small business assistance, arts and design projects, and affordable housing initiatives, Epicenter is a model of supporting small communities through design.

HIGHLIGHTS

109 community members participated in downtown planning survey

8 VISITING ARTISTS HOSTED

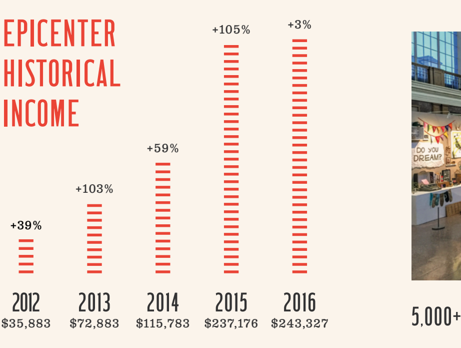
10 HOME REPAIR PROJECTS COMPLETED

ARTPLACE AMERICA FINALIST

FRONTIER HOUSE BUILT

5,000+ VISITORS TO OUR EXHIBITIONS

EPICENTER HISTORICAL INCOME



PRINCIPALS' STATEMENT

In 2016, Epicenter made immense strides towards becoming a mature organization. We prioritized reaching outside of our small community to share our work with our peers as well as to learn from others doing similar work. Most significantly in this realm, we partnered with the Utah Division of Arts & Museums and the NEA to produce our first major exhibition, *A Call to Place: The First Five Years of the Frontier Fellowship*. The exhibit logged over 5,000 visitors during its three months in downtown Salt Lake City. We hosted our second Summer Summit, a weekend-long gathering in Green River of 39 creative professionals from around the world to exchange ideas. We attended and spoke at two major national convenings and multiple regional conferences and institutions.

Back at home, we built our first Frontier House, a case study to test an affordable, quality-made, and high-performance option for the high desert West. Epicenter was honored to be an ArtPlace America finalist for our creative multi-family housing proposal. We plunged into our second major grant from the NEA, this time to support creative placemaking projects that help to transform communities into more resilient places with art-centered strategies at their core. The community chose three projects to pursue in 2017 with a $100,000 project budget: *Reinhabitation* with Erin Carraher and the University of Utah College of Architecture + Planning, *Green River Lights* with Lisa Ward and Lite Brite Neon, and the Green River Rock & Mineral Festival with Alison Jean Cole and Lisa Ward. In conjunction with these downtown-focused arts projects, we will soon release our Downtown Revitalization Plan, a product of many months of work alongside the community. The plan will identify strategies that highlight Green River's special character and mobilize its citizens. We also continued to work with Green River's local businesses and entrepreneurs to bolster the town's economy.

Our staff logged 15,413 hours this year working at Epicenter. Steph Crabtree celebrated her third year at Epicenter as Housing Specialist. Maggie Cochrane, Christopher Henderson, and JD Scott joined us for the summer to accomplish home repair projects and renovate our basement. Ryan Baxter joined us as an intern and stayed on into 2017 as a Citizen Designer. In August, Jarod Hamm and Gwen Peck signed on for year-long AmeriCorps VISTA positions. Kelly Gregory and Spence Kroll, former Epicenter employee and Frontier Fellow respectively, joined the team again this past fall to lead the Frontier House project; Nate Stapley stepped in along with a returning Christopher Henderson to help with construction. Katie Anderson, Bryan Brooks, and Armando Rios have moved on from Epicenter to be citizen architects in new places. As Principals we remain dedicated to the mission of Epicenter and we look forward to the challenges and accomplishments of 2017.

— Jack Forinash, Chris Lezama, and Maria Sykes

FRONTIER HOUSE

Our ongoing work, evaluating and developing systemic solutions for affordable housing in rural Utah, led us to the development the Frontier House. Our first iteration is a 708-square-foot house built in late 2016. The Frontier House is designed as a case study to test an affordable, quality-made, and high-performance option for Green River, Utah. Prevalent to rural America, affordable housing options are often limited to inefficient mobile homes ("trailers") which depreciate in value over time and incur high ongoing repair and maintenance costs as they deteriorate with age. Epicenter's *Fix It First* program expanded to offer repairs on trailers (we previously only repaired traditional homes) as a band-aid solution for urgent repairs. But as we worked and invested in trailers, we grew increasingly concerned by the living conditions and sky-high costs. As a response, we designed the Frontier House to match the square footage and monthly living costs of a single-wide trailer. For our next steps, we'll be closely watching the performance and maintenance costs of the house and working with our partners (including our sub-contractors and USDA Rural Development) to work to bring this stick-built, equity-building housing option to our fellow neighbors looking to build their own home, one that is efficient, durable, and affordable.

Going forward, we'll finish the house, debrief the project, review lessons learned, and monitor the house's energy use and durability. We'll use it to house our Frontier Fellows, seasonal staff, and volunteers, something we've been needing for many years. The house will remain open for tours.

The house was made possible through support from individuals like you and through private grants from American Express, Wells Fargo, Bike & Build, the Sorenson Legacy Foundation, the Rocky Mountain Power Foundation, and the Olene Walker Housing Loan Fund.

DOWNTOWN PLAN

Epicenter is writing a plan and has created a planning committee made up of Green River residents to identify the community's unique qualities and to focus on opportunities for the future of downtown. Building on previous planning efforts like the 2014 General Plan and branding surveys, the plan will identify strategies that highlight Green River's special character and mobilize its citizens.

Downtown is where things happen: it's where businesses prosper, where you get to know your neighbors, where you meet your friends, and where you have the opportunity to contribute to the economy and community. It's where public life is made. Though remnants of a more prosperous past still populate Green River's downtown, we have great cause to be optimistic about its future. Green River is a special place. We have many assets to build on – from historic buildings to a rural landscape to all of the basic services and amenities our residents need right here to the many and varied talents of our residents. Recent community efforts, like the formation of the trails and beautification committees and investment in town branding show that our community is getting stronger, smarter, and starting to recognize its own power.

The completed document will include a map of Green River's cultural assets, documentation of community discussions and input, visualizations of what Main Street and Broadway could look like, and recommendations for how Green River can strengthen the economic, cultural, and infrastructural qualities of downtown.

This effort has involved surveys, large community meetings, conversations with partner organizations, and focus group discussions all geared towards improving this community we love. By encouraging a broad range of local residents, this effort will build upon the community's positive attributes and create a more diverse and dynamic downtown economy to benefit the community. The plan's recommended actions will hopefully improve streetscapes, decrease the number of dilapidated buildings, provide support for entrepreneurs, build bridges among a changing population, keep youth involved in the community, and inspire citizens to take action.

OUR TOWN: THE RURAL AND PROUD INITIATIVE

Often called "the Crossroads of the West," Green River is at a crossroads of another kind. Like many rural towns, this desert community can choose to accept its slowly shrinking population or it can choose to commit to strengthening its roots, embracing its people and history, and finding creative ways to empower the community. We've chosen the latter. The Rural and Proud Initiative reminds residents of Green River's history and traditions, invigorates them to creatively voice their desires for the future, transforms downtown into a vibrant destination, and involves designers in making those desires a reality.

REINHABITATION

Led by architect and educator Erin Carraher, the University of Utah College of Architecture and Planning students proposed interventions in downtown Green River. Local residents selected the project titled *[light]*, a series of lighted benches for Main Street.

GREEN RIVER LIGHTS

Lisa Ward, in partnership with Lite Brite Neon, is working with local business owners and the City of Green River to rehabilitate one existing sign and create two new neon signs on Green River's Main Street. The new signs include a welcome sign for the west side of town as well as neon clouds on the Green River Coffee Company. Ward will assist in refurbishing the much beloved Ben's Cafe neon sign to suit the current restaurant, La Veracruzana.

Green River invited select artists to propose small scale design projects that support local ongoing revitalization efforts. These projects reveal and reinforce the distinct character of Green River and reimagine and activate locations downtown, especially our forgotten spaces. Deemed exemplary by the local selection committee, three projects were chosen to foster interaction between community members and discover new ways to engage existing resources, spaces, and cultures:

GREEN RIVER ROCK & MINERAL FESTIVAL

Artists Lisa Ward & Alison Jean Cole are planning a weekend-long event celebrating the region's geology through vendors, field trips, workshops, and educational programming, including building a dry-stacked rock wall. The festival takes place March 31 - April 2, 2017, at the John Wesley Powell River History Museum and in the surrounding landscape. Visit greenriverrocks.com for more info.

A CALL TO PLACE

A Call to Place: The First Five Years of the Frontier Fellowship is a publication and was an exhibition at the Rio Gallery in downtown Salt Lake City from March 18 – May 13, 2016. *A Call to Place* showcased work from 50 visiting artists and collaboratives who spent up to a month in residence generating place-based work in Green River, Utah, alongside the community. *A Call to Place* was co-curated by Epicenter and Corbin LaMont.

Featured artists: Gina Abelkop, Dylan Adams, Sarah Baugh, Michelle Benoit, Colin Bliss & Lucia Carroll, Zach Bulick, Cabin-Time, Pete Collard & Alice Masters, Shawn Creeden, Erica Ruth Dixon, Grayson Earle, Eliza Fernand, Justin Flood, Kristina Fong, Ryan Troy Ford, Molly Goldberg & Mary Rothlisberger, Raphael Griswold, Andrew Hamblin, Catherine Page Harris, Jamey Herman, High Desert Test Sites, Celia Hollander, Geoffrey Holstad, Emily Howe & Jordan Gulasky & Phil Dagostino, Russell Kerr, Aidan Koch, Spencer Kroll, Laurelin Kruse, Corbin LaMont, Nicole Lavelle, Sarah Lillegard, Rob Loucks, Miles Mattison, Zoe Minikes, Ali Osborn, Jordan Topiel Paul, Zorth Pilonieta, Richard Saxton, Cyrus Smith, D. Strauss, Charlotte XC Sullivan, Lisa Ward, Bennett Williamson, and Nick Zdon.

A Call to Place was made possible with support from the National Endowment for the Arts, Utah Division of Arts and Museums, Steve & Juanita Sykes, Emery County Travel Board, and the Sorenson Legacy Foundation.

FRONTIER FELLOWSHIP

The Frontier Fellowship provides creative professionals the opportunity to live and work with Epicenter in Green River, for two to eight weeks. From this rural place and in the context of the frontier, Fellows generate new work that is informed by local residents and the surrounding desert landscape. We've hosted 60 artists and collaboratives through the Frontier Fellowship. In 2016 we hosted Sarah Lillegard, Walker Tufts, Hannah Vaughn & Damien Delorme, Kirsten Southwell, Anne Thompson, and Ashley Ross.

Experience the new Frontier Fellowship website at frontierfellowship.org.

The Frontier Fellowship is supported by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and Utah Division of Arts and Museums, Sorenson Legacy Foundation, Eccles Foundation, and Steve & Juanita Sykes

Quilt by Kirsten Southwell

SUMMER SUMMIT

In October Epicenter was honored to host our second Summer Summit. We invited both alumni and new friends to attend this weekend-long gathering. With 39 attendees from as far as Melbourne, Australia, the weekend's agenda consisted of bonfires, canyoneering, mountain biking, communal meals, panel discussions, workshops, beach time, live music, sunset club, kickball, and (of course) Area Fifty Fun, an extraterrestrial dance party.

Panel discussions focused on citizenship, place, and social practice and workshops included cleanups around town, making cocktail muddlers and cocktails, working on the Frontier House, and making pennant flags.

Attendees included Dijana Alickovic, Adam Bateman, Ryan Baxter, Nara Bopp-Williams, Bryan Brooks, Dasha Bulatova, Erin Carraher, Steph Crabtree, Adrienne Decker, Jack Forinash, Wes Funes, Kelly Gregory, Luke Gullickson, Christopher Hagedorn, Jarod Hamm, Katie Hargrave, Christopher Henderson, Emily Howe, Brett Hunter, Jennifer Joy Jameson, Ashley Jardin, Eric Jardin, Brett Jones, Kelsey Jones, Russell Kerr, Spence Kroll, Chris Lezama, Sarah Lillegard, Rob Loucks, Taylor Massey, Aimee O'Carroll, Gwen Peck, Ashley Ross, Mary Rothlisberger, Bevin Savage-Yamazaki, Maria Sykes, Aurora Tang, Alicia Toldi, and Jesse Walker.

BEYOND GREEN RIVER

Maria Sykes was honored to be the keynote speaker at the Nevada Art Council's annual conference in June. In addition to speaking on Epicenter's projects and programs, Maria led a workshop with Nevada artist and Frontier Fellow Sarah Lillegard.

Maria Sykes and Chris Lezama attended the first Rural Creative Placemaking Summit in Iowa City, Iowa. The gathering was a breath of fresh air because for the first time ever, they were able to move beyond "rural places matter" to how and why we choose to practice in rural places.

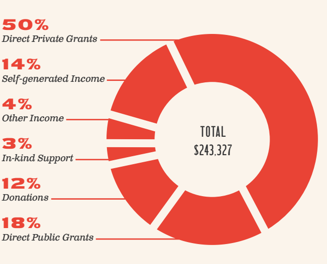
Maria and Bryan Brooks both spoke on panels in Miami at the Common Field convening, an annual gathering of contemporary, experimental, noncommercial artist spaces and initiatives.

As an artist-in-residence with the Rabbit Island Foundation, Jack Forinash spent three weeks on Rabbit Island in Lake Superior off the Upper Peninsula of Michigan with two collaborators. An exhibit of the work will be held in September 2017 at the DeVos Art Museum at Northern Michigan University.

Closer to home, Jack organized a two-part session and presented on Epicenter and the Frontier House at the 20th Annual Utah Housing Matters Conference. Maria spoke at the Utah Museum of Fine Arts on a panel titled, *ARTLandish: Land Art, Landscape, and the Environment*. And finally, Maria was invited by artist and educator Amy Jorgenson to give an artist talk at nearby Snow College.

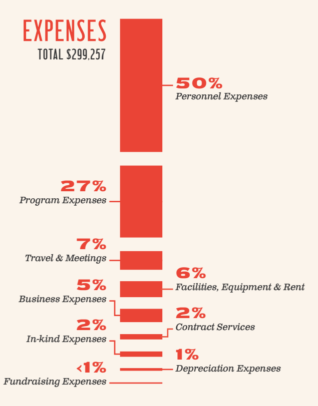
FINANCIALS

INCOME



EXPENSES

TOTAL $299,257



BALANCE SHEET

as of Dec 31, 2016

LIABILITIES AND EQUITY

Retained Earnings	$97,383
Unrestricted Net Assets	$72,375
Net Income	-$69,650
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	**$100,107**

ASSETS

Cash	$26,544
Accounts Receivable	$5,066
Accumulated Depreciation	-$6,233
Buildings	$69,919
Equipment	$1,811
Land	$2,500
Security Deposit Asset	$500
TOTAL ASSETS	**$100,107**

WE ARE WORKING DILIGENTLY TO REFINE OUR ROLE AS CITIZENS

We are often asked the question, "Why Green River?" In reality, Green River is not so different than many rural towns, but Epicenter is different. We work from this place with purpose. We are outsiders that derive purpose and direction from our neighbors; over half our board members are local and our daily work is alongside Green River residents. Our practice is imperfect and constantly being refined. In a town this small, there's accountability and we're constantly learning from our neighbors. Our participation in our community is vital.

Rural America is not homogenous, and even as Green River is a microcosm of so many other rural towns, it is complex and one of a kind. As 2017 begins, we know that we belong here in Green River. This is our place.

Thank you for your support and enthusiasm for our work. We hope our story encourages you to be active in your community. Give yourself the title of Citizen and take responsibility for your community. Let's get things done.

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT

DONATE TO EPICENTER TODAY

Please consider making a tax-deductible donation to Epicenter to help support our programing and operations. Use your credit card or bank account at paypal.me/EpicenterGREENRIVER.

GRANTORS

Sorenson Legacy Foundation
American Express
The National Endowment for the Arts
US Department of Agriculture, Rural Development
Steve & Juanita Sykes
US Department of Housing and Urban Development
Wells Fargo
Utah Division of Arts & Museums
State of Utah Olene Walker Housing Loan Fund
City of Green River
George S. & Dolores Doré Eccles Foundation
Union Pacific Foundation
McCarthey Family Foundation
Bike & Build
Rocky Mountain Power Foundation
Emery County Travel Bureau

DONORS

Steve and Juanita Sykes, Arthur and Carol B. Merkle, Vicky Mackay, Greg and Barbara Bassett, Jim and Lisa Rothlisberger, Wes Funes, J. Taylor Massey, Armando Rios, Mary Rowe, Keith and Sandy Massey, Paula LaMont, Brian Depew, Kirsten Stoltz, William Durkan, Susan and Dr. Charles Brooks, Pam Dorr, Nick Zdon, Bevin M Savage, Christian Ayala, Sarah Baugh, Joshua Hilliard, Travis Bacon, Aimee Trujillo, Dijana Alickovic, Betty and Paul Moore, Rep. Brad King, Kim and Lynne Edwards, Cynthia Connolly, Brian Martinelli, Jason Dilworth, Hayley Crooks, Matthew Fluharty, Lindsay Toman, Emily Howe, Kyle Lefler, Mikenna Clokey, Margaret Urban, Ana Lucas, Carson Brown, Roger Mainor, Mary Rothlisberger, Jim Goddard, José Galarza, Pete Collard, Lorraine Moore, Eric Shaw, Rebecca and Jerry Higdon, Laurel Hunter, Kirsten Southwell, Richard Elliott, Raphael Griswold, Melissa Denney, Nelda Ault-Dyslin, Jan Baugh, Alan and Martha Mattison, Lesly Allen, Celine Downen, Kenneth Hunt, Rhiana Medina, Davey Ornegri, Tianyi Dong, Felicia Baca, Andrew Ranville, Brooke Williams, Joanna Onorato, Anonymous

IN-KIND PARTNERS

AmeriCorps VISTA
Arches Education Center
Art of the Rural
Bike & Build
City of Green River
CRATE
Eastwood Print and Copy
Emery County Economic Development
Green River High School
Green River Improvement Team (GRIT)
Green River Trails Committee
Habitat for Humanity of Castle Country
Hannah Vaughn, AIA
High Desert Excavating, Inc.
John Wesley Powell River History Museum
Outward Bound
P&D Ace Hardware
PACT / Pyramid Youth Programs
Potluck
River Terrace Inn
Rural Community Assistance Corporation
Tamarisk Restaurant and Skyfall Guestrooms
University of Utah College of Architecture + Planning
USDA Rural Development
Utah Division of Arts & Museums
Utah Governor's Office of Economic Development
Utah Housing Coalition

We value transparency. We are a GuideStar member and are evaluated annually by the Better Business Bureau. Links to those reviews and detailed financial disclosures can be found at ruralandproud.org/disclosures.

**Current Staff & Board Members*

Annual Report Design by AmeriCorps VISTA Jarod Hamm.

OUR BOARD

*Rand Pinson, Epicenter Co-founder and Architect**
*Ethan Migliori, Emery County Commissioner and USU-E Director of Workforce Development**
Pat Brady, Mayor of Green River and Educator
*Craig Gowans, Educator at Green River High School**
*Nick Derrick, Small Business Owner in Green River**
*Nick Zdon, Graphic Designer**
*James Wheeler, Director of Community Partnership at The Public Design Exchange**

FRONTIERSMEN

Travis Bacon, Greg & Barbara Bassett, Dave & Suzanne Conine, Brian Depew, Wes Funes, Kelly Gregory, Paula LaMont, Glen & Rita Lezama, Vicki Mackay, J. Taylor Massey, Keith & Sandy Massey, Art & Carol Merkle, Ted Ranney, Jim & Lisa Rothlisberger, Mary Rowe, Kirsten Stoltz, Steve & Juanita Sykes

OUR STAFF

Katie Anderson, AmeriCorps VISTA for Habitat for Humanity
*Ryan Baxter, Citizen Designer**
Bryan Brooks, Citizen Designer
Maggie Cochrane, Habitat for Humanity Intern
*Steph Crabtree, Housing Specialist and Trails Committee Facilitator**
*Jack Forinash, Principal of Housing**
Kelly Gregory, Frontier House Project Manager
*Jarod Hamm, AmeriCorps VISTA**
*Christopher Henderson, Designer and Frontier House Builder**
Spence Kroll, Frontier House Designer
*Chris Lezama, Principal of Economic Development**
*Gwen Peck, AmeriCorps VISTA for Habitat for Humanity**
Armando Rios, Housing Specialist
JD Scott, Housing Specialist
*Nate Stapley, Frontier House Builder**
*Maria Sykes, Principal of Arts & Culture**

THIS IS THE PLACE