



RURAL & PROUD

EPICENTER

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

CONTENTS

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

HOUSING

- › Enterprise Rose Fellowship
- › Housing Open House
- › Planning for Canal Commons
- › RFP Response for Canal Commons
- › Acceptance of proposal & donation of land

FEATURE: HOUSING OPEN HOUSE

BUILDING LOCAL LEADERSHIP

- › Local Frontier Fellow
- › Local Artist Booth at Melon Days
- › Green River film screening
- › Community Coordinators

FEATURE: SARAH BURNETT & JUDITH TREJO

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- › Frontier Fellows & Visiting Artists
- › Public Safety Building
- › Community Events

FEATURE: FRONTIER FELLOWSHIP

STRENGTHENING OUR ORGANIZATION

- › Policies & Procedures
- › Logic Model
- › Enterprise Rose Fellowship
- › Board of Directors

LOGIC MODEL

FINANCIAL REPORT



LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Over the past few years, Epicenter has grown in ways we could have previously only imagined, and we remain focused on our mission in Green River while continuing our growth in vision and approach.

VISION: We envision a world where communities of all sizes have equitable access to the resources needed to shape their own futures.

FOCUS: Epicenter stewards creative initiatives that honor the past, strengthen the present, and build the future that we envision with our community.

APPROACH: Our logic model both is a tool for internal course-correcting and external communication of our vision and intended impact.

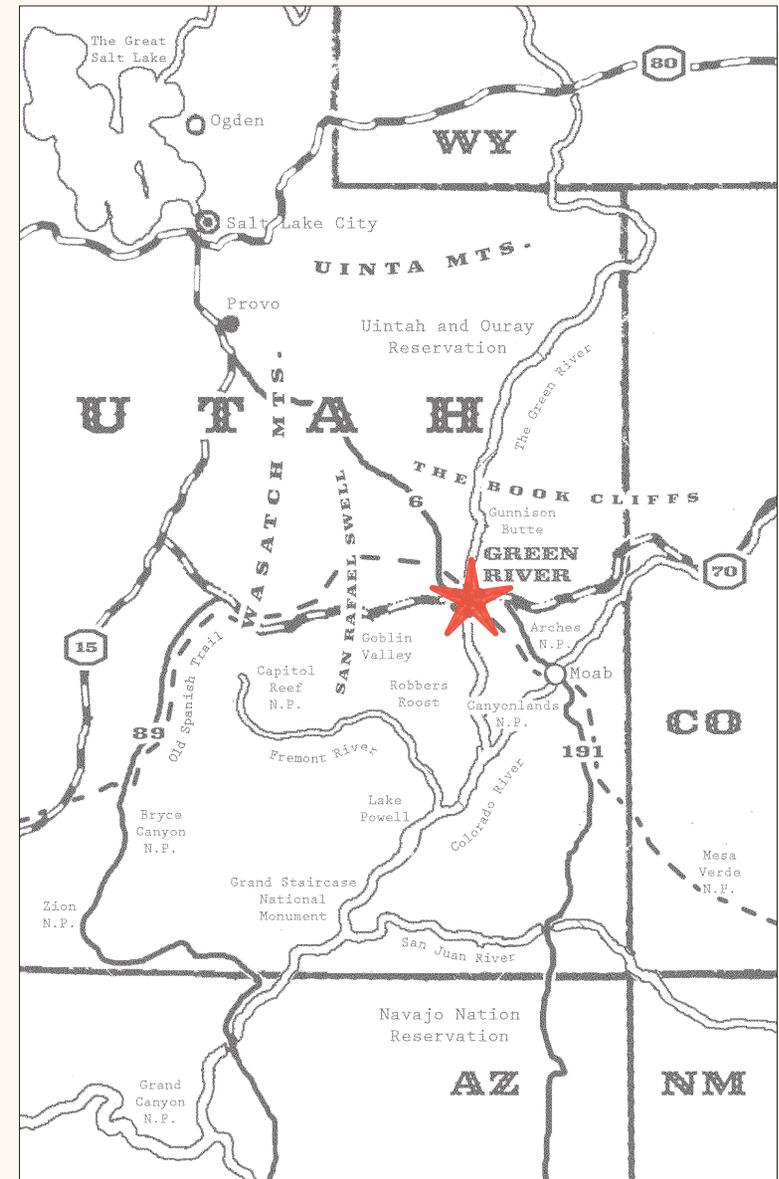
This growth and vision have been possible thanks to an incredible team I am honored to direct, made up of dedicated employees, a determined Rose Fellow, supportive and wise board members, innovative artists, and enthusiastic collaborators and interns. Steph Crabtree remains our rock as Housing Specialist, bookkeeper, and builder extraordinaire. Architect Lindsey Briceno, nearing the end of her second year as an Enterprise Rose Fellow, has taken Epicenter to the next level. And we added artist Grace Whatley to the team as Frontier Fellowship coordinator and generally as an endlessly creative and strategic thinker and communicator.

Epicenter continues working with both our ongoing collaborators as well as beginning new collaborations both in person and remotely. Designers Jarod Hamm and Danny Baxter continued to assist on varied projects. Sarah Lillegard developed resources especially in relation to the Frontier Fellowship program of which she was a participant in 2016. Former Epicenter Co-Director Chris Lezama assisted with a new communications strategy and resource development. We hosted two local community coordinators Judith Trejo and Grissell Huerta, an arts intern Lydia Thompson (student at Bennington College), and many talented Frontier Fellows, our month-long artists-in-residence.

Our Board of Directors has evolved, most significantly by adding three women and becoming a fully Utah-based board, a first for Epicenter. With backgrounds in law, finance, affordable housing development, architecture, social impact investment, non-profit administration, and more, the board is ensuring Epicenter is perfectly situated for our biggest project yet.

2019 has been a time of accomplishing unprecedented work, building toward our biggest project yet: Canal Commons, a development in the heart of downtown Green River. The development, located on Green River Avenue near Epicenter HQ, is expected to break ground soon with major construction beginning in 2021. Visit canalcommons.ruralandproud.org to learn more.

Sincerely,





Rose Fellowship Retreat (Nov 2019)

HOUSING

In 2019 we made our greatest progress yet toward the development of new housing in Green River.

We gained staff member Architect Lindsey Briceno to work full-time on developing new affordable housing in Green River.

We hosted an open house to inform the development of Canal Commons, an affordable housing development consisting of 10 individual, single family units.

We submitted a proposal to the City, to develop Canal Commons, for a city owned parcel of land which was accepted.

We secured a key partners: Rocky Mountain Community Reinvestment Corporation, Zions Bank, and other for the Canal Commons housing development.

We launched the “House Party” fundraiser to raise private donations towards Canal Commons.



Canal Commons

HOUSING OPEN HOUSE

After ten years of extensive research, assessments, design studies, and critical home repairs, the housing open house marked an exciting step in our development of affordable housing.

The housing open house was both an info session and a community-driven design charrette.

We shared a timeline of housing work since 2009, Epicenter's long term goals, and a recent housing assessment update. The design portion included asking residents about their current housing (ie. "What do you love about your current house?") and asking them to help Epicenter begin designing new housing for local residents (ie. "What housing typology would you prefer: duplex, row house, townhome, or apartment?"). Twenty-nine residents were in attendance throughout the event including Mayor Travis Bacon.

In the days after the open house, Community Coordinator Annalee Howland took the open house on the road for those who were unable to attend (mostly due to work/family obligations). She visited local businesses, focusing mostly on back-of-house workers. Twenty-three local residents, with a focus on those currently living in mobile homes, were surveyed after the main event.





LOCAL LEADERSHIP

To empower residents to develop their own ideas, and ensure the town's economy is less susceptible to outside forces, Epicenter builds local leadership within our community. We are determined to break the boom-and-bust cycle through local leadership and entrepreneurship.

We hosted our first local Frontier Fellow, Sarah Burnett. During her residency, she created a Green River themed coloring book. We also sponsored her to attend the Mountain West Arts Conference

We organized a booth for local artists during Green River's annual Melon Days festival.

We facilitated the screening of the film "Green River," created by local filmmaker Tadd Mecham.

We hosted a second round of community coordinators who increased dialogue with our Latinx community.

We mentored the City's new full-time Event Coordinator in grant writing and project management.



SARAH BURNETT, FRONTIER FELLOW

Sarah has lived in Green River her entire life. She is a self-taught illustrator and photographer, plus her kind spirit and lifelong love for her town made her the perfect choice for Epicenter's first local Frontier Fellow. During her residency as an Emerging Fellow, Sarah had the opportunity to share the residency with Summer Orr, a young professional artist from Nevada. Summer provided Sarah with a fresh perspective, and Sarah was a resource on all things local for Summer. During her residency, Sarah focused on illustration, drawing from observation and her own photographs, compiled the resulting drawings into a coloring book. Sarah's ultimate goal is to help others see the beauty in the details of rural life.



JUDITH TREJO, COMMUNITY COORDINATOR

Raised in Green River, Judith Trejo is a bilingual singer/songwriter and an advocate for the local community, particularly youth and Latinx members. Judith was hired by Epicenter as a Community Coordinator to assist with bringing resources to the local Latinx community. In her time at Epicenter, she worked with residents to help them apply for public assistance programs. Judith also catalyzed Epicenter's collaboration with the Green River Bible Church on a Fall Festival, where Epicenter hosted mask and pumpkin painting, games, and a photo booth. Judith currently works at GR High School (Spanish Language Assistant) and is pursuing a degree from Utah State University.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Epicenter engages residents in creating a more vibrant community atmosphere and cultivating town pride. Our Frontier Fellows and visiting artists encourage residents to view the community, landscape, and region through a unique lens and develop a fresh perspective.

- Calista Lyon captured the waves (a powerful symbol of rural camaraderie) of over 100 town residents in a short film, which was shown at a community gathering and projected onto various town structures and vacant billboards.
- Jenn Emerling collaborated with Green River High Students in co-photo-documenting their Prom in order to show the students' perspective alongside her own.
- Folklorist Jenn Jameson and photographer Chris Merchant collaborated on a regional project that investigates tourism in Utah and asks important questions about visitorship ethics.
- Ashley Hanson and Brian Laidlaw engaged residents in musical performances and songwriting/storytelling workshops at multiple venues throughout town.

Epicenter is also working directly the City on larger projects and events:

- Our housing specialist, Steph Crabtree, assisted with the design of the city's new Public Safety Building located on Main Street.
- Epicenter works regularly with City Events Coordinator, Robin Nelson, on various public events including: the Green River Rock and Mineral Festival, Outlaw Days, River Fest, and Melon Days.





CALISTA LYON: LOCALIZED GESTURES

Calista Lyon came to Green River from Ohio. During her Fellowship, she created a short film called *Localized Gestures*. The work shares a single gesture—the wave—a greeting present in many cultures, but particularly prevalent in small rural communities. Through the gesture of the wave, this work explores how we use our hands as a form of relation, affection, and solidarity.

Localized Gestures was screened at the annual town picnic and projected around the town on a billboard viewed as motorists exit the town, on the wall of a local restaurant, and on the side of a semi-truck trailer parked at the truck stop.



We humans must learn to look inward, to be critical of what these evolutions have allowed our species to do to others, both the human and non-human. Communities like Green River offer a tangible place to start, a space where we might know each other and therefore be accountable to each other, working at a scale that offers possibility.

---Calista Lyon, on her film *Localized Gestures*



JEN EMERLING: PROM



Jen Emerling is an independent visual storyteller specializing in travel and editorial photography. As a Frontier Fellow, Jenn soon discovered that Green River does Prom night a little differently; this annual event isn't just for the 10-20 kids who comprise the Junior Class. Green River High School's Prom has been adapted into a beloved community gathering, where parents and siblings are invited to attend and partake in the festivities themselves.

Emerling used her immersive visual storytelling abilities to capture the experience of prom in Green River while also empowering the students to be their own storytellers by providing them with instant film cameras for the night.

The stakes are often high at prom—there is a rich tapestry of stories in books and film that paints a picture of immense possibility, pressure, rituals, excitement, disappointment, and big dreams. And yet, my observation of Green River's Prom is that its meaning is less about individualistic needs and more about the shared experience of dancing all night with everyone in town to a playlist that shuffles effortlessly between pop, country, and Mexican music (a crowd favorite).'

- Jennifer Emerling on her project, *Prom*





STRENGTHENING OUR ORGANIZATION

In order to better ensure our organizational resilience and continue developing Epicenter as a model for other rural communities:

We developed new policies and procedures and improved on those already existing.

We created a new evaluation tool for our programs, staff, and organization as a whole.

We developed a logic model for the organization. (See next page.)

We expanded and diversified our Board of Directors adding more women and LGBT+ members.

We hosted the Rose Fellow Retreat, a professional development opportunity for architectural fellows in partnership with the national organization, Enterprise Community Partners.



EPICENTER LOGIC MODEL

INPUTS



Art/Design Expertise

An Engaged Community

Diverse Funding

Staff, Board & Volunteer Time

Strategic Partners

Data, Research and Exchange

STRATEGIES

Curation and creation of creative products, programs, and events

Affordable housing design and development

Exchange with rural/small/remote communities

Data collection and analysis

OUTPUTS

New affordable housing units

Arts/design programming and projects

Creation of partnerships, community groups, and advocacy consortiums

Replicable models for other communities

OUTCOMES



SOCIAL

Increased civic participation in efforts that impact the community

Increase the working trust and cohesion within the community

New & diverse leadership

Maintaining the comfort of a “small town atmosphere”

PHYSICAL

Improvements and beautification in the built environment

Decreases in blight and vacancy on Main Street

Development and renovation of facilities, housing, and public spaces

ECONOMIC

Growth of local businesses

Displacement prevention through better access to affordable housing

Programming increases public engagement

Increased visitorship and awareness of Green River

Community wealth and resources retained

IMPACT

OPPORTUNITY

Rural pride from all Green River residents

Awareness/admiration of Green River from urban counterparts

Equitable opportunity for all residents regardless of housing, economic, etc. status

ECONOMIC

Community as self-sufficient and secure with a stable year-round economic environment

Increase in intergenerational wealth building and diversity in ownership

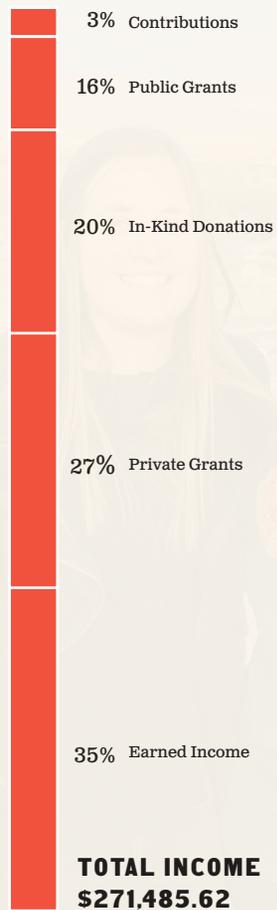
Appropriate, affordable, and accessible housing options for all

BEYOND GREEN RIVER

Epicenter’s strategies and impact used as a model for other rural/small/remote communities.

Awareness/admiration of rural places from urban counterparts

FINANCIAL REPORT



ASSETS

Buildings	\$154,069.53
Bank Accounts	\$30,352.11
Land	\$5,000
Accounts Receivable	\$58,544.31
Equipment	\$1,811.29
Depreciation	\$-20,683.81
Other Current Assets	\$689.95
Total Assets	\$229,783.38

LIABILITIES & EQUITY

Restricted Net Assets	\$51,988.75
Unrestricted Net Assets	\$171,195.41
Net Income	\$892.57
Total Equity	\$228,585.41
Total Liabilities and Equity	\$229,783.38

FOR MORE INFO, VISIT:

ruralandproud.org

frontierfellowship.org

thisisgreenriver.com

facebook.com/greenriverepicenter

instagram.com/ruralandproud

