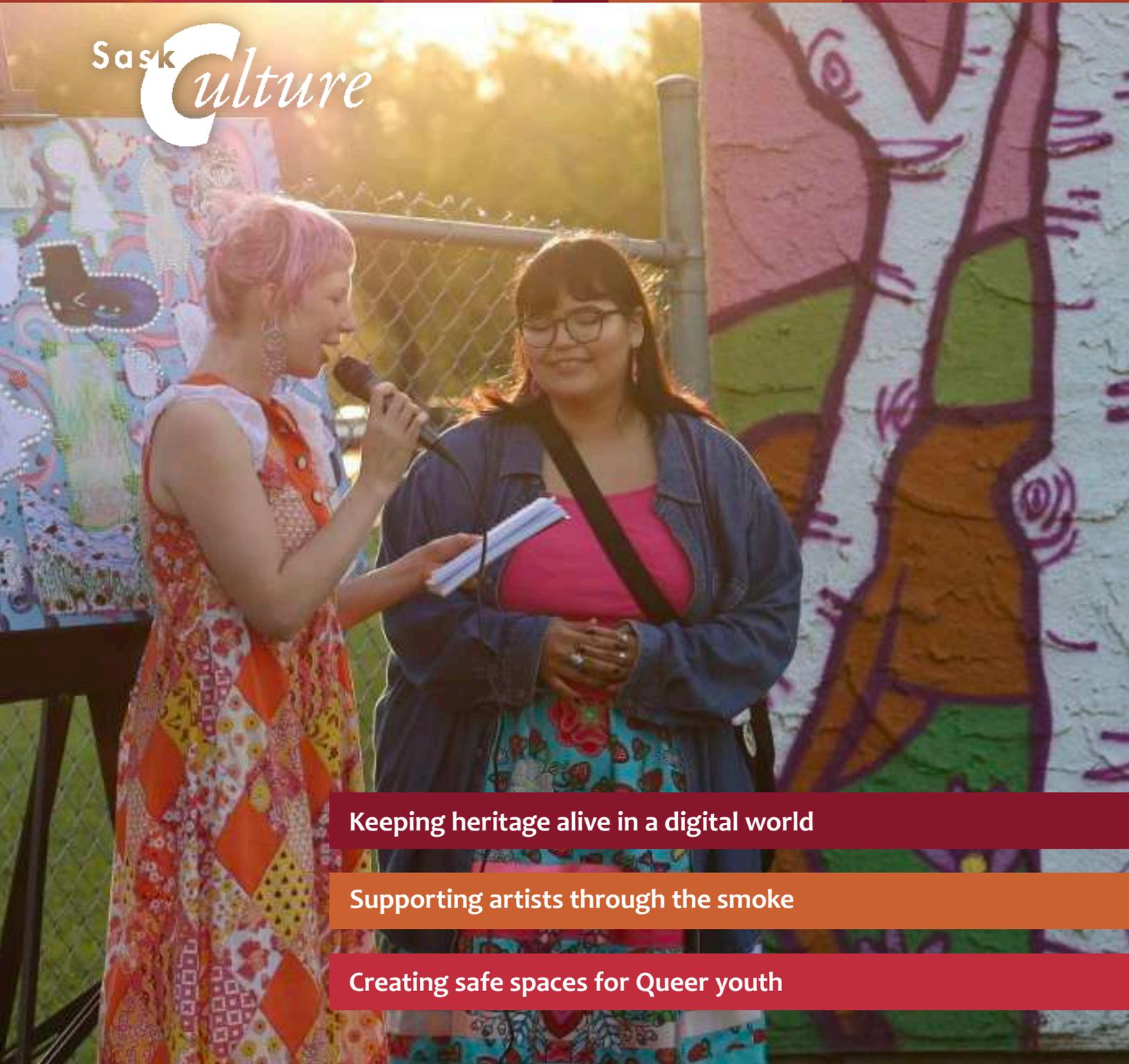


Culture Builds Community!

Engage

Spring 2026
Volume 16 Issue 2

Sask *Culture*



Keeping heritage alive in a digital world

Supporting artists through the smoke

Creating safe spaces for Queer youth

Engage

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is designed to

highlight
the work of
cultural leaders,
volunteers

and the

diversity
of activities

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and Recreation.



ON THE COVER:

Katie Stead (left) was the lead artist on the Midtown Mural project, organized by Aaliyah Flett (right), which celebrated creativity, connection and pride. (Photo courtesy of Culture Days Prince Albert)

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Direct Inquiries to:

Busayo Osobade, Editor
bosobade@saskculture.ca

Ana Cristina Camacho, Publishing Coordinator
acamacho@saskculture.ca

404, 2125 11th Ave., Regina SK S4P 3X3
Tel: (306) 780.9448

www.saskculture.ca

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Graphic Design:

Third Wolf Studio
Tania Wolk, Designer

Contributors:

Sabrina Cataldo, Kevin Power, Jackie Ledingham
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Message from the CEO



LEADING CHANGE TOGETHER

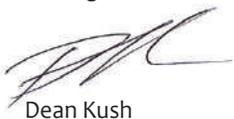
Saskatchewan's cultural community has always been shaped by creativity, resilience, and innovation. Today, leading change means honouring those roots while having the courage to evolve.

We are living in a time of significant change. Economic pressures, evolving funding realities, new technologies and shifting expectations are shaping how organizations operate, and how communities engage with arts, culture and heritage. While these changes can present challenges, they also create opportunities for innovation, growth, and new ways of connecting with people. This issue of *Engage* highlights individuals and organizations that are embracing change and leading the way.

For SaskCulture, responding to change means continually reflecting on how we serve people across Saskatchewan, support cultural organizations and engage communities in an authentic and meaningful way. This year, SaskCulture has had the pleasure of gathering feedback through a number of consultations and outreach, which will inform how we move forward. While SaskCulture completed its current Strategic Plan this year, the work connected to our Funding Program Renewal will continue.

Change is not about leaving our values behind; it's about applying them in new ways, so culture remains vibrant, inclusive, and relevant for the future.

The leaders and organizations highlighted in this issue are leading the way in moving beyond the status quo, telling stories in new ways, building new relationships, and reaching broader audiences. At SaskCulture, we are grateful that funds from Sask Lotteries can support these types of initiatives. By embracing new tools, responding to unexpected challenges and mentoring young people to bring fresh energy to the sector, the cultural community continues to show that arts, heritage and culture are powerful catalysts for positive change.



Dean Kush



Cultural organizations across the province are embracing change with innovative programs and strategies, with funding support from Sask Lotteries. (Photos by the Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan, Culture Days Prince Albert, and Heywood Yu.)



Culture Builds Community!

Engage



explore stories

ONLINE

Supporting Artists

THROUGH THE SMOKE

BY SABRINA CATALDO

In the summer of 2025, wildfires swept through northern Saskatchewan, forcing entire communities to evacuate with little notice. With thousands on the move at once, some families spent up to 12 hours on the highway to reach safety. And the impact did not end there; the unexpected costs of gas, food and hotel stays quickly added up, creating financial strain during an already stressful and uncertain time.

The crisis hit close to home at CARFAC SASK, as one of its board members lives in La Ronge. As a province-wide organization with the mission of representing visual artists in Saskatchewan, the many artists displaced from their homes were on all the staff's minds. "We decided to look into an emergency fund, but we knew we had to respond quickly," says Wendy Nelson, executive director, CARFAC SASK. The organization had an Artist Distress Fund (ADF) that had been in operation since the 1990s. However, it was too small to adequately respond to the situation.

So, Nelson and the board pivoted. "We had money in a surplus programming fund, so we reallocated it," she says. They also simplified the application process to make it easier for people who were out of their homes to apply. "All they had to do was email us and give their CV or social media information [to show they were an artist in the north] and a little about their situation," Nelson explains.

In addition to the ADF, The Artists' Emergency Relief Fund (AERF) went live on June 5, 2025, offering \$500 payments for evacuated artists to use on anything they needed. From early June to mid-August, there were 65 requests through the AERF and four through the ADF, paying out a total of \$32,500. Funds were used for everything from gas to art supplies. "Sometimes, we were the first aid money that they saw," says Nelson.

As with the ADF, CARFAC SASK did not ask for repayment of the AERF funds, and applicants were not required to be members of the organization.

According to the Canadian Red Cross, more than 16,100 people from over 6,300 households were displaced. Among them was Kokum Bannock, also known as Janice Grayson, a northern artist who ended up at an evacuation centre in Montreal Lake. In her rush to escape, she had left behind her art supplies.



"Sometimes, we were the first aid money that they saw."

– WENDY NELSON

In an interview in a late 2025 issue of the CARFAC SASK newsletter, she recounted her experience:

"I felt like I was nothing without my art supplies. I sat on my cot off and on thinking about it. Like what if everything I worked for burned to ash and charred memories?"

"I was given a kid's painting kit a couple of days into the evacuation. I was relieved to have that and to be able to paint again. Besides forgetting my art supplies, I also forgot to bring backing for beadwork. I was given some beading supplies — faux leather backing and beading felt. That was good, and I was able to make some keychains.

"I applied for the Artists' Emergency Relief Fund with CARFAC SASK a few days later. I got the funds a day after, and that helped with the cost of art supplies. Now I was a little more motivated, and I would paint at night with a flashlight pointed in my direction."

Quick thinking and meaningful action on the part of the CARFAC SASK staff and board ensured artists were supported physically and artistically during a time of extreme need. "We were really happy we had the opportunity and means to be of aid," Nelson says.

CARFAC SASK receives Annual Global Funding from the Sask Lotteries Trust Fund.

Kokum Bannock (Janice Grayson) is a visual artist based in La Ronge, Saskatchewan. She mainly works with acrylic paint and creates beadwork. (Photo by Annalisa Keppner)

CREATING SAFE SPACES FOR Queer Youth

PODCAST EPISODE WITH BRENDAN DICKIE

Sometimes, challenges can spark incredible initiatives.

When Bill 137 came into place in the province, a group of Regina-based educators saw a huge impact on their students and the community at large. With resources for Queer youth quickly disappearing, they decided to start a new program to offer youth support and connection.

Join us as we dive into the story behind the Kaleidoscope Youth Camp, a program that has offered a safe space for 2SLGBTQ+ youth in Regina and beyond for the past two years.

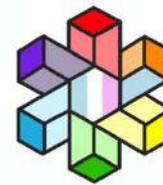
The Kaleidoscope Youth Camp received support from SaskCulture's Small Grant Accessibility Program, funded by the Sask Lotteries Trust Fund.

"It's getting harder for my generation in the Queer community to be the ones that are getting in front of everything. I think it's [important to] develop those skills in the younger people, so that the response to urgent needs is broader."

– BRENDAN DICKIE



Listen to this episode online, where we discuss how Brendan and his team launched the program to address urgent needs for Queer youth in their community.



*Kaleidoscope
Youth Camp*



Queer community members and allies came together to organize the Kaleidoscope camp in 2024 and 2025 in Regina. (Photo courtesy of Brendan Dickie)

Keeping Heritage

ALIVE IN A DIGITAL WORLD

PODCAST EPISODE WITH THE SASKATCHEWAN HISTORY & FOLKLORE SOCIETY

Stories are how we connect with each other. The Saskatchewan History & Folklore Society (SHFS) understands this well, using communications, especially social media, to share heritage stories in ways that feel alive, relevant, and connected to everyday life.

In this podcast conversation, SaskCulture’s Communications team speaks with the people behind the SHFS communications efforts.

In recent years, the organization has made a conscious effort to modernize its approach and has learned an important lesson along the way: heritage organizations can’t rely on traditional approaches alone; they need to embrace new channels to connect with new audiences.

The Saskatchewan History & Folklore Society receives Annual Global Funding from the Sask Lotteries Trust Fund.

“Just like we need to get into physical rooms and be there and claim our space, we need to do that in the digital space as well — and not just quarter ourselves into our own sectors.”

-JESSICA DEWITT



Listen to this episode to hear from Kristin Enns-Kavanagh and Jessica DeWitt from the SHFS about how they use communications, particularly social media, as a powerful tool for building relationships.



The SHFS is trying out new types of content on social media, aiming at informing audiences while building authentic engagement. (Photos courtesy of the SHFS)

KRONAU MUSEUM GETS A Marvelous Rebrand

BY SABRINA CATALDO

For nearly two decades, the Kronau Heritage Museum has been quietly redefining what a small-town museum can be. Through fascinating storytelling, innovative events, and family-friendly programming, the Museum has been a vibrant, creative hub in the Kronau area.

Over time, one thing became clear: the name no longer told the full story. So, in 2024, after some community consultation, the volunteer board rebranded the museum, christening it the Kronau Marvelous Museum & Creative Corner.

In its early years, the Museum featured local history and artifacts. “But then, we started to get more into telling stories and offering programs, and the name wasn’t reflecting what we were about,” Audrey Euteneier, Board chair, says.

The Museum was originally located in a 650-square-foot church building built in 1912. There was a permanent display of

artifacts upstairs and rotating exhibitions, collection storage, offices and meeting space downstairs. “We quickly outgrew the basement,” says Rhonda Lamb, Board treasurer. “We needed space for our collection and programming, but we were also seen as a building full of old stuff. We knew we were more than that.” The building also wasn’t accessible to people using mobility aids.

In 2007, a local historic school came up for sale. It was the perfect opportunity for the Museum to address their space, perception and accessibility challenges. But they didn’t have the money. The board held a large public meeting to see if there was enough interest to save the school. Community support was overwhelming. So, the board stepped up and gave personal loans to purchase the building, move it next to the church and build a new basement.

“After that, we were dead broke, and it sat for four years while we fundraised, paid back the directors’ loans and started renovations,” Euteneier explains. The renovations spanned from 2007 to 2024, during which time the Museum continued operating in the church; the new space opened in June 2024, under the marvelous new name.

The gallery for the rotating exhibits broadened, given that there was four times more physical space. There is also a craft room, a meeting room and space for adult programming. The entire building is now accessible to those using mobility aids.

“Be open to change and new ideas, always trying to be relevant to who your audience is and who you want your audience to be.”

– AUDREY EUTENEIER

Additionally, the collection now has its own dedicated heated and humidity-controlled storage area in the church basement.

The new moniker, building and programming are attracting a more diverse audience, including young families from town who had never come to the Museum before, as well as people from neighbouring communities such as Regina, Lajord, Sedley, Vibank, Pilot Butte and beyond. Younger people have also been inspired to join the board.

Euteneier has some advice for other museums thinking about modernizing: “Don’t think things always have to be done the way they always have been done. You can change it.” Lamb adds, “Look at your capacity and work within it, so you don’t burn folks out. Be open to change and new ideas, always trying to be relevant to who your audience is and who you want your audience to be.”

The Kronau Marvelous Museum & Creative Corner receives support from SaskCulture’s Museum Grant Program, funded by Sask Lotteries Trust Fund.

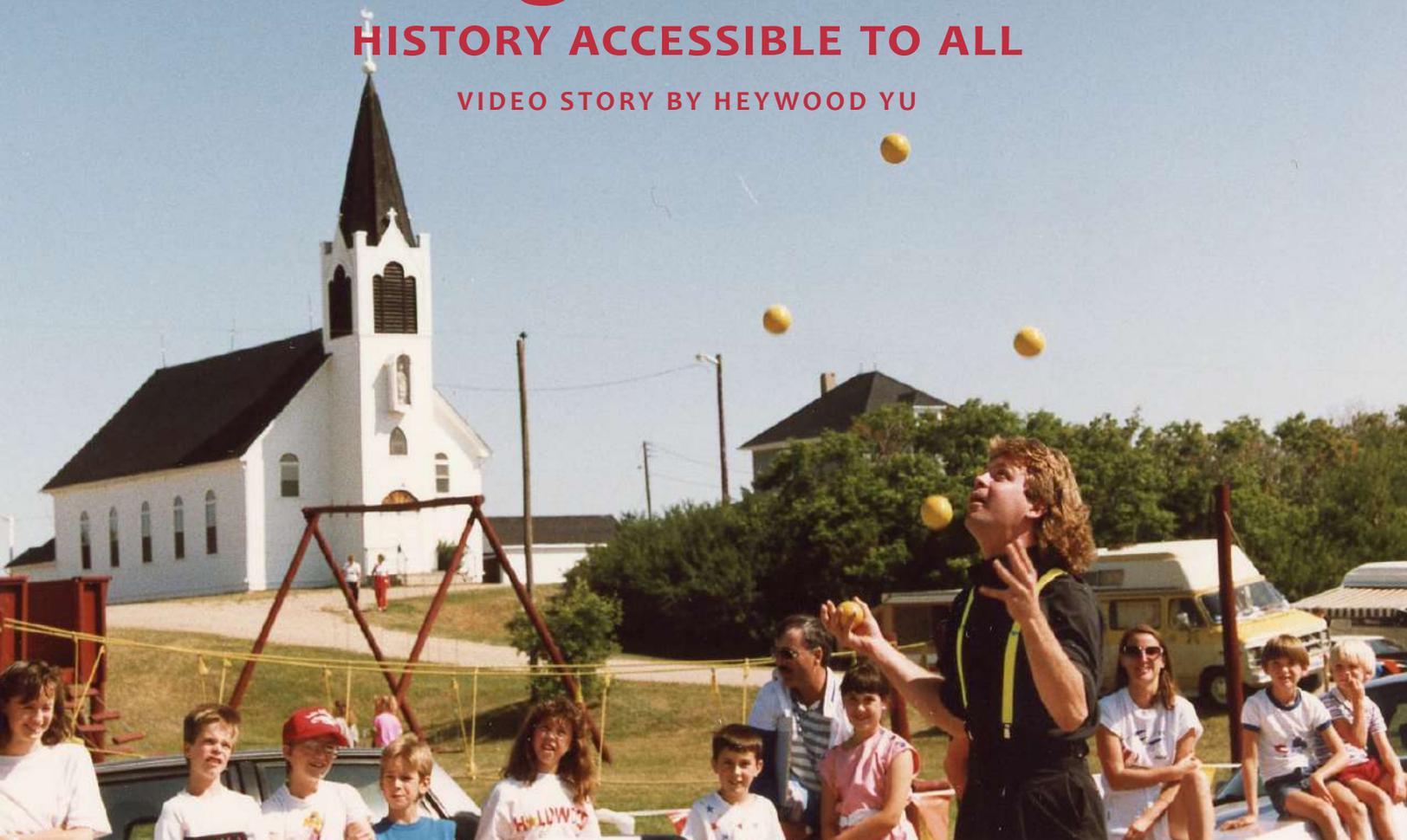


Top left: Retired executive director of the Museums Association of Saskatchewan Wendy Fitch, who was instrumental in founding the Kronau Museum, cut the ribbon at the grand opening of the Saar school building in 2024. Right: Volunteers celebrated the unveiling of the Museum’s new name during the Simple Fun Festival in 2024. (Photos courtesy of the Kronau Marvelous Museum & Creative Corner)

Making Fransaskois

HISTORY ACCESSIBLE TO ALL

VIDEO STORY BY HEYWOOD YU



The Société Historique de la Saskatchewan (SHS) serves the province's French-speaking community, but many people are not able to easily access its archives located in Regina. To address this challenge, the organization has taken on a multi-year project to digitize the Archives Fransaskois.

Quinn Bell, Francophone archivist, SHS, says preserving archival materials

and making them widely accessible is important for minority language groups, as these resources help people stay connected to their heritage.

The Société Historique de la Saskatchewan receives support from SaskCulture's Multicultural Initiatives Fund – Annual Funding, funded by the Sask Lotteries Trust Fund.

“A lot of people have these stories and don't necessarily share them unless they're asked.”

– QUINN BELL



Watch the video story online for a look into the Archives Fransaskois' work to preserve and share local history, and why it matters.



Top: A circus performer at the 10th Fête fransaskoise in August 1989 at St. Denis, Saskatchewan. (Archives fransaskoises, SHS, Fonds Conseil culturel fransaskois (CCF)) Bottom: The SHS aims to digitize 80 per cent of the Archives Fransaskois this year. (Photo by Heywood Yu)

Symphony Orchestra

PUTS AUDIENCE FIRST

VIDEO STORY BY HEYWOOD YU

As the Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra (SSO) approaches its 100th year, the organization is embracing change and looking ahead to the future.

Its 10-year strategic plan, Opus 100, is all about preparing and adapting to a changing cultural landscape. As part of its effort, the SSO is reimagining what it means to be an orchestra and redefining its role as a catalyst for music appreciation

in the community, with the goal of building long-term sustainability.

The SSO is supported by the Professional Arts Organizations Program (PAOP), delivered by SK Arts. Through the partnership between SK Arts and SaskCulture, and funding from Sask Lotteries, PAOP funding streams reach more professional arts organizations throughout the province, including the SSO.

“The change in ... attracting people in different ways came when we stopped thinking about our concerts as purely the musical experiences we had before.”

– MARK TURNER



Watch the video story online to learn what motivated the SSO’s new strategies and tactics, and how the organization is preparing for future changes.



Since the pandemic, the Symphony Orchestra has been streaming performances online so more people can access programming. (Photos by Heywood Yu)



STORYTELLERS USE NEW TOOLS TO Imagine Better Futures

VIDEO STORY BY HEYWOOD YU

An Indigenous-led storytelling project aims to change public spaces, not physically, but in people's perception.

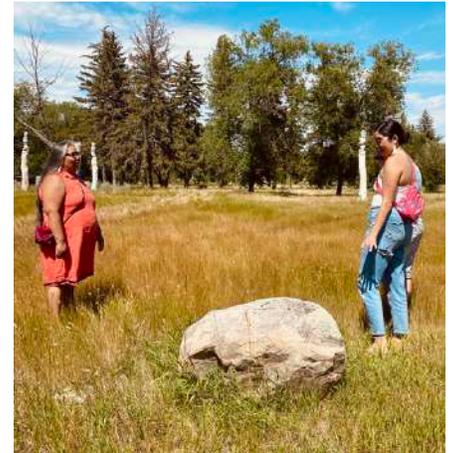
Buffalo Futurism, an ongoing digital monuments project by Common Weal Community Arts, uses Augmented Reality to tell Indigenous stories in Regina. This project invites people to view a local park from a whole new perspective, through an Augmented Reality app that includes audio and visual components.

By using new technologies to tell Indigenous stories, Buffalo Futurism invites people to engage with digital arts as a tool to explore Truth and Reconciliation.

Common Weal Community Arts receives support from SaskCulture's Multicultural Initiatives Fund – Annual Funding, funded by the Sask Lotteries Trust Fund.

“In order for culture to survive, it has to evolve.”

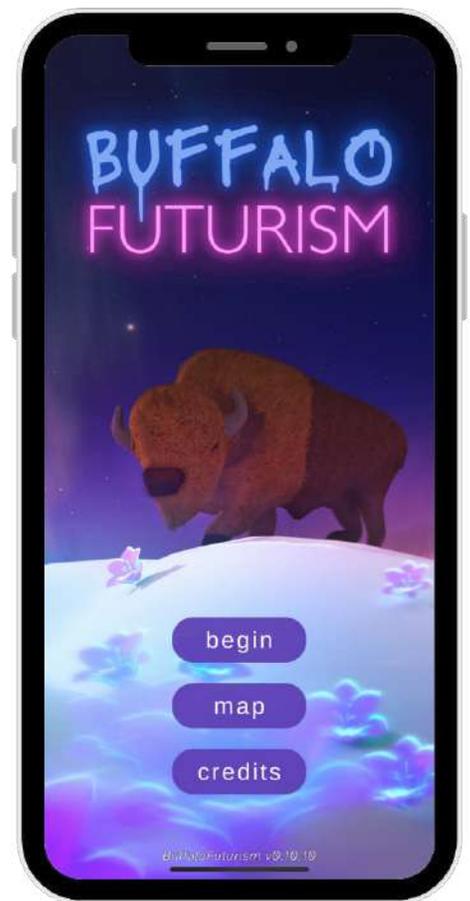
– JOELY BIGEAGLE
KEQUAHTOOWAY



Watch the video story online to explore this innovative storytelling project.



Buffalo Futurism was showcased at the imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival in Toronto, the largest Indigenous film and media arts festival in the world. (Photos by Lorne Kequahtooway and Evie Johnny Ruddy)



Supporting Youth

SHAPES THE FUTURE OF CULTURE

PODCAST EPISODE WITH THE SPARK PROGRAM AND CREATIVE KIDS

If youth really are the future, and we say that a lot, the question becomes: how is the cultural sector preparing for it?

In this episode, we're joined by Shawn Bauche from the Creative Kids Saskatchewan charity and Skip Taylor from the Organization of Saskatchewan Arts Councils' (OSAC) Spark program. Their work supports youth in different ways: helping families financially to afford arts and culture classes for their children and creating leadership opportunities for young cultural organizers. Together, these programs directly impact local youth and help shape the future of the arts and culture sector.

OSAC receives Annual Global Funding from the Sask Lotteries Trust Fund. Also, thanks to support from the Sask Lotteries Trust Fund, SaskCulture is able to cover all administrative costs for Creative Kids. This means that 100 per cent of all donations to Creative Kids go directly to helping children and youth participate in arts and cultural activities.

“We want to see young people being given that voice and having that impact and not being tokens.”

– SKIP TAYLOR



Listen to this episode for a discussion about what the future of the arts and cultural sector could look like, and how young people are already shaping it.



Both the Creative Kids and Spark programs allow youth, of different ages, to explore and grow their connection to arts and culture. (Photos courtesy of OSAC and Creative Kids)

Youth Lead

CELEBRATION AT CULTURE DAYS

VIDEO STORY BY CULTURE DAYS PRINCE ALBERT



Watch the video online to see the results of local youth coming together to celebrate arts and culture in Prince Albert.

Youth leadership was front and center during Prince Albert Culture Days in 2025, as young people stepped forward to create and share meaningful cultural experiences in their community.

Working together, members of the Community Building Youth Futures (CBYF) group helped create a vibrant mural and produced a video celebrating the benefits of arts, culture and heritage and their power to connect the community. Through this work, the youth involved demonstrated the meaningful impact that

can happen when young people are given opportunities to participate and lead.

Their efforts also showed the strength of youth supporting youth. By leading activities during Culture Days, CBYF members helped strengthen participation, build confidence, and create authentic connections within the community.

The Prince Albert Culture Days Hub received support from SaskCulture's Culture Days Hub Sponsorship, with funding from the Sask Lotteries Trust Fund.

“We wanted to really highlight it through video to get it out there for more youth to see, look at these amazing things that are happening in our community, and it’s such an accessible way for youth to engage with it, and see themselves in those spaces.”

**– NICOLE MATHEIS,
PROGRAM COORDINATOR, CBYF**



Top: Tia Holash embraced the value of youth involvement by creating the opportunity for the mural project. Bottom: Aaliyah Flett (right) organized the creation and launch of a Midtown Mural, with help from Nicole Matheis (middle) and Daphne Masih (left). (Photos courtesy of Culture Days Prince Albert)

RELATIONSHIPS AND RESOURCES

Key to Navigating Change

PODCAST EPISODE WITH THE MULTICULTURAL COUNCIL OF SASKATCHEWAN



Listen to this podcast conversation with Rhonda Rosenberg, executive director, MCoS, to learn about how leveraging funds and generating revenue is key to thriving in times of change.

How can a cultural organization find stability while riding the waves of change?

The Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan (MCoS) has been working towards its vision of a world where multiculturalism is central to the cultural, social, economic, and political life of Saskatchewan for over 50 years. It has done this work while navigating massive changes in the province, including changing demographics, shifts in public opinion, and more.

The Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan receives Annual Global Funding from the Sask Lotteries Trust Fund.

“Dealing with change is really about continuing to build relationships, continuing to evolve our understanding of who we are, and who we need to be, how we engage and where we engage.”

– RHONDA ROSENBERG



MCoS staff at their 50th anniversary gala in 2025. L-R: Yordanos Tesfamariam, Kelsey Aitchison, Titilayo Omolola, Ali Thompson, Rhonda Rosenberg.



MCoS executive director Rhonda Rosenberg teaching at an anti-racism event. (Photos courtesy of MCoS)

A Cultural Vision

TAKING SHAPE IN MOOSE JAW

BY HANNAH WILLIAMS

Imagine a city where every cultural group feels seen, heard, and valued. In Moose Jaw, that vision is taking shape through the city's first-ever Cultural Plan. Initiated by the Cultural Diversity Committee, the plan aims to weave the rich tapestry of Moose Jaw's diverse communities into the very fabric of the city's future.

Officially adopted by the City of Moose Jaw in 2024, the Moose Jaw Community Cultural Action Plan now serves as a framework to strengthen the city's cultural landscape in the years to come. The journey began in 2021, when committee members recognized a gap in public awareness around the many diverse cultural groups, programs, and events in the community. What followed was a thoughtful process that included research, community consultations, and collaborative planning.

Throughout the multi-year effort, the committee remained focused on one priority: ensuring that diverse communities were meaningfully included and engaged at every step.

"Diversity is a core community-identified priority. So, when you look at our Cultural Plan, there's a list of priorities, and one of those is diversity," says Craig Hemingway, director of strategic growth, City of Moose Jaw.

The community responded well, with 20-30 people regularly attending cultural planning meetings. One major challenge identified early on was that cultural groups did not have enough resources, and there was a lack of collaboration. Hayley Hart-Rushinko, manager of communications and Indigenous relations, City of Moose Jaw, says that "Because [organizations] don't have a ton of time or a ton of resources, they end up working in silos."

Involving many voices in the planning process had a twofold impact. First, it allowed the committee to hear diverse perspectives and move forward with a shared understanding. It also created opportunities for groups to connect, collaborate, and raise awareness of their work. "The past few years, we've been able to host consistent free public events ... along with meeting with the cultural

"...when you look at our Cultural Plan, there's a list of priorities, and one of those is diversity."

— HAYLEY HART-RUSHINKO

committee members on a regular basis, who might not otherwise get a chance to speak with each other and even just collaborate within a year," Hart-Rushinko says.

For communities that are looking to start on the cultural planning journey, Hemingway says that consistency is key for keeping the community engaged through a long process.

"As a member, I want to be in a meeting, and at the next meeting, to see where that input went, and how it was used and the progress that's been made," he says.

Hart-Rushinko says that developing this plan helped the city build a stronger, more connected community, while raising awareness among community groups. The biggest challenge, she adds, is "making sure that [groups] stay engaged, because these plans can take a lot of time, and sometimes it can seem like not a lot is happening — it just takes patience to build that foundation."

The City of Moose Jaw received support from SaskCulture's Community Cultural Engagement and Planning Grant for the Research, Engagement and Developments phases of the cultural planning process, with funding from the Sask Lotteries Trust Fund.



Moose Jaw has a vibrant and diverse cultural scene, which the City sought to engage throughout the cultural planning process. (Photos courtesy of the City of Moose Jaw)



SaskCulture

404 - 2125 11th Avenue, Regina SK S4P 3X3
info@saskculture.ca • www.saskculture.ca

Weyburn celebrated Culture Days 2025 with cultural events that aimed to increase awareness, understanding and curiosity in the community. (Photo by FSI Studio)



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