

# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

Cottrill's  
OPERA HOUSE



**COTTRILL'S  
OPERA HOUSE**



## MISSION

*Our mission is to restore Cottrill's Opera House to its historic role: a performing arts venue, a community center and cultural hub — driving sustainable economic development for Tucker County and the entire Potomac Highlands region.*

## ***Letter from the President of the Board of Directors***

*March 2021*

*Tucker County, West Virginia*

Friends of Cottrill's Opera House,

It's difficult to to overstate just how extraordinary this past year has been. The global COVID-19 pandemic has impacted every organization across the globe — including Alpine Heritage Preservation, the nonprofit that owns Cottrill's Opera House. The all-volunteer AHP board has worked diligently to maintain our recent momentum, pushing the project forward despite financial challenges and an unexpected shift to virtual collaboration.

At this time last year, we were busy wrapping up our market study and business plan, partnering with Historic Theatre Consultants. Herb Stratford and his team visited Tucker County in late 2019 and conducted a online public survey early last year. Thanks to the diligent contributions of the AHP board, we were able to solicit over 620 responses from stakeholders — a wildly successful result that provided critical data!

The market study gave us a clearer picture of the sorts of events that will take place at the restored Opera House: live entertainment (e.g., concerts and theatre), arthouse and festival films, and community events like weddings and banquets. We had the opportunity to share the study results with the public at our first-ever public town hall, conducted live from the Opera House itself via Zoom in fall of 2020.

Soon afterwards, we were thrilled to welcome another partner to the project: the Mills Group, a renowned West Virginia architecture and design firm. Michael Mills, who knows our building and our county well, brought his team to Thomas and conducted a 3D scan of the Opera House, inside and out. The resulting digital model has been an essential tool these past few months, as AHP and Mills Group have collaborated to produce a conceptual design for the Opera House's full redevelopment.

We look forward to sharing this design with you soon, as part of our overall master plan. We're confident that the Opera House's best days lie ahead, and we look forward to partnering with you to see the building serve its community once again. Till then, thank you for your support, and please stay safe!



**Matt Hauger**

*President*

*Alpine Heritage Preservation*

# HISTORY

- 1902** Hiram Cottrill, a former mine superintendent and saloon owner, built Cottrill's Opera House as a venue for vaudeville acts.
- 1914** Prohibition arrived in West Virginia. Cottrill was forced to close his saloon, eliminating the Opera House's primary source of revenue.
- 1915** Cottrill sold his building to the Sutton family; programming quickly shifted from live entertainment to motion pictures.



Children lining up to see a show at the Opera House in 1910

- 1960s** After many successful years, local industry began to slow. Tucker County's population declined and television competed for the audience's attention.
- 1963** The Suttons sold the theater to Ralph and Betty Stuart.
- 1972** Faced with dwindling audience numbers, the new owners were ultimately forced to close the theater. The local Catholic church, St. Thomas Aquinas, continued to operate it as a community service.
- 1977** The building finally closed for good. The Opera House began to deteriorate—water infiltrated the building, damaging bricks, mortar, and beams and filling the basement. At one point, massive icicles even formed inside the building!



Moviegoers pose on Front Street in 1948

- 1978** Concerned local citizens took action to save the building. Betty Stuart, the building's last commercial owner, donated the building to Alpine Festival, a local nonprofit organization. This group succeeded in their effort to have Cottrill's Opera House added to the National Register of Historic Places.
- 1981** Alpine Heritage Preservation, a new organization, was incorporated as a 501(c)(3) with a mission of restoring Cottrill's Opera House. The stabilization work continued in stops and starts over the preceding decades.



A closed Sutton Theatre in the late 1970s

- 1982** AHP resurfaced the main roof and rebuilt rotten truss ends.
- 1984** AHP stabilized ceiling joists and windows and continued repairing trusses.
- 1989** AHP stabilized first floor
- 2001** AHP installed a new roof and stabilized mortar and basement walls



Scaffolding supports the balcony and roof.



Ongoing stabilization work in 2008

- 2003** AHP erected fire egress tower on the north side of building.
- 2008** AHP renovated the north end of the ground floor.
- 2013** AHP renovated middle storefront on ground floor and commissioned study of trusses, confirming their structural integrity.
- 2014** AHP secured tenants for the street-level storefronts.
- 2019** A reconstituted and reenergized Opera House board has kickstarted the renovation back into active development.

# CURRENT PROGRESS

**2020 was a major year for Cottrill's Opera House.** In March, Historic Theatre Consultants delivered a report which included a review of our potential programming, a market study, and guidance on operating a restored multi-purpose arts venue. Later in the summer, we engaged the Mills Group, a West Virginia architectural firm with extensive experience in our community, to develop conceptual plans and renderings for our restoration.

**Looking forward into 2021 and beyond,** we hope to partner with a fundraising consultant to strategize a capital campaign, to continue working with Woodlands Development Group to secure grant-based funding, and eventually to complete the building's design with the Mills Group.

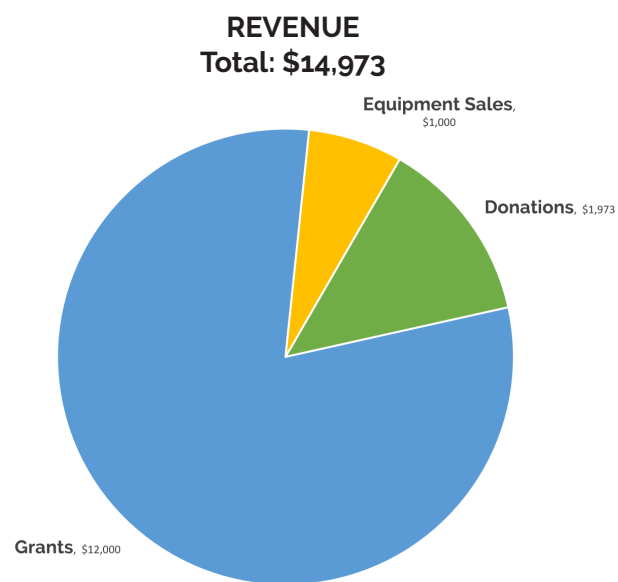
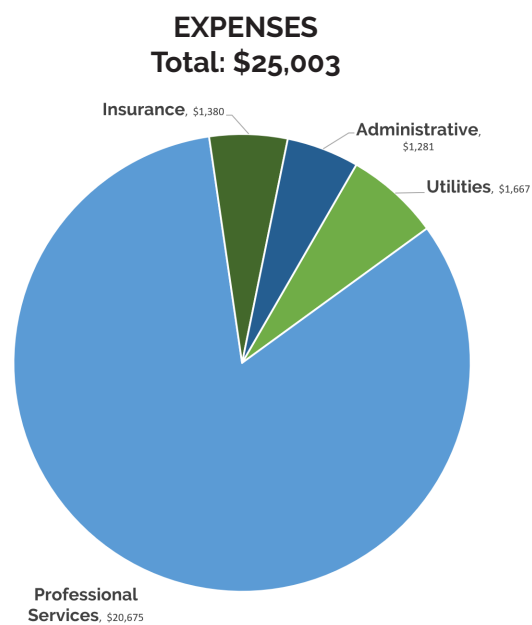


# 2020 FINANCIALS

Financial data from the end of our fiscal year (December 31, 2020)

ASSETS	
Current Assets:	
Cash	\$23,519
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	
Property net (building & land assessed value)	\$461,940
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$485,459</b>

LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	
Current Liabilities:	
Accounts Payable	\$7,350
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>\$7,350</b>
Net Assets:	
Unrestricted	\$475,251
Temporarily Restricted	\$2,858
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$478,109</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$485,459</b>



# THANK YOU TO OUR 2020 DONORS!

We're grateful for the generosity of our 2020 donors. Thanks to their support, we continue to make progress on our restoration.

### Private Foundations

The Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation  
Oakland Foundation, Inc.  
Tucker Community Foundation  
Tucker County Cultural District Authority

### Contributors

Anonymous (4)  
Sophie Blumberg  
Cory Chase  
Thisbe Cooper  
Paula Flaherty  
Matt Hauger  
Kathleen Hoppe  
Michael Matteson  
Chris Montgomery  
Linda Reeves  
Rebecca Robeson  
Jennifer Taylor

### Gifts In Kind

Tom Preston  
Woodlands Devel. Group

### Additional Support

WVU Legal Clinic



The Mills Group surveying the Opera House in fall of 2020

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Elaine George  
Bobby Snyder  
Jennifer Taylor  
Al Tomson

Our all-volunteer board is dedicated to the restoration of Cottrill's Opera House. Interested in learning more about our board? Email us at [info@cottrillsoperahouse.org](mailto:info@cottrillsoperahouse.org).

## FOLLOW US ONLINE!

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[Cottrill's Opera House](https://www.youtube.com/Cottrill's%20Opera%20House)

# COTTRILL'S OPERA HOUSE

Cottrill's Opera House is owned by Alpine Heritage Preservation Inc., a 501(c)(3) tax exempt nonprofit organization.

Alpine Heritage Preservation is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors

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