

The Buffalo Bill Center of the West tells the authentic story of the American West by sharing the stories, past and present, of the western experience. Headquartered in Cody, Wyoming, the Buffalo Bill Center of the West is a complex of five internationally acclaimed museums and a research library: the Buffalo Bill Museum, the Whitney Western Art Museum, the Plains Indian Museum, the Cody Firearms Museum, the Draper Natural History Museum, and the McCracken Research Library. These programs work collaboratively to exhibit and support the conservation of cultural, natural, and artistic heritage locally as well as internationally.

As the largest history, art, and science museum between Minneapolis and the West Coast, the Center of the West encompasses more than 300,000 square feet of space on three levels. With its location in Cody, Wyoming, a town with a population of 9,000, just 52 miles from the east entrance of Yellowstone National Park, many visitors are stunned when they venture inside its doors. Nowhere else in the United States is such an important museum located in such a remote location.

Nearly 200,000 visitors come to the Center each year, making it the most heavily visited single attraction in the entire Yellowstone National Park region outside of the park itself. Its collection includes thousands upon thousands of priceless treasures related to art, cultural and natural history, ethnology, and technology of the American West.

### **History**

Mary Jester Allen had a dream. After her famous uncle died in 1917, she envisioned a great national shrine and memorial to both William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody and the early pioneers of the American West. In 1927, she began her quest as curator of the Buffalo Bill Museum, a modest log building in remote Cody, Wyoming, mimicking Buffalo Bill's TE Ranch house, on the Southfork of the Shoshone River near Cody. The story of the evolution from a 50 by 70 foot log building to the monumental Buffalo Bill Center of the West is fascinating and inspiring. It is a tale of vision, perseverance, and dedication, Eastern and local support, creativity, and continuity. Today's Center encompasses five museums, a research library, and a vibrant educational outreach program. The Center's formal name is the "Buffalo Bill Memorial Association," but it does business as the Buffalo Bill Center of the West (changed from Buffalo Bill Historical Center in 2013).

### **Mission Statement**

"Through our ideas, collections, and programs, we educate and entertain worldwide audiences about the past, present, and future of the American West."

The Buffalo Bill Center of the West serves both the general public and a wide range of professional communities throughout the world. Through the work of its programs—the museums, scholarship and research, and public interpretation, the Buffalo Bill Center of the West aims to further knowledge, to nurture critical seeing through the growth and presentation of its collections, and by advancing the understating and preservation of the nations' artistic heritage. The Buffalo Bill Center of the West pursues this mission with the conviction that cultural awareness, creativity, and aesthetic enjoyment are essential to a vital and civil society.