

Dust & Wonder Trail

CTA BOARD MEETING PRESENTATION

November 9, 2026 | Eric Brooks

Dust & Wonder Trail Final Report Highlights

- Regional Destination Development
- Public Art Investment
- Cultural Interpretation & Representation
- Community Partnerships & Collaboration
- Tourism & Economic Impact
- Grant Completion & Long-Term Stewardship



Regional Destination Development

- Established a unified cultural tourism corridor linking Carson City, Carson Valley, Virginia City, Gold Hill, Silver City, and surrounding communities through arts, heritage, and historic destinations. (Seven cities in four counties.)
- Created a shared destination identity to encourage regional exploration and connect visitors with museums, cultural sites, downtowns, and lesser-known attractions.
- Established Dust & Wonder Trail as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit with governance, fundraising, and partnership infrastructure for long-term stewardship.
- Developed branding and a digital visitor platform with the Estipona Group; dustandwonder.org is live, with site content being added ahead of public launch.



Public Art Investment

- 27 four-foot railroad spike sculptures — Reno artist Jeff Schomberg fabricated 27 interpretive railroad spike sculptures across the combined Dust & Wonder and separately funded America250 Points of Unity initiatives. Eighteen Dust & Wonder sculptures await installation; eight of nine America250 sculptures are installed, with one awaiting park improvements.

- Three 12-foot railroad spike sculptures — Carson City artist Seth Johnson fabricated interpretive artworks for Virginia City Depot, Eastgate Depot, and Minden Mill, each featuring two historical themes and multilingual narratives. Finishing and installation preparations continue.

- DRIVEN – A Monument to Connection — Seth Johnson designed and fabricated a 69-foot railroad spike monument commemorating the start of the V&T Railroad and connection of the Transcontinental Railroad in 1869, intended for the Nevada State Railroad Museum. Previewed at Burning Man 2026; permanent foundation, base, and installation will be funded separately.



Public Art Investment

- Carson Valley Cinemas mural — Rafael Blanco and Oscar Guerra completed a three-sided mural at the former theater, supporting its planned future as an arts venue. Featured in a forthcoming WALLS documentary series planned for PBS.
- Rabbit Man — Dale Rogers' sculpture was delivered to St. Mary's Art Center in Virginia City as the first planned artwork for a sculpture garden; foundation and installation remain.
- Silver City Schoolhouse Obelisk — Invested $5,000 in a design by Hidden Spring Design, providing a foundation for subsequent community fundraising and fabrication.



Cultural Interpretation & Representation



- Developed place-based narratives that recognize Indigenous communities, immigrant workers, artists, families, railroad employees, and others whose contributions are often overlooked in conventional historical interpretation.
- Each small sculpture pairs a site-specific English word with three additional languages reflecting its historical and cultural context, plus an interpretive story and QR-linked digital content.
- Engaged cultural and historical partners including the Washoe Tribe, Stewart Indian School, and 1882 Foundation to inform language selection and historical interpretation.
- Interpretive themes include BRAVE at Stewart Indian School, RESILIENT at Carson City's Chinatown, BASKET at the Dat So La Lee House, INNOVATION at Donovan Mill, and BROTHERS at Gold Hill Depot.

Community Partnerships & Collaboration

- Built working relationships among local governments, destination marketing organizations, museums, preservation representatives, artists, property owners, cultural institutions, and residents.
- Coordinated multiple jurisdictions and historic sites, adapting to permitting, safety, preservation, engineering, and community priorities while respecting each destination's distinct identity.
- Created a lasting nonprofit framework for future public art, cultural programming, joint promotion, and regional tourism development.



Tourism & Economic Impact



- Generated direct economic activity through commissions and services involving artists, fabricators, designers, marketers, technology developers, and other creative professionals, including Nevada-based businesses.
- Developed year-round attractions designed to encourage travel between communities, support longer visits, and introduce visitors to local museums, galleries, restaurants, lodging, and shops.
- Established infrastructure to pursue a long-term goal of 10% increased visitation to corridor sites by 2034, measured against a 2024 benchmark. Visitation and spending gains are anticipated, not yet attributable to the Trail.

Grant Completion & Long-Term Stewardship



- The grant concluded October 8, 2026; all $631,350 was expended before September 30, 2026.
- Completed grant-funded organizational development, branding, digital resources, historical interpretation, commissioning, and fabrication milestones.
- Physical installations and public activation continue beyond the grant period through separate resources; installation was not an eligible grant expense.
- Established the nonprofit and digital foundations for long-term maintenance, fundraising, interpretation, and collaboration as the Trail becomes visitor-ready.

THANK YOU

