



EMERGING PRAIRIE

2020
**ANNUAL
REPORT**





ENERGIZING

COMMUNITIES



During an innovation roundtable discussion at the start of the pandemic, Brian Johnson, VP of New Ventures at Marvin Windows, said “I’m challenging myself to spend at least one hour thinking about playing offense for every hour I think about defense.”

As the 2020 year unfolded, we started with a clear strategy to play offense. Our team strived to support world class events that connected the entrepreneurial ecosystem, we created North Dakota’s first accelerated learning platform, and we tested our idea of the Grand Farm by focusing energy into the innovation site. The year started off incredibly strong with a highly attended 1 Million Cups that highlighted the launch of a new 3D printing effort in the area. This was followed by the revealing of Plug and Play’s agtech focused platform opening in Fargo and our 4th annual Prairie Capital Summit. And then, like the rest of the world, we were hit with a ton of bricks and were forced to adapt.

We quickly adjusted our strategy and kept our team safe working from home. We modified expectations of our events, we reduced our staff to preserve resources, and we contemplated how to use technology to fulfill our mission. Through the process, we became more efficient, connected, and clear in our purpose.

On top of that, we were able to graduate the first class through our accelerated learning platform. By upskilling their talent in the tech industry, we were able to help these folks find life changing career opportunities. Grand Farm proved it could add value by providing space for research, access to an agtech community, and opportunities for innovators to participate alongside growers and producers. 2020 was a year where we realized the value of a talented team, clear focus, and a diversified approach.

As we look to 2021, we are doubling down on our belief that we need to focus on energizing the entrepreneurial, technology, and innovation communities. We are in a strong position to play offense, to support the nation’s recovery from a challenging time, and allow our community to continue to shine. We believe that as we energize entrepreneurs, technologists, and innovators, the result will be a better world for all.

Greg Tehven
Co-Founder & Executive Director

COMMUNITY CENTRIC GROWTH.

Our origins began with building up the entrepreneurial ecosystem, and as Emerging Prairie grew so did ambition. We've been able to create impact and connections within the entrepreneurial ecosystem through events and programming, we've launched the first coding school in North Dakota, and we've been the driving force behind Grand Farm. We continue to strive to support our communities across the region to be curious and relentless in their pursuits.

Why? Because entrepreneurs, innovators and technologists are what moves the needle and ignites economic growth for our region. When they succeed, our community succeeds. Our team is focused on creating meaningful and impactful experiences for those communities and we'd be remiss if we said we didn't have big plans for the future.



OUR MISSION

Emerging Prairie was founded around the notion that local entrepreneurs need more support to be successful. As the organization matured, we started to re-evaluate our mission. Though “connecting and celebrating the entrepreneurial ecosystem” is a valiant mission; we believe that we can make a bigger impact with a wider scope. With that in mind, we’ve updated our mission statement to:

Energizing Communities.

This new mission allows the organization to support entrepreneurs and their ecosystems who assist them through new pathways. As we build up these subsets of community builders, risk takers and movers - we continue to create a more vibrant and active region.

The Technology Community

We’ve seen that economic impact is driven by the development of new technology. New businesses arise, our knowledge expands, and new opportunities are created. We are dedicated to supporting the development of this community and meeting the needs of those within it, and currently do so through Emerging Digital Academy.

The Entrepreneurial Community

We’re continuing our commitment to the entrepreneurs and founders that are creating opportunities across our region. We believe that “a rising tide lifts all boats” and by supporting the entrepreneurial community we are helping build better lives for everyone in our region. We continue to support this work through our entrepreneurial-centric programs and events.

The Innovation Community

True innovation lies at the heart of improving the human condition. By continuing to stretch our potential, we challenge the notion of “what is” and “what can be.” The start of every great era began with innovation - the wheel, the printing press, the internet. So we’re asking ourselves - what’s next? We’re supporting this community through the Grand Farm Research & Education Initiative.





A YEAR IN REVIEW

2020 was a year that no one expected. In the midst of uncertainty, there were challenges, new opportunities and new pathways to create dynamic impact in our community. Here's an overview of what our organization was able to accomplish.



216

total events were hosted in 2020. These events ranged from conferences to meet-ups where attendees joined us for connection, education, and inspiration to build up a supported and equipped community.



6,900+

total attendees joined us at our events this year - both in-person and digitally. These attendees are innovators, community builders, risk-takers, makers, creatives and leaders working to make an impact in our community.



109,202

visits to our websites - including Emerging Prairie, Emerging Digital Academy and Grand Farm. In a world where digital communication is more important than ever, we're committed to providing a world class digital experience.



\$301,048

is the amount we spent on local goods and services. As an organization that vocalizes the importance of shopping local, we understand that it is important to put our words into action. From local creative agencies to coffee shops, we practice keeping the money in our region.

Impacts from the Pandemic

Like many, Emerging Prairie was heavily affected by the impacts of COVID-19. As an organization that focuses on connection through events, our team had to quickly shift focus to find new ways to build up our community. Even though we had to cancel multiple events, including TEDxFargo, and rethink our organization structure; we were able to take the challenge as a way to create new opportunities. We moved many of our events outdoors during the summer, we collaborated with the City of Fargo on a unique campaign and we've improved our digital assets to better serve our virtual audience. Below are some of the initiatives that came to fruition.

Save Summer Campaign

Save Summer was a community movement focused on rallying young adults in the Fargo-Moorhead area to stay home, practice physical distancing, and help slow the spread of COVID-19. Our team worked with 5 other organizations to create a 3 month long movement.

Founders Town Hall

We hosted United States Senator John Hoeven (ND) and United States Senator John Thune (SD) for an online town hall. Founders will be able to hear updates about the state of business in our region and have the opportunity to ask the Senators questions. Over 300 founders joined us for the event.

Innovation Roundtables

Our team was able to host peer to peer learning environments for corporate executives that have a focus on innovation in their company. We were able to host 8 different experiences with 17 participants from different organizations.



SUPPORTING THE TECHNOLOGY COMMUNITY.

In its first year of operation, North Dakota's first (and only) immersive coding bootcamp accelerated the technology community in a massive way. Emerging Digital Academy has created opportunities for learners across the state to start a career in software development and has garnered the attention of employers both locally and regionally. We have expanded our employer network beyond the state's borders, connecting our students with businesses across the region.



**EMERGING
DIGITAL
ACADEMY**

Among our successes is the creation of the Career Education & Alternative Learning (CEAL) Program in collaboration with Bank of North Dakota. This loan provides funds for current and prospective ND residents to pursue education through an alternative learning training program or certification.

This program gives our students access to university-level financing options, including the ability to use funds for cost of living expenses, such as rent and utilities. The CEAL program is the first of its kind across the country, and Emerging Digital Academy is currently the only program where CEAL funds can be utilized.

ADDRESSING THE DEMAND

FOR SKILLED SOFTWARE DEVELOPERS



ADA COHORT

Our inaugural cohort, named after English mathematician Ada Lovelace, soared through the program with flying colors. A uniquely young cohort, this group of 13 learners proved that Emerging Digital Academy is a viable option for young professionals looking to enter a career in software development. Ada cohort graduated in August of 2020.

BABBAGE COHORT

Babbage cohort moved swiftly through the program and provided an opportunity for a more hands-on approach with a smaller cohort size with 7 students. This cohort gets its name from Charles Babbage, considered by many to be the “father of the computer”. Babbage cohort graduated in December of 2020.

CONWAY COHORT

Another group of 13, Conway cohort has proved resilient and determined. As each cohort advances, our instructors are continuously surprised with how quickly our students are able to pick up concepts and techniques. This cohort gets its name from English mathematician and theorist, John Horton Conway. Conway cohort graduates in April of 2021.



89%
of students graduate
the program

76%
of students get placed
into jobs within the first
two months

800
hours of work goes into
completing the program
by one student

136%
is average salary
increase for a student
who has gone through
the program and secured
a job

CURIOSITY WEEK

This year, Emerging Digital Academy set out to spark curiosity in the tech community with the creation of Curiosity Week. During December 13th - 19th, Emerging Prairie and Emerging Digital Academy hosted 30+ events revolving around technology. These events were curated to engage those pursuing tech as a career, provide professional development to technology professionals, and give tech entrepreneurs a place to convene.

388

attendees joined us at multiple events that week.

23

was the average number of attendees registered for each session.

9.8

was the average session rating from attendees on a scale of 1 - 10.

\$10,000+

was the amount raised and donated that week to Arise Communities

OUR FOUNDING PARTNERS

Emerging Digital Academy prepares our graduates for software development careers to provide excellent outcomes for both students and area tech employers. These partners have made significant contributions to allow us to provide the best learning ecosystem for our students.



MEET CLEVER

If you were familiar with Emerging Digital Academy, chances are you heard about Clever Mukori. From a young age, he has always been interested in technology businesses and advancing his own knowledge of the industry. Emerging Digital Academy launched at a point in his life where he was considering a career shift into software engineering, and our program provided the perfect platform for him to do that.

Chief among his reasons for applying was the program's affordability. As someone who was already concerned about piling on more educational expenses, our financing options were perfect for him. He believed the program was top-notch - working with real clients on projects, focusing on the end user, and collaborating in teams were all important attributes that set him up to succeed post-graduation.

“

I loved the holistic mindset that the staff had, training us on technical aspects, as well as soft skills. We read case studies about fostering equity in the workplace across racial lines or gender divides.”

Clever graduated from Ada Cohort in August of 2020, and he currently works at ByteSpeed as a Partner Relationship Manager. Beside his new career, he's also started building an electronic health records system that began as a project during the program.

We're grateful to have been a part of Clever's journey and are excited to see what's in store for the next stage of his life.



SUPPORTING THE ENTREPRENEURIAL COMMUNITY.

Emerging Prairie was founded on the principle of supporting the entrepreneurial community - and we continue to do just that. We were able to host over 130 events, meet-ups and gatherings for the entrepreneurial community that connected over 5,300 people in-person and virtually. These events are geared to give entrepreneurs a platform to share their ideas, provide connections, give opportunities for growth and learning, and celebrate the work being done.



1 MILLION THANKS

This evening event is dedicated to celebrating the incredible things that entrepreneurs do in our community. It's a time to connect with others and reflect on the amazing progress our community has seen over the past year. We had over 340 community members join us in our celebration in January.



PRAIRIE CAPITAL SUMMIT

Access to capital and investors is one of the biggest issues facing entrepreneurs in North Dakota. We created Prairie Capital Summit as a way to intimately connect entrepreneurs, investors and resource partners in order to create a space for discussions around capital to happen. 150 entrepreneurs and investors joined us for this event in early March.



TEDxFARGO THROWBACK SERIES

2020 unlocked the opportunity for an intentional shift to virtual events, sparking the idea to re-engage past TEDxFargo speakers. In each throwback call, we revisited their TEDxFargo talk and talked about how those concepts could be reapplied to 2020. We hosted 5 digital events engaging 5 past TEDxFargo speakers.



GIVING THE ENTREPRENEUR

THE STAGE

1 MILLION CUPS FARGO

1 Million Cups is a free, national program designed to educate, engage, and connect entrepreneurs. Developed by the Kauffman Foundation in 2012, the program is based on the notion that meaningful connections are made over one million cups of coffee. With over 160 communities that meet around the nation, 1 Million Cups Fargo is the largest 1 Million Cups event.

We were able to have 58 entrepreneurs share their stories to an average audience of 60 community members each week. Thank you to 13 sponsors who helped support the event, the 22 artists that were able to engage our audiences during Random Act of Art, and the 5 different venues that hosted our event throughout the year.



58

entrepreneurs presented at 1MC Fargo - 50% of these speakers were females. That allowed 29 female entrepreneurs to share their story.



38

total 1MC Fargo events were hosted in 2020. 24 events were hosted in-person and 14 events were hosted virtually.



3,734

total attendees joined us at 1MC Fargo in 2020 - either in-person or virtually.

ENTREPRENEURIAL COHORTS

We designed an entrepreneurship cohort program to cater to start-ups. Each cohort of entrepreneurs participates in weekly programming for almost 3 months centered around the CO.STARTERS platform. Along the way, we offer them access to the Prairie Den, the opportunity to speak at 1 Million Cups Fargo, participate in a community session focused on innovating their work, attend Founders Retreat, and connection with mentors. Since launching, we have hosted a Social Entrepreneur Cohort and New American Cohort. In 2021, we look forward to launching a Women's Entrepreneur Cohort, Native American Cohort, and a Black Entrepreneur Cohort.

NEW AMERICAN ENTREPRENEUR COHORT

Facilitated by Simi Kasakwe, a past New American Cohort member, this cohort consisted of 4 entrepreneurs with start-ups revolving around childcare, fashion, and technology. With help from the Nice Center at NDSU, we had the ability to offer all content and opportunities to these entrepreneurs at no cost to them.

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR COHORT

Facilitated by Kodee Furst from the Nice Center, this cohort consists of 12 individuals. All 12 participants either have their 501(c)(3) status or are actively seeking their non-profit status. Partnering with the Dakota Medical Foundation, we were able to offer all content and opportunities at no cost to them, as well as offer support in each of their Giving Hearts Day campaigns.

WOMEN ENTREPRENEUR COHORT

This cohort of 15 individuals marks our largest cohort so far. In addition, this will be our most geographically diverse cohort with entrepreneurs from Waubun, MN to Dickinson, ND and all the way down to Sioux Falls, SD. This program begins February 16, 2021.

MEET JOCELYNE & MONIQUE

If you're a frequent Emerging Prairie event attendee, you may have already met Monique Lamoureux-Morando and Jocelyne Lamoureux-Davidson. After winning a Women's Hockey gold medal in the 2018 Olympics, Monique and Jocelyne took advantage of their elevated platform to fight for gender equality in professional sports - sharing this message on the TEDxFargo stage in July of 2018. Days after their TEDxFargo talk, the pair announced the launch of their foundation, the Monique and Jocelyne Lamoureux-Foundation and shared the mission of their organization at 1 Million Cups Fargo in early 2020.

Most recently, these trailblazing North Dakotans participated in our inaugural Social Entrepreneur Cohort, working to elevate their non-profit, the Monique and Jocelyne Lamoureux-Foundation.



“

The difference between when we started the cohort to now is night and day” ... “One of the most important and fulfilling things that has occurred is the relationships we have started and developed throughout this process. It is inspiring to work and talk with people who are just trying to make a difference and do positive things. Being around and talking to people with that similar mindset is contagious and makes you want to do more and continue to make positive changes.”

The Monique and Jocelyne Lamoureux Foundation is a non-profit organization whose mission is to provide a level playing field for kids in order for them to reach their full potential. This foundation has a geographical focus on creating impact for youth across North Dakota. Since their launch in January, Monique and Jocelyne have funded projects that allow the Grand Forks school system to adapt to new education needs.

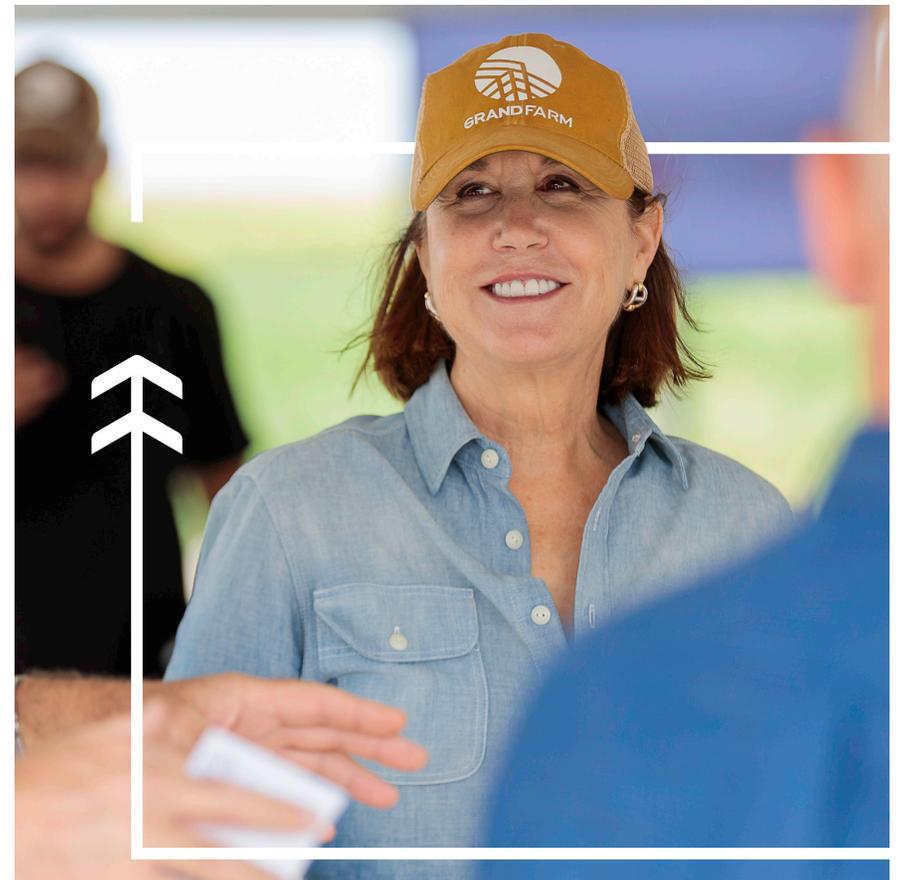
SUPPORTING THE INNOVATION COMMUNITY.

Grand Farm aims to capitalize on the region’s potential in the agriculture and technology industries. The Grand Farm Test Site will create the farm of the future by 2025 as the global example in solving challenges to farming worldwide, unleashing vast new potential for technology for the greater good. It will do so by growing and inspiring regional businesses, organizations and entrepreneurs to collaborate globally in developing technological and human solutions for farming in a new era.



The Grand Farm Education and Research Initiative will take advantage of the region’s expertise in the agriculture and technology industries. The initiative will accelerate the research and innovation which will be present on the farm. The Grand Farm Initiative is designed to inspire collaboration to develop the future farm, which we believe will solve issues critical to farmers worldwide.

Grand Farm is built on five “pillars”, which are: Encouraging and facilitating agtech community engagement around the world; Supporting innovation and agtech startups; Creating “makerspaces” as a resource for innovators to develop their ideas; Be a champion for accelerated learning in technology; Pro-actively work to create the best environment for future farms related to public policies and support.



NORTH DAKOTA'S FIRST AUTONOMOUS TRUCK

Innovation hit the streets on Thursday, Oct. 8 as the North Dakota Department of Transportation unveiled their first autonomous truck at Grand Farm. The truck is an autonomous truck-mounted attenuator and is meant to enhance safety and protect DOT workers' lives. The truck drives behind construction crews providing a barrier for the crew so if a rogue vehicle hits the truck, they will be protected. Senator John Hoeven took the first ride in the passenger seat as the truck drove autonomously from Grand Farm.

After the demonstration, Grand Farm hosted an Innovation Day on Autonomous Systems Policy with the mission of connecting the autonomous industry and policymakers in order to make North Dakota the most autonomous-friendly state. Panels were held on public policy, research being done in higher education, and the work happening in the autonomous industry.



2020 MILESTONES



41 research projects present at the Grand Farm



22 events hosted at the Grand Farm



9 unique partners supporting the Grand Farm

2021 GOALS



Double the amount of research projects at the Grand Farm to 80 projects.



Triple the amount of events hosted at the Grand Farm to 66 events.



Quintuple the amount of partners supporting the Grand Farm to 50 partners.

RESEARCH PROJECTS AT THE FARM

Grand Farm utilizes a framework of scaffolding projects to rapidly iterate towards the solution of grower and industry pain points. This requires direct project management across commodity supply chains, digital system integration and grower operations. Below are just 3 of the 41 projects currently at Grand Farm.

Augmented Reality Map of Grand Farm

Agronomeye created an augmented reality map of the Grand Farm utilizing data pulled from drones and ground sensors. This project demonstrates collaboration as it utilized data from 10 different inputs from 10 different organizations to get the final result.

Product Trial on Iron Deficiency Chlorosis

In collaboration with CHS, DPA Yield Point is conducting 2 product trials evaluating effectiveness against Iron Deficiency Chlorosis by adding nitrogen to treatment groups of soybeans. Two different trials will occur; one on what is considered good land and one on what is considered bad land.

UAS/UGS Weed Identification Using Computer Vision

Dr. Xin (Rex) Sun of NDSU is researching native and non-native weed identification. This will allow them to develop effective tools and systems to identify, map, and site-specifically manage weeds, specifically resistant weeds, using latest technologies such as unmanned aerial systems (UAS), bioinformatics, artificial intelligence, and chemical/sprayer technologies.

INNOVATION PLATFORM

In March, Plug and Play, the world's largest early stage investor, accelerator & corporate innovation platform, brought their agriculture-focused accelerator to Fargo. In 2020, 28 agtech startups went through the program and worked with Plug and Play's corporate partners: Microsoft, CHS, OCP and Bremer. Due to COVID-19, the 28 startups weren't able to locate in Fargo as planned, but were still able to participate in the Grand Farm ecosystem.



MEET STU

The Grand Farm Initiative has caught global attention and engagement, and we'd be remiss to not mention Stu Adam, Co-Founder and Director at Agronomeye - an agtech Company based in Australia. Coming out of a career in media, Stu partnered with his co-founder, Tim Howell, to offer UAV/Drone services to a variety of industries. After a generational drought hit Australia, they were forced to rethink their operations.

They pivoted their business, and began focusing on making the landscape more efficient and resilient. By creating a detailed 3D version of a farm, they are able to analyze the entire asset and enable a landholder to make decisions with clarity and confidence.

Their involvement with Grand Farm has allowed them to prove their technology beyond Australia and explore new markets that are experiencing the same problems.

“

To be involved in this work and to collaborate with Grand Farm only fills us with confidence that we will get there.... Wherever *there* ends up being.”

Stu continues to make waves, both locally and globally, by accelerating Agronomeye forward and working to help solve problems for growers. We're excited to continue collaborating with him and his team, and look forward to what's next.



SUPPORTING THE RISK-TAKERS AND CREATIVES

The Prairie Den is a co-working space that was founded by Emerging Prairie in 2015. It's home to entrepreneurs, creatives, non-profits, corporate employees and others seeking a unique and inspiring work environment in downtown Fargo. The Prairie Den is also a great place to connect with others who have an entrepreneurial spirit and are looking to build relationships in the community.



- 19** new Prairie Den members joined us in 2020.
- 50** active Prairie Den members use the space.
- 5** organizations have dedicated office space.



MOVING TO THE BLACK BUILDING

As the Prairie Den continues to grow - we're excited that we'll be moving into a larger space. The new Prairie Den home will be on the skyway level of the Black Building in Downtown Fargo. By moving into this new space, we'll be adding 1,822 usable square feet - a 30% increase in square footage.

The new Den will feature working, collaboration and event spaces. It will be home to the Emerging Prairie Team as well as the future home of the Emerging Digital Academy. We'll be moving into the Black Building in 2021.

MEET AUSTIN

Sitting at a desk surrounded by Lego Architect sculptures, Austin Foss has been working for an architecture firm from the Prairie Den since 2019. Austin has watched the Prairie Den grow, weather the storm of 2020, and most recently committed to joining us in our move to the Black Building in 2021 with the launch of his new board game company - Pops & Bejou.

In 2020, Austin and friends were inspired by their love of boardgames to create Pops & Bejou Games - a home for their first board game, CULTivate. With this start-up growth, the Pops & Bejou team decided to make the Den their home base by becoming official members of the Den - even printing our new Black Building address on their printed boxes!

“ I am so glad that we have made the decision to become full-fledged members. Being able to use facilities such as conference rooms for business meetings and printing tools to create prototypes at the Prairie Den has helped us get started when working on a limited budget. Having access to all of the resources we need all in one place has allowed us to focus on the work we need to do rather than on finding our own resources.”

Pops & Bejou will launch their funding Kickstarter in February 2021, and we couldn't be more excited that they chose the Prairie Den to be a part of their start-up journey.

“It really feels like I am part of a community, and that community has been so supportive of all my endeavours, including Pops & Bejou.”





ENERGIZING

COMMUNITIES THROUGH

OPPORTUNITIES

LOOKING FORWARD TO 2021

Emerging Prairie is looking forward to another year of growth. In addition to maintaining and building upon the success of our current events, programs and initiatives, the organization is striving to find new ways to make a stronger impact in the region. Below are just a few of the things we have in store for 2021.

Emerging Digital Academy Classroom

Our team has been able to adjust to a digital learning environment; however, we are also preparing for the day that we can host classes in-person again. In the preparation, Emerging Digital Academy will be opening a new classroom within the Prairie Den when the Den moves into the Black Building.

Grand Farm will Increase Available Acreage

Grand Farm is expanding the test site from 45 acres to 80 acres. With the land expansion, Grand Farm will be able to expand the test plots, provide more opportunities for physical buildings, and provide avenues for more partnership opportunities.

Entrepreneur Cohorts that Supports Under-Represented Founders

Building an inclusive entrepreneurial community begins with providing under-represented founders with resources, connection and innovation that may be harder to access. We plan on hosting specific cohorts for under-represented founders to give them a place for growth.

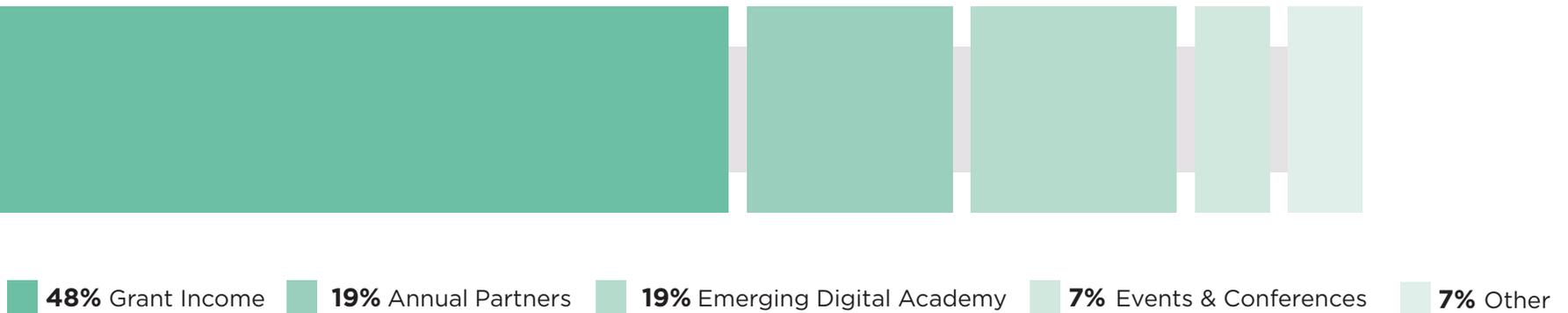
Potential of a Venture Fund

We are exploring the possible creation and potential impact of a venture fund. This fund would serve the realm of agriculture technology and could continue to support entrepreneurs throughout our region.

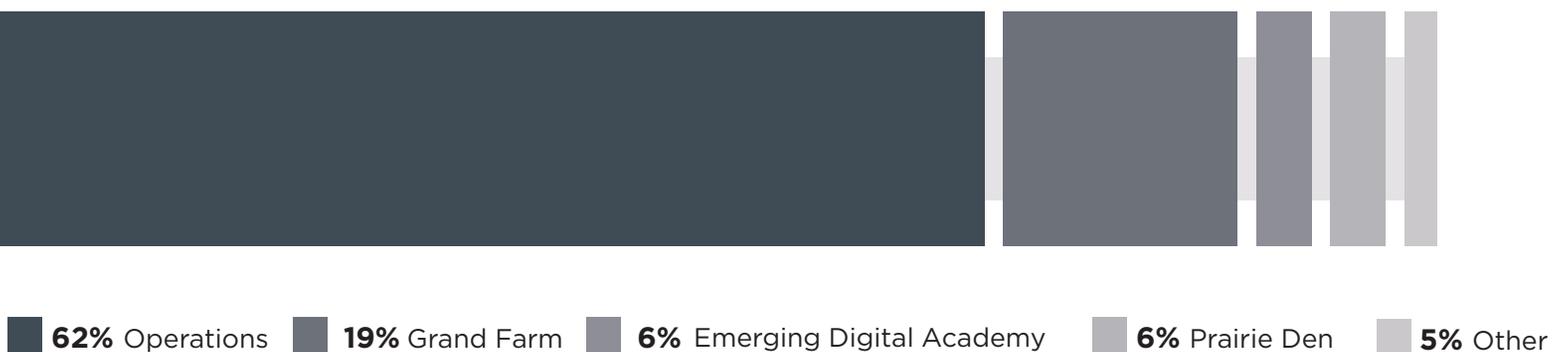
FINANCIALS

Emerging Prairie seeks to use all of our resources given to us well. We are grateful to be supported and enabled by our partners, donors, foundations and community members. As we carefully steward the donations we receive from supporters like you, we are committed to investing your contributions efficiently and effectively as we continue the relentless pursuit to improve the human condition.

Total Revenue **\$1,907,000**



Total Expenses **\$1,845,000**



2020 ANNUAL PARTNERS



EMERGING PRAIRIE'S FULL-TIME STAFF

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Management at Bell Bank*

Mike Derheim, Board Member
Co-founder of Prime Digital Academy

Kodee Furst, Board Member & Secretary
Program Manager at The Nice Center

Jake Joraanstad, Board Member
CEO of Bushel

Jane Schuh, Board Member & Treasurer
*Vice President of Research & Creative Activity
at North Dakota State University*

Greg Tehven, Board Member
Co-founder & Executive Director at Emerging Prairie



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at Bank of North Dakota*

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IT Manager at Bell Bank

Nathan Joraanstad, Board Member
Director of Engineering at Bushel

Darin King, Board Member
Vice Chancellor of IT at North Dakota University System

Taya Spelhaug, Board Member
TechSpark Manager at Microsoft

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Co-founder of Prime Digital Academy

Cynthia Schreiber-Beck, Board Member
North Dakota State Representative

Jay Schuler, Board Member
Regional Agriculture Entrepreneur

Taya Spelhaug, Board Member
TechSpark Manager at Microsoft

Mark Watne, Board Member
President of the North Dakota Farmers Union





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