



# THE FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX

The Newsletter of the McNeill Street Pumping Station Preservation Society

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## *You Can Help: Be a Member*

December is when the McNeill Street Pumping Station Preservation Society reminds everyone to renew their membership, and you will find the reminder enclosed with this newsletter. Membership is for 12 months, and you can join or renew anytime, but we don't send individual reminders during the year and instead do it "en masse" now. The biggest benefit of membership is the satisfaction of knowing you are helping a great project, but you also get the benefit of receiving "inside" information on museum happenings and the ability to participate in the governance of the Preservation Society.

Unless we happen to snag a grant from somewhere, donations from our members are typically the largest single source of income each year. This became hugely important during the last two years after the Preservation Society took on the responsibility of operating Shreveport Water Works Museum. In the old days, it was possible to balance the books by controlling the projects undertaken to match income. Nowadays, there are bills that must be paid every month, and red ink has become an unfortunate pattern. The projected budget for 2019, based on best guesses about what will be received and spent, forecasts a deficit of about \$25,000. Not good. The Board of Directors has been working hard to increase income and find ideas for the future, but we're not there yet on stopping the red ink.

The Preservation Society only has 125 members, which the most ever, but LOTS more are needed for the work at the museum. So, please read the enclosed letter and have positive thoughts about supporting the future of your National Historic Landmark. Your donation is needed and will be put to good use!

## **Behind The Scenes**

Glance at the picture nearby, which shows the steps leading from the pumphouse up the berm to the settling basins. See anything odd or out-of-place about the stair railing? Perhaps not, but the railing is not original to the stairs installed in 1926.

During the 1950's and 1960's an employee named Felix Horton worked at the old water plant. Mr. Horton was an amputee with a wooden leg, and he had a LOT of trouble negotiating the stairs to the settling basins because the stairs didn't have a handrail at all when they were built. So, to help out Mr. Horton, the maintenance crew cobbled together a handrail from material on hand and installed it. Problem solved, and now you know the rest of the story!



## **Honoring Members**

The Preservation Society exists and is able to operate the Shreveport Water Works Museum solely because of its members and donors. The Board of Directors (who are all members and elected by the membership) is grateful for this support and has decided that more recognition is due to the mostly unsung heroes who are supporting the work at the site.

Everyone has been to nonprofit places (like the Strand, Robinson Film Center, etc.) and seen the plaques or signage used to recognize their supporters, and we plan to borrow the idea as a small way of honoring our donors by putting up our own sign. The new sign in the museum will list people who give \$100 or more each year grouped by member category of the donation, which will be kept up to date for that year's donors beginning with the current cycle for 2019. Of course, if you wish to be anonymous, just make a note on your donation and that wish will be observed.

You know you need to come to the museum anyway, so come on out and admire the new sign when it gets installed in 2019!

## We've Got Sponsors!

Shreveport Water Works Museum is now offering businesses the opportunity to be a sponsor of the museum through a recently initiated program. The museum is welcoming thousands of visitors each year and reaches thousands more through the newsletter, the website, and online social media, so here is an opportunity for businesses to get their name in front of a lot of people and be associated with a nationally important historic site. Sponsors will be recognized with signage at the museum, online, and (ahem!) in this newsletter.

Sponsoring levels start at only \$500 per year and go up from there. If you have a business or know of a business that would like to participate, just contact the museum by phone or via the website email and we'll get the ball rolling. Other entities like clubs, trade associations, or individuals are welcome to participate, too.

Welcoming as a new sponsor:

Cothren, Graff, and Smoak Engineering. CGS is a civil engineering company providing a variety of services for planning, design, and construction of utilities, streets, drainage, foundations, retaining walls, buildings, and other structures. We recommend them if you are in need of a good engineer!



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Individuals who have signed up as sponsors are Mark Snow, Carlos Spaht II, and John D. Caruthers, Jr. THANK YOU to all who have chosen to be sponsors of a popular and important National Historic Landmark!

## Hear Ye...Hear Ye: Membership Meeting

The annual meeting of the membership is scheduled for February 11, 2019 at 5pm in the meeting room at the museum. Principal item of business will be the election or reelection of four directors.

### *Museum Happenings*

- The big surge in visitors this year has continued unabated into the Fall. Through the end of November, Shreveport Water Works Museum has welcomed 6,145 which is up 21% from last year. One noteworthy group was 220 elementary and middle schoolers from West Monroe, which definitely strained our group tour-guiding capabilities!
- The museum's meeting space has hosted some out-of-the-ordinary events like a wedding, some wedding receptions, and a Willie Wonka birthday party. Joining the list of "firsts" is a homecoming dance for Calvary Baptist Academy in October. They loved the amenities of our space, although it was hardly recognizable after they got through with all the decorations and dance floor!

