



THE FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX

The Newsletter of the McNeill Street Pumping Station Preservation Society

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Good News!

Earlier this year, McNeill Street Pumping Station Preservation Society submitted a grant application to Union Pacific Foundation requesting money to work on repairing the brick walls on the interior of the old pump-house. The good news is that we were notified recently that an award of \$6,000 has been approved! The Preservation Society's board has authorized adding \$4,000 received from ongoing general donations during the year to create a total of \$10,000 to be used for the project.

But, what is "repairing the walls" all about? The mortar installed between the bricks over 100 years ago to hold them in place was a mixture of mostly lime and sand that is actually a pretty good building material, but it doesn't last "forever". Over the decades, infiltration of moisture plus traces of environmental chemicals (like the powdered bleach, chlorine, ozone, and alum formerly used in water treatment) has caused the mortar to crumble. Nothing is left but powder in many areas, and the bricks are definitely not being held in place but are completely loose. This is a recipe for creating a collapsed wall one of these years. The process of replacing the mortar is called repointing or tuck pointing, and that is what the money will be used for. Our regular newsletter readers will undoubtedly remember that a couple of other projects a few years ago repointed the exterior walls that were in need of work, which was a higher priority than the interior since it stopped ongoing penetration of the wall by rain.

The old high service pump room interior will be the first new area to receive attention, then the boiler room. The available money almost certainly won't be enough to do it all, but we won't know until bids are obtained (anybody want to be a sponsor?).

Union Pacific Foundation has taken an ongoing interest in SWWM and in 2016 and again in 2017 they provided grant funding that paid for almost half of the exterior repointing mentioned previously. Their letter announcing the grant award reads in part: "Union Pacific has a long-standing commitment to improve the quality of life in the communities we serve and where our employees live and work. Our vision is that Union Pacific employees will take pride in their company's civic leadership and that our customers and shareholders will appreciate Union Pacific as an excellent corporate citizen. We are proud to support McNeill Street Pumping Station Preservation Society and extend our best wishes for continued success."

Thank you very much to Union Pacific Foundation for their support of preserving our community's unique National Historic Landmark. If you know a Union Pacific employee, be sure to give them an Attaboy!



View of Old High Service Pump Room



Closer look at a wall. Gaps between the bricks are not desirable!

Spring Street Museum Has New Owners

The Spring Street Historical Museum was once a state museum operated by the Secretary of State, just like Shreveport Water Works Museum. And, just like SWWM, Spring Street was closed in 2017 (albeit ever so briefly) by the state and returned to the original owners, the Colonial Dames in Louisiana, who immediately reopened the museum and resumed operating it themselves.

Spring Street Museum is located in what is probably Shreveport's oldest building and was opened by the Colonial Dames in 1976 to showcase the city's culture and history. The Dames turned the facility over to the state in 2010 for what proved to be a relatively short tenure. However, the Dames feel that the long term viability of the museum depends on having professional, non-volunteer leadership and financial support, so everyone was understandably thrilled when an initiative to transfer the property to LSUS got a thumbs up from the school.

The precise details are a bit involved, but the site will be owned by the LSUS Foundation and used by the university for new academic programs, including internships for history students and a digital arts class using the museum's collection. The museum's large collection of artifacts includes among other things vintage clothing dating back to 1835, antique toys, firearms, swords, plantation records, photographs, antique maps, paintings and 18th and 19th century furniture. The LSUS Foundation sees this as an opportunity to establish a presence downtown and Dr. Cheryl White (LSUS academic coordinator for the Spring Street Museum) says the museum and university will complement each other and present a unique opportunity to merge the LSUS academic efforts directly with the remarkable history and culture of Shreveport and the surrounding area. The museum will retain its two part-time employees, one of whom is Maria Schmelz (who also works at SWWM), plus a corps of dedicated volunteers from the Friends of Spring Street Museum.

Congratulations to our sister museum and best wishes for a productive and long-running career at LSUS!

Please Don't Skip This!

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 is once again inviting everyone to renew their membership (or join up). Please see the letter enclosed with this newsletter for details.

This annual membership appeal is THE big fundraiser each year. The Preservation Society doesn't throw an event like Christmas In The Sky or Les Boutiques Noel, we just straight out ask for your support without providing any entertainment and count on your generosity to keep the doors open! Memberships are for a rolling 12 months, so if you've joined or renewed sometime earlier this year, you're still good, but nearly everyone renews just about now to save the need for ongoing reminders. Please help SWWM stay open another year! And, remember that memberships/gifts of \$100 or more will earn a spot on our donor recognition sign at the museum (unless you ask us not to).

Hear Ye.,.,Hear Ye: Membership Meeting

The annual meeting of the membership is scheduled for February 10, 2019 at 5pm in the meeting room at the museum. Principal item of business will be the election or reelection of directors to the board.

Museum For Rent

If you're looking for a last minute place for a Christmas party (or any other party), there are still open dates for the use of the meeting room at SWWM. It is about 1500 sq. Ft. and a blank slate for your decorating creativity. Call SWWM (318-221-3388) or email mceill1887@gmail.com to inquire.