

THE MUSEUM TRUMPET



Vol. 11, No. 3

The Official Newsletter of the San Jose Fire Museum

July 2020

SAN JOSE FIRE MUSEUM IS AWARDED HISTORIC GRANT

There is a definite cause for celebration as the San Jose Fire Museum (SJFM) is pleased to announce that on April 21, 2020, the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors under the sponsorship of Supervisor Dave Cortese and Cindy Chavez awarded it a historic grant for \$200,000. This grant is to be used specifically for phase 2 and phase 3 upgrades of the electrical power at Old Fire Station One (OFS1).

Here is a little background about this project. It all started a few years ago when the SJFM identified a need to upgrade the power at OFS1. The construction of OFS1 started in 1949 and opened in 1951. Early on during OFS1's restoration, the SJFM discovered just how limited the main power source was and that the existing service was already maxed out. At this point, knowing that significant improvements like air conditioning, new and additional circuits for modern power needs, and most importantly the expansion of a new exhibit space in the backyard were needed, it was time to develop a strategy to deal with these issues. The SJFM also knew that these issues needed to be dealt with before any further restoration to OFS1 could be done. In consultation with Vic Giacalone, owner of Best Electrical Company, a strategy was developed to upgrade the electrical power to OFS1 from the current 200 Amps power source to 1,600 Amps power source. This would provide OFS1 with a modern "State of the Art" electrical power upgrade including the power needed for the future buildout of the backyard as well as allowing for the complete restoration of OFS1.

The SJFM came up with a 3 phase program estimated to cost a total of \$300,000 with the cost of each phase at \$100,000. The following is a brief description of each phase:

Phase 1: The phase requires PG&E to install a subterranean, concrete vault outside OFS1. PG&E will then bring high-voltage power into the vault. The final step in this phase will be to have underground empty conduits installed from the vault into the backyard of OFS1.

Phase 2: This phase will include installation of a new main electrical service inside OFS1 and have wiring installed between the PG&E vault and the new main electrical service inside the underground empty conduit lines.

Phase 3: This phase will involve connecting the new main electrical service to the existing substandard main electrical service inside OFS1.

On June 10, 2019, we were fortunate enough to receive a \$100,000 appropriation from the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors for phase 1 of this electrical power upgrade project. We had been working on this phase until everything came to a grinding halt with the shelter in place mandate because of COVID-19. With the recent ease of restrictions, we are able to continue working on phase 1 of this project which we expect to have complete by early 2021. The \$200,000 award of the historic grant we were just given, will allow us to complete phase 2 and phase 3 of the electrical power upgrade project for which the county has provided us a window of just under 3 years to complete.



STILL STANDING STRONG



***Pictured to the left:** This artwork of Old Fire Station One was completed in 1951 by Dick Nailen, a major fire fighting buff as well as a friend and supporter of San Jose Fire Department history.*



***.Pictured to the right:** The Old Fire Station One rear steel awning was just completed and signed off by city inspectors.*

President's Message

By John A. McMillan



Hello friends of the San Jose Fire Museum (SJFM)! As we move into the summer of 2020, we are all facing a strange and difficult time in our lives as the COVID-19 virus has changed us all! As with all other non-essential facilities, we had to shut down Old Fire Station One (OFS1) and our museum warehouse from late March until the end of May. This meant that our tenant, the San Jose Firefighters Local 230 and our museum volunteers had to stop all their activities at these locations. We are pleased to share that they were able to resume using OFS1 and the warehouse at the beginning of June.

Beginning mid May, we were able to resume some construction work on the outside of OFS1 while wearing masks and maintaining the proper social distancing. I am happy to report that because of this, the new steel rear awning is now complete and has been signed off by city inspectors! We think that it turned out even better than we dreamed and have included a picture of it above. Once again, we want to say a big “THANK YOU” to our friend Rob Bettencourt for his generous donation that funded this project. We have now begun to work on some minor repairs to the apparatus floor to prevent it from degrading further and hopefully protect against any tripping accidents.

Our focus for the remainder of the summer will be to prioritize our next steps and projects but with the understanding that it may be a slow process due to the impact of COVID-19. In the last newsletter, we mentioned our intent to establish a docent program and want to thank those of you who responded. We have created a short list of volunteers who we plan to contact about the program in the very near future. At our June SJFM board meeting, we discussed our priorities as well as the immediate future of the SJFM. A brief update from that meeting is provided on the next page of this newsletter.

In closing, we continue to plan for a birthday party for Retired Fire Captain Sam Seibert who will be turning 101 years old on Wednesday, August 26, 2020. Dependent on what happens with COVID-19, we hope to be able to celebrate this amazing milestone with Sam. Make sure to check your emails for updates as to how this event might unfold.

WORTHY RECOGNITIONS

2019 SJFM VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR: JULIE STORMS



.Pictured above: Julie Storms receives SJFM Volunteer of the Year for 2019 from president John McMillan.

.Pictured to the right: President John McMillan presents Retired SJFD Fire Captain Sam Seibert with the SJFM Partnership Empire One Helmet for donating over \$341,000.



A MUSEUM THAT WILL WEAR MANY HATS



Much like a firefighter has to multi-task, so shall our museum! This is what came out of our San Jose Fire Museum (SJFM) board meeting on June 17, 2020 where discussions centered around future planning for the SJFM. At the meeting, president John McMillan proposed 3 options in response to his question “**What do we want the museum to be?**”. Option 1: A fire museum with exhibits. Option 2: A fire museum that has exhibits and an interactive public safety & educational program. Option 3: A fire museum with exhibits, an interactive safety & educational program, and an event space. The board came to the consensus that the museum should serve multiple purposes and agreed on option 3.

This decision led to further discussions as to what steps are needed to achieve this future version of SJFM. Clearly more work will need to be done on the building to bring our vision to life. We are already making strides with the steel rear awning which was just completed. The purpose of this awning is to allow us to move apparatus outside during inclement weather and increase the floor space inside. The board also recognizes the need to develop the exhibits and displays that will go into the facility. The board believes that we need to start moving in this direction before Old Fire Station One (OFS1) is completely remodeled so that we can engage volunteers and the community in our mission. As an initial commitment to the concept we envision, in July we are targeting to have a planning session where we will bring in experts in the field of museum development focusing on exhibit design and layout. The board also recognizes the need to allow for flexibility in how the space is used and arranged, given the new normal of social distancing. In fact, already there is review of how we can most easily modify our existing layout to accommodate for social distancing in areas where our patrons have been in close proximity.

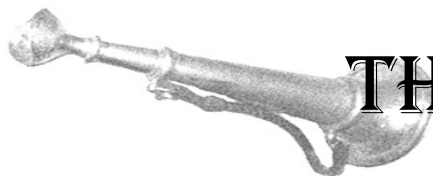
To make our future vision of the SJFM a reality, we need your financial and volunteer support more than ever. We hope we can continue to count on the assistance of our SJFM supporters, and we are excited to see what our future holds!

San Jose Fire Museum



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DEDICATED TO PRESERVING THE HISTORY OF THE SAN JOSE FIRE DEPARTMENT

We Need Docents Now!

The SJFM Board of Directors is seeking individuals who can get involved with us at Old Fire Station One (OFS1), so that we can open the station to the public. But we need volunteers to make this happen.

Can you help?!

We are not asking for a major commitment from any one person. So if you can spare any of your time this would make a huge difference. Whether you serve as a Docent or simply wish to assist other Docents, we will supply all the training you need. If interested, please contact anyone on the SJFM Board of Directors.

"The Museum Trumpet"

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