

Memorial Hall Update #13

It has been two years since the last update on our restoration project for Crockett's Memorial Hall (Legion Hall), but we have not been idle. We have worked on design issues and on raising funds for construction. The engineering design for seismic retrofit has been completed by HolmesCulley of San Francisco and is ready to go out to bid. The architectural restoration design work by Interactive Resources of Point Richmond is largely completed, as well.

Project architect Kimberly Butt has been successful in having Memorial Hall added to the State Register of Historic Resources and the National Register of Historic Places. Such landmark status in recognition of architectural significance in relation to World War I is a great honor for Crockett. Kimberly's "*Historic Resources Evaluation*" has been posted on our website (www.town.crockett.ca.us). Just search on the word "historic" to find the report easily. The history of Memorial Hall makes interesting reading, with many photographs included.

The 2014 *Walk of Honor for Our Veterans* was held on May 17, which is Armed Forces Day. This is our primary fundraiser for restoration of Memorial Hall. This year we raised \$24,500, including \$5,000 from the Crockett Community Foundation. In the four years that we've been a part of this event, we have raised a total of \$96,500 from the Walk of Honor. We are VERY grateful to event co-organizers Phillips 66 and VietNam Veterans of Diablo Valley, and to the many event sponsors, as well as the Crockett Community Foundation. Thanks also to the many participants who gather once a year to talk with veterans service organizations, walk our elegant Alfred Zampa Bridge, eat a fabulous lunch and compete for raffle prizes, all in support of America's veterans. Be sure to join us in celebration next May 16, 2015.

Another fundraising event this year was sponsored by Toot's Tavern of Crockett. Toot's Tavern has offered to sponsor fundraisers for four Crockett non-profits each year. The music was great and the people were generous, raising \$1,143 toward Memorial Hall restoration, which the Foundation will match with another \$1,000 in fundraising assistance. Please keep an eye open for an even better event at Toot's next year!

Memorial Hall did well to survive the recent large earthquake centered in American Canyon. However, we must take steps urgently to stabilize this unreinforced masonry building or we might not be as lucky next time. Our engineers have completed the design of a seismic strengthening system that will hold everything together for generations to come. The first phase of work will be the installation of micro-piles in the ground to support the massive walls on a new concrete grade beam. Movement of the earth will then have less severe impacts on the building. This will give us some important breathing room while we seek additional construction funding.

We have just been granted \$150,000 by the Crockett Community Foundation toward the abatement of hazardous materials (asbestos and lead paint) and the seismic retrofit of Memorial Hall. They have made this grant on condition that we are able to procure additional funding sufficient to contract for construction work. We continue to look everywhere for outside grants, and Congressman Mike Thompson's office is helping by researching available federal assistance programs. In addition, we anticipate that local volunteers will contribute labor worth more than \$50,000.

Volunteers are an essential part of the equation for returning Memorial Hall to public use. Volunteers of the Memorial Hall Advisory Committee have already spent years in moving this

project forward. Many volunteers have invested time and energy in pruning trees, planting lavender bushes, mowing the weeds and other landscape duties. Neighborhood volunteers have installed two benches on concrete pads and are about to plant a lot more vegetation to beautify the site. Others have repaired and refinished the 38 foot flag pole.

The Crockett Community Foundation and so many of our local residents have repeatedly expressed solid support for the restoration of Memorial Hall. It will be wonderful when we can finally reopen its door for veterans services and other community uses. We are currently investigating the many needs of veterans in our area of West County, with the hope that Crockett can one day play a role in serving veterans. After all, the federal government cannot do this all on its own. The needs are great. States, cities and towns, service organizations, all must pitch in. As pointed out by Ron Wilson, local veteran and chair of the Memorial Hall Advisory Committee, when we took our oaths of service we pledged to serve our country, not just our town or Crockett's veterans, alone. In restoring Memorial Hall and using it to provide services to west county veterans, Crockett will take pride in doing its bit in the national effort. Just as this 1925 landmark was built by the Crockett community of that era to serve all current and future veterans of the American Legion, the restoration of Memorial Hall by the Crockett community of today will achieve that same goal a hundred years later and into the future. The Crockett Community Services District, owner of this property, wants to do its part in this regard.

We welcome the interest of everyone who wants to see our historic Memorial Hall returned to public use. Those who want to be kept informed about our project can be added to our email list by sending your email address to Crockett CSD at: manager@town.crockett.ca.us. Past news updates on the project can be found on our website at: www.town.crockett.ca.us. In addition, there is a group site on Facebook, www.facebook.com/groups/CrockettVFMHall that shares posts regarding Memorial Hall.

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December 2014