

The

COTTAGE GROVE ARMORY

SIGNAL

A quarterly newsletter showcasing the restoration efforts and potential of a local historic landmark



SPRING, 2017

What's Inside

The Three Ps

*POSSIBILITIES

What a revitalized Armory could mean for Cottage Grove

PAGE 2

*PROGRESS

Early successes in the restoration process

PAGE 3

*PARTICIPATION

How you can help take part in the restoration effort

PAGE 4

Who's involved

Meet the 'Signal' Team

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The Mission: From Drill Hall to Downtown Centerpiece

Talk to just about anyone who's lived in this area for many years, and they'll almost certainly have a story about the Cottage Grove Armory.

From its first days, the Armory — which was built for the National Guard in 1931 and partially funded by the citizens of Cottage Grove — doubled as one of the City's premier gather-

ing spaces and the cultural hub of a thriving Main Street. Almost as soon as the building was put into use, it hosted a dance and wrestling exhibition that showcased its potential to generations of locals that would one day enjoy concerts, take gymnastics classes or attend the year's best parties in the beautiful historic building.

These days, new generations are discovering the potential of the Armory, and it has already hosted premier community events such as the Chamber of Commerce banquet this year. A full slate is planned there in 2017 and will only bolster its reputation for hosting quality events, but the massive building —

Please see MISSION, page 3

Youth boxing club finds a home downstairs

Every two minutes, a bell rings out, offering a momentary break to the dozen or so young athletes gathered downstairs in the Cottage Grove Armory.

Their respite doesn't last long, however, as each of the middle and high-schoolers quickly rotates to a new station to begin another round with a new bag or another sparring



Sabrina James ducks a punch from her sister, Sophia, during a Tuesday afternoon practice in the Armory basement.

ment of this historic building, there's no shortage of sweat.

Presiding over their twice-a-week practices is Cottage Grove High School Principal Iton Udosenata, who's taken on a new role as boxing coach for a group that's been training in the Armory basement for a few months now.

partner. Outside, rain pours down, a frigid late-winter but in the base-

Please see BOXING, page 4

Possibilities



A quinceañera held in February offers a look at the kinds of large gatherings that can be hosted in the Armory.

Party place: Armory can be the go-to for CG's biggest events

From out on the sidewalk, it's easy to tell there's a party going on. Inside the Cottage Grove Armory, the music and merriment are in full swing. Yesenia Rangel has gathered about 120 of her daughter, Jasmine's, closest friends and relatives to mark an important cultural milestone in the 15-year old's life. Known as a quinceañera, the gathering commemorates the transition to womanhood for many Latin American cultures, so families pay close attention to the party's many important details — which, of course, include a decision about the perfect venue to host the occasion.

Yesenia Rangel said she chose the Armory — a beautiful Art Deco structure that's stood at the corner of Seventh and Washington Streets since 1931 — after

scouring much of the Cottage Grove area in search of a building that could accommodate the number of guests she expected to attend her daughter's party. Finding many locations already booked and many too small for the occasion, Rangel called the City of Cottage Grove and made a reservation for the Armory, which, she was thrilled to discover, turned out to be both spacious and remarkably affordable.

And Rangel isn't the only one — the City of Cottage Grove has been renting out the Armory for such events since it purchased the building from the Oregon Military Department in 2009, and City Recorder Trudy Borrevik said the Armory has hosted several quinceañeras in that span. In fact, though it's still in the early stages

of extensive renovation efforts, the Armory has already become one of the Cottage Grove area's go-to venues. Recently, the Armory has hosted the annual Chamber of Commerce awards banquet and the state conference of the Oregon Main Street Program, and it recently hosted a lip sync contest and will host a retirement dinner and several birthday parties in the coming months. And as word gets out about its possibilities, it's safe to assume that the range of events planned in the Cottage Grove Armory will only continue to grow.

For more information about the Cottage Grove Armory or to inquire about booking possibilities, call the City of Cottage Grove at 541-942-5501.

Down on Main Street

Coordinator talks about what a restored Armory could mean for CG

Shauna Neigh has served as the coordinator of the Cottage Grove Main Street Program since 2014. Recently, we sat down with her to talk about the program and the part the Armory can play in creating a vibrant Main Street in Cottage Grove:

Could you start by providing a little background on the Main Street Program?

The Main Street Program is a national program that focuses on rehabilitating small town Main Streets in a way that's as historically accurate as possible. We're looking to revive communities and help people realize the importance of the histories of their towns. The Cottage Grove Main Street Program is part of the Oregon program, which is run through the state's Parks and Recreation Department.

Why do you and the Main Street Program believe that the historical aspect is important for the restoration of Main Street?

I believe it's important for any small town to hang on to its history and to be able to tell the story of its past. Main Streets are envisioned as the heartbeats and the gathering places of their towns. Having a vibrant Main Street helps a community come together.

Would you and the Main Street Program envision a return to the Main Street of the past, or are we looking at the need to create a new future downtown?

I think the goal is not necessarily to revive and bring it back to exactly what it was, but to modernize — to create a space where people want to be and are comfortable. We want to provide a unique area to each town with a sense of space and of the community.

Please see MAIN ST., page 4

UPCOMING ARMORY EVENTS:

Jan Wellman, Public Works Director retirement party, March 31

South Lane Fire and Rescue Awards banquet, April 22

London School fundraiser, April 29

Progress

Window restoration nears completion

The final phase of a project to restore all 117 windows in the Cottage Grove Armory continued recently with work to refurbish the 26 windows that surround the mezzanine in the historic building.

Chris Gustafson of Albany-based Vintage Window Restoration, LLC said his company spent time at the end of February adding an additional 100 years to the life of the upstairs windows in the Armory. Gustafson has performed similar work on many of the building's windows over the past two years, and he said that due to the age of the building, many of the windows share the same afflictions.

"In some of them, we've dealt with rotten window sills and issues with the building's stucco finish," Gustafson said. "The common issues are typically that the putty in the windows begins to fail, paint starts to peel, the wood is depleted of oils and the deterioration goes on from there."

Due to their age, he pointed out, even extensive restoration



Ben Isaacson of Vintage Window Restoration, LLC uses infrared light to remove old paint from a window in the mezzanine of the Armory.

costs less than total replacement. Removal of coats of paint that had built up over the years and replacing each window's sash cord should allow for proper ventilation in the Armory, Gustafson said. More information about the Armory restoration project can be found at: <http://www.cottagegrove.org/community/page/armory>.

MISSION from page 1

which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places — will require extensive renovation to return to its former glory and serve as the community gem that Cottage Grove deserves. Recognizing and recalling its potential, City leaders purchased the Armory for \$395,000 when the National Guard relocated in 2009, and the City recently contracted with Lund Development Solutions of Cottage Grove to raise the \$3.2 million it will take to refurbish the building and add such necessities as access for those with disabili-

ties, additional restrooms and a new heating system. But the City can't do it alone — a true community effort will be vital in ensuring the success of renovation and fundraising efforts. Which, in short, means that we need help from each of you! The Armory has always belonged in and to the citizens of Cottage Grove. It's your building. Won't you join us in assuring its legacy as the place to be downtown, in taking the Armory from drill hall to downtown centerpiece?

MANY THANKS TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS!

A true community effort will be vital in restoring the Armory for the benefit of all. The list of those who have already contributed cannot be fully printed in these pages. To view the full list including individual donors, please visit: cottagegrove.org/node/2551.

American Legion	Cottage Grove Hospital	Oregon Posse
Baker Butcher	Cottage Grove Sentinel	Pacific Power
Banner Bank	The Divine Cupcake	Pacific Yurts
Barker Foundation	Edward Jones	PC Garage Computer Repair
Belknap Properties, LLC	Faye & Lucille Stewart	Pinocchio's Pizza
Big Stuff BBQ	Foundation	Rick Dancer Media
Bohemia Foundation	Ferguson's Appliance	Safeway
Brad's Cottage Grove Chevrolet	Five Flying Monkeys	Sassy Cupcakes
Broadway Wine Merchants	Gray Cat Inn	Seeds of Change
Buster's Main Street Cafe	Hemenway Realtors	South Lane Fire and Rescue
Cakes by JoDee	Hoyer Accounting	South Lane School District
Carousel House B&B and Catering	Jack Sprats, LLC	Stacy's Covered Bridge Restaurant
Cascade Home Center	Jonathan E. Backer, DDS	Territorial Seed Company
Cetera Advisor Networks	KNND	Three Rivers Foundation
City of Cottage Grove	Lane Community College	Umpqua Bank
Coast Fork Feed & Brewstation	Les Schwab Tire Center	U.S. Bank
Commonwealth Financial Network	Magnolia Gardens	Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 3473
Cottage Grove Board of Realtors	Marist High School	Village Green Resort
Cottage Grove Chamber of Commerce	Market of Choice	Weyerhaeuser Company
Cottage Grove Community Foundation	Noisette Pastry Kitchen	Williams & Mathis Accounting Services, Inc.
	Northwest Community Credit Union	Woodard Family Foundation
	Oakway Wine & Deli	

Participation

COMING TOGETHER FOR A WORTHWHILE GOAL

Much like the original construction project that brought the Armory to Cottage Grove, a coordinated community effort will be vital in its restoration. The Armory will require an estimated \$3.2 million in renovation costs, to be raised over the next three years. Here's how you can help:

Become a Donor

Opportunities to contribute can be tailored to your preferences and your budget.

Volunteer

There are many ways to contribute your time and talents to the restoration effort.

Spread the Word

Tell your friends and neighbors about the exciting event you

recently attended at the Armory, or share stories about the many great memories you've made there over the years.

For more information on the Armory project or how you can contribute to the restoration effort, contact Christina Lund at 541-953-5377.

BOXING *from page 1*

Udosenata offers tips and encouragement as he guides each boxer's gloves toward a pair of training mitts, and it's clear after watching the group for just a little while that he has each athlete's attention — and their respect. The same can be said for coach Brian James, whose two daughters are working on their skills in the Armory this afternoon. Udosenata said that about a year and a half ago, several students learned that he had once been an aspiring boxer at a gym in Eugene.

"I never had time to train them, but I found out eventually that a few kids were training without equipment," he said. "So I said, 'I'll train you, but it can't be in your backyard.'" Instead, the fledgling boxing school got started with two students in Udosenata's garage, though South Lane Maintenance Supervisor Matt Allen later suggested the Armory as a suitable location.

Enter Ed Smith, a local military historian who has collected Armory memorabilia over the years and who happened to spot a pair of heavy bags on the floor during a recent tour of the historic building.

"I had wanted to have a boxing gym in the 70s and 80s, but I never did," Smith said. "But I did happen to have a boxing ring in storage."

Udosenata said that Smith was quite helpful in getting the basement set up for boxing, and the two soon learned that they shared common ground.

"His coach in Eugene was Myron Johnson," Smith said. "Back when I boxed in the late 60s, Myron Johnson was eight years old, and his father was an ex boxing pro. He's the one we used to spar with — small world!"

Now, the group of boxing students, which is about equally male and female, trains in space just outside the old Armory kitchen that was formerly used as storage for munitions and other military equipment. But this isn't the building's first experience with sports, and it won't be its last. A wrestling match was among the first events held when the newly constructed Armory opened, and more events are still being scheduled this year. It's part of a packed schedule in the old building, which is slated to undergo extensive restoration over the next three years.

MAIN STREET *from page 2*

And how does the Armory fit in with that vision?

The Armory is a huge focal point downtown, but frankly, right now, it is a bit of an eyesore. But it is such an incredible building with such a strong history — and not just related to the Armed Forces. Some people remember going to kindergarten there. There are stories of people meeting their first loves there. They went to school dances. It was a huge community space.

So, has the Main Street Program evaluated the importance of that experience?

In 2016, Sheri Stuart of the Oregon Main Street Program came and did a strategic plan for

Cottage Grove's Main Street that included five goals, and the Armory project works with all five of them. A program evaluation was done in 2015, and its recommendations were to focus on strengthening the economic base, bridging divides, enhancing liveliness and capitalizing on Cottage Grove's historic assets. The Armory can help with each of those goals. It can provide jobs, security, community resources, entertainment and excitement.

What kind of activities do you envision happening at the Armory?

Cottage Grove is short on space and programs for kids, places teenagers can go, things

for kids to do. We can provide cooking classes there. So many different sports events and practices can happen. Business owners can have a meeting space in case they have people coming into the area. If you're getting married, now we have a really cool indoor venue for weddings.

What is your dream scenario for the future of the Armory?

I would love to see it active on a daily basis, to have the doors open and have something going on there at all times. I'd love to see people coming in asking about the history of the building and being in awe, as most people are when they first walk in.