

MUSEUM-ANNUAL REPORT, 2018-2019
AMADOR COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
by Judy Jebian, Museum Director

The Amador County Museum has been in operation almost continuously since 1949 when it was first dedicated, and this probably makes it one of the oldest museums in California. Visitors often tell us that it is one of the best small museums they have ever visited. Since 2013, the museum has been under the management of the Historical Society as it was during its first 40 years of existence.

Over 1,000 persons have visited during the last year from all over California, as well as many other states and countries, and we have also hosted many local school groups and tour groups. Visitor donations and the gift shop brought in over \$5,000 last year, and museum funds continue to grow including several sizable donations earmarked for the Livery project. Dedicated volunteers have logged over 1,600 hours keeping the museum open and the grounds maintained. The Pole Barn has now been stabilized with cement footings and the framing is finished. Siding, windows and doors will complete that structure and then livery artifacts will be moved from the old livery to the Pole Barn for temporary storage; the old building will be taken down and construction will begin on the new 100x36 foot building.

The current challenge is to raise a lot more money; this is a huge undertaking and we are a small Board made up of retirees. We need help to raise necessary funds for labor and materials in order to accomplish the goal of constructing the building. Donations trickle in and we are planning another capital grant application to the state of California. The Livery is a big project; however, when it is completed, it will provide a wonderful space for large artifacts such as antique wagons, carriages, and representation of other important Amador industries such as logging and ranching.

Donations of artifacts to the museum also trickle in such as the recent acquisition of an 1868 platform scale from the Grisham Ranch at Slough house, Miwok grinding stones, pestles, and a lovely Miwok basket. We've also received a watercolor of the Ludeken's store, as well as a large watercolor by Alice Duke of the old cattle drive up Highway 88, photos, documents and more. We never know what treasures will be donated by the generous folk who come through the front door. Sometimes, it is a real gem which demands display space on our crowded walls or in one of the rooms. The Amador County Museum contains a rich display of artifacts which are vitally important to the narrative of Amador's history as the epicenter of the California gold rush which thereby represents the beginning of California's history as a western state.

ACHS Board members are concerned about a large dead tree on the south side of the house near the walkway that children and parents use on their way to school. In addition, several of the other Incense Cedars seem to be dying. The dead tree needs to be removed, but we are unsure what can be done to save the other cedars, if anything. It would be a shame to lose any of the big trees since they contribute so much to the beauty and ambiance of the grounds.

Another ongoing concern is the homeless traffic around the museum. In fact, a rather large hole was burned in one of the picnic tables a few months ago, and on Tuesday, August 6, at about 5:00 p.m., that same table was set on fire. The school principal saw the smoke and rushed over with a fire extinguisher, and the fire and police departments both arrived and removed the tables away from the trees. ACHS will work to address this situation; an immediate solution is to remove the bushes that shield that area from street view. Low overhanging branches on the locust tree should also be removed for fire

prevention. That area is a lovely shaded spot and a wonderful place to picnic and we would like to see a couple of new cement tables installed. Fire is a dire threat to the museum because the entire collection is irreplaceable and its value inestimable. We need the County to work with the Amador County Historical Society for the protection and beautification of the grounds. This would greatly enhance the property both as a park and as a wonderful historic centerpiece for Jackson and the County.

Museum volunteers regard their work as of vital importance to preserving the rich history of our community and our state. It is our pleasure to share this heritage with both local visitors as well as visitors from around the world. We have a wonderful treasure in our back yard that needs to be both respected and preserved, and we appreciate your assistance in these matters.