



CITY OF OREGON CITY

Staff Report

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To: City Commission **Agenda Date:** 09/20/2023
From: Melissa Sebastian, Aquatic and Recreation Manager

SUBJECT:

Programming at the Ermatinger House

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

The staff would like to inform you of the success of this past year with programming at the Ermatinger House.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Francis Ermatinger House re-opened back in 2018. This presentation will cover the success of programming that has taken place, primarily focusing on the increases seen this past year and how we are growing attendance. These successes and celebrations come from the partnerships we have continued with the Friends of the Ermatinger House and a new partnership we have developed with the Clackamas County Historical Society.

BACKGROUND:

This presentation highlights the successes of this past year with programming at the Ermatinger House. Much of this success is due to working with the Friends of the Ermatinger House and the Clackamas County Historical Society on programs and events.

The Parks and Recreation Department works with the Friends of the Ermatinger House on many of the event programming that has taken place. Events take place every month, sometimes bi-monthly. The Parks and Recreation Department meets with the Friends of the Ermatinger on the first Friday of each month. These meetings are primarily used for touch points on upcoming events and evaluating recent events. In November of 2022, we had our first strategic planning meeting with the Friends of the Ermatinger House, and we will also have another one this year.

We want to highlight this past year as we have grown greatly in our programs, attendance, and Field Trips. We have seen a 66% increase in visitation compared to the prior year from other attendance outside of our field trips, mainly due to the events. This past summer alone, there was an 18% growth in attendance, primarily from the attendance for the Heritage Days event. These percentages are based on the attendance for tours and events and do not include the Field Trip programming numbers.

Programs from this past year include:

- Adopt-An-Artifact
 - 4 Artifacts were adopted this year
- Preserve Our Past Art & Poetry
 - 10 Art Submissions, 49 Poetry Submissions.
- Field Trips
 - 453 students visited the site
- Drop-in Tours
 - 1133 patrons visited

The Events that took place this past year include:

- Veterans Day Event- Celebrating Veterans: American Military Service Uniforms
 - Exploration of American military service uniforms beginning in the 18th century through today.
 - The event was held in person and recorded for virtual viewing.
- Heritage Holidays- Sleigh Bells Ring
 - Free, guided tours, as well as wreath and ornament making.
- 5th Annual American Military Arms: Weapons from 1776 to Present
 - Exploration of American military armaments from the 18th century through the 21st century.
 - The event was held in person and recorded for virtual viewing.
- Oregon's Birthday
 - SoulFlags came and led crafts; cupcakes/refreshments were offered with tours.
- Lantern Tours
 - Tour of the Ermatinger House after dark by candlelight.
- Gambling Games & Bootlegged Gin.
 - Stillweather Spirits came and did a gin tasting while people played games and visited the house.
- Historical Preservation Month
 - We displayed the restoration process the Ermatinger House underwent and had 3 educational talks throughout the month, available in person and virtually.
- Heritage Days- Weddings Through the Ages

- Displays of wedding dresses, artifacts, and information on weddings throughout June and July.
- Instruments & The Music they Play
 - Presentation on instruments of the Victorian Era. Instruments will be available to view during September.

Field Trips were accepted at this site, but due to size limitations, we could not meet the needs of many school groups looking for Field Trips between 2018-2022. Schools typically want to bring all their 4th-grade classes at once, which is beyond our capacity at the Ermatinger House. Since re-opening in 2018, there was also an extended period of a pandemic to get through, which paused a lot of this effort, and we have been working to re-open again over the last 2 years.

To navigate this, we started conversing with the Clackamas County Historical Society about partnering and offering both sites as a packaged program. Using our two heritage sites and the Pioneer Community Center Basement, we could accommodate class group sizes of 70-90. We were also able to have some classes, visit the Library and the McLoughlin house as well. Between 2018 and 2022, we had 107 students visit the Francis Ermatinger House; in 2023 alone, we had 453 students visit.

We have a lot of upcoming plans for programming and events this year at the Ermatinger House. We plan to take a break from our Preserve Our Past Art & Poetry Contest this year, revamp that program, and bring it back in the Winter of 2024-2025. The goal is to create a new opportunity to engage our youth in learning about heritage sites and creating art pieces about them.

We will be spending more time continuing to develop and expand our field trip programming with the Clackamas County Historical Society and working with the Friends of the Ermatinger House. The Friends of the Ermatinger House will continue to meet monthly with our department and have another review of our annual plans. A big project that we will be working on is adding a new exhibit that will be an example of a Hudson's Bay Store and will serve to expand the field trip program.

The Parks and Recreation Department is also meeting with the Director of the Clackamas County Historical Society monthly and will continue to. The primary focus is to continue developing and expanding field trips; however, we plan to partner on more events in the future.

OPTIONS:

1. Commissioners are invited to provide comments or questions at the end of the presentation.

