

FEATURED

Historical society host gala to kickoff Kittanning Train Station Restoration Project

Event held at the Meredith Inn, with preliminary plans presented to save the train station and freight building, which is near where the historical society McKean St., Kittanning.

By DENNIS PHILLIPS Associate Editor
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1 of 3

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A graphic illustration of what the restored Kittanning Train Station might look like after it is restored. The Armstrong County Historical Museum & Genealogical Society is working to raise money to restore the train station.

Photos: Dennis Phillips | Leader Times

A kickoff gala recently was hosted by the Armstrong County Historical Museum & Genealogical Society for the Kittanning Train Station Restoration Project.

The gala was held at the Meredith Inn, with preliminary plans presented to save the train station and freight building, which is near where the historical society is located at 300 N. McKean St., Kittanning.

"This is the preliminary vision of what we want to do with the property," said society President Tyler Woodside about the historic train station, which was purchased by the society for \$75,000 last year.

Woodside said he sees the combination of the historical museum and train station property to be a possible economic engine driving tourism in Kittanning similar to George Washington's Mt. Vernon property near Washington, D.C.

“Step one, we need to save the building,” he said. “We need to use our history to bring in money.”

Project team LGA Partners gave a presentation on what needs to be done to save and restore the buildings.

The passenger station needs to have its roof replaced, brick masonry cleaned and repaired, windows restored, foundation stabilized and reinforced, doors restored, woodwork restored and chimneys repaired.

The freight building needs its roof replaced, brick masonry cleaned and repaired, windows restored, foundation waterproofed, doors restored and clerestory windows replaced.

The Kittanning Train Station Restoration Project's Phases 1 through 3 are estimated to cost \$110,000, which would cover the costs to complete the feasibility study, the National Register of Historic Places nomination and attorney fees for tax credit planning. Phase 4 would be stabilizing each structure, with the cost still to be determined after the feasibility study. So far \$45,000 has been raised for the project with the main contributor of donations to date being the Richard G. and Barbara A. Snyder Fund through the Armstrong County Community Foundation.

Woodside said the restored train station property could be the future location of community festivals and organized and casual bicycle rides with the Armstrong Trails passing by where the museum and train station property is located.

Woodside thanked several individuals, organizations and businesses that have helped with the restoration project, which included those who helped secure the property including IMA's Chip Echnoz, NexTier Bank, Lee Calarie and Kittanning Borough, which donated property near the train station to the museum.

During the gala, Dennis Cramer, former teacher and history society research assistant, gave a presentation on the history of the train station.

He said the station first opened in 1896 and was used until the last passenger train visited Kittanning in 1956.

He said the Kittanning train station is the last of the Allegheny Valley Railroad, which had several stations in Western Pennsylvania during its heyday.

"This is it. This is the last chance," Cramer said about saving history.

For more information on the restoration project or to make a donation, visit: achmgs.org.

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