

## Manager's Message

This past month I wanted to focus on the civic groups and citizen committees that provide volunteer opportunities and this month I will spotlight our local museums and the wonderful history they showcase and promote for our community. These two local gems are the Pioneer Museum, which is located on the southeast corner of Lincoln Park at 502 Marion Avenue, and the Fort Vasquez Museum and historical site, which is also the Welcome Center for our community, located at 13412 Highway 85 just a half-mile south of SH66. These are fun and interesting topics to discuss as I continue in this month's newsletter to highlight the wonderful groups and small-town amenities that Platteville has to offer.

I mentioned last month that the Pioneer Museum is managed and operated by the Historical Society and in recent years the Town has provided a part-time attendant to assist the Historical Society, otherwise known as the "museum ladies", as needed to maintain the museum and work on displays and projects. The Pioneer Museum is open three days each week from 9:00am-3:00pm on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday with additional visits or tours offered by scheduling an appointment.

The museum itself has a long history of how it developed over the years and residents can learn more by visiting the ladies so for now I will only provide a brief summary. The museum building is getting closer to 100 years old as the original portion was built in 1932 and was used as the Library for the community. The southeast section of the building can be visibly identified as the original building just by looking

at the architecture and brickwork around the original double-door entrance. The old library was very small with less than 1,000sf of space and is somewhat of a bilevel as once you enter the old entrance there's a small landing area where you can either go downstairs to the basement or upstairs into the main level. This entrance is no longer open to the public but anyone can still access the original basement through the current main entrance and by asking the ladies for a tour that they would be more than willing to provide.

The museum has expanded twice since it originated with the first building expansion being completed in 1968. This addition was similar in size and was added to the west side of the original building which included a new entrance that was elevated by raising the landscaping and included a sloped sidewalk that connects to the sidewalk along Marion Avenue. The '68 expansion did not include a basement but connected well to the '32 side and provided a lot more space for exhibits and various historical displays and records.

Many years later in 2005 the Historical Society and Town Officials worked on a Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) Energy & Mineral Impact grant application to complete a large addition to the north side of the building that was approved. The museum was in dire need of additional space for the many displays and

## Town Departments

### Administration

400 Grand Avenue  
Platteville, CO 80651  
(970) 785-2245  
Mon-Fri 8:00am-4:30pm  
[www.plattevillegov.org](http://www.plattevillegov.org)

### Police Dept.

(970) 785-2215  
Non-Emergency Dispatch:  
(970) 356-1212

### Public Works Dept.

(970) 785-6415  
After Hours:  
(970) 304-2534

### Recreation & Seniors

508 Reynolds Avenue  
(720) 438-0711

### Pioneer Museum

502 Marion Avenue  
(970) 785-6285  
Mon & Wed 10:00am-3:00pm  
Sat. 10:00-2:00pm

### Ft. Vasquez Museum Welcome Center

13412 US85  
(970) 785-2832  
Wed, Sat, Sun 10am-3pm

### Public Library

504 Marion Ave./PO Box 567  
(970) 785-2231  
Mon – Fri 10:00am-6:00pm  
Sat 10:00am-2:00pm  
[www.PPLCO.us](http://www.PPLCO.us)

### Nantes Library (Gilcrest)

703 Birch Street  
Gilcrest, CO 80623  
(970) 737-1035  
Mon-Fri 10:00am-6:00pm  
Sat 10:00am-2:00pm  
[www.nanteslibrary.us](http://www.nanteslibrary.us)

### Manager's Message (cont.)

historical documents that were maintained so with the financial assistance from DOLA the 4,000sf expansion on the north side of the museum was completed and opened to the public in 2006. The new addition included a partial basement for storage and an enclosed garage bay that currently displays an old west wagon. Today the Pioneer Museum remains a center point for our community and have many wonderful displays and historical documents and artifacts which tell the story of our community. For more information about the Pioneer Museum please either visit the museum ladies during one of the days they are open or simply call the museum and speak with Lucy Montoya, Historical Society President, at 970.785.6285. The museum ladies are always looking for members and volunteers to help them on a regular or part-time basis.

In the fall of 2022 Town completed a lease agreement with The State Historical Society of Colorado (i.e., History Colorado) to use the Fort Vasquez Museum as a welcome center for the community. The lease is at no cost (lease, maintenance or utilities costs) to the Town and has a 3-year term that is renewable upon mutual agreement. History Colorado had approached me over the years about forming a partnership in which the Town could operate the historical site and after the pandemic was over we decided to revisit the idea that lead to the current agreement. It was clear that History Colorado was not interested in opening the facility and since it has such historical significance to Platteville the Board and Trustees agreed to the lease and authorized a small budget for operational expenses.

During the first few months of this past year I advertised for a part-time museum attendant position and was very fortunate to hire a local senior member, Bill Crowley, who happened to have worked for History Colorado as the facility manager of Fort Vasquez from 2013-2015. With his prior and vast

knowledge of the historical site the Town was able to open the new Welcome Center at Fort Vasquez last March. Bill worked with the Historical Society at the Pioneer Museum to have them put together several displays that reflect a historical period of Platteville and also worked with the local Senior Organization to provide various homemade or local products to sell including quilts, towels and other items. Another partnership was made with the Platteville Library to provide books and videos along with several displays that summarized the history of Fort Vasquez and other important locations in the area.

Overall, the new Welcome Center has done very well since it opened last spring and during its first year (9+ months) it attracted approximately 1,488 visitors and multiple tours were given along with Bill providing monthly evening presentations. The Platteville Chamber of Commerce has also been using the Welcome Center to hold their monthly meetings and the Town hosted a large meeting for the Upper Front Range Transportation Region and plan on hosting additional meetings at the site in the upcoming years. The Welcome Center is also open three days each week on Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday from 10:00am-4:00pm and tours can also be scheduled for other days as needed. For more information regarding the Welcome Center at the Fort Vasquez Museum please give Bill a call at 970.785.2832. Bill also informed me that he would like to start a Program & Steering Committee to help with event planning and provide ideas on how to continue improving the Welcome Center.

In next month's newsletter I'll discuss the Mizpah Cemetery & Veterans Memorial as they are also important landmarks in our community. Troy Renken, Town Manager