



PRESERVING THE HISTORY OF THE KEY CITY AND THE BLACK HILLS THAT MADE IT

Sturgis City Council,

Sturgis, and the surrounding area, is alive with history. While many local communities have embraced this history, and have benefited from such, the city of Sturgis has largely taken a much more passive interest. While many of the local cities, including Deadwood, Lead, Spearfish, and Rapid City have some sort of historical commission, or preservation office, Sturgis has none to speak of. When it comes to historic monuments, the city lists only a single one, the Freedom Memorial, that focuses on Fort Meade.

The one aspect of local history the City has taken some focus on, as per the Official Website of the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally, is the Rally. In the case of this history, they get it embarrassingly wrong. The implication that all of this puts out is that the City of Sturgis puts little stock in the history, and doesn't really care.

The reason I'm addressing the City Council is to encourage them to take a step and invest in the history of Sturgis. The City has had numerous chances to do so in the past. At one point they owned the Poker Alice House, which was listed under the National Register of Historic Places, but allowed it to be removed from that register, and were willing to have it removed from Sturgis, or destroyed. Luckily, others stepped forward and preserved that portion of our history.

Understanding our local history can be a great asset. If local history was understood, the way the very public case about the Sturgis Rally trademarks had went most likely would have been a lot different. The direction of the Rally itself could have been very different, instead of fighting the same concerns decades after decades.

Utilizing history can be an even greater asset. Towns throughout the Midwest stake their entirety on history. It has helped numerous cities revitalize themselves, to keep them away from extinction. Deadwood is a great example of just that; a town on the brink of extinction that now is thriving. While Sturgis is in a different position, it could learn something from Deadwood, and it would be a win win situation. The City has the potential to leverage it's history to keep people in town, spending money, supporting local businesses, while at the same benefiting from an increase in tax revenue.

Going this route doesn't require a massive financial investment. It does take some money, but the biggest investment is a person's time. And the City doesn't even have to deal with that, as organizations like mine are already doing the work. The effort the City would need to put into this is minimal. Promoting the history, or the organizations that are putting the effort into preserving this history, would do a world of change. Pledging to allow markers or plaques to be placed takes almost no effort, but has a large impact. And yes, financially donating, or even promoting others to donate, could lend itself to massive benefit to the city.

It doesn't take a lot of effort by the City to make a difference here. Along with this appeal to the City, I'm also including a sponsorship kit that breaks this down much more.

Thank you, Dustin White



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COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP KIT

Dear Community Members:

Five years ago, I decided to undertake a project to document the history of Sturgis and the Black Hills. The reason was simple. Finding local history was difficult as there was no recent proper work on the subject, nor was there a central database. It was more like finding a needle in a haystack, but much of the hay was fake.

So, I started to dig through the historical sources, scouring newspapers, articles, even popular books, in order to start compiling the foundation for a database. I also started looking at what other cities in the Midwest were doing in order to not only preserve their history, but to promote it. Some cities, like Deadwood and Medora, took to creating an entire historic atmosphere that have become huge tourist destinations. Others, such as Bismarck, has seen a boom in historical tours, as well as larger discussions and showcasing of their history.

I also started to start writing a number of articles, as well as sharing history where I could. Through this background research a few things became exceptionally clear.

1. People don't know a lot of the local history, but want to find out more. The most common comment I've received is, "I didn't know that," or some form thereof
2. History is exceptionally popular. The first story I posted on our Facebook page was on January 21, 2019. It reached 28 people. Today, we are reaching over 28,000 people a month.
3. History has the potential to bring communities together. The great majority of responses I've received have been positive. It's a shared past that people can relate to.
4. People crave it. The biggest tourist sites in the Midwest are based on history. Historic tours are expanding to additional cities. Historical dramas and documentaries are blockbusters, all because people want more history.

What this all suggests is that right now is the perfect time to invest in our own local history. That is what Historical Sturgis is all about, providing an accessible and interactive manner in which to engage it in. We are set to begin expanding the work we currently are doing, which includes podcasts, videos, demonstrations, tours, and a whole lot more. But to get there, we are looking at local support.

Sincerely,
Dustin White

BENEFITS OF SPONSORSHIP

As a business owner, I understand that when sponsoring an event or organization, the hope is to eventually receive something in return. A sponsorship is much like an investment, and a good investment should pay back dividends, or at least the equivalent. With that in mind, we wanted to create a sponsorship package that would be a benefit for many years to come. We see Historical Sturgis as a long term investment in the community, and thus sponsorships will have a long lasting impact, as well as benefit.

Engaged Visitors:

A center part of this project is to create a self-guided historical tour. It will utilize an online database, printed pamphlets, and eventually signage. Such a tour will keep people in town and engaged. And studies show that the longer people stay in town, the more likely they are to frequent local establishments.

Increased Foot Traffic:

The potential to increase foot traffic is two fold. First, the tour, as well as expanded history, will help bring people into town. Taking the tour is free, and family friendly, which is what many are looking for. Especially during the off season. History is also a big seller. Entire economies are built on just historic tourism. Second, many of the businesses in town have some sort of interesting and unique history attached to them, and thus the tour will direct them to those establishments.

Building Community:

A big complaint in many of the towns throughout the Hills is that there is nothing to do. After tourist season ends, this becomes even more true. This project would help alleviate a bit of that in a few ways. First, the tour would give individuals something they could do on their own. And since there is a lot of history to explore, this tour will keep growing and thus continue to be something that can be explored.

Second, another main component of this project will be demonstrations, talks, and other presentations. These events will occur throughout the year, and will be things that the community can enjoy. It will give them something to do.

It will also bring people downtown. In Sturgis, and many other of the towns that dot the Hills, after the summer, a lot of the businesses do close. But there are still many that stay open, but are forgotten about. As a business owner, that's something I hear a lot, "I didn't know this was here," and I've been told by other business owners that they get the same reaction. This project would help address that by helping to build community engagement.

Wholesome, Long Lasting Advertising:

Advertising has changed drastically in the last couple of decades. Traditional advertising has struggled with the rise of social media. More and more people are going online to get their news, entertainment, and to interact. Which means you have to get creative.

Sponsors will get ads in all of our material, both online and in print, and all of it is wholesome, family friendly work. These ads will be long lasting. An add in one of our stories will remain with that story, period. Ten, twenty years down the road, that ad will still be there. And with the stories we do, they are continually bringing in new traffic.

MOBILE HISTORY

Currently, our big project is creating a mobile history booth. The plan for this is to build a historic chuck wagon that can be used as a history booth. The build will be documented, which adds an additional feature to the project. People will be able to see how these wagons that brought people and supplies into the Black Hills were built.

This booth, once finished, will be used to provide a mobile location for the presentation of history. This will include everything from building simple displays for it which people can look at, to using it as the center of a variety of demonstrations, classes, and presentations. The community of Sturgis offers a host of events where this booth could be set up and thus add to festivities going on.

Other plans for the booth include using it an authentic chuck-wagon, where food can be prepared and served. While most of the activities the booth would be used for would be free to the public, utilizing it as a sort of food truck would help fund the project as a whole.

The primary goal for this mobile history booth is to bring history to life. History doesn't have to be stuffy. It can be engaging and exciting. It's why cities like Deadwood focus so much on presentations and the like to bring history to the present, and expose new generations to it. Without making history engaging, the risk of losing our history only grows.

PLANNED PUBLICATIONS

While much of the world is now online, there is still a place for printed publications, especially for the older generations. The eventual goal is to publish a series of books, but we have to walk before we run.

Starting off, pamphlets as well as maps will be printed and distributed that showcase specific aspects of local history, as well as give people a source to discover this history on their own. Landmarks will be included on the maps, so that for those who prefer something printed can also participate in the self-guided tours.

A historical journal will also be produced, starting off with a yearly issue, with the goal of becoming a quarterly publication. This journal will include articles relating to the history of the Black Hills, as well as historical projects that people can try at home.

Special, short publications will also be produced that look at specific pieces of history. Some of these will deal with historical events, while others will be how to guides that look at a historical process, or a historical trade.

Specialized works are also in the works, such as a historic cooking book that has not only recipes from the late 1800s and early 1900s, but the techniques used to make those meals.

Finally, reproductions are also in the works. There are works from the late 1800s that have a bearing on today's society, but are hard to find, and those that can be found are difficult to read and navigate through. The reproductions that this project will produce will seek to restore these works back to their original grandeur.

Besides written works, I'm also working on recreating and reproducing historical images, as well as posters from the turn of the 20th century. Some of these will be faithful reproductions, while others will be recreating images to show how the times have changed.

MULTI-FACETED APPROACH

The best sort of history is that which engages. To do that, a multi-faceted approach is ideal as it allows a wider variety of people to participate. For this project, I am bringing in a number of historic trades, entertainment, and knowledge in order to help people dive into history and become immersed.

Over the last couple of years, I've been pulling together sources, working with others, and drawing from my own background in order to create a project that encompasses a large swath of history. As the project grows, so will the items that we offer. To begin, we will have a focus on a number of aspects:

Woodworking:

The craftsman was an integral part of early cities. The Black Hills were filled with local woodworkers who could craft whatever product you would need. To capture that history, I'm building an 1880s workshop that will be used to demonstrate, as well as teach, how woodworking was done by the pioneers, and how those methods are still viable today.

This workshop will also be used to teach people the basics of woodworking, and how to get into it on a budget. In this way, they will be able to find a bit of that self-sufficiency that the Hills' early pioneers brought with them.

Cooking:

Some of the first establishments set up in any new town were eateries. For pioneers traveling, the chuck-wagon became an essential part of the convoy. Simply, people need to eat. And that hasn't changed at all, people still need to eat.

What better way to facilitate that than by creating cooking classes based on historic principals that can also be adapted to the modern age. These courses I'm developing revolve around cast iron cookware, particularly the dutch oven. A piece of cookery so important that the Lewis and Clark Expedition refused to ever part with theirs. The end goal again is to help people find a bit of self-sufficiency like our early pioneers had.

Entertainment:

When the first pioneers arrived in the Black Hills, it was during the vaudeville era. Stage shows would travel throughout the country, bringing entertainment to the masses. It would help bring to fruit Hollywood, and house hold names like Harry Houdini. It would help birth Spiritualism and the seances and performances that came with that, as well as the performances that debunked those same seances.

This project will bring those sorts of performances back to life, and introduce a new generation to the entertainment that the early pioneers would have enjoyed, ranging from historical magic performances, to seances and explanations of how they were conducted.

These shows will be based on my nearly two decades of performing as a magician, and research into early magic acts, and spiritualism acts.

Future Projects:

With support, we intend to continue to make the Historical Sturgis project to expand to include additional classes and workshops that cover other aspects of pioneer life that can provide wisdom and skills today. These will include things such as gardening, buck-skinning, hunting, and even things like shoe-making. The goal is to have this project encompass the entire life of a pioneer, while also teaching practical skills for today's life.

SPONSORSHIP LEVELS

Community Sponsor - \$100

- * Business listed on sponsor page, and event pages
- * Business listed in an online article

Silver Sponsor - \$250

- * Business listed on sponsor page and event pages
- * Business listed in an online article
- * Business listed in select printed material

Gold Sponsor - \$500

- * Business listed on sponsor page and event pages
- * Business listed in an online article
- * Business listed in select printed material
- * Special event inclusions and in promotional material

Platinum Sponsor - \$1000

- * Business listed on sponsor page and event pages
- * Business listed in an online article
- * Business listed in select printed material
- * Special event inclusions and in promotional material
- * Logo on advertising material
- * Banner displayed at events, or logo included in presentations
- * Shout-out during online and live presentations when applicable

Palladium Sponsor - \$2500

- * Business listed on sponsor page and event pages
- * Business listed in an online article
- * Business listed in select printed material
- * Special event inclusions and in promotional material
- * Logo on advertising material
- * Banner displayed at events, or logo included in presentations
- * Shout-out during online and live presentations when applicable
- * Special historical presentation at your business for online use
- * Listing in all print material

Lifetime Sponsor - \$20,000

- * All of the above perks, extended through the lifetime of your business
- * Special event in your business' honor
- * Dedication in larger online and print material, such as future books and/or documentaries
- * Dedication in historical journal