



OZAUKEE COUNTY

FORWARD FOCUSED

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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JOIN THE OZAUKEE COUNTY BOARD AND OZAUKEE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY IN CELEBRATION OF THE RESTORATION OF MISS COLUMBIA

Port Washington, WI, March 25, 2019 – Join the Ozaukee County Board in celebrating the restoration of the Miss Columbia Mural at the County Courthouse! The Ozaukee County Historical Society is pleased to present a public Open House to Celebrate Miss Columbia on Saturday, April 13, 2019 from 2:00 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. at the Ozaukee County “Old Courthouse” 121 West Main Street in Port Washington, WI.

The event will feature Milwaukee’s popular bluegrass band, Picking Up Speed, refreshments and historical exhibits celebrating Miss Columbia and E.G. Wurthmann, the primary artisan responsible for the decorative plaster work and painting in the building. The “Old Courthouse” is a hidden jewel in Port Washington, don’t miss the opportunity to visit this fabulous public building!

The 1893 World’s Fair in Chicago inspired the mural of Miss Columbia. The fair was entitled “World’s Columbian Exposition”. Constructing the County Courthouse in 1901 was a timely decision to include an image of this famous symbol of liberty. During these times, Miss Columbia was a goddess representing American Liberty. The song “Hail Columbia” was considered one of the unofficial National Anthems of the United States until 1931 and is now the official song of the Vice-President.

The restoration of the Miss Columbia mural and the surrounding plaster and walls, funded through private fundraising, began in August of 2018. Historic Surfaces of Michigan is the same company who restored the County Board Room on this same floor. Decades of smoke damage and loosening plaster made the restoration a challenge. The large mural, which is actually painted on a canvas and then adhered to the ceiling, was removed and spread out on a large table and painstakingly restored while the plaster and paint on both the ceiling and walls was repaired and refreshed. The mural was then reattached to the ceiling. Restoration of the room directly south of the staircase was accomplished at the same time.

Contact County Administrator Jason Dzwinel at 262.238.8202 or jdzwinel@co.ozaukee.wi.us for more information.

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