

Public Invited to Celebrate Clock Tower Rededication and Witness Time Capsule Opening

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EDWARDSVILLE - The City's Historic Preservation Commission will host a rededication of the Edwardsville Clock Tower - 25 years after it was built to help an iconic piece of City history stand the test of time.

The Clock Tower Rededication also will celebrate a more momentous milestone: the 100th anniversary since the historic Edwardsville National Bank Clock, which hangs at the tower, was first erected in the City.

The event will take place at noon on Saturday, May 13, at the site of the Clock Tower, in front of the public parking lot in the 200 block of North Main Street. A time capsule that was embedded in the tower when it was built in 1998 will be opened and the contents revealed during the event, which coincides with National Preservation Month. For Joe Hutton, a Historic Preservation Commission member now and 25 years ago when the Clock Tower was conceived and created, it's important to be able to save and share elements of a City's bygone years.

“That particular clock configuration was a very popular thing in the 1900s,” he said. “For many cities, a clock on the corner of a bank building was a prominent thing.”

The clock was a fixture on the Edwardsville National Bank Building at St. Louis and North Main streets for nearly 70 years. It was purchased for the newly constructed building that rose five stories into the downtown skyline in 1923. The clock weighs approximately a ton, and spans 8 feet in height and about 4 feet in width. When the Edwardsville National Bank Building was razed in 1990, the clock disappeared into storage, and could have been lost forever, but for the efforts of a dedicated group of history buffs and preservationists.

In 1996, local businessman Bill Philippe happened upon the clock where it was being stored, and turned it over to the Historic Preservation Commission, which had been established in 1977 to help maintain the City’s historic character, particularly its architecture. Debbie Caulk, who retired from the commission in 2018 after serving on it for 39 years, offered to store the clock while its future was determined.

“I’m very sentimental about Edwardsville. I grew up there and I’m a history buff,” said Caulk, who is a former history teacher. “I think anytime you can communicate to people about where they lived and their heritage, it’s awesome.” A huge fundraising effort ensued, with residents, the City, businesses and even a state grant ultimately adding to the collection to build the tower. Along with that, a time capsule campaign kicked off to collect memorabilia, personal messages from residents and other items that were sealed into the tower when it was dedicated in October 1998.

A bronze plaque on the tower indicated that it would be opened in 2023. Hutton said a new time capsule will be created and sealed in the tower later this year. Just like 25 years ago, the array of contents won’t be revealed until it’s reopened. The Historic Preservation Commission will install a new plaque to designate the next rededication, to take place sometime in 2048.