

News Release



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Huge Numbers, Despite Downpour, Attend Grand Reopening of United States Immigration Station at Angel Island State Park

Final attendance numbers for the Grand Reopening Preview of the restoration of the Immigration Station are in and they are way beyond park predictions.

Angel Island State Park Superintendent Dave Matthews had predicted that around 800 would likely attend the reopening on a sunny day. However, it was not sunny. It was probably the worst weather day of the year in the Bay Area with strong winds and heavy downpours, yet more than 1,600 people attended the reopening.

“I got a call after the first boats arrived on the island, mostly full,” said Superintendent Matthews, “and they said there was another 800 people waiting on the dock to make the crossing. My first thought was, we need a bigger tent. But somehow, people squeezed in and it turned out great. That is a testament to how important this place is to so many people.”

The exact number at the end of the day, February 15, taken from the official count done by the ferry boat companies that brought people to the island, was 1,636, more than double the early prediction. Those who squeezed into the tent for the speeches, heard comments from Ruth Coleman, director of California State Parks and Cynthia Garrett, the National Park Superintendent of the Statue of Liberty/Ellis Island. Garrett used the occasion to announce a bit of news, that as of that day, the U.S. Immigration Station at Ellis Island and the Angel Island Immigration Station were officially joined as sister parks. That means they will share information and collaborate on enhancing the historic story of immigration to the United States, tying together two of the main immigration entry points to the United States during the early 1900s.

Beginning in March, guided barracks tours will be offered to groups, from Wednesday through Friday. All March tours have already sold out, due to the overwhelming interest in seeing the restored immigration station.

In April, both individuals and groups can tour the barracks from Wednesday through Sunday. Groups of 10 or more can reserve tours with open spaces made available on the day of the tour to individuals on a first-come, first-served basis, by calling (415) 435-3522.

More information about the site and tours is available by calling (415) 435-5537. ###

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California State Parks on the Internet: <<http://www.parks.ca.gov>>

