

News Release



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Community Planning Meeting Focus - Improve Visitor Experiences at Sonoma State Historic Park

California State Parks is hosting a community meeting to improve visitor experiences at Sonoma State Historic Park. The meeting will be held in Sonoma on Wednesday, January 26th from 7-9pm at the Vintage House, 264 First Street East. This activity is part of a year-long planning process to produce an Interpretation Management Plan (IMP) for the park. The IMP will address the interpretive and educational services at the park's historic, and popular tourist and school group visitation sites; Mission San Francisco Solano, Vallejo Home (Lachryma Montis), Blue Wing Inn, Barracks, and Toscano Hotel and Kitchen.

The program will include a brief overview of the interpretive planning process followed by a self-guided activity where participants will be asked for their ideas regarding current and future visitor experiences of the park. Refreshments will be served.

The IMP will translate the interpretation and education goals of the park's General Plan into specific strategies and measurable objectives in order to engagingly communicate the significance of the park. The Sonoma State Historic Park General Plan can be viewed by visiting the Park Management section of the state park website at www.parks.ca.gov.

To aid the development of the plan visitor surveys were conducted during the busy tourist visitation week following the Christmas holiday and recently those closely associated with the Sonoma State Historic Park - staff, its treasured park partners, valuable volunteers and docents, and Sonoma leaders including Mayor Gallian - participated in planning charrettes. Additional opportunities for public participation will be available soon when an on-line survey is

activated and during a second public meeting in June. Plans also are underway to consult with a teacher focus group.

Last year California State Parks, Diablo Vista District secured funding for the IMP from funds allocated from Departmental Headquarters for critical project needs. The interpretive planning effort is an operational based priority due to Sonoma State Historic Park's statewide significance, school group visitation, visitor demand for park interpretive opportunities and the park's contributing role in local tourism.

California State Parks has contracted with Frank Binney & Associates, a professional interpretive planning firm to produce the plan. The Frank Binney & Associates team includes Sonoma-based exhibit designer Tom Whitworth. The firm has helped plan visitor experiences at Yosemite National Park, Grand Canyon National Park, Mount St. Helens National Monument and numerous other state and federal parks across the country.