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## **Large state grant will allow Sutter County Museum to better tell region's flood history and create educational programming for local schools**

The “super flood” of 1862-63 turned the Sacramento Valley into an inland sea. The flood of 1875 was the last to reach downtown Marysville. The flood of 1955 killed 38 in Yuba City. And the floods of 1986 and 1997 devastated southern Yuba County, killed three, and turned the Meridian basin in Sutter County into a giant lake.

Now, these and other stories about floods and fires that have impacted Sutter and Yuba counties can be shared through a permanent exhibit to be developed at the Sutter County Museum in Yuba City, thanks to a \$383,183 combined capital improvement and program grant awarded to the Sutter County Museum in late February.

"This is the largest grant ever awarded to the Sutter County Museum," said Sutter County Board of Supervisors Chair Karm Bains. "This funding will allow the Sutter County Museum to add a comprehensive flood exhibit, upgrade the Nisenan and Gold Rush exhibits, and create educational programming that more directly supports our local schools and teachers. This is in line with our Board’s goal of remaining committed to community and cultural programs and services such as the museum and library. I congratulate staff on a great job of pursuing and landing this grant.”

The grant is from the California Cultural and Historical Endowment, a state agency, and administered by the California Natural Resources Agency. Its Board of Directors approved 63 grants totaling \$19.7 million for museums across California at a meeting on Friday, February 24<sup>th</sup>.

“California’s museums teach us about our state’s dynamic, diverse history and culture,” said California Natural Resources Secretary Wade Crowfoot. “This funding will support projects across the state that lift up history and culture that has been underrepresented in the past and enable more people to learn these remarkable stories.”

“We are thrilled that the California Cultural and Historical Endowment saw the importance of bringing this funding to the Yuba-Sutter community,” said Molly Bloom, Sutter County Museum Director and Curator. “Thanks to their support, our museum will be able to make a significant and lasting impact and meet our goals for how Sutter County can best serve the local community through our museum.”

The funding will allow the museum to create a comprehensive exhibit that details the known history of flooding here, how native Californians coped with flooding for centuries, how the valley

was transformed by the construction of levees to “reclaim” naturally flooded lands beginning in the mid-19th century, and the construction of dams by the federal government on the Sacramento River, the state government on the Feather River, and by the people of Yuba County on the Yuba River.

In a partnership with the Sutter County Office of Emergency Management, the exhibit will include information on how residents can prepare for a flood, and to better understand our relationship to the rivers.

"Flooding is deeply embedded in our community's history," said Emergency Manager Zachary Hamill. "The regional flood exhibit will serve as an educational and informative resource for locals and visitors alike. We look forward to leveraging existing and future grants to help develop this exhibit and provide valuable resources to the community. Together, we can ensure that the impact of floods is not forgotten, and we can work towards a safer and more resilient future."

In addition to the flood exhibit, the grant will also fund upgrades to exhibits about the Nisenan, who lived here for 10,000 years prior to European discovery of California, and the Gold Rush, which led to the rapid transformation of the Sacramento Valley.

“As a part of future planning for the Sutter County Museum, our staff and Board have been exploring opportunities for interactive components, enhancements to the technology, and other upgrades in our permanent exhibits,” added Bloom. “We want our galleries to support a variety of learning styles and include more participatory opportunities. Having a grant of this size awarded will allow us to continue considering these options and more, creating a well-rounded museum experience for local schools and families.”

The grant will also allow the Museum to create curriculum targeted to elementary school students and increase the number of students and families that visit the museum each year.

“We want to directly meet the needs of our local teachers and schools,” said Bloom. “This funding will allow us to form a school advisory group of teachers and administrators and work with them to determine key curriculum topics that our exhibits can share. We plan to develop traveling artifact trunks with hands-on lesson plans and objects, as well as targeted museum tours, that meet state educational standards.”

Development of the flood exhibit and refurbishing of other exhibits will take about two years, according to a timeline presented to the California Cultural and Historical Endowment. During that time, the Community Memorial Museum Association, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization which supports the Museum’s educational programs and both temporary and permanent exhibits, will be eagerly seeking participation from community donors, funders, and volunteers. Funds raised by the Museum Association could add technology upgrades, finance additional buses for increased school tours, and other enhancements to this project.

The Sutter County Museum operates with a budget funded by the County of Sutter of approximately \$350,000 annually, and the Museum Association maintains a small endowment fund and hosts annual fundraising events like Trees and Traditions in December to raise money for the Museum. The County supports basic operations; funding staff salaries and benefits, building maintenance, utilities, and basic operational overhead. The Association funds temporary exhibits, educational programs, the Museum Gift Shop, membership program, publications, fundraising events, advertising, and miscellaneous charges not covered by the County.

Since 2017, the City of Yuba City has shown a commitment to this project, donating \$15,000 to the Museum Association to help develop and install a flood exhibit.

The California Cultural and Historical Endowment Museum Grant Program is a competitive grant program to support small capital projects and programs in museums, authorized by Assembly Bill 482 in 2013. Initially funded with Proposition 40 bond funds, it will subsequently be funded with revenues from the new Snoopy license plate.

The Sutter County Museum will provide opportunities to participate in the process by collecting community input and stories about local flooding, the Gold Rush, and the Nisenan. More information will be shared when events and other opportunities for input are scheduled.

“This is a project that the community wants to see from the Sutter County Museum,” said Bloom. “These are the stories of our community that have been told for generations, and the Museum is a place where people can discuss, discover, and build connections from shared experiences. Now, more of these stories will be celebrated with free exhibits and educational programs. This is exactly why we are here- to share the local history of this community and serve the region through our community’s museum.”

### About the Sutter County Museum

The Sutter County Museum has been serving the Yuba-Sutter community since 1975. The Sutter County Museum shares local stories to strengthen community bonds, to inspire celebration of our diverse cultural heritage, and to demonstrate how understanding the past prepares us for the future. The Museum is located at 1333 Butte House Road in Yuba City. Regular open hours are Tuesday-Friday 9:00am to 5:00pm, and Saturday and Sunday from 12pm to 4pm. Admission is free. For more information, call the Museum at 530-822-7141, or visit our website at [www.suttercountymuseum.org](http://www.suttercountymuseum.org).

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