



CITY NEWS



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Media Advisory

Ceremony to mark official opening of Heller Cabin at Cowtown

Media are invited to attend an 11 a.m. ceremony on Saturday that will officially open Heller Cabin at Old Cowtown Museum. As part of the festivities, Wichita Mayor Carl Brewer will be presented a key to the cabin by Cowtown's Board of Directors President David Dennis. The event marks the completion of five months of restoration work to turn the 19th century structure into the museum's newest store and stagecoach shop.

"The addition of Heller Cabin at Cowtown is especially significant because it is considered as one of the top 10 intact structures in the United States from the settlement period," said David Flask, Cowtown executive director. "It is also one of our best documented properties because it was photographed, measured and sketched and all of its parts were numbered before it was dismantled and brought here."

The top 10 ranking was given to the cabin by Douglass C. Reed of Preservation Associates in Hagerstown, Md., who originally assessed the structure in 2002. Reed is a nationally known preservationist, author and historian.

The Cowtown board funded and oversaw efforts to move Heller Cabin from Elmo, Kan. to Cowtown, and return it as closely as possible to its original state. The 1870s cabin, located just behind the Visitor's Center, was donated to Cowtown by the estate of Wichita resident Donna B. Heller. As part of the restoration process that began in April, rotten logs were replaced, open areas between the logs were filled and historically accurate interior features were added.

Heller Cabin was built by Civil War veteran Leonhard Hoffman, who expertly cut and pieced the logs together. It's an artifact that will appeal directly to those who are interested in log construction. Aspects of its construction, including notching and flooring, are different from that of Cowtown's Munger House or the Trapper's Cabin, both of which are log cabins built during the same time period in Sedgwick County.

Located on 25 acres off the Chisholm Trail, Old Cowtown Museum is a unique, open-air living history museum which re-creates Wichita and Sedgwick County from 1865 to 1880. Cowtown is owned and operated by the City of Wichita.

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