

Heritage Day in Francestown an opportunity to look back on history

◆ Clock restoration:

Man responsible for work to talk about recent project at Heritage Museum.

By **KATHLEEN BAGLIO HUMPHREYS**
Union Leader Correspondent

FRANCESTOWN — This Columbus Day weekend, Francestown will celebrate Heritage Day on Saturday, Oct. 11 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

During that time, historic buildings around the Francestown Common will be opened. Visitors can see recent renovations to Town Hall and hear about future rehabilitation projects, talk to the man who restored the 100-year-old clock that graces the Old Meeting House or see history on wheels at the Heritage Museum.

Enjoy the fall tradition of cider and doughnuts, while viewing a photograph exhibit at Town Hall called "Francestown People, Places and Things, Past and Present." Both professional and amateur photographers have been invited to participate and their photographs will offer an insider perspective on the town's history. The exhibit is hosted by The Friends of the Francestown Town Hall and the Francestown Heritage Commission.

In addition, the Francestown Heritage Museum will open its doors. The museum, built from an old post and beam barn relocated from Weare, houses a rare collection of Francestown transportation items including an 1845 Concord Coach, an old Hunneman #383 hand tub purchased in 1850 and two antique hearse, one for summer and a sleigh to transport the departed during the winter months.

Philip D'Avanza of D'Avanza Clock Repair will be on hand to discuss his restoration project to the town clock located in the Old Meeting House which restored the three faces, hands, and surrounding areas of the clock to match their original E. Howard design and condition. The clock faces and bezel molding were prepared, primed, and painted. New numerals, minute and hour marks were fabricated to match the originals and the elements were gilded with gold leaf and secured with brass screws. It was funded by a \$10,000 Moose Plate Grant and town funds.

The town will find out in December if they will receive a LCHIP Grant to help with the future rehabilitation work to the interior of Town Hall across the street. This weekend kicks off fundraising activities to help with the town's funds that will be needed.

"Part of this event is to let folks know we are really working on the town hall now," said Heritage Commission Chairperson Elly Miles.

"The work up to this point was structural, to make it safe to be in. Recently, we've been able to have a library event, use it during Labor Day and the church fair. Even without the interior renovations, we are happy to use it again. The Friends wanted to have an event of their own before it's closed for the winter," added Miles.

Last month, restoration work was completed on the cupola and some exterior painting.

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On Oct. 11, Philip D'Avanza of D'Avanza Clock Repair will be in Francestown to discuss the town clock restoration project (as pictured on Sept. 17) as part of Heritage Day. Last week, the project was completed.

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The Francestown Heritage Museum will be opened as part of Heritage Day on Oct. 11 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. This rare Hunneman #383 hand tub is one of the antique town vehicles that can be seen in the museum. The pumper was purchased by the town in 1850. An 1845 Concord Coach is also part of the collection.

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Francestown will host Heritage Day Saturday, Oct. 11 at buildings around the common. Plans are to use Town Hall for a photograph exhibit and kick off fundraising for the rehabilitation work before it is shut down for the winter.

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