The long awaited Ray Watson Transportation Exhibit is getting finishing touches and will ready to open for the public in March 2020. The new exhibit is housed in a 12,000 square foot hall and will showcase 40 horse drawn carriages, stage coaches and wagons from Kern County’s past. The collection also has early automobiles, and transportation related artifacts. Many of the vehicles come from the Harry West Collection and have been at the museum for many years. “We are absolutely thrilled that our vehicle collection will be on public view,” said Executive Director Mike McCoy. “This new exhibit has been possible by the generosity of Ray Watson and more than 30 individual benefactors.”

The Kern County Museum has had a large collection of historic vehicles for a number of years. The challenge was to develop an exhibition space that was accessible to visitors while maintaining security and providing educational info. With a starter grant from former Kern County Supervisor Ray Watson and then another generous grant from the Virginia and Alfred Harrell Foundation, the exhibition hall went under construction in 2016. A fire suppression system was built, air conditioning and heating completed, new exit doors and video surveillance were added. In 2019, the concrete floors were ground and polished and the entire room with its 30 foot ceilings was painted. A final grant from the EBT Guild in the fall of 2019 was the last puzzle piece to complete the exhibit.

Local architect Steve Kieke and designer Gary Prendez were brought in to best showcase the collection. They recommended a staggered vehicle layout so that the collection can easily viewed. “We wanted to avoid the parking garage look,” said Kieke. The vehicles are laid out by theme and have 360 degree access. Prendez culled through the museum’s permanent collection to find smaller artifacts for display cases and added antique lighting for the “wow” factor. Vehicle expert Dave Wolin advised creating a flexible space for future changeable exhibits to keep things new. “You have to bring in new vehicles to keep the space interesting,” Wolin said.

The Watson Exhibit is now connected to the Neon Plaza, the historic Sonora Filling Station and the Trolley Car Station for a unified space. “A huge thanks to the Arkelian and West Foundations for the Trolley Car Exhibit. That was the big final step in getting this project moving,” McCoy said. “And to all of the local donors who sponsored vehicles. We think the community is going to be very pleased.”
In 2013, the Museum’s Board of Directors began to brainstorm on how to better connect the museum to the community and increase support for important projects and programs. The Museum had its 75th birthday coming up and the question was how to maintain relevance moving forward. Two board members, Beth Pandol and Barbara Patrick, had a conversation with critical friends in the community and the idea for a special museum support group was imagined.

The Ellen Baker Tracy Guild, named in honor of the historic First Lady of Bakersfield, are 50 like-minded women who share an interest in Kern County history and recognize the importance of preserving our county’s rich heritage. The group meets twice a year at the museum for an update from museum staff on current programs and then propose an annual restoration project. Since the Guild has been launched, six significant projects have been completed including the landscaping on the rear of the Chamber of Commerce Building and the interior restoration of Standard School. The Guild’s investment in the museum’s programs and facilities give us the boost and encouragement that we need often at critical times.

The 2019 EBT Guild Project was very special. Two small houses that sheltered itinerant farm workers during the Dust Bowl era were moved to the museum’s grounds, restored to their 1930’s appearance and then furnished with depression era artifacts. For 2020, the group will be putting the finishing touches on the Ray Watson Exhibition Hall with interpretative signage, art work and feature lighting.

The Ellen Baker Tracy Guild is truly making a difference for the museum and our entire county.

Many members of the Guild also volunteer at the museum. Kitty DeArmond is active in the curatorial department as a researcher and Lisa Meehan was recently recognized as the Docent of the Year. Chris Frank connected the museum with Adventist Health for the restoration of the Band Stand and Holly Lazzerini created the new Bud and Virginia King Volunteer Center through her family’s foundation. Vicki Farrell offered her design services to the Tejon Ranch Gallery Project and Sheryl Barbich serves as the Treasurer on the Board of Directors. The Ellen Baker Tracy Guild is truly making a difference for the museum and our entire county.
After a long and very productive 21 year career at the Kern County Museum, our award winning Curator of Collections Lori Wear resigned in November for another professional opportunity. Lori accepted a new job with the California State Parks managing historic interpretation, collections and tours at a dozen different sites in California.

Thank You!

“Lori Wear has made an incredible difference in our region with historic preservation, educational programs and building the Kern County Museum into a well regarded resource for California history,” said Executive Director Mike McCoy.

Lori first came to the museum in 1998 as the Collections Manager managing 60 historic structures and more than 750,000 artifacts. With a solid foreground of experience as an archeologist, she developed systems for cataloguing the collection, created policies and priorities and designed new exhibits. Lori became the Curator in 2006 and her ability to create order and intelligent collection policies will be her lasting legacy for the museum. Imagine a huge warehouse and basement literally loaded with thousands of artifacts, pieces of paper and art work. Lori and her dedicated crew of volunteers have been able to catalogue and organize the collection so that future generations will appreciate our county’s history.

Lori also worked well with local schools and universities, other museums in California and historical societies. Her bi-monthly historic lecture series that included field trips and walking tours were very popular. Lori also partnered with Cal State Bakersfield and several local high schools to begin historic archiving programs.

The Museum did a national search for a new curator and hopes to have another staff member on board soon. “Lori left a great legacy for our county museum,” said McCoy. “We do wish her well and we are very grateful for her hard work over the last 21 years.” 🎉
Recently, Lori Brock Discovery Center has started the *Lori Brock Kindness Campaign*. Each season, a specific charity is chosen and museum attendees are offered the opportunity to support it. The first charity chosen was the A. Miriam Jamison Center, a Shelter Care Facility which houses abused, neglected, and exploited children who have been taken into protective custody.

There is a great need to assist the young people residing at the Jamison Center, who range in age from infant to eighteen. The Center’s wish list included new and gently used clothing, especially underwear, socks, T-shirts, and sweats, as well as diapers and other baby items. Numerous boxes and bags of donations were received and happily transported to Jamison.

The *Lori Brock Kindness Campaign*’s most recent charity selection was the Bakersfield Gleaners. The Gleaners’ mission is to help alleviate hunger and provide food for the needy of Kern County. Food is distributed to needy children, senior citizens, families in crisis, the ill, disabled, and the homeless. Our Lori Brock Discovery Center friends donated boxes of canned goods, especially easy-to-prepare favorites like chili beans, spaghetti, and soup.

Starting January 1, the *Lori Brock Kindness Campaign* charity of focus will be the Rasmussen Senior Adult Center. The Center is operated by the North of the River Recreation Department and offers activities for adults 60 and older, including dancing, exercise classes, billiards, painting, and bingo. Some of the more than 100 seniors who visit daily have limited incomes. We will be collecting the following items: hair brushes, shampoo, body soap, deodorant, shaving cream, toothpaste, denture cleaner or adhesive, canned food, sugarless gum, hard candies, throat lozenges, band-aids, socks, gloves, scarves, and McDonalds gift cards.

If you have a suggestion of a future recipient of this program, please contact Shannon at shannon@kerncountymuseum.org.
It’s not all business here at The Kern County Museum! Host a company gala, awards reception, BBQ, employee appreciation event or holiday party with us and create a memorable experience for your colleagues and clients. All our venues are available for daytime or evening rentals. You are welcome to bring in the catering team of your choice.

The Museum sets up tables, linens and chairs for 150 people. Other rentals are available through private vendors and often a 15% discount is applied to your order. Cost for a Full Property Buyout is only $6,500.

Kern County Museum Outdoor Venues;

**BATEY GARDEN** - 5000 people maximum
Batey Garden has ample space for the largest events. This picturesque gated location features a large gazebo, beautiful walking path, and spectacular views of historic Howell House and Beale Memorial Clock Tower.

**LOG CABIN GREEN** - 500 people maximum
Surrounded by historic buildings, Log Cabin Green is perfect for a large group, reception, or party. It is used as a concert space and a beer garden to many events each year.

**BANDSTAND GREEN** - 450 people maximum
A vintage gazebo is the focal point for this scenic spot, which features a dance floor and generous catering space and is surrounded by beautiful trees.

**NEON COURTYARD**
300 people maximum
This unique location features restored neon signs, courtyard, old-fashioned lamp posts and a 1940s gas station. It pairs nicely with the Trolley Room and the Ray Watson Transportation Exhibit.

Kern County Museum Indoor Venues;

**TEJON RANCH GALLERY** - Seating for 24, cocktail set up for 50
This Western-inspired gallery features exhibits pertaining to Kern County’s rich and diverse history. A long meeting table or cocktail table set up are possible in this area.

**STANDARD SCHOOL** – Seating for 80
Standard School features a kitchen, bathrooms and presentation screen. The adjacent lawn is perfectly shaded and offers a friendly spot for a picnic or BBQ.

**TROLLEY ROOM** - Seating for 120
The Trolley Room offers two built-in bars and a kitchen space with the ability to overflow onto our stunning Neon Courtyard Transportation Exhibit.

Event Director, Brenna, can work with vendors to create the perfect day for your group. Add a Guided Tour, Bounce House, Train Ride (complete with conductor), Catered Meal, Carnival or a space for a team building day. Call to set up your tour & begin planning your best event yet!
The Kern County Museum has been engaged in an active restoration campaign of the 60 historic buildings at our 16 acre site. In the last two years we have completed a dozen restorations of structures including the Metcalf House, Band Stand, Joss House, Undertaker’s Parlor, Drug Store, Heller Hall, and Standard School. Most recently we restored two 1930’s Dust Bowl era worker housing units. Community members and corporations have stepped forward to support these projects financially. Most recently the Land Office was sponsored by Mr. Bill Edmonds and will be restored in March.

Our most recent project is the exterior restoration of the Kuehn House. The museum’s Curatorial Department is housed in the 1914 two story house on the back of our property. It was originally located at 2111 G street and owned by musician George Kuehn. The house was moved here for office space 35 years ago as a gift from Francis K. Lyons. It was in serious need of an exterior paint job and carpentry repair.

Thanks to a very generous donation from the Ben H. and Gladys Arkelian Foundation and the Harry and Ethel West Foundation, we replaced dry rotted siding, added new fascia and repaired damaged trim. We discovered through paint analysis that the original color was dark gray. The 1970’s beige paint was replaced by the original color along with a new pendant porch light.

The Curatorial Department in the Kuehn House, manages all of our research and preservation work with the help of volunteers, college interns and community members. The building is always a beehive of activity and is actively engaged in maintaining our region’s history. And they are now doing this in a beautifully restored building.
The Museum is lucky enough to have an exceptional volunteer Lisa Meehan who has offered her talent and endless hours helping to make the Museum an even more wonderful place. Lisa was born in Wasco and was raised in Bakersfield. As a child, the Kern County Museum was always a “magical, wonderful place for me!” She used to run and play all around Pioneer Village with her brother and sister. The Long family enjoyed the Museum, its exhibits and grounds, for years.

As an adult, Lisa moved to the Northwest and worked for Verizon. She relocated to Thousand Oaks, but when it came time to retire, she happily returned to Bakersfield and began thinking about volunteering. Because of that special bond she and her siblings had for the Kern County Museum, it The Kern County Museum was the first place she thought of, but she was worried she’d be made to “clean bathrooms or rake leaves!” When she found that they were offering training for the school tours and the historic docent program, she knew she had found the right volunteer opportunity.

Lisa is a trained docent for the Black Gold Exhibit, Native American Life, Norris Schoolhouse Tour, and the Howell House Tour. She has been a volunteer for the last fifteen years and recently received an award for logging the most hours of any Museum docent last year. Her special love is doing the Native American Life Tour for children. Executive Director Mike McCoy said that Lisa “does a wonderful job sharing the story of the first inhabitants of our valley. She works well with our youngest visitors and is a great teacher. We are lucky that she is part of our docent team.”

Are you seeking a volunteer opportunity? Do you love history, or wish to learn more of the history of our county? Would you like to help care for our beautiful grounds? The Kern County Museum offers so many opportunities to make your extra hours valuable ones. Perhaps you can think of additional ways you might help! Join the friendly, energetic, and dedicated volunteers at the Museum. Volunteer Coordinator Shannon (at shannon@kerncountymuseum.org) would be delighted to help you, like Lisa, find you perfect volunteer home.

“... a magical, wonderful place for me!”

Lisa
Upcoming EVENTS

2020 WINTER EDITION

WINTER Calendar SPRING

FEBRUARY
4  Bilingual Storytime 10:30am
5  Lecture in Standard School 6pm
8  Rock the Cobbler Event
8  Lori Brock Discovery Center
   Valentines Event 10am
19  Lecture in Standard School 6pm
21  California History Day

2020

MARCH
2  Bilingual Storytime 10:30am
   Lori Brock Discovery Center
4  Lecture in Standard School 6pm
14  Lori Brock Discovery Center
   St. Patrick’s Day Event 10am
18  Lecture in Standard School 6pm
27th & 28th
   Valley Oaks Charter School Play
28  BARC Gala

APRIL
1  Lecture in Standard School
2  California History Day
2nd-10th
   Bounce Fest in Batey Garden
6th-10th
   Lori Brock Spring Camp
11  Lori Brock Discovery Center
   Easter Event 10am
15  Lecture in Standard School 6pm
17  Starlight Movie at the Museum
19  Spring Village Flea

VISIT THE NEW STEAM TOWN!

MUSEUM HOURS
TUESDAY - SATURDAY
10:00 AM - 4:00 PM
SUNDAY
10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

2020
CLOSED OCCASIONALLY FOR SPECIAL EVENTS AND PRIVATE FUNCTIONS
ALL EVENTS RAIN OR SHINE. PROGRAMS SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE

KERN COUNTY MUSEUM  3801 CHESTER AVENUE  BAKERSFIELD, CALIFORNIA 93301