

Town Hall Celebrates its Centennial

Washington Township's Town Hall will observe its 100th birthday with a celebration befitting the downtown's most visible historic landmark.

"Town Hall embodies more shared history than nearly any historic structure in our community. For many years, it was the central gathering place for almost every sort of community event," said Recreation Supervisor Mark Metzger who oversees Town Hall.

The centennial celebration will take place July 4th at the Americana Festival and will include: an original 30-minute play with three afternoon performances; a float in the Americana parade; and displays that tell the story of Town Hall's first 100 years. Photos, posters, programs and old costumes will be exhibited and a documentary presentation will feature images and audio about the building and its significance to the community.

The Town Hall plaza will feature patriotic arts and crafts, games, balloons and activities for children.

In honor of the centennial, Washington Township

trustees have commissioned a rendering of Town Hall by local artist Mary Malino. Notecards with her artwork will be available for sale at the Americana Festival and the Asahel Wright Gift Shop, across the street from Town Hall.

Since it was dedicated on July 3, 1909, Town Hall has housed township and city government, fire dispatch, and even a former fire chief who once lived there with his wife. Many community groups, from the Centerville Grange to the local VFW Post, have used the building for their meetings. The building also continues to serve as the headquarters for the Americana Festival.

For many years, Centerville Schools staged all of its programs at Town Hall – from elementary Christmas pageants through high school graduation exercises. The stage also provided a home for community theater and has been used for courtroom trials, church services and traveling road shows.

The Centerville-Washington Township Historical Society has helped the township research the history of the building and is helping to develop historical displays.



Washington Township will host an invitation-only gala for people who have acted on the stage, worked in the building, or had some connection to Town Hall. Some of the famous faces that have performed there include noted author John Jakes and Gordon Jump of *WKRP Cincinnati* fame, Metzger said.

The building currently serves as the home of Town Hall Theatre, now in its 17th year of presenting live theater for young audiences.