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Belmont County Heritage Museum Opening For 2020 Season

ST. CLAIRSVILLE – The Belmont County Heritage Museum will be celebrating a grand re-opening on Friday, September 4 featuring two new displays. There will be a ribbon cutting by the St. Clairsville Chamber of Commerce at 12:15 p.m. with the museum open for tours from 12:30 to 1:30. Those who choose to tour the museum can enjoy a complimentary Kirke's Homemade Ice Cream. A food truck will also be available that day as part of the chamber's Food Truck Friday. The event will be live on the museum's Facebook page.

Regular hours of operation for the museum will be Tuesday-Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is by donation. Facial masks will be required for entry.

The museum, once known as the county's sheriff's residence, first opened its doors in December of 2014 after being fully restored to its historical significance.

Formerly under Ohio law, the sheriff was required to live on the premises of the county jail. From 1888 until 1976, all sheriffs and their family lived in what was called the sheriff's residence, connected to the jail.

The Victorian Romanesque architectural style building was designed by noted architect Joseph Warren Yost and matches the style of the attached jail and the adjacent Belmont County Courthouse, both of which he also designed. Yost was instrumental in organizing the Association of Ohio Architects and had the distinction of being named a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects in 1889.

The Heritage Museum houses the county's past. In addition to displays about the county's sheriffs, each room houses displays from the county's communities representing their industries, landmarks, and important historical figures. The displays bring the spirit and history of each area together under one roof. Inside are artifacts and photos of what made Belmont County great. From the designer of the *USS Constitution* to a major role in the glass industry, people can discover hidden gems that Belmont County is proud to hold in its history.

The museum's two newest displays highlight very different subjects. One focuses on the history of nursing, while the other features a TV cowboy star.

The museum is immensely proud to display artifacts from the the Ruth Brant School of Nursing that were housed in the East Ohio Regional Hospital prior to the hospital's closing. Organized by Brant in 1925, and later named in her honor, the school graduated more than 500 nurses before closing in 1965. The Ruth Brant Alumni Association donated many items such as uniforms from the early 1900's, all class photographs, and equipment that were a part of their collection, as well as a monetary donation to the museum. A section of the Martins Ferry room is now dedicated to this display.

Another new display spotlights Hendrysburg native William Boyd who gained fame for portraying cowboy hero Hopalong Cassidy. The items, donated by New Concord resident Laura Bates, were part of her collection that was open to the public at the Hopalong Cassidy Museum in Cambridge, OH. Following a fire, the museum was closed in 2016. Items in this display include “Hoppy” merchandise and promotional items. In addition to buying the rights to the Hopalong Cassidy movies for television syndication, Boyd, who became the first national TV star, vastly increased the popularity of his character through the marketing of over 2,400 products that bear his name and likeness.

For more information about the museum, contact Cathryn Stanley, Curator and Group Tour Sales Manager, Belmont County Tourism at 740-298-7020 or info@visitbelmontcounty.com. You can also find more by visiting the website www.belmontcountyheritagemuseum.com and follow the museum on Facebook and Instagram.