



Elgin Museum finds permanent home, seeks donations Published 7:00 pm Thursday, April 10, 2025 By By TRISH YERGES | For The Observer facebook sharing button email sharing button print sharing button The Elgin Museum and Historical Society has a fundraising goal of \$200,000 for the purchase and renovation of the former U.S. Bank, 800 Alder St. in Elgin. EMHS Secretary Suzanne Goodall, along with long-time museum curator/archivist Charlie Horn and EMHS Vice President Debbie Leslie, stand in front of the U.S. Bank on April 8, 2025. (Jean Whitmore/Contributed Photo) Fundraising goal is \$200K to renovate former bank ELGIN — The Elgin Museum and Historical Society is seeking community donations for the purchase of a permanent home in the former U.S. Bank at 800 Alder St. in downtown Elgin. The museum artifacts are displayed at the former Elgin City Hall, 180 N. Eighth Ave., a building adjacent to the Elgin Opera House on the same tax lot, owned by the City of Elgin. Mayor S. James Johnson confirmed the city is examining its debt load and considering its options, but it has not issued any notice to the museum to vacate the property, and has made no final decisions on the future disposition of the buildings. “The museum board came to my council meeting and spoke with me and the council about what they are doing,” Johnson said, “and we advised them that there could be potential for that property to have to be offloaded or sold due to financial strains on the city, and that the city wanted to begin conversations with the Elgin Opera House.” Johnson said the city is looking to decrease any money that it has going out and keep what it has. The city is being very conservative now, he said, given its financial situation. “I think it will work out good if EMHS does get the U.S. Bank building because the chances of the city having to get away from the \$30,000 a year burden are pretty high, and it costs a lot to insure both of those buildings there,” Johnson said. “So, we’re just looking at the best outcome for the city financially in the situation we’re in.” The museum board is excited to have this opportunity to secure a permanent home with greater space for its growing collections. The property at 800 Alder St. with its 6,960 square feet will meet their needs well. “Presenting our history, enhancing

exhibits, and creating community gathering space for education have been identified as needs and as a way to fulfill the mission of our organization,” Debbie Leslie, EMHS vice president, said. Consequently, the EMHS board of directors have contracted with Benjamin Brown of Sanger, California, the owner of 800 Alder St., for the purchase of the property, and Brown accepted the EMHS offer and its down payment. “The EMHS has a fundraising goal of \$200,000 for the purchase and renovations,” Suzanne Goodall, EMHS secretary, said. “The purchase price is \$175,000 with \$100,000 due by June 22.” The community has committed \$35,000 in donations, but the museum is seeking more donations to meet its contractual obligations to Brown. To make donating easier, a bank account has been established for secure accounting and direct deposit of community donations. Donations may be made through www.elginmuseum.org or by visiting the Community Bank of Elgin, soon to be renamed Spokane Teachers Credit Union. Checks may be written out to Elgin Museum and Historical Society and sent to EMHS, PO Box 358, Elgin, OR 97827. People may also make donations by using their Donor-Advised Fund or making qualified distributions from their IRAs, Leslie added. The museum fundraising committee has participated in training to ensure that all aspects of the fundraising, donation collection and recording meet required standards. “Designing the materials to explain and promote the campaign has been a group effort bigger than the museum has ever undertaken,” Goodall said. For more information about how to make donations or to become a Friend of the Elgin Museum and Historical Society, visit www.elginmuseum.org. [facebook sharing button](#) [email sharing button](#) [print sharing button](#) [More Community News](#)

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