



First Jenks Arkansas River Bridge



JENKS AMERICA MUSEUM & HISTORICAL SOCIETY

JAM NEWSLETTER

Vol. 2 No. 1. 2025

JAM Awarded Grant

Jenks Museum Takes Another Step Forward

An organization formed almost a year ago has taken another major step toward its ultimate goal of establishing a museum that will tell the story of the city of Jenks.

The Jenks America Museum & Historical Society was informed on Jan. 23 that it would be receiving a \$5,000 grant from the Oklahoma Heritage Preservation Grant Program of the Oklahoma Historical Society. The money will go toward hiring a consultant to help create a strategic plan.

"It's a big step, as foundations as well as the Oklahoma Historical Society will not accept grant requests from nonprofits that do not have a strategic plan," according to Linda Parker, grant writer for the JAM committee.

A total of 40 organizations were approved for funding by the OHS board of directors, following a review process that received input from a panel of OHS staff members and a subcommittee appointed by the board.

Several cities and towns in the Tulsa area already have their own museums, including Sapulpa, Broken Arrow, Sand Springs, Bristow and Bixby.



Football Letter Jacket



City Hall

A plan for a Jenks museum first emerged in the early 1980s, when a committee was established to discuss the idea. The group met a few times but eventually was disbanded. The concept was resurrected nearly three decades later, when, in 2021, Annette Bowles-Ragland, a retired Jenks Chamber of Commerce president, launched a Facebook page – "Jenks America Past and Present" - to see if there was interest in starting a new museum. By early 2024, the page had accumulated thousands of pictures, videos and stories and over 4,100 followers. Time apparently was ripe to move forward. Bowles-Ragland called a meeting to discuss the establishment of a Jenks museum, and 15 people showed up at Louie's Grill & Bar to discuss the idea on March 4, 2024.

Each person had a deep connection to Jenks and was enthusiastic about moving forward to establish a museum in the city. Thus, the journey began," Wayne Parker, who grew up in Jenks and served its mayor from 1981 to 1985, later wrote.



Linda George



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Grant Contd.

JAM has continued to move forward since its first meeting. The articles of incorporation for the Jenks America Museum & Historical Society Corporation were filed on Sept. 27, 2024, with a primary goal "dedicated to researching, preserving, protecting and educating the public on the rich history of Jenks, Oklahoma, from its early days as a railroad way station and small farming community on the Arkansas River. The museum will serve as the epicenter of the corporation to share and exhibit publications, Native American artifacts, antiques, art and other historically significant items to strengthen community bonds and educate the public on the achievements and history of the Jenks, Oklahoma, community."

The Jenks Museum & Historical Society held its most recent meeting Jan. 6, also at Louie's, with 22 people in attendance, including new members Buster and Linda McCurtain, Karen and Tom Anderson and Brian Sherman. Parker pointed out that the committee would like to attract additional members.

MARCH Meeting:

Louie's in Jenks
Monday March 3, 2025
5:30 PM

Anyone interested in helping to make the Jenks America Museum a reality is welcome to join us.

History Event Saturday

JAM to Host History of Jenks Presentation

The Jenks America Museum & Historical Society will host a program Feb. 15 that will provide local residents and others with the opportunity to learn about the history of Jenks.

"The Beginning of a City," featuring Dr. Eric Fox, is scheduled for 10:30 a.m. at the Jenks City Library, located at 523 West B St. Fox is a vice principal at Jenks High School and a former Oklahoma history teacher.

Event highlights include Dr. Fox's presentation, a question-and-answer session and light refreshments. There is no admission charge for the program, which also will be live-streamed on the JAM Facebook page, Jenks Museum and Historical Society.

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