

Butte County Historical Society

Volunteers Make It Work!

www.buttecountyhistory.com and like us on Facebook!

About us: In 1956, a group of concerned citizens joined together to collect and preserve Butte County's history. Ever since then, volunteers have been giving freely of their time helping collect and organize the history of the area and the stories of its people. In the end, it really is the story of the people of Butte County and the times in which they lived.

Volunteering: It is people like you who donate their time to the Butte County Historical Society who help collect and tell these stories. We tell these stories to young and old alike through presentations and newsletters. Each year the hours donated by our members make this all happen.

It is important your experience with us is a pleasant one. We realize your time with us is a gift and we appreciate it. Whether you can donate one hour per month or forty, it is all appreciated, and we want you to feel it was worthwhile!

As a prospective volunteer, you probably have some questions. Below we have tried to anticipate a few of these and provide answers.

Do I need to know all about the area's history before I volunteer?

No, very few of us knew the history when we first volunteered. During your time as a volunteer, you will learn, as we all continue to learn, about our history, often one exhibit or collection project at a time.

Do I need to know how to operate a computer?

There are many collection management, maintenance and events projects that require no computer skills. If you are interested in working with digital archives, it helps to have a basic knowledge of Word, Excel and similar programs. If you would like to learn to use our Archives specific computer aids, we are happy to teach you.

How much time do I need to volunteer per month to be of help to the organization?

Whatever works for you. Volunteer schedules tend to range from a regularly scheduled few hours per month to a few dozen hours in a short period of time if you are working on an active short-term project. Many activities are seasonal. For instance, you might work 16 hours in April and May as a volunteer on our maintenance programs, but less than 2 hours a month, or perhaps no hours at all, the rest of the year. Some duties require specific hours, such as working with the digital database collections at the Archives building; others can be very flexible. *Depending on the hours and times you are available, some volunteer opportunities may be more appropriate than others; we will be happy to discuss that with you. The important thing is that we can count on you at scheduled times.*

What kind of work will I be doing?

That's largely up to you - if you have a skill or an interest, we probably have a place to apply it!

Yearly Events: Many short-term events such as festival booths and other one-time events need support (Planning, setup, manning booths, etc.) The Olive Festival and our annual Yard Sale are good examples of short-term volunteering opportunities.

Facilities Maintenance: We support five facilities in Butte County. Each year we identify one or more maintenance projects to maintain our buildings and grounds. These projects require a variety of skills, simple manual labor and organization. Visit our webpage for pictures and more information about the facilities.

Docents: Our museum facilities require docents while they are open. We have materials in each museum to help facilitate a tour. We are in the process of developing a docent's guide for each museum.

Digitizing Archives: The recording and digitizing of these archives is an ongoing labor of love. We update the web page periodically with new material as it becomes available. We need to scan documents, capture material from old files and occasionally seek additional information elsewhere. We can train you on digitization for our archives and website.

Cataloging Collections: This job is an opportunity to learn history from our collections and other reference materials. Incoming collections are given catalogue numbers and briefly described in the Archives prior to entry into our database. If you enjoy descriptive detail and can print legibly, this capturing of information might be a niche for you.

Newsletter: Do you like group work? Volunteers fold, stuff and mail the newsletter every month. Or you might like to write an article about the area's history. The archives hold a vast amount of material that lends itself to short articles. Interested in the area's gold mining, logging, ranching, railroad or family and community history? There is information in the archives for your article. What about fires and other natural events, notable people from the area? It's in the archives. Articles, if approved for content, may be included in our newsletters or quarterly publication.

Social Media: Social media is becoming a larger part in promoting events and includes posting one-page stories on the area's history via our webpage, Facebook and other online resources. Helping promote BCHS through these media can be done on a non-scheduled basis.

Special Projects: (example) Soon a yearly calendar of events sponsored by Butte County will be started that will expand our reach into the community. That will require developing a long-range plan with event fliers and other materials that can be posted to the community online calendar.

How do I coordinate availability?

The chairperson for each project generally tracks the who and when of volunteer availability. We're pretty flexible, so let's talk and we will work it out.

Can I change the type of volunteer work I do after I sign up?

Absolutely, we have many projects going on at once and you can switch around or do more than one. We will be happy to discuss this with you.

Volunteer work should be fun and rewarding. We appreciate the efforts of everyone and want you to know your contribution is important to us. We are an all-volunteer organization, help us continue to serve the community as we have since 1956.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please contact us by e-mail via our website buttecountyhistory.com. Use the Volunteer Form to leave your name, state your interests and skills. Be sure to leave contact information for you (phone and/or email). We will contact you!