

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT – April 15, 2025 - UREC Board Meeting

Two other construction project –

- (1) **Front Entryway** -- in process – sandstone foundation wall and sandstone steps to the basement entry are in place and looking beautiful. A delay has been incurred because the gas meter needs to be lowered before the stair frame can be put in place, to be followed by the sandstone treads and scrolled metal handrails. Grant funding = \$250,000.
- (2) **Interior restoration** – we are working with Thaler, Reilly, Wilson, Albany based architects, on predevelopment aspects of the interior restoration of The Myers Residence. Most recent discussion included plans for 2-3 geothermal wells to heat and cool The Myers Residence. Looking at \$150,000 cost.

Operations –

- **Office of Cannabis Mgmt.** – application submitted for \$100,000 to be applied to MSTP – responses forthcoming in April 2025
- **Advance Albany County Alliance** – submitted \$90,000 application for exhibit program
- **Board discussion sessions** will be scheduled later this year to address the Interpretive Center and what to do with it
- **Community Conversations** to focus on what to do with the IC – scheduled for May 21, June 18, July 16 from 6-7pm in person at The Residence – Board members are welcome to participate

Program –

- **Voices and Votes: Democracy in America** Smithsonian traveling exhibit that was to be hosted in the IC in November 2025 – January 2026 will now be located at the New York State Museum. Our friends at the NYSM are willing to let UREC use space on the 4th floor because the IC will not be open as planned. A great partnership!
- **Handel's Messiah Arias** – a late autumn fundraiser to be held on December 5 or 12 from 5pm-7pm at The New York State Museum with featured internationally known singer Daniel Pascoe Aquilar donating his singing of Handel's Messiah arias, the Voices and Votes exhibit as a centerpiece, and more. Please let Mary Liz know if you can **help plan and implement**. We need lots of attendees, we need lots sponsors, we need help with food and drink prep, we need invitations out and thank you's afterward. We need recordkeeping of ticket purchasers and sponsors. We do have a volunteer who will design the program for us. Our financial goal is \$50,000 net. Money raised will support IC.
- **YALI Afterschool** – continues – focus is on learning and interpreting history through various mediums (film, visual art, comic illustration, video)
- **Museum Studies Teen Program** planning and recruitment continues with launch in October 2025
- **Over the Edge urban rappelling event** – ~~August 15-16, 2025~~ **April 24-15, 2026?** – we are investigating holding this fun fundraiser at the Hilton on Lodge Street in downtown Albany. Plans to work with Hyatt Place have been delayed due to the Hatt's administration not yet signing the MOU, which is essential for UREC to forge ahead implementing plans – intention is to net \$120,000 minimum (gross \$150,000) through rappeler pledges and sponsorships – all board members will be asked to take a role in helping with this event. It is already generating excitement!
- **Collaborating with 518 Elevated** on teen programming
- **Collaborating with MiSci** on a Star Show – event though NEH funding is not available
- **Founders' Tour** – First Founders' Tour to be held on Saturday, April 19 from 12:30-3:30pm - \$100 / tkt for 3-hour experience – please promote the Founders' Tour – additional dates are being set
- **Appreciation Tea** – **Friday, April 25 from 5-6:30pm** – the annual thank you to those who have contributed time, talent and treasure. Board members are needed to participate so as to represent UREC

- **Juneteenth 2025 – Saturday, June 14 from 1pm-5pm at The Residence** – if you would like to join the staff in the planning and implementation, please let Mary Liz know so that we can loop you in.
- **July 4th Oration – Friday, July 4 from 11am-1pm** – Lavada Nahon is the guest speaker to address the institution of enslavement in NYS – this aligns with Underground Railroad Consortium of New York State’s Freedom 2027: New York State Emancipation Bicentennial which is promoting a focus on the theme of enslavement for 2025, abolition for 2026, and emancipation for 2027
- **FreedomCon 2025: Voices of Freedom** – virtual UREC conference with hour long presentations on the 4th Saturday of each month at 2pm – see the UREC website home page for more information
- **Hoop House** – has been dismantled and sold to Home Earth Alliance, a local non-profit who is also applying some of its grant funding to plant a small collection of native NYS plants by the wooden barrier at the front of the Anna Profit property AND who also included a model of The Stephen and Harriet Myers Residence in its **exhibit** that was on display at the Capital Region Flower and Garden Expo that was held on March 28-30 at Hudson Valley Community College
- **Albany Symphony Orchestra collaboration** – June 7 and July 6 – two ASO public events at which a small selection of Liberty Minstrel songs will be sung as part of the program, with Paul and Mary Liz providing some contextual introduction to the music.
- **Friday Folklore & Friday at the Movies** – Amelia is working on making The Myers Residence the go-to place for folklore and for movie & conversation
- **Drawn to Art** – funded by NYSCA 2025 grant for 2025 and again in 2026 – Marcus and Amelia will host this senior art experience from April 18- June 19 and again August 21 – October 23 with the final production of a public mural telling stories of significance to the senior artists.
- **Lift Every Voice: Democratic Engagement Community Conversations** – hosted by Excelsior University in collaboration with UREC – monthly hour-long virtual conversations from 5:30-6:30pm – please see UREC Events Calendar for dates
- **Dept. of State** – in conversation to see how UREC and Dept. of State can collaborate on programming
- **Please remember to check every month the UREC Events calendar on the UREC website**
- **Please remember to read the Constant Contact emails that get emailed out at least once a month**
- **Please remember to be an ambassador for UREC – tell folks about the programs hosted by UREC, tell folks about the IC, become familiar with the IC Case for Support, invite folks to donate to the IC as a timber sponsor, through pledging, through hosting a house party, view the great IC videos that are available on the UREC website**
- **Invite folks to become members / donors in support of UREC programs – remind them to donate now to Black history sites while they can – this is a time of great need**

By the Numbers (February 19, 2025 – April 15, 2025)

- **Members** – 490 (up from 477); includes 4 international
- **Social Media** followers – 8455 (up from 7900) Includes Bluesky – please frequent UREC’s social media accounts and leave comments
- **Volunteers** – 12 fundraising; 10 collections; 1 administration; 2 library; 6 gardens; 1 grant writer
- **Speaking Engagements + Number of Attendees** – 5 & 265
- **Constant Contact** – 3142 (up from 3137) with a 42% open rate (up from 40%)
- **Tourists / Event visitors** – 124 (up from 107)
- **TV / Radio engagements** – 1 @ 1.5mil
- **Programs** – 132 attending

BOARD ORIENTATION – will be part of a monthly board meeting, likely in May or June