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Preston Castle Foundation's Quest for the Deed is over!

IONE, CA: Quest for the Deed? The Deed is Done!!!

The Preston Castle Foundation is pleased and proud to announce that they have received the Deed to the Preston Castle and surrounding property, totaling almost 13 acres with 5 freestanding buildings. This has been the major focus of the Foundation's fund raising and preservation and rehabilitation efforts over the past several years.

The strikingly beautiful Romanesque style Preston Castle, on a hill in Ione, was actually the administration building for the Preston School of Industry, the first major attempt in California at rehabilitating, instead of just imprisoning, young offenders. Opened in 1894, the Preston School of Industry became a leader in the juvenile prison reform movement by giving convicted boys a real chance at life by educating them not only in academics, but in all of the useful trades of the time. Closed in 1960, when the Preston Youth Authority moved into a new administration building down the hill, the Preston Castle was left to deteriorate due to weather, vandalism, and general neglect. It now serves as a vacant, but vitally important landmark for Ione, Amador County, and the Mother Lode. It is a California State Historic Landmark and is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Originally incorporated as the Historic Preston Restoration Foundation in 1996, and renamed in 1999, the Preston Castle Foundation (PCF) is a California 501 (c) (3) Nonprofit Public Benefit Corporation.

In 2002, the Foundation was successful in obtaining a 55 year lease from the State of California for the purpose of preserving, rehabilitating, and utilizing the historic Preston Castle site. To help raise money for this important project, the Foundation has been sponsoring numerous fund raising events, historical tours, paranormal tours, event rentals, and soliciting memberships, grants, and donations. Funds raised enabled much needed improvements to be accomplished, including a new roof, a new 4th floor, refurbished front porch, rebuilt windows, safety upgrades, and many items relating to structural stabilization. Completing these projects satisfied key terms of the lease that would allow transferring ownership from the State to the PCF. This prompted, in 2011, the Preston Castle Foundation Board of Directors, under the leadership of Carol Lipchik, Director, to begin their Quest for the Deed. Carol and her committee put together a large binder with Business Plans, Budgets, Strategic Planning, a Core Historic Structures Report and the Vision and Mission of the PCF. This book was used at a meeting with the landlord, the Department of General Services of the State of California, to officially ask for transfer of the deed to the Preston Castle property. Carol and the PCF also began the difficult task of satisfying the State of California with answers to their questions on access issues and the feasibility of providing utilities separate from the State's surrounding property.

This project could not have been completed without the expert help of several consultants. Mr. Rob Aragon of Aragon Solutions helped answer utility questions. Mr. Jay Radke with Nolte Engineering provided maps and plans and overlays for many presentations to State officials. Mr. Matt Toma of Toma & Associates provided legal descriptions and boundary adjustments to the finalized 12.91 acre site. Mr. Jim Rooney, County Assessor provided a valuation of the property for escrow purposes. Mr. Malcolm White of Malcolm White Consulting helped with PG&E engineering leading to completion of dedicated electrical service. Mrs. Renee Chapman-Mikkelsen helped with the writing and editing. Mr. Mike Garavaglia of Garavaglia Architecture, worked with the PCF Board on Vision, Planning, the Core Historic Structures Report and National Significance reports for National Historic recognition.

Karl Knoblauch, PCF President stated: *"During the eighteen year life span of the Preston Castle Foundation literally hundreds of volunteers have contributed thousands of hours in an effort to preserve the Preston Castle and its history. That work has paid off with the Foundation receiving ownership. The Foundation can now pursue more than just preserving the Castle. We can pursue the next big goal, rehabilitating the Castle."*

"I have been on the board since 2002. It has been our dream to own the castle and the foundation has been working since before 2000 to achieve the goal of ownership. It just shows with lots of perseverance things come to those who wait and work hard." Marie Nutting, Director and past President

"During all the negotiations, the Foundation Board continued holding numerous events for the community and tourists to enjoy while securing funds for permit fees and eventual utility costs. Thank you to the leadership of all the Foundation Committees and volunteers and the community support that made it possible to say the DEED IS DONE! On November 7th 2014 the Fee Title recorded from the State of California to the Preston Castle Foundation." Carol Lipchik, Director

2014 was a challenging year for the Preston Castle Foundation's fundraising efforts, as several events and most of our tours had to be cancelled or significantly reduced due to restrictions from the California State Fire Marshal's office. With the Deed in hand, we can once again open the majestic Preston Castle to the public. We are already working on our plans and schedules for 2015 and invite everyone to come visit, join the Preston Castle Foundation, make a donation, and/or volunteer to help.

Help **SAVE THE CASTLE** and learn more about our history, events, and tours by visiting www.prestoncastle.com. All contributions are tax deductible.