



Dedication of the newly-renovated Vermontville Opera House will be a Victorian affair, set for the afternoon of Armistice Day, Nov. 11. A state grant is helping restore the interior of the historic red brick structure, built in 1898 with funds solicited from the township and village. Over the years the Opera House has been the site of stage plays, political and social events and religious services.

by Susan Hinckley
Staff Writer

The Vermontville's Friends of the Opera House decided Wednesday that the theme of an open house to celebrate restoration of the historic building will be in keeping with the era of the structure.

"We would like to make it a Victorian affair, as much as we can," said Hildred Peabody, secretary of the Friends Committee which is overseeing the restoration project.

The open house is set for Sunday afternoon, Nov. 11, from 1 to 5 p.m.

Peabody added that at the Aug. 29 meeting the group ironed out many of the details of the celebration. Invitations

will be sent to several dignitaries and officials, she said.

Work is progressing on schedule for the renovation project, largely funded by a

\$25,000 Michigan Equity Grant from the State Department of Commerce. Vermontville's required contribu-

tion was \$5,000 cash and \$5,000 in-kind (labor by local volunteers).

The cash contribution was given equally by the Village of Vermontville and Vermontville Township, with each governmental unit providing \$2,500. In addition, community organizations and individuals have donated money for items not included in the grant.

The original woodwork in the 1898 building is being stripped and refinished. Next will come refinishing of the floor, then painting of the walls and hanging of the fixtures, said Peabody.

For the floor work, she added, "We will need lots and lots of volunteers." Several community organizations are expected to get involved in that job.

The Vermontville Lions Club has asked the Friends of the Opera House Committee to appear at their meeting Sept. 11 to tell the club about the project.

Peabody, who represents the Vermontville Historical Society on the panel, will recount the history of the building. Village President Sue Villanueva will tell the Lions about the state grant. And Russ Lavery, Vermont-

ville Township Supervisor, will explain its implementation. Don Mulvany, representative of the Chamber of Commerce to the Friends committee, will detail proposed future uses of the Opera House.

Once completed, in addition to preserving an historic landmark, the project will provide Vermontville with a much-needed community center. It is expected that the building will be used for youth activities, programs, dances, meetings, receptions and art exhibits. Plans also call for display of memorabilia relating to the early days of the Opera House.