Minnesota Mineral Club Considers New Location For Its Annual Rock and Mineral Show

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Minnesota Mineral Club Considers Relocating its Annual Rock and Mineral Show

The Board of Directors and the Show Committee of the Minnesota Mineral Club are considering relocating their annual rock and mineral show to a new venue. While no final decisions have been made, an opportunity to use a building on the Minnesota State Fairgrounds is under active consideration.

The Minnesota Mineral Club is a non-profit organization devoted to the study of Mineralogy, Geology, Paleontology, Lapidary Arts, and Earth Sciences it was founded in 1945 and has just over 400 members mostly from throughout Minnesota.

Club Publicity Director, Earl Netwal points out that the Fairgrounds are not only centrally located in the Twin City Metropolitan area. ?Everyone in Minnesota knows how to get to the State Fair,? Earl says.

A well-known central location is expected to significantly increase attendance as compared to the Club's most recent show location in Cottage Grove.

The Minnesota Mineral Club ran its first show in 1946 at the Curtis Hotel, and over the past 75 years has moved among numerous venues including Brookdale Mall, Coffman Union, Southdale Center, Apache Plaza, Maplewood Mall, Signal Hills Shopping Center, Northtown Shopping Center, and Har Mar Mall.

Most recently the club has run very successful shows in the Cottage Grove National Guard Armory. ?The Armory has been a great venue for the club,? Earl continues, and both Show and Board members expressed appreciation for the positive relationship the club has had working with the Guard on an annual basis.

The success of past shows resulted in occasionally overflowing crowds and close quarters, a factor that

challenges any hope of effective social distancing without severely limiting attendance. As a result, the Club?s board decided to push for a larger facility in the hopes that it would accomplish multiple goals. To permit a safe show, to increase opportunity for additional dealers, and expand its youth and education programs during the show.

Increasing the size of the show will present challenges to the Club, particularly in the area of recruiting volunteers. Outgoing Show Chair, Maureen Scaglia, reports that volunteer recruiting is always a challenge. ?While we have a good core of volunteers,? Maureen says, ?it is something of a challenge to get new people to step forward for the first time.?

Netwal notes that the first time he and his wife Joan volunteered, they were put in the Youth area where all they needed to do was help kids with simple tasks and games. ?It was easy, and a lot of fun,? he says.

One change that would result from a move from Cottage Grove to an alternate location is that the Club would no longer need to run a kitchen operation. ?Instead,? John Porter, Club President said, ?we can rely on Food Trucks, which will free up volunteers to work on other tasks.?

One additional change under consideration is to move the date of the show forward by a few weeks. ?September weather is much more reliable than that of mid-October,? John Porter remarks. ?That too could help boost attendance,? he continued.

Past president Dan Bissonnette expressed the opinion that the club is on its way to becoming the premier rock, mineral, and lapidary club in the Midwest.

The Minnesota Mineral Club has a well-developed rock & mineral website with a wide range of resources for the general public as well as its members.

It communicates regularly with members and the public on Facebook and has been upgrading its YouTube Channel to better serve members and fulfill its educational mission: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCaqGk-MLw_KqXjDDOxp1RZg

It has a private member-only section on its website where its member newsletter The Rock Rustler, Membership Directory, and access to the Club's Field Trips are organized.

The Club holds monthly meetings open to the public. During the Covid epidemic, instead of canceling meetings expanded them to a twice-a-month schedule with formal programs alternating with purely social Zoom meetings. The Club's most recent program meeting topped out its Zoom account with 100 participants forcing the Club to upgrade its Zoom account to accommodate more.

The Club?s Board and Show Committee expect to make a decision in the relatively near term, as a new show venue will require a significant effort to reconfigure the operations and get the word out to dealers who need to plan in advance.

Membership is not restricted to residents of Minnesota. Monthly meetings are open to everyone. The Minnesota Mineral Club is a member of the Midwest Federation and the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies. membership is not restricted to residents of Minnesota. Monthly meetings are open to everyone. The Minnesota Mineral Club is a member of the Midwest Federation and the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies.

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Minnesota Mineral Club

We are a non-profit organization devoted to the study of Mineralogy, Geology, Paleontology, and the Lapidary Arts.

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