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Fire at the Wright Factory Site

You probably read about the fire at the Wright brothers original factory site at the intersection of Route 35 and Abbey Avenue. As highlighted in prior newsletters, the Wright Image Group has been positioning itself to locate the Triumph of Flight monument on that 54-acre parcel currently housing the newest Dayton Metro Library (West Branch) along with the historic Wright Company aircraft buildings, which were the first purpose-built structures in America for manufacturing airplanes.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Fire at the Wright Factory Site**
- 2 The Wright Flyer III Sculpture Has Landed**

On March 26th the historic buildings were significantly damaged by fire. The Dayton Fire Department's investigation is ongoing, and a detailed structural viability assessment is underway. It looks from photos in the press that the two original Wright Company buildings are all but gone, but the iconic front façades of the buildings look to have survived.



Photo of fire damage centering on original building 1



1912 photo of original building 1

The National Park Service (NPS) had plans to purchase the two original buildings, restore them, and locate a museum and their local administrative offices on the site. How the fire will affect their plans is unknown at this time. Restoration of the buildings was problematic to begin with given the condition of the large amount of wood in the roof structure. It is possible that the elimination of that by the fire may make new construction on the building footprint less expensive and afford more design flexibility. Who knows.

We are monitoring the City of Dayton, NPS, Dayton Daily News, and the National Aviation Heritage Area (NAHA) for any new information related to the fire at the Wright Factory Site and plans going forward.

That the development of the Wright Factory Site will continue to be a top priority for the City of Dayton is evidenced by The Dayton Daily News stating recently that the City plans to have Dillin Corporation produce a Factory Site Master Plan, including a community outreach effort, in the coming months. Dillin Corporation's vast portfolio includes many successful developments including the West Social Tap & Table, Austin Landing, and the soon-to-be Cornerstone Project which will be one block from the National Aviation Heritage Museum next to the Wright brothers bicycle shop. WIG Board members are communicating with the Dillin Group to maintain awareness of their progress on the development and to advocate for the Triumph of Flight monument to be included in the Factory Site Master Plan.

NAHA, of which the WIG is a partner, has been and will continue to advocate with the City of Dayton and the NPS to explore various paths toward a good outcome.

The Wright Flyer III Sculpture Has Landed



The Wright III Flyer sculpture designed by our own Steve Brown has landed and now stands on the south-west corner of Third Street and Edwin C. Moses Blvd. It is a fitting symbol to welcome visitors to the historic Wright Dunbar district of Dayton. Drive by and take a look.

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