

Press Release



Battle Ground Public Schools

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Central School building in 2011 photo from rear (west side) looking northeast.

Central School ‘Burn Day’ nears

Battle Ground’s old Central School, which closed in 2001 after 60 years as the educational home for generations of north county children, will be burned in a firefighting drill Saturday, Jan. 21. Beginning Friday, hundreds of salvaged Central School bricks will be given away in limited numbers, beginning with former students and staffers.

The deteriorated, 39,000-square-foot structure is on Parkway in downtown Battle Ground, about a quarter-mile north of Main Street.

The public is welcome to watch the action, which will begin about 10 a.m. with small-fire drills. Mike Ciraulo of Clark County Fire and Rescue, who is incident commander for the training operation, said he expects the entire structure will be set ablaze about noon, but added that it could be as early as 11 a.m.

Ciraulo said hundreds of firefighters from nearly all Clark County fire-fighting agencies have participated in drills at the old building in recent weeks and about 50 will be on hand Saturday. He said one crew will be dedicated Saturday to protecting the trees in front of the school from the fire, as requested by Shonny

Bria, superintendent of Battle Ground Public Schools.

“Central School played an important role in the educational and social growth of thousands of people still living in the Battle Ground area,” Bria said in November when the burn was announced. “We understand that some will be saddened to see the school gone (but) the building is truly unsalvageable. From a financial standpoint, this is the most prudent and beneficial” course of action.

The district has no immediate plans for the site. For now, the grounds will remain as an open, park-like space for public enjoyment, Bria said.

Ciraulo said in November, “Training in a building of this size and complexity provides a rare opportunity for our volunteer and career firefighters, fire officers and cadets. The fire service in Clark County appreciates this opportunity to work in partnership with the Battle Ground School District, not only to save the district money, but also to train our personnel in a realistic environment.”

BRICKS -- Hundreds, if not thousands, of bricks from the school are being put aside for giving away, from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday, Jan. 20, in the Battle Ground High School north parking lot, which is immediately south of old Central School.

There likely will be a limit of three to five bricks per person, at least initially. It is asked that only former students and former employees come for bricks until 3 p.m. Friday with anyone welcome after that. The brick giveaway will continue on Saturday during the fire if any remain after Friday.

HELP THE FOUNDATION HELP KIDS – Bricks will be free, but donations will be welcome for the Battle Ground Education Foundation.

MEMORIES: Central School opened in March 1941 and mostly was home to primary and middle-school grades. To read “Central School Memories” submitted by former students and staffers, go to the school district’s Website at battlegroundps.org.

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