

ride atop the water wagon, which was likely used during the mid-1800s as a military wagon. It was converted to a water wagon at the turn of the century. At the time, water wagons were generally towed behind a grain wagon to water cattle. The fact that the tank is galvanized might be an indication of when it was converted, said Rusty Fielder, project manager and association member.

Association members dismantled the wagon and began restoring using as many of the original parts as possible to keep its history intact including much of the ironwork. Oak from square beams from a torn-down bridge were milled and salvaged for use in the restoration. Woodworkers were forced to throw away a first batch of wood due to quality, and new wood was provided. The quality, strength and stability of the oak and the fact that it doesn't distort over time will help ensure the structural integrity of the wagon, which Fielder said wasn't in towable condition prior to the restoration. The wheels were improved to make the wagon drivable. Following completion, members installed a time capsule with a past newspaper article about the project inside of the water tank.

At one point in time the tank had the words "Mid-State Fair" written on its side and used to sit on the side of Highway 101, according to Fielder. Often many such wagons were purchased in good shape and left to sit wheels down in the fields and their wood left to rot.

"Fortunately because people donate to the Pioneer Museum, these things are going to live on a long time," Fielder said.

All of the money to pay for the project ultimately is donation money, he said. In addition, many of the woodworkers, including past president and member Keith Williams, were credited with performing a tremendous amount of at-home work using their own equipment and are not reimbursed.

"We put a lot of hours into it, and we learned a lot about 19th Century woodworking," said Bob Mahoney, a member of the woodworkers association. "We work as a team and enjoy each other's company and enjoy woodworking."

Mahoney said everybody in the project pitched in their own part, himself mostly doing work on the running boards and filling wood cracks, and added that he was appreciative to have Harris, who is well-versed in the wagon technology.

Harris, who served as a consultant on the project providing advice on work like how the seats should be set, the brakes, the tongue setup and how everything needs to be the right size for the animals, said he was looking forward to

seeing the water wagon on display at the Pioneer Day Parade. The event is a 79-year tradition for the North County, and the water wagon will now join the many historical tractors, wagons and other equipment on show for spectators to see and appreciate.

"I'm really excited to be able to see a piece of equipment that is Paso Robles history along with history of the horse-drawn vehicles," he said. "Young people and even adults don't remember the trials and tribulations that our forefathers went through to go ahead and get us further in agriculture, and it's real important that we learn as much from the past to help us understand our future better."

The restored wagon will be stored at the Pioneer Museum with plans to showcase it annually during the annual Pioneer Day Parade.

Central Coast Woodworkers Association is a club that provides support for members who share an interest in woodworking and have completed projects for the Carnegie Library, Paso Robles Senior Center, Estrella Warbirds Museum and Pioneer Museum. Meetings are held on the second Thursday of the month except December at the Paso Robles Senior Center, 270 Scott St. The group's next meeting on Thursday, Oct. 8 will be held at the Pioneer Museum, 2010 Riverside Ave.

The association is currently looking for sponsors and donations to help restore five additional wagons in need of restoration at the Pioneer Museum. A \$1,000 per year donation for five years would provide enough money to start restoration work on another wagon. The association is also looking for donations to support its annual program to make and distribute through the Toy Bank.

For more information on the association or how to contribute, visit www.ccwa.org or e-mail president Mike Brown at mwbrown42@gmail.com.

More information on Pioneer Day can be found at www.pasoroblespioneerday.org.