


City launches mobile app for historic sites



Learn about the Kimberleigh A. Fay House, a Mission-style house on Southeast First Street in the former pineapple grove of the FW Webbers Family by using the city's new app. (submitted photo, FPG)

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The city of Boynton Beach Cultural Resources mobile application went live after July 4 on the city's Historic Preservation Education website, <http://historic.boynton-beach.org>.

Residents and visitors to the city can link to the city's website on their mobile device and explore more than 170 present and past historic sites.

"The mobile application is the latest addition to the city's award-winning Heritage Education Program," said Warren Adams, the city's historic preservation planner. "By drawing attention to the city's cultural resources, the website will promote education, encourage heritage tourism and contribute to ongoing economic development."

Using an interactive map, viewers can click on a site and read or, in some cases, hear an audio description of sites such as the Kimberleigh A. Fay House, a Mission-style house on Southeast First Street in the former pineapple grove of the FW Webbers Family.

On Northeast Fourth Street, visitors will learn about the Marjorie S. Roberson House, a Mission-style house (now demolished) and around the corner on North Seacrest Boulevard, sits the Lillian F. Oyer house, a wood frame vernacular-style home from 1925, which was home to one of the city's first residents.

On East Ocean Avenue, folks can see the city's first post office, which was built in 1915 in the vernacular style but damaged during the 1928 hurricane and replaced with a Mission-style structure.

At 101 N. Federal Highway, view an old photo of the never-to-be Cassandra Hotel that was damaged during construction by the 1928 hurricane. The hotel was never completed and demolished in the 1930s.

The second phase of a three-phase project, the application has been in the works for the past year and is funded by a non-matching grant of \$27,200 through the Florida Division of Historical Resources Small Matching Grant Program and developed in-house.

Terri Owens, the city's senior GIS analyst who helped develop the website, said in a statement, "A combination of resources and team effort has contributed to a stable, secure website."

"By working together over the past year, and utilizing current technology, we have successfully created a user-friendly product built from strong research, accurate data and sufficient resources," Owens said.

City staff have committed to the ongoing maintenance of the website, which will be updated as more information becomes available.

Janet DeVries, outgoing president of the Boynton Beach Historical Society, said, "The Boynton historic sites interactive mapping application is a welcome addition to the history of Boynton Beach."

"Warren Adams, Terri Owens and the team have created an outstanding shell for chronicling and showcasing historic sites in Boynton Beach," she said.

One of her favorite features is the mp3 recordings with historic accounts of the structures listed in the Boynton Beach Register of Historic Places.

DeVries wants to continue researching the history of these structures, including the architects, builders and homeowners to include the information in the application.

Adams is applying for a grant for the third phase of the project, to create an additional interactive website focusing on a long-neglected part of the city, known during segregation as Boynton Colored Town.

"Everyone from schoolchildren to retirees can explore the past with a click of a mouse, even when out exploring the city," DeVries said.

The project was financed by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior administered through the Bureau of Historic Preservation, Division of Historical Resource, Florida Department of State, assisted by the Florida Historical Commission.

The application may be accessed via computer or mobile device at <http://historic.boynton-beach.org/>. The "Historic Sites" tab links to the site database and the "Interactive Maps" tab links to the Historic Sites Interactive Map.