



## **Boca Raton Historical Society & Museum**

### **Talking Points for Depot**

Summer 2017

#### **What is the Boca Raton Historical Society & Museum's Connection to the Depot?**

The Florida East Coast Railway Station at 747 South Dixie Highway was opened in 1930 and was operational until 1968. When passenger service ended, the depot fell into serious disrepair after decades of abandonment.

In the late 1980's Boca Raton Historical Society, now the Boca Raton Historical Society & Museum (BRHS&M), with the help of the Community Redevelopment Agency, rescued the building, completing a full restoration in 1989. Today, the Depot is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Following the restoration of the Depot, the Historical Society accepted donations of four rail cars to add to the site, and in 2003 completed the restoration of the steamlined rail cars. These cars are also on the National Register of Historic Places and are the location of the Historical Society's highly successful Ticket to Ride children's educational program. The cars are also open for guided tours.

In 1993, the Historical Society signed a contract with the City of Boca Raton enabling the City's Recreational Services Department to use the Depot as an adjunct to the Community Center. In exchange, the City assumed responsibility for the day-to-day upkeep of the building and the grounds. While this arrangement helped with the ongoing expenses of the Depot and allowed public use, the Historical Society received no income, and continued to be responsible for the maintenance of the building's exterior and structural aspects of the building and rail cars.

#### **Today's needs**

As our community has grown, so has the demand for services provided by the Boca Raton Historical Society & Museum (BRHS&M), particularly now that it has become a Welcome Center. In order to fund the costs of a growing museum, the BRHS&M made the decision to find a new tenant or owner for the Depot that would be compatible with the historic site. They looked for someone with the passion and ability to maintain public access and to preserve the design and spirit of the historic building.

#### **Decision Made**

In 2017, the BRHS&M selected Mizner Arts, LLC, as the new owner of the Depot property. Mizner Arts intends to renovate the building to accommodate a variety of community events and activities, and will allow the BRHS&M to continue its public programs in the rail cars. A preservation easement on the exterior of the building will ensure that it remains a historic icon for the community. It is anticipated that the Depot will become a hub of activity and gathering place for community interaction.

The BRHS&M will invest the proceeds of the sale to secure its sustainability as a historical society and museum for the Boca Raton community. This financial security will enable the organization to focus on improving the History Museum in Town Hall with updated interactive exhibits and programs. The Welcome Center will be perfectly positioned to welcome residents and visitors to both modern and historic Boca Raton!