Finally!!! The FOHP Gift Store has received preliminary approval on the repair construction to the exterior of the store.  We are awaiting actual sign-off from Los County agencies.  We were closed in early October and it took until June 22nd to get the final site inspection by the Los Angeles County inspectors.  As soon as the final approval is given in writing, along with the restrictions for virus health protection has been lifted by the LA County Parks, the Gift Store should be back in operation with nicer merchandise displays and other interior improvements.

The Gift Store has been closed since October 6th when FOHP President, Laurene Weste, began the restoration of the outside wood siding on the structure.  The much needed repairs were completed by early March and just when the final inspection was to take place everything was put on hold at the Park due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 virus.  During this time, the stock in the Gift Store was packed into boxes for safe keeping and the interior was covered in plastic drop sheets in the attempt to keep it protected.  When the County gave us permission to reenter the store, we started the long process of cleaning and unpacking the merchandise and putting it back on the shelves.  This actually gave us the opportunity to improve the shelf and cabinet displays and freshen up the entire appearance of the store.  We are pleased with the end result and think that it is much more attractive with the changes which were made – both on the inside and the outside—and can hardly wait to show it off to our customers.

Meanwhile, Roger and FOHP Board Member, Jeff Wheat, have spent many hours re-doing the FOHP Bookstore located in the old 1910 log cabin next to the animal pens.  The objective was to improve the shelving so that more books could be put on display, and with donated and purchased Ikea bookshelves we increased the displayed stock by at least 30% and gave it a much nicer appearance.  When the Gift Store opens up again we should also be able to open the Bookstore to the public and not have to move books outside to tables to sell them.  On occasion we will still have large book sales outside when it is appropriate.

More Good News!  The Newcastle bird disease quarantine has been lifted and the Barnyard will also be hopefully opening once again.  At this time it is still closed due to the Covid-19 virus and restrictions on the number of people who can gather together.  The Gift Store will once again be selling bags of animal feed when everything gets back to normal.  We are seeing more visitors to the Park as some of the virus restrictions are being eased up on, and adults and children alike are most anxious to see the animals up close again.  When the Barnyard is once again opened, a grand “Reopening Event” is being planned, with the Gift Store and Bookstore also participating in the event.

Becki Basham

Gift Store Mgr.