

Strasburg tour explores ‘grave history’



Strasburg Mayor Tim Taylor stands in Riverview Cemetery off South Holliday Street in town. The town is sponsoring a graveyard tours on Saturday. Rich Cooley/Daily file

Those walking along on a Strasburg Graveyard Tour will get better acquainted with the unsettling and at times eerie history of those buried underneath the town’s headstones.

From 6 to 9 p.m. Saturday, students in Strasburg High School’s FCCLA program will lead tour groups out of Hotel Strasburg with old town lanterns at 15-minute intervals. The route will lead to different sites at the Strasburg Presbyterian Church Cemetery and the Riverview Cemetery, where 10 volunteer storytellers will be telling chilling tales of events past. Each tour will last from 45 minutes to an hour.

Those tales cover very real chapters of the town’s history, from the high infant mortality rates throughout the 19th century to the impact of the Spanish flu epidemic in 1918. Attendees will be led past monuments for

prominent citizens and the graves of deceased veterans, covering around 100 years of creepy and terrifying tales.

Once led by the now-defunct Hometown Strasburg group and currently put on by the Strasburg Heritage Association, this will be the fourth ghost tour exploring the town. Mayor Tim Taylor said that unlike last year's recycled stories from previous tours, this year's content is completely new. In addition, it gives attendees the rare opportunity to explore the graveyards after dark.

"It's a great evening for sharing information not only of the stories that we have prepared, but also people swapping stories," he said.

Ina Rae Crisman, an instructional assistant at Strasburg High School, will be telling the tale of two local victims of the deadly Spanish flu outbreak.

"I think my story lends a little eerie element of how something that big could hit such a small town," she said.

While some of the tales may be chilling to the bone, Taylor said the tour will be accessible to all ages and no one will spring out from the tour path to scare attendees.

"Everything we do, we do it in a respectful manner," he said. "It's not meant to be scary, it's family friendly."

"Strasburg is so rich in history, I think people just really appreciate the history of the region and also our community," Taylor said. "We try and do as much research as we can. It's amazing that we've had people who have been here their entire lives and come and say, 'I had no idea.'"

IF YOU GO:

- Tours leave from 6 to 9 p.m. Saturday at Hotel Strasburg, 213 S. Holliday St. in Strasburg.
- Tickets are \$3 in advance, purchased from the town office and \$5 at the hotel.