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ERCC Receives An Organ Dating Back to the 1850s

Rehab and Care Center Hopes This Timeless Piece Can Continue Playing For Another 170 years



By [WDTV News Staff](#)

Published: Apr. 26, 2021 at 8:25 PM EDT



BRIDGEPORT, [W.Va](#) (WDTV) - The Elkins Rehabilitation and Care Center just received the gift of the century - or century and a half to be more specific.

In April, WDTV has covered a lot of uplifting stories on organ donations for National Donate Life Month. So, 5's Ian Roth went to go see a different kind of organ that's enriching the lives of more than just one person.

Grace Roy, HR Coordinator at ERCC, showed off the timeless musical piece, "It's an 1850 organ. It was made at that time. So, 171 years old."

For reference, when this organ was made, future President of the United States Abraham Lincoln hadn't been elected to the Senate yet; the price of gas was unnoteworthy because the first automobile wouldn't be invented for another 47 years; and the country only had 30 states.

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"The fact that you have an instrument like this that's 171 years old that still plays and still sounds good is remarkable," says Roy.

Perhaps even more remarkable than its age is the organ's history. If it wasn't for unique payment it could have been lost forever.

Grace Roy explains, "It originated with [Chip Rettzo's] father, Tony Rettzo, who was a well-known singer in this area. And actually, he sang for a wedding about 65 years ago in Marlinton and they paid him with this organ. So that was his payment for singing at the wedding."



According to Roy, it stayed with the Rettzo family for years and stayed in perfect condition.

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"The cabinet is solid oak. Its original cabinet. The only thing that has changed on it is about 15 years ago Chip replaced the bellows and he cleaned the reeds because it's a reed pump organ," she describes.

Even though it's monetary value only sits in the \$1,000 to \$1,500 range, the value comes to the residents of ERCC when they hear it play.

"Absolutely. And the sentimental value of when residents can hear this, and it takes them back to a time and a place."

The organ looks like it has found its forever home and doesn't look like it'll be going anywhere any time soon. ERCC hopes this donated organ can keep people smiling for another 170 years.

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