

A newsletter on
historic preservation
from the
State Historic Preservation Office
of the
Minnesota Historical Society

Preservation PLANNER

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County and Local Preservation Project Grants are Making a Difference in Minnesota Communities

Completion reports are in for many of the projects funded in 1995 during the first round of state bond-funded County and Local Preservation Project Grants. One thing is evident: These funds are making a difference indeed in Minnesota communities across the state.

Since 1994, the Minnesota Legislature and the governor have approved a total of \$1,250,000 in state bond funds for County and Local Preservation Project Grants: \$500,000 in 1994 and \$750,000 in 1996. Thirty grants, totaling \$818,074, have been awarded to date. The funds were appropriated to the Minnesota Historical Society "to be allocated to county and local jurisdictions as matching money for historic preservation projects of a capital nature."

The most tangible benefit is the preservation of the historic properties themselves—such as the Willmar Auditorium (Kandiyohi County), the Koochiching County Courthouse in International Falls, the Pine Island City Hall and Fire Station (Goodhue County, below), and the Christie House in Long Prairie (Todd County, p.2)—to name a few.

The projects funded vary greatly. In Willmar, grant funds helped restore the interior mural and the exterior sculpture on the auditorium. In International Falls, new windows appropriate to the historic courthouse were installed, and in Pine Island, the city hall clock and building exterior were restored. For the Christie House, one of the smaller projects funded, grant funds restored the porch and made accessible the entryway to the local museum. Several of these projects were featured in recent issues of this newsletter; others are pictured here.

Many of the historic properties funded continue to serve their original purpose—as county courthouses, public libraries, city halls, and township halls. For other properties, such as the Universal Laboratories Building in Dassel (Meeker County), the grant funds are making possible a new public use—in this case a new home for the Dassel Area Historical Society through a joint project with the city, which owns the property. The city and historical society have developed a detailed plan of work that is phased over several years: they have completed phase 1 (foundation and structural restoration) and have now initiated phase 2 (exterior restoration), including windows and doors as well as plumbing and mechanical systems work.



Both: Grants Office files

The Pine Island City Hall (above) and Fire Station (below) in Goodhue County received a grant from the County and Local Preservation Project grant program.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

July 7-Aug. 15: "Historic and Public Archaeology Field School," Red Wing. Focus on the excavation of the original site of Hamline University, in Red Wing's Central Park. Call John McCarthy, Institute for Minnesota Archaeology, 3300 University Ave., S.E., Suite 202, Mpls, MN 55414, (612) 379-8364.

Sept. 13: "Breaking New Ground on Old Buildings IV: Historic Architecture and Landscapes of Minnesota and Wisconsin," will provide a regional forum for sharing current research on Minnesota and Wisconsin historic architecture and landscapes. Illustrated keynote address on history of gardens by Susan Price. Call Michael Koop, MHS, (612) 296-5451.

Sept. 18: State Review Board meeting, 7 p.m., Minnesota History Center, 345 Kellogg Blvd. W., St. Paul. For agenda information, call Michele Decker, (612) 296-5434.

Oct. 14-19: 51st National Preservation Conference, Santa Fe, NM: "People and Places: Living in Cultural Landscapes." Highlighting cultural landscapes of the Southwest. For details, call the National Trust, 1-800-944-6847.

NOMINATION DEADLINE

Aug. 1: Preservation Honor Awards. To be presented by the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota in October. Categories include brick-and-mortar projects and community efforts, both individual and community. For details call Charles Liddy, (612) 337-0000.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

GRANTS

The County and Local Preservation Projects Grants-in-Aid Program has \$431,926 available to local and county jurisdictions for historic preservation projects of a capital nature. The State Bond-Funded Grants-in-Aid Manual issued in 1996 is in force for 1997.

The State Grants-in-Aid Program has \$100,000 available. The primary recipients of these awards are regional, county, and local nonprofit organizations whose purpose is historical preservation and/or interpretation. A newly revised manual will be distributed in July.

GRANT INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS

July 28 • 4 p.m. • New Ulm (Gág House)

July 30 • 5 p.m. • Grand Rapids (Forest History Center)

July 31 • 4 p.m. • Onamia (Mille Lacs Indian Museum)

To receive a copy of the application materials, call or write the Grants Office at the Minnesota Historical Society, 345 Kellogg Blvd. W., St. Paul, MN 55102-1906; telephone: (612) 296-5478; fax: (612) 282-2374.

GRANT APPLICATION DEADLINES

Aug. 15: Pre-applications due

Sept. 12: Applications due

Oct. 16: Grants Review Committee meets

The Bickle House (1913) was nominated for its association with Ann Jones Bickle (1886-1984), who served the Glenwood community in many civic organizations, including the Civic, Music and Literary Clubs. During World War II she was Director of Women's Services in Civilian Defense in Pope County. Bickle was a founder and the first president of the Women's Auxiliary of the Minnesota Hospital Association, and in 1945 was appointed State Health Chairman of the Minnesota Federation of Women's Clubs.

Preservation Grants

Continued from page 1

The completion reports attest to other benefits as well, sometimes harder to measure, for example, the heightened community awareness of the importance of these properties and renewed sense of local pride. Time and again, the local match exceeds the required level, and project directors have taken time to write and say what a difference the grant award is making in achieving the fundraising



Grants Office files

The Christie House in Long Prairie (Todd County) received grant assistance through the state bond-funded grants program.

goals for their projects. Several also have cited the renewed enthusiasm of volunteers and the boost to the local economy in the form of construction jobs.

A total of \$431,926 remains from the 1996 allocation; these funds are available for award during the 1997 fall grants cycle. To be eligible for a state bond-funded grant, you must be a public entity and your historic property must be publicly owned and serve a public purpose. Priority is given to properties listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

For the fall round, the maximum request is \$75,000 and the minimum is \$10,000. See the calendar (left) for application deadlines and times and locations for informational meetings. The grants manual issued in 1996 is current. To request copies of the application materials package, including the manual, contact the grants office at (612) 296-5478.

Britta L. Bloomberg
Deputy SHPO

REGISTRATION

Recent Additions to the National Register of Historic Places

Pope County: Ann Bickle House, 226 Minnesota Ave. E., Glenwood. Prepared by Susan Granger and Kay Grossman.

Ramsey County: Dairy Building, Red Barn Rd. at Hill Farm Circle, North Oaks. Prepared by Garneth Peterson.

St. Louis County: Virginia Commercial Historic District, Chestnut St. between 1st Ave. and 6th Ave., Virginia. Prepared by Charlene Roise and Chad Perkins.

Steele County: Bridge No. L-5573, Twp. Rd. over the Straight River, Clinton Falls Twp. Prepared by David C. Anderson.



SHPO collection



SHPO collection

The Dairy Building (1884) at the North Oaks Farm, a link to James J. Hill's efforts to promote agricultural diversification among farmers of the Northwest. It used the best equipment and methods available in the 1880s to show that dairy products provided significant income..

About "Reuse": A Status Report

"The preservation of historic resources can be best accomplished through alliances between those who recognize the historic value of a property and those who might be able to enhance that value with appropriate rehabilitation strategies." This concluding statement in *A Primer for Historic Properties Reuse Teams in Minnesota*, published in 1995 by SHPO, clearly proclaims the goal of a reuse study, a process that has garnered a reputation as a particularly innovative approach to the preservation of underused or threatened properties.

The *Primer* further states that this "approach recognizes that historic resources can and should be practical community assets that will increase in both historic and economic value. It will put a property's historic value in a broader perspective and give community leaders and preservation advocates the facts and direction they need to save a part of their past."

Beginning with the reuse study of Johnston Hall in Faribault in 1986, the SHPO has sponsored similar studies for 19 threatened properties. In each case, the study team encountered a

unique set of challenges. Members of each team were selected for the particular kinds of expertise they could employ in prescribing realistic uses for the property. The primary issues included building and design, community and political, and economics.

Building condition, design issues, and economic alternatives can be readily identified and objectively addressed, but community and political issues are not always clear-cut. In these instances, the reuse team is hard-pressed to maintain impartiality and objectivity, and to make recommendations that may be contrary to local agendas.

Sometimes, no matter how sound or economically viable a proposed reuse may be, if the very idea of retention of the property lacks the support of the

community, any efforts to implement a reuse program may be doomed to failure. In the best scenario, however, the study will become the catalyst for gen-

erating the necessary support and investment to bring about a successful outcome.

The study must be a "working tool" to be used; it must be realistic in its approach; and it must provide the necessary guidance toward a common goal that includes both preservation and economic viability.

The reuse study process has been a catalyst for preservation of a number of properties, including, for example, Gillette State Children's Hospital West Wing (St. Paul); the Territorial Prison (Stillwater); the Wendelin Grimm farmstead (Carver County); the Owatonna Fire Hall (Owatonna); and Tugboat Edna G. (Two Harbors). Not all have resulted in preservation success stories, however. The Sherburne County Courthouse was lost in spite of a successful court battle that required the County to delay demolition for a period in which to market the property. No developer was found and the building was demolished in 1995.

The jury is still out for several other properties, including the Armstrong House in St. Paul and the Pine City Naval Militia Armory. And, studies on three properties have recently been completed: Hearing and Johnson Schools in Aurora, the Kasota Village Hall in Kasota, and the Saint James Opera House in Saint James. With generated community support and guidance provided by the reuse studies, these and many other endangered historic resources will be given a greater chance for survival.

Charles Nelson
Historical Architect, SHPO



Courtesy Minnesota Humanities Commission

The West Wing of the Gillette State Children's Hospital, now the home of the Minnesota Humanities Commission. The auditorium (above, Sept. '95) is now the Commons Room (below, June '96). Photo below by Brian Droege.

Historic Preservation Grants Awarded to Two Minnesota Indian Tribes

Two Minnesota Indian tribes have received grants to support Tribal Historic Preservation Offices established to assist them in carrying out national historic preservation program responsibilities on tribal lands. In fiscal year 1997, the National Park Service (NPS) awarded \$920,000 to 14 American Indian tribes, pursuant to Section 101(d) of the National Historic Preservation Act. The Leech Lake and Mille Lacs tribes received \$130,831 for their tribal programs.

In announcing these awards, Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt said, "The increased participation of American Indians in the national historic preservation program is highly significant in the evolution of this important nationwide effort. Increased attention to the preservation of significant tribal places, as well as tribal culture and tradition, is important to all Americans. For many tribes, languages and traditions are threatened with extinction, and sacred places are endangered. This grant program provides much-needed funding to protect the cultures of America's first people."



SAVED

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Goodhue County. *The Boston Block (1872) in Red Wing, before (above) and after (right) the building was rehabilitated using federal preservation tax incentives.*



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Isanti County. *One of the oldest courthouses in Minnesota, the Isanti County Courthouse in Cambridge (1887) has been converted into offices using federal preservation tax incentives. Vacant since 1993 and threatened with demolition, it received a new roof, windows and an elevator for accessibility.*



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