



MINNESOTA

Preservation Planner

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

CALENDAR



Needed: more tools to make historic preservation work

That's the message preservationists in Minnesota - and across the country - are carrying to their state legislatures and to Congress this year. Historic buildings contribute to our communities' sense of identity, stability and vitality so historic preservation makes good sense as an economic development tool. But incentives of all kinds are needed to make historic rehabilitation a viable alternative.

The federal investment tax credit program, established in 1976 and lauded as one of the government's most successful and cost-effective programs of community revitalization, has been the model for a growing number of state tax incentive programs. For several

Rehabilitation of properties such as these homes in the Lincoln Park Residential Historic District in Mankato (Blue Earth County) would get a boost from bills before the Minnesota Legislature this year.

years the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota, the Minnesota Historical Society and other preservation advocates have been working hard to promote passage of a state tax incentive for historic preservation in Minnesota.

Those efforts have resulted this year in three bills before the Minnesota Legislature that could add significantly to Minnesota's "tool kit" for preservation. If the bills pass, historic properties across the state will benefit. One bill (S.F. 407/H.F. 471) directs the Department of Administration to adopt a building code for the rehabilitation of historic structures. The other two bills would create, through different approaches, financial incentives for

PUBLIC MEETINGS ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The State Historic Preservation Office will host three public meetings to discuss historic preservation planning as it relates to the needs of the general public, government agencies and communities throughout Minnesota.

We seek your input as we review goals of the statewide preservation plan issued in 2000 and set priorities for our 2001-02 work plan. Make plans now to attend one of the meetings listed below.

All meetings begin at 7 p.m., receptions at 6 p.m. No advance registration required. For more information, call Michael Koop, 651-296-5451, or e-mail michael.koop@mnhs.org.

March 29: Hutchinson, McLeod County Historical Society

April 19: Albert Lea, Freeborn County Courthouse

May 3: Duluth, St. Louis County Historical Society (Depot)

MEETINGS AND WORKSHOPS

March 27: State Review Board meeting, 7 p.m., Minnesota History Center, 345 Kellogg Blvd. W., St. Paul. For agenda information, call Michele Decker, 651-296-5434.

April 5: Grants Review Committee meeting, 9 a.m., Minnesota History Center, 345 Kellogg Blvd. W., St. Paul. For agenda information, call Mandy Skypala, 651-296-5478.

April 21: Minnesota Barn Preservation Workshop, Oliver H. Kelley Farm, Hwy. 10, Elk River. All day, beginning at 9:30 a.m. Cost: \$30

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CALENDAR

for MHS members, \$35 for nonmembers. See article, page 3, for details.

May 13-19: National Historic Preservation Week. "Restore, Renew, Rediscover Your Historic Neighborhood Schools!" is the theme of this year's week-long celebration. For tips on planning and promoting Preservation Week events, visit www.nationaltrust.org/preservationweek.

May 17: "Whose House Was This?", 2-3 p.m. Learn how to use resources such as city directories and photographs to uncover your house history. MHS Library, 345 Kellogg Blvd. W., St. Paul. \$3 for MHS members, \$5 for nonmembers. Registration required; call 651-296-2143.

May 22: State Review Board meeting, 7 p.m., Minnesota History Center, 345 Kellogg Blvd. W., St. Paul. For agenda information, call Michele Decker, 651-296-5434.

SAVED

Goodhue County: Kappel Wagon Works (1875), Red Wing. The three-story Kappel Wagon Works originally served as a wagon factory. It was later converted to a candy plant, with retail and office space. The building has been rehabilitated using federal preservation tax incentives. Work included replacing double-hung windows, repointing exterior brick, repairing the stone foundation and installing an elevator.



Kappel Wagon Works, Red Wing, before (top) and after (bottom) rehabilitation.

REGISTRATION

Nansen Agricultural Historic District added to National Register

In November 2000 Minnesota's first historic agricultural landscape – the Nansen Agricultural Historic District – was listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Composed of 30 individual farms, the Nansen district encompasses 7.3 square miles of the Sogn Valley in southwestern Goodhue County. It contains 274 resources, including 20 farmhouses, 25 barns, a cheese factory, agricultural fields, a system of roads, woodlots and a cemetery. Together, the properties form a unified, distinguishable whole.

Geographical features that define the character of the valley are the winding Upper Little Cannon River and its tributaries, tree-lined valley ridges whose forested areas were historically used as woodlots, and low-lying areas

still used as fields and pastures for crop production and cattle grazing.

The Nansen District is significant as a distinctive landscape representing a continuum of agricultural practices in southeastern Minnesota. First to farm the Sogn Valley area were Norwegian immigrants, who began subsistence farming in the 1850s. Wheat, their first important cash crop, was grown almost exclusively until the 1880s. When environmental conditions adversely affected wheat production, farmers diversified, introducing new crops, livestock and dairy cattle.

Along with the rest of Minnesota's farming industry, Sogn Valley farmers experienced ups and downs through World War I and the Great Depression. World War II brought another boom in



Nansen Agricultural Historic District, Holden Township, Goodhue County.

the area's farm economy. Today, despite ongoing economic pressures, many Sogn Valley farmers continue to work the same land their forebears farmed.

Nomination of the district culminated a two-year project undertaken by the SHPO with funding from the Minnesota Legislature as recommended by the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources. The National Register nomination was prepared by Mead & Hunt Inc.

Kelley Farm to host barn workshop

The second annual Minnesota Barn Preservation Workshop will be held Saturday, April 21, at the historic Oliver H. Kelley Farm in Elk River. This one-day workshop for barn owners and enthusiasts, agricultural historians and preservationists covers the history of barns, technical issues and construction techniques in barn rehabilitation, and resources to guide the process. Presenters include experts in several aspects of barn preservation:

- Mary Humstone is founder of Barn Again!, a program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and Successful Farming magazine. She will discuss the nationwide interest in barn preservation, show examples of successful barn rehabilitations across the country and suggest ways that Minnesotans can help preserve the state's agricultural heritage.
- Minneapolis architect and barn expert Dewey Thorbeck, AIA, directs the Center for Rural Design at the University of Minnesota. He will

discuss the past, present and future of barns and other agricultural buildings and explore their relationship to the rural landscape.

- Barn restoration contractor Mike Woodford and his company repair foundations, replace timbers, straighten structural frames, and replace roofing and siding on nearly 300 barns each year. He will discuss practical aspects of a typical restoration project.
- Kelley Farm manager Jim Mattson will describe the special challenges involved in researching and restoring the barn at this historic site.

After a box lunch, participants will tour the Kelley Farm, then travel by bus to other historic barns in the area.

Registration is \$30 for MHS members, \$35 for nonmembers. Registrations must be received by



Built during the 1850s by the founder of the Grange movement, the barn at the Oliver H. Kelley Farm had been greatly altered over the years. A carefully researched reconstruction, completed in 1974, returned the structure to its original appearance. The Kelley Farm, in Sherburne County, is one of Minnesota's 21 National Historic Landmarks.

April 9. For more information and to register, call Michele Decker, 651-296-5434.

Sponsored by the State Historic Preservation Office of the Minnesota Historical Society and the Oliver H. Kelley Farm. We gratefully acknowledge the generous support of the Horace F. and Esther J. Chamberlain Fund for Historic Preservation in helping to make this workshop possible.

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private investment in rehabilitating residential and commercial historic properties.

S.F. 169/H.F. 596, patterned after similar programs in Missouri and Wisconsin, would provide a 25-percent state income tax credit for rehabbing historic structures. S.F. 408/H.F. 331 would establish a \$10 million historic preservation grant program. Under this program, an eligible property would receive a grant for up to 20 percent of the total costs of rehabilitation. For either program, the property must be a "certified historic structure," total investment in the rehabilitation must meet certain thresholds, and all work must meet the Secretary of the

Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

If you have questions about the pending state legislation or want to help promote its passage, call the Preservation Alliance at 612-341-8140. Or log on to their web site at www.mnpreservation.org and click on "Action Alert." David Kelliher, the Minnesota Historical Society's legislative liaison, can answer questions about the legislative process and the status of bills before the legislature; phone 651-297-8085.

There's historic preservation action to watch in Congress this year as well. Support for the Historic Homeownership Assistance Act is gaining momentum and sponsors are

actively being sought. This bill would provide a federal investment tax credit for residential properties. In addition, legislation for the Conservation and Reinvestment Act was reintroduced in the House this year. That bill would increase funding for the Historic Preservation Fund to \$150 million.

For the latest developments on this federal historic preservation legislation, visit the web site of Preservation Action, a national historic preservation advocacy organization, at www.preservationaction.org.

– Britta L. Bloomberg,
Deputy SHPO

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Little Falls unveils local history curriculum

This spring elementary school students in Little Falls will learn about their local heritage and historic preservation through an exciting new curriculum, *Little Falls on the Big River: A History of Little Falls, Minnesota, for Kids*. The materials were prepared for the Little Falls Heritage Preservation Commission (LFHPC) and funded in part by a Certified Local Government grant administered through the State Historic Preservation Office.

Mary Warner, Jan Warner and Ann Marie Johnson worked with a planning committee of Morrison County Historical Society staff, LFHPC members, teachers from Little Falls schools and a group of fifth-grade students to develop the curriculum package and accompanying teacher's manual.

Illustrated with historic photographs



Morrison County Historical Society; photo by Nelson

Little Falls High School theatrical production, ca. 1910-15.

and maps, the curriculum's seven chapters trace the city's founding, growth and development on the banks of the Mississippi River. Each chapter contains a series of sidebars – Snapshot!, Look It Up, Think It Over and Check It Out – that help students explore their city's rich cultural heritage.



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