

MINNESOTA

Preservation Planner



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

Photo by John Runk



Waters were calm during opening ceremonies for the Stillwater Bridge in July 1931.

Future is brighter for historic Stillwater Lift Bridge

Few historic properties in Minnesota have received as much attention as the Stillwater Bridge. A vertical lift highway bridge built in 1931 across the St. Croix River, the bridge was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1989. It gained prominence as a national preservation issue in 1997 when, caught in an interagency tug of war and threatened with demolition, it was named to the National Trust for Historic Preservation's list of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places. And four times - in 1996, 1997, 1999 and 2000 - it made the

list of Minnesota's most endangered properties, issued by the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota.

Through the many years of planning for a new river crossing between Minnesota and Wisconsin, the fate of the historic bridge has been debated by more than two dozen federal agencies; state agencies in the two states, including both SHPOs; numerous local governments and many other stakeholders. Now, as the debate draws to a close, there is reason for optimism.

Stillwater Lift Bridge *continued on page 3*

CALENDAR

MEETINGS AND WORKSHOPS

April 16: "Common Repairs to Historic Structures" 9 a.m. to noon, Midwest Preservation Institute, Anoka-Ramsey Community College. Learn how to protect your historic structure from water damage, ice dams and dry rot and make repairs that preserve the integrity of the building. Cost: \$69. Call Sherry Butcher at 763-422-3395 for more information and to register.

May 24: 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.

June 16-18: 4th Biennial Conference for Stewards of Midwest Region National Historic Landmarks and Historic Sites, Mill City Museum, Minneapolis. Co-sponsored by the National Park Service Midwest Regional Office, the Minnesota Historical Society and the Minnesota SHPO. For more information call Dena Sanford, 402-661-1944, or e-mail Dena_Sanford@nps.gov.

MAY IS PRESERVATION MONTH

The National Trust for Historic Preservation has stretched Preservation Week into Preservation Month. The theme this year is "Restore America: Communities at a Crossroads." For tips on planning Preservation Month events, visit the National Trust web site at www.nationaltrust.org/preservationmonth/index. To publicize your events on the MNLOCALHISTORY listserv, e-mail Tim Glines at timothy.glines@mnhs.org. Include the event name, date, time, location, a brief description, sponsors and contact information.

SAVED

Carver County: Brinkhaus Saloon Livery Barn (ca. 1890), Chaska.

Rehabilitated using funds from the State Capital Projects Grants-in-Aid program, this Chaska brick building has been converted into offices and a museum for the Chaska Chamber of Commerce and the Chaska Historical Society. Work included repairing and repointing brick, replacing molding along the cornice and restoring the cupola.



Brinkhaus Saloon Livery Barn before (left) and after rehabilitation as offices and a museum for the City of Chaska.

Brown County: Hermann Monument (1897), New Ulm.

Sixty-two bullet holes, a rusted right boot, a gaping hole in the shoulder and corroded interior framework were among the problems repaired on this monument using funds from the State Capital Projects Grants-in-Aid program. The 32-foot-tall copper statue was originally erected by the Sons of Hermann, a German-American fraternal organization.



Left: The Hermann Monument before rehabilitation. Right: The restored statue is hoisted back into place.

REGISTRATION

Recent additions to the National Register of Historic Places

Crow Wing County: A. L. Cole Memorial Building (1937), 4285 Tower Square, Pequot Lakes.

Prepared by David Anderson.

Dakota County: St. Stefan's Romanian Orthodox Church (1924), 350 5th Ave. N., South St. Paul.

Prepared by David Anderson.

Stevens County: Morris High School (1915, 1934, 1950), 600 Columbia Ave., Morris.

Prepared by Susan Granger, Scott Kelly, Kay Grossman and Sue Dieter.



Built for social and recreational activities, the A. L. Cole Memorial Building housed theatrical productions, school functions and sporting events. Sponsored by the Pequot Lakes Commercial Club, it was constructed during the Great Depression by the Works Progress Administration. In 1939 the auditorium was converted into a movie theater, which was managed by the club until 1967. The Pequot Lakes Area Historical Society has its museum in the basement.



The Church of St. Stefan was an important means of sustaining ethnic identity for the Romanian immigrants who settled in South St. Paul in the early 20th century and found employment in the meatpacking industry. The church's Byzantine architecture and its dual role as a house of worship and a social center for the community made it a focal point for both Orthodox Christians and other Romanians in the city.

Preservation conference set for Sept. 15-16

Mark your calendars now for Minnesota's 26th Annual Statewide Historic Preservation Conference, to be held Sept. 15-16 at the Duluth Entertainment Convention Center overlooking Lake Superior.

Sponsored by the State Historic Preservation Office, the conference will be hosted by the City of Duluth, the Duluth Heritage Preservation Commission, the Duluth Preservation Alliance, the Duluth Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Duluth Greater Downtown Council.

Highlighting the program will be a keynote address by economic development consultant Donovan Rypkema, who specializes in downtown

revitalization and economic and preservation issues related to the rehabilitation of historic structures. Conference sessions, mobile workshops and tours will draw on Duluth's Preservation Development Initiative, sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation to incorporate historic preservation into community economic development (see *Preservation Planner*, Winter 2005).

Watch for a postcard about the conference to be mailed later this



An evening reception will be held on board the *William A. Irvin*, a steel-hulled freighter launched in 1938 as the flagship of U.S. Steel's Great Lakes fleet.

spring. Further details will be available in the summer. For more information before then, call the SHPO at 651-296-5434 or e-mail mnshpo@mnhs.org.

Stillwater Lift Bridge *continued from page 1*

A look back

When the original Memorandum of Agreement for a new bridge project was signed in 1994, it was assumed that the lift bridge would continue to carry traffic as part of the Minnesota highway system. But in 1996 the National Park Service determined that the project would have an adverse effect on the scenic and recreational values for which the St. Croix had been designated a Wild and Scenic River. If a new river crossing was constructed, the NPS said, the historic lift bridge would have to come down.

With that determination, the project derailed and debate heated up. Work began again in 1999 and a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement was issued. However, in 2001 the project was again suspended because consulting parties could not agree on the fate of the Stillwater Lift Bridge and on appropriate and fundable mitigation.

Working toward a resolution

In 2003 the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) set in motion

a facilitated stakeholder process to discuss a new set of alternatives for the river crossing. This time, the future of the lift bridge was central to the discussion; under all the alternatives explored, the bridge would serve a functional use.

As the planning phase nears closure, certain options have risen to the fore. Both the FHWA and the Minnesota and Wisconsin Departments of Transportation prefer the alternative calling for the lift bridge to be rehabilitated and integrated into a loop trail for pedestrians and bicycles - a vision that will enhance the recreational and scenic values of the waterway.

Several issues remain under discussion, including a management structure for the lift bridge. Under the current proposal, the State of Minnesota would retain ownership and MnDOT would manage the bridge. In addition, it is critical that the bridge be in good condition for its conversion to trail use. The \$5 million appropriated by Congress a few years ago will fund the

first phase of that work, to begin this summer. The Minnesota SHPO and others are advocating strongly that funds for the balance of the required work, as identified in a MnDOT inspection report, be secured as part of the project. Finally, an endowment fund is proposed to cover future maintenance and rehabilitation costs.

A final Environmental Impact Statement is expected in May or June, after which an amended Memorandum of Agreement will be issued. While the lift bridge is not the only cultural resource issue to be addressed in the memorandum, it is the most visible and complex. If all goes according to plan, work on a new St. Croix bridge, downstream from the historic bridge, will begin in 2007. That represents good work by the many stakeholders who have toiled for the last two years and good news for the future of a local landmark.

- Britta L. Bloomberg, Deputy
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Midwest Preservation Institute opens

Need to know more about maintaining and preserving historic buildings? Then this new education program is for you.

The Midwest Preservation Institute (MPI), located at Anoka-Ramsey Community College, was established to help improve historic preservation practices in the region. The strategy: strengthen preservation values and the quality of traditional building arts by developing a network of individuals equipped with preservation knowledge and skills.

Designed for building professionals, homeowners, preservationists and others with a vested interest in the care of historic buildings, the Institute's curriculum includes courses such as Fundamentals of Maintaining Historic Buildings, Common Repairs to Historic Structures and Historic Masonry Preservation (see



Restoration work on this commercial façade in Todd County's Long Prairie in 2001 included masonry repairs.

Calendar under "Meetings and Workshops").

For more information on MPI, call Sherry Butcher at 763-422-3395 or e-mail sherry.butcher@anokaramsey.edu.

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