

MIDWEST OFFICE HIGHLIGHTS

January 2008

SAVING HISTORIC PLACES---FY07 ACHEIVEMENTS

This summer, Chicagoland was the second recipient of \$1 million in preservation funding from **American Express** and the National Trust for Historic Preservation's **Partners in Preservation** program, launched in 2006 in San Francisco. **The Midwest Office** (MWO) worked to identify potential projects worthy of support, and **25 historic sites** from five Chicagoland counties were selected to compete in on-line voting, with the winner of the popular vote guaranteed to receive their request. Sites rallied their constituents to vote with a variety of creative strategies. When voting closed on October 10th, the **On Leong Merchant Association** building in Chinatown was the clear winner, guaranteeing them \$110,000 to stabilize the decorative terra cotta masonry that defines the iconic 1926 Chinese community center. To distribute the remaining funds, the MWO assembled an **Advisory Committee** of respected civic leaders who awarded 14 other substantial grants to projects representing the diverse range of Chicago history and architecture, and each of the remaining 10 projects received \$5,000 recognition awards. Partners in Preservation brought money to preservation projects in the field, engaged the public in active support of preservation, built the capacity of local preservation organizations and historic sites, and raised the visibility of the National Trust, American Express and historic preservation in general. It was a fun and exciting summer! See the winners and explore all 25 sites at www.partersinpreservation.com.



On Leong during summer festival, 2007, Darius Bryjka

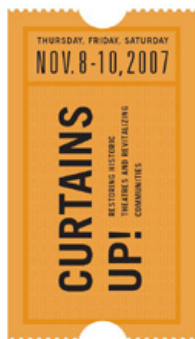
REVITALIZE COMMUNITIES---FY07 ACHEIVEMENTS

With a goal to establish an effective state historic tax credit in each state, MWO and our Center for State and Local Policy has been working diligently throughout 2007 with statewide partners and preservation advocates to enhance the impact and usability of existing state historic tax credits in Iowa, Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin. Efforts to establish a tax credit came oh-so-close in Minnesota during the 2007 legislative session, but were successful in Ohio, where a two year pilot program will accept up to 100 applications annually.



Photo courtesy of Heritage Ohio

LEAD THE PRESERVATION MOVEMENT---FY07 ACHEIVEMENTS



Curtains Up! Restoring Historic Theatres and Revitalizing Communities was held on November 8-10, 2007 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. MWO and co-sponsor, the **Wisconsin Historical Society**, held the two- and a half day workshop in collaboration with the **League of Historic American Theaters**. The event attracted a capacity crowd with 80 registered participants representing 35 theatre projects, ranging in size from 200 to 1,700 seats, in small towns and cities across the Midwest. It was a hands-on, project specific workshop using nationally recognized facilitators with extensive expertise. The seminar was designed to show the way through the maze of decisions involved in a successful theatre renovation and reopening. The symposium was made possible by the generous support of the **Jeffris Family Foundation of Janesville, Wisconsin**.



FUNDING FOR PRESERVATION BY THE NATIONAL TRUST---FY07 ACHEIVEMENTS



Downtown Expo, Freeborn Bank Building, Albert Lea, MN Photo: Peter Bastianelli-Kerze, Eveleth, MN 5/17/2007

Our ongoing goal to create endowed grant funds for Midwest preservation projects was extremely successful this year with the establishment of two new Preservation Funds: **The Dr. Frank Henry Landes Preservation Fund for Iowa**, and the **Virginia Sweatt Preservation Fund for Minnesota**. MWO is extremely grateful to the Luyben and Sweatt families for their generous support. In October, the Sweatt

Fund awarded grants to the **City of Albert Lea** for a Downtown Expo which will encourage appropriate renovation of historic buildings; and to **Historic St. Paul** to support the survey of housing stock in *Invest St. Paul* areas, to identify structures with historic or architectural character presenting opportunities for rehabilitation. The Landes Fund awarded its first grant to the **Clayton County Conservation Board** for an assessment of the Motor Mill Inn and Stable in Elkader, including documentation of current conditions and recommended repairs.



Motor Mill Cooperage, Elkader, IA, www.motormill.org

SAVING HISTORIC PLACES—FY08 PRIORITIES/CHALLENGES



Milwaukee Soldiers Home

The **Milwaukee Soldiers Home Historic District** is one of the 3 original National Soldiers Homes authorized by President Lincoln in 1865. The site occupies approximately 90 acres and includes 25 buildings, among which are excellent examples of Greek Revival, Queen Anne and Gothic Revival architectural styles. Additionally, the site is listed on the National Register for its significant archeological resources, as the location of a 400 million year old underwater reef. The site faces an urgent threat because of the ongoing deterioration of the buildings which have stood unused for decades. In addition, work proposed through the Veterans Administration Enhanced Use Lease Program could open 37 acres of vacant land and six historic buildings to commercial development. The MWO's challenge in FY08 will be to help all of the involved parties find a restoration/redevelopment plan that satisfies both the needs of the existing Veterans Administration Hospital for redevelopment and the concerns of numerous veterans' groups who want the site to continue to respect the legacy of this country's veterans.

Teardowns in the Chicagoland area, which continue unabated in many communities, remain a priority for the Midwest Office. One challenge is to collect meaningful data that can be used to convince local governments that unchallenged and unmanaged demolitions of older and historic homes and replacement with out-of-scale and out-of-character McMansions is not in their best interest. Another challenge is finding the most effective tools that communities can implement to assist in managing the teardowns issue



LEAD THE PRESERVATION MOVEMENT---FY08 PRIORITIES/CHALLENGES

On March 10–11, 2008, house museum owners, stewards and experts in the field will come together in Wausau, Wisconsin for a Midwest Office sponsored symposium, *Beyond the Velvet Ropes: Successful House Museums for the 21st Century*. This workshop is designed to deal directly with the problems facing small house museums. Participants will hear from nationally-recognized experts and local authorities about the most innovative ways to keep these treasures viable. Participants will network with fellow museum stewards and individually interact with program experts to find answers that will help them meet the challenges they face in new and ground-breaking ways. This workshop is made possible by the generous support of the **Jeffris Family Foundation of Janesville, Wisconsin**.