

MIDWEST OFFICE - HIGHLIGHTS
September 2007

SAVING HISTORIC PLACES

The **East Side School** in **Decorah, Iowa**, chosen as one of *America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places* in 2003, has another chance at survival. District Judge Margaret Lingreen ruled that voters can decide in September whether or not to allow the East Side School Development Corporation (ESSDC) to lease the school for a community arts and education center. The decision annulled the local school board's decision to keep the motion off the ballot, despite a petition that 1,030 people signed in favor of taking the issue to the polls. The Midwest Office has been deeply engaged in this issue since the 11 Most listing, providing technical assistance, conducting a preservation development charrette, and submitting an affidavit for the lawsuit with assistance from the Law Department. The judge's ruling represents a triumph for the ESSDC and the community, which will now have the opportunity to decide the future of this local landmark school. The Midwest Office is continuing to assist the ESSDC in their efforts to educate the public about the ballot initiative and keep the issue in the press.



*East Side School
Decorah, Iowa*

The wide variety of historic structures in **Missouri's Mark Twain National Forest** were chosen as one of *America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places* in June. Since learning in late 2005 that the Forest planned to demolish or remove from federal ownership up to 70 historic resources, the MWO, MPO, and Law Department have been working with the Forest, SHPO, and ACHP to investigate alternatives as part of Section 106 consultation. In April, the MWO awarded a Thorne Intervention Fund grant to the Forest to support a feasibility study and assesment of four historic properties. While positive progress has been made on the Programmatic Agreement now under development, the MWO remains concerned about the Forest's Facilities Master Plan, which demonstrates a clear preference for new construction over preservation. We hope the 11 Most listing will highlight the National Trust's concern about Forest Service cultural resource policy and will provide the Public Lands Initiative team with the opportunity to more deeply engage with that agency.



*Markham House
Mark Twain National Park
Missouri*

REVITALIZE COMMUNITIES

With assistance from our Local Partner, **the Cincinnati Preservation Association**, and with the sponsorship of National Trust Council Member and member of CPA's Board, **Marty Rahe**, MWO hosted on July 10, a reception and informational forum on the application of Ohio's newly established State Historic Tax Credit to revitalization efforts in downtown Cincinnati and in the adjacent **Over-the-Rhine** neighborhood. Thirty business leaders and local developers attended and heard staff from MWO, NTCIC and our Statewide Partner, Heritage Ohio, speak to the power of historic tax credits as a revitalization tool, discuss how it could apply in Cincinnati, and learn how they could help assure its continued availability for all the communities of Ohio.



Recently, Main Street organizations in Wisconsin, Iowa and Illinois have been exploring ways to exchange services to bring a broader perspective to their programs. The concept was piloted when WI Main Street was invited and agreed to judge the Iowa awards and Main Street Iowa did the same for the Wisconsin awards. As a result of this exchange, MWO staff judged the **Iowa Main Street Design Awards** at the invitation of **Wisconsin Main Street**. Award categories included Best Design Committee Project—Beautification, Best Design Committee Project—Education/Preservation, Best Façade Improvement, Best Public Improvement Project, and Best Total Building Rehabilitation Project. The candidate projects

in each category were ranked based on a total possible score of 100 points according to 10 criteria. The Awards judging presented an excellent opportunity for interaction between the two state organizations, as well as the chance to learn more about their programs. It was an interesting and rewarding collaboration that will hopefully lead to further and expanded cooperation among Midwestern Main Street Programs.

ENGAGE THE PUBLIC

During the next few months, the Midwest Office will be sponsoring two workshops in Wisconsin. Funded by a generous grant from the Jeffris Family Foundation of Wisconsin, a two-and-a-half day workshop, *Curtains Up! Restoring Our Historic Theatres and Revitalizing Our Communities* will be held November 8-10, 2007 at The Pfister Hotel in downtown Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The event is designed to show current and prospective stewards of historic theatre venues the way thru the maze of decisions that precede the launch of a successful historic theatre venue. This hands-on, project specific workshop will be held in collaboration with the League of Historic American Theaters and the Wisconsin Historical Society using content experts with extensive expertise to help participants through the initial planning stages of their projects. A second workshop scheduled for March 10-11, 2008 in Wausau, Wisconsin is also funded by the Jeffris Family Foundation of Wisconsin. *Beyond the Velvet Ropes: Successful House Museums for the 21st Century* is a two-day event targeted toward a broad audience of organizations which own and manage historic properties. The content will be focused on smaller organizations with little or no staff but is designed to be a one-stop event that will address the small house museums' specific concerns about fundraising, board development, curatorial practices, and creating engaging interpretative programs. Nationally-recognized and local experts will also be talking about the newest ideas in the field.



*Balcony view
Mabel Tainter Theater
Menomonie, WI*



*AF & AM Lodge
Cave-in-Rock, IL*

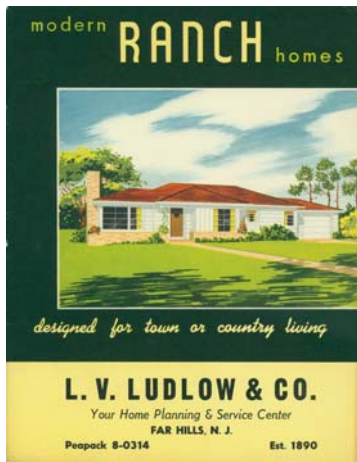
Continuing the collaboration and coordination that began in 2006, the Midwest Office accompanied Project Designers from **Illinois Main Street** on a tour of southern and south-eastern Illinois towns, including DuQuoin, Roseville, Elizabethtown, Cave-in-Rock, Galconda, and Metropolis. The whirlwind tour included a number of meetings, site visits, and presentations with Main Street managers and board members, property owners, and city officials. Our efforts focused on the successful application of Main Street principles to small town commercial areas, the programs of the National Trust, and technical assistance programs and financial incentives of both organizations that could be combined on specific projects. In Metropolis, the City Council and a large public audience were energized by the prospect of bringing a Main Street program and **National Trust Preservation Funds** to bear on their wonderful, but significantly deteriorated, Art Deco Massac Theater, which has been crumbling for nearly a decade. The MWO plans to expand our efforts and outreach to include additional tours to Main Street communities throughout the state in coming months.

LEAD THE PRESERVATION MOVEMENT



The National Historic Landmark town of **Arrow Rock, Missouri**, Missouri's first Dozen Distinctive Destinations winner (2006), continues to be threatened by the potential construction of a Confined Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) nearby, although recent developments provide some cause for optimism. Concerns were first raised in January 2007, when Dennis Gessling applied to the Missouri DNR for permission to build and operate a CAFO housing 48,000 hogs just two miles west of Arrow Rock. Opponents of the Gessling CAFO cited concerns about air quality and odor, as well as the potential impact upon the tourism industry so important to this town and other nearby historic sites. Upon closer examination of its funding sources, the MWO discovered the CAFO operation was receiving financial support from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Although initially the NRCS did not believe the undertaking required Section 106 review, the contentiousness of the project coupled with National Trust interest caused the agency to initiate Section 106 consultation in May. The MWO and Law Department, in partnership with the Washington University School of Law, have requested Missouri DNR refrain from issuing the state CAFO construction permit until Section 106 consultation is resolved. The MWO and Law Department will continue to work to engage the ACHP on this issue and will remain deeply involved in Section 106 consultation.

On the legislative front, Missouri HB 909, introduced in February 2007 and intended to create a buffer zone around state parks and National Historic Landmark sites, was not successful. Fortunately, a separate bill that would have rescinded county health ordinances regulating CAFOs died in the state senate this spring. The bill had prompted opponents to raise concerns that the bill would usurp the ability of local entities to regulate CAFOs within their jurisdictions.



Led by our statewide partner, **Landmarks Illinois**, the 2007 Illinois preservation conference in the Hyde Park neighborhood of Chicago included a track focused specifically on preservation of recent past resources, which are increasingly threatened in Chicago and its surrounding suburbs. One of the least recognized and most threatened of these resources is the Ranch house. **Chris Morris of the Midwest Office**, along with **Darius Bryjka and Anthony Rubano of the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA)**, created specialized training materials for a session, **“Ranch Houses: Past, Present, and Future.”** The session covered the history and cultural significance of the ranch house, processes for designating properties at the local and national level, and strategies for maintenance and repair. The focus of the course was technical information on specific assessment and preservation techniques for Ranch houses, included a **Resource Guide** for parts and services, and a detailed **Inspection Checklist** that guides homeowners through the process of assessing conditions and prioritizing maintenance and repairs. The session was so well-received that the MWO and IHPA plan to develop the materials into a series of public presentations, training workshops, and additional tools for Illinois Historic Preservation Commission, Certified Local Governments, and communities with large collections of post-war housing.

Nicollet Island, which sits in the Mississippi River near the St. Anthony Falls, is located in the heart of the St. Anthony Falls National Register Historic district. It has played a critical role in the explosive growth of Minneapolis, and is one of a handful of historic riverfront sites that recently have been subjected to intense development pressure. The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board began exploring the option of building a new football stadium on Nicollet Island for DeLaSalle High School, a long-time resident of the Island. The proposed stadium would take up a considerable portion of open space in one of the oldest residential areas, blocking views across the Island to the river on either side. Most significantly, it would require the closing and vacation of a large portion of an historic street, disrupting the street grid and viewsheds. Although currently engaged in a lawsuit filed by the **Friends of the Riverfront, the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota**, and the **National Trust, DeLaSalle High School** returned to the City with a revised plan for their stadium this March. The changes were designed in response to both the negative public comment and the HPC Findings from their previous hearings. Legal counsel for the preservation organizations informed the City of Minneapolis that such a move was unwise and inappropriate given the pending lawsuit, and that the proposed changes did not fundamentally alter the project in a way that would preserve the historic streetscape of the National Register district. The Midwest Office and the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota also provided comments to the Heritage Preservation Commission, stating objections to the process and reiterating larger concerns about the negative impact of the project on streetscape and archaeological resources. The HPC overwhelmingly voted to deny the Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposal, reconfirming the inappropriateness of a new stadium in this sensitive location..

FUNDING FOR PRESERVATION BY THE NATIONAL TRUST

The **Partners in Preservation** program with American Express that will avail \$5M in preservation funding to projects in selected cities is focused on Chicagoland in 2007. 25 worthy sites have been selected by MWO to compete for a share of the \$1M allocated this year. Those sites were announced and a five week on-line public voting period commenced on September 6. Once the voting closes, a Chicago Advisory Committee will recommend awards based on the results of the public vote, their own knowledge of the community, and information provided by MWO. Brick and mortar grants to selected projects will be administered by MWO between January 2008 and June 2009.

The **Virginia and Harry Sweatt Preservation Fund for Minnesota (PAM)** was established by a generous gift from Ginny and Harry, who have been so involved in the preservation of Minnesota historic resources for the last two decades. Ginny Sweatt retired from long service on the Board of our Statewide Partner, the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota (PAM), in 2005 and in close cooperation with MWO and PAM, issued a \$100,000 challenge to match their gift to begin the fund. That Challenge has been successfully met, but MWO and Resource Development staff will continue to seek additional contributions to the fund.