

# **Barn Preservation Programs and Activities (MICHIGAN)**

## I. Michigan Continuing Collaborative Efforts in Barn and Rural Preservation

During the '90's numerous joint efforts in barn and rural preservation were undertaken in Michigan. Most of these have continued and expanded. The chief collaborators in these initiatives have been: Michigan Barn Preservation Network, Michigan Centennial Farm Association, Michigan Historic Preservation Network, Michigan Humanities Council, Michigan State Historic Preservation Office, MSU's Extension Service, MSU's Museum, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. A number of the new enterprises brought partners together for the first time. A quick summary of major collaborations in 1999 follows.

1. The "Barn Again—American Icon" exhibit jointly arranged by the Smithsonian Institution and the Michigan Humanities Council was booked in seven locations throughout Michigan. Attendance at the exhibits and the related "spin-off" sessions has been great. (Plans are being made for the new series "Yesterday's Tomorrow: Past Visions of an American Future" with the MSU Extension Service a new joint sponsor).
2. Two new tax acts were passed by Michigan's Legislature for granting tax credit for preservation efforts. Broad collaborative efforts led to this passage. Six workshops were conducted by the State Historic Preservation Office and Michigan Historic Preservation Network to assist in applying the acts.
3. New efforts are being made for a fifth Michigan conference on "Preservation in Small Communities and Rural Areas" to be held in the spring of 2000 in SW Michigan.
4. Two sessions concerned primarily with rural preservation were added to the annual conference of the Michigan Historic Preservation Network. They were "Rehabilitating Barns in Michigan" and "The Best in Michigan Land Use Practice."
5. At least eight somewhat remote rural communities were supported by the Michigan Humanities Council for educational programs in rural preservation.
6. Training was provided for 125 "Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance" employees of the National Park Service for helping them to better understand rural landscapes.

7. Efforts are expanding in “Heritage Tourism” for MSU’s Extension Service including a new “Tourism Assessment” project in Michigan’s “Thumb Area.”
8. Grants have been announced by the Michigan Department of Transportation for the development of a statewide Agricultural Context Document through the Bailey Scholars Program and under the leadership of Terry Shaffer of MSU Museum/Extension.
9. A Michigan senator is being assisted in efforts at sponsoring new barn rehabilitation legislation.

## II. Major Efforts of the Michigan Barn Preservation Network for 1999

The Michigan Barn Preservation Network, now in its fifth year with over 200 paid members, continues to grow and expand its promotional efforts and services. A revision of bylaws to increase governing board participation is underway. Its major efforts during 1999 were:

1. Nearly 200 eager participants attended the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Michigan Barn Preservation Conference at MSU on March 13, 1999.
2. Nearly 1,000 copies of the Michigan Barn Rehabilitation Contractors and Consultants List have been distributed since its revision in 1998. Revision and reprinting efforts are underway.
3. Barn rehabilitation workshops have been provided at several locations in Michigan including special sessions at Port Oneida of the Sleeping Bear National Lakeshore and Maybury State Park.
4. The Michigan Barn Preservation Network provided a promotional display and assisted with programming at the “Barn Again—American Icon” exhibits and at several other events.
5. Three Michigan Barn Preservation Network newsletters were printed with the assistance of the Michigan Farm Bureau and widely distributed.
6. The website Barn Journal Online sponsored by Leik Foundation, the MSU Museum and the Barn Network and edited by Charles Leik is being continuously updated and is regularly accessed.
7. For the fourth year a Barn of the Year was recognized and included on coffee mugs, which are sold by the Michigan Barn Preservation Network.

**Broad Topics for Consideration at**

**2000 National Barn Alliance Meeting**

1. What publications are needed for continuation and expansion of barn rehabilitation efforts?
2. What improvements and additions should be made for Internet services in barn rehabilitation?
3. What improvements should be made for increasing the effectiveness of National Barn Alliance meetings—location, timing, content, etc?
4. What are your suggestions for any joint programming that might take place between states?
5. What are your suggestions for assisting the Barn Again! program?
6. What should the relationship be between the National Barn Alliance and the National Trust for Historic Preservation?
7. What can the National Barn Alliance do to expand efforts to include farmsteads and rural preservation?
8. How can the National Barn Alliance increase participation of National Trust advisors and State Historic Preservation Offices?