

BARN PRESERVATION PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES (OHIO)

Brief History: In the mid 1980's, there was a grass-roots effort to organize a statewide barn preservation network, but without paid staff support the effort languished. Meanwhile, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) continued to receive numerous inquiries about barn preservation concerns and expanded delivery of technical assistance. In 1993, Ray Luce, Ohio's SHPO, and Keith Smith, Director of OSU Extension, initiated informal discussions about the possible collaboration of a barn program for Ohio. The first formal meeting in August 1994, included two representatives from the SHPO and four Extension staff. Inspired by Michigan's groundbreaking Barn Rehabilitation Workshop efforts, it was felt Ohio needed to develop a similar program encouraging rural barn rehabilitation and reutilization. Ohio's program was also inspired by the NTHP's successful BARN AGAIN! awards program begun in 1988 under the guidance of Mary Humstone.

Program Focus: Modeled after Michigan's highly successful program and the Ohio SHPO's popular Building Doctor Clinics, BARN AGAIN! in Ohio has as its goals: to 1) provide technical information to rural property owners on the how-to's of barn rehabilitation and reutilization (rather than pure restoration or "remuddling") and 2) develop a series of workshops using lectures and barn tours that will bring rural property owners together with barn experts, contractors, and engineers. Annual winter planning workshops evaluate the successes and weaknesses of the program and chart plans for future Barn Again! programs.

Program Collaborators: Ohio's BARN AGAIN! program has been developed and overseen by The Ohio State University Extension and the Ohio Historic Preservation Office, a division of the Ohio Historical Society. Program development also includes district extension specialists, county extension agents, and a growing list of barn experts. The technical and support staff of OSU Extension have been instrumental in developing information packets, workshop materials, and other program materials. There is also growing coordination efforts with Friends of Ohio Barns and local preservation organizations.

Workshops: Twenty-one educational workshops have been held in different locations across the state to date, with three more tentatively scheduled for 2002. These workshops have attracted nearly 1300 registrants and extensive local and statewide media coverage. Most workshops are organized into a full day of presentations followed by a day tour of area barns. In addition to the county workshops, a statewide barn conference is held each year. In 2002, the conference will be held in Archbold on March 15-16. Also, an educational session and barn tour with informative demonstrations are being planned during the NTHP's annual meeting in Cleveland on October 8-12, 2002.

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Publications: A comprehensive packet is provided to all workshop registrants and by mail for a \$25.00 fee. In addition, in April 2000 all 88 county extension offices received from Extension a comprehensive barn reference book. In March 2002, all 88 county extension offices will receive a comprehensive update to the barn reference book. Included in the packet are the NTHP's BARN AGAIN! Guide along with the Barn Aid Series, several Preservation Briefs and National Register Bulletins, Ohio's Guide to Barn Rehabilitation and Reutilization, a contractor's list and other barn related materials. Questionnaires are being sent to all contractors/carpenters doing barn rehabilitation work in Ohio. There is a steady demand for qualified contractors capable of doing barn repairs.

Other Activities: In conjunction with the Ohio's Outstanding Century Farm awards, it is hoped a similar program can be developed for successful barn rehabilitation projects in Ohio, where winners can be recognized at the State Fair and Farm Science Review. Case studies of successful Barn Again! projects are being compiled and will hopefully be shared with the National Barn Alliance database. In addition, a barn owner's database will be developed for future program planning and information distribution. Five workshops held in the late 1990s in conjunction with the Smithsonian Institutions BARN AGAIN! exhibit were very well received. The barn workshops held at the Farm Science Review and Power Show - Ohio have been successful and will be continued. A new statewide organization, Friends of Ohio Barns, was formed in 2001 and has published a newsletter.

Agricultural Land Issues: Loss of farmland and urban sprawl are among the leading land management issues in Ohio. OSU-Extension is devoting much of its outreach in this area. An Ohio Office of Farmland Preservation has been established in the Ohio Department of Agriculture. Legislation passed in 1999 allows farmers to qualify for a tax break on federal income and estate taxes for qualified easement donations. A series of Managing Change workshops held across the state in 1996-97 attracted huge audiences, and have laid the foundation for additional farmland legislation. BARN AGAIN! will continue to be linked to and dovetailed with the farmland preservation audience.

Agricultural Surveys and National Register Designations: An agricultural survey and National Register nomination was prepared for Elizabeth Township in Miami County. At 20,000 acres, it is the largest rural historic district in Ohio. The nomination was the result of a grass roots effort and has energized the preservation efforts and awareness in this rural area. The SHPO has also developed an annotated bibliography of all 250 agricultural related National Register Listings in Ohio. SHPO staff are also in the preliminary stages of developing guidelines for documenting historic barns. A nomination was prepared by the SHPO in 2001 for a 90 acre farmstead in Wayne County. Another farmstead nomination will be completed in 2002.