

MICHIGAN

Annual Barn Preservation Activities Report - 2004

2004 has been a very active and busy year for Michigan Barn Preservation Network. Most of it on the very positive side. However, not all was good. In the middle of October, Victor Wiltse, husband of MBPN President Vera Wilts, and a co-worker were killed in an accident while working on a barn roof. No one witnessed the accident and the cause is still unknown. Safety procedures were followed and the scaffolding was sound. Vic was a leader in his community and loved working on barns. Our hearts and thoughts are with Vera. Vic will be missed.

A highlight of the year was the selection of the barn owned by Leo Fitzpatrick, Beaverton, Michigan, for National recognition by Barn Again. Leo lives on a Centennial Farm and did a great share of the work himself. With the help of a grant from the Michigan Humanities Council, MBPN printed a poster showing a series of dated pictures of the barn from construction to the present day. It is being sold as a fundraiser and a PR tool.

The 9th Annual Meeting was held on Mar. 10 and 11, the first time it was a two-day event. It was also the first time for us as part of the conference. Held on Saturday, it featured four stops at barns that had been moved. The tour was very successful in spite of the break down of the buses.

Barn Survey work is continuing with several more counties becoming involved. Luanne Kozma, with the MSU Museum continues to coordinate the program, assigning the area for groups to cover in the counties, raising funds, and scheduling training sessions for local instructors.

Several workshops were held during the year featuring foundation repair, sill replacement and barn evaluation. Port Oneida- Sleeping Bear Dunes continued their annual workshops in restoring barns in that area of the National Park.

MBPN is working closely with the Oakland Co. Parks and Recreation Dept. and the Oakland Co. Road Commission in the move of the "Ellis" Barn. It is being moved from its present (original) site to a near-by recreation area (6-7 miles). It is a large barn with several unique features. Many of the materials used for the barn are reported as to have been shipped in from New England.

The Michigan Centennial Farm Association is continuing to support the efforts toward more awareness of the need to preserve barns. While many old barns continue to fall around the state, there is an increase in those that are being repaired, having roofs replaced, painted and being converted to other uses. They are involved with programs that stress the importance of awareness to barn conditions, proper maintenance and what will happen if all these "Rural Icons"

disappear. The ethnic diversity of the rural heritage of Michigan is well represented by Michigan Barns.

Wall Mart Corp. recently purchased large tract of farmland south of Ionia, Mi. with a large barn. It was to be torn down. With the help of a local newspaper woman, (the person that puts together the MBPN newsletter) it has a temporary reprieve and several local businesses are interesting in acquiring the Barn. Wall Mart has shown some interest in helping with the preservation of the "Benedict Barn."

Central Michigan University Public Broadcasting Network has produced a video "Michigan Barns: Then End of an Era" by Kurt Wilson. It features the Leo Fitzpatrick barn, (nationally honored in 2004), The Stevens Barn, Beal City, MI. (round barn torn down summer of 2004) and other barns in the area. The laminated rafter barn is reported to have originated in the Mount Pleasant, Michigan area. (Home of Central MI, Univ.)

The 10th Annual Michigan Barn Preservation Conference will be held at Michigan State University Kellogg Center on March 11 and 12, 2005. Plans are underway to continue the two-day format with the tour being held on Friday, the first day of the conference. It will feature alternate uses of barns, conversion to houses, public use (nature center) and Bed and Breakfast. Saturday's program will include presentations on:

- AM Land Use in MI
Barn Rehabilitation
Save wiring in barns while not changing historical appearance
New uses for old Barns
- PM
a How to move a Barn
Barn Again Restoration
Insuring your Barn
Raising a Timber Frame Barn
- PM
b Ag Barn Conversions
Hay Cars- Their relationship to the development of barns
Woldumar Barn-Nature Center
Saving Barns form Sprawl

Membership is continuing to grow. This has been helped by the presence of the Smithsonian traveling exhibit. It has returned for the second time to the state making stops at six new counties. The county that hosted the last stop had a very successful tour and is planning one for 2005.

All told, it was a very busy and successful year with needs for more dedicated people and funds to continue saving our Wonderful Old Barns.