



Preservation Oklahoma News



The newsletter of Oklahoma's statewide preservation community.

April 1996

Volume 2, number 3

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Eighth Annual Statewide Historic Preservation Conference to be held in Duncan, May 16, 17, & 18

Joining the Oklahoma Historical Society as cosponsors of the eighth annual Statewide Preservation Conference are the Oklahoma Main Street Program; Preservation Oklahoma, Inc.; and Main Street Duncan, Inc. Registration materials were mailed the first week of April and everyone on the mailing list for *Preservation Oklahoma News* will receive the brochure.

The Statewide Preservation Conference is a celebration of Oklahoma's rich heritage. This year, we are also celebrating a very special occasion, the tenth anniversary of the Oklahoma Main Street Program's establishment. You will not want to miss the keynote session on Friday afternoon, May 17th, which will highlight the past, present, and future of "Main Street" and then adjourn to a special anniversary party in downtown Duncan, complete with tours of rehabilitation projects and other exciting activities.

The conference is also held to recognize National Historic Preservation Week. This year's theme for the national observance is "Preserve Community."

The three concurrent conference tracks include (a) A Decade of Success on Main Street, (b) Preservation Technology and Methodology, and (c) "Preserve Community." Many special events are planned in addition to the keynote session, which features speaker Kennedy Smith, National Main Street Center, and the Main Street celebration. There will be tours of Duncan's historic houses, a tour of Halliburton's facilities and a special reception, the annual preservation awards banquet, a bus tour to Marlow, Preservation Oklahoma's annual meeting and luncheon, and a preservation resources fair.

Mark your calendars for May 16th-18th. You will not want to miss out on this year's conference. If you have questions, contact Melvena Heisch, State Historic Preservation Office, at (405) 522-4484, or Sharon Rhodes, Main Street Duncan, Inc., at (405) 252-8696.

(see related stories, page four)

El Reno Group Raising Funds for Stable Project

Preservation El Reno, Inc., is providing an example of how a local historic preservation organization makes steady progress because of good planning and effective leadership. State Senator Bill Gustafson (R - El Reno), who has been one of the strongest organizers and supporters of local preservation efforts and community beautification, said the organization's chief motivation is a desire to stop the neglect, deterioration, or destruction of important historic buildings. "To do that, you need people, money, and political clout."

Preservation El Reno held its first meeting in December of 1993, incorporated in 1994, held its first annual membership meeting in March of 1994, and was recognized as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization by the I.R.S. in 1995. The group holds monthly meetings, a historic house award program, and has already built a track record that rivals many older organizations.

When the local Sonic drive-in owner wanted to get rid of an old railroad caboose on his property, he donated it to Preservation El Reno. Senator Gustafson said he convinced a contractor in Oklahoma City to donate use of two cranes to lift the caboose onto a flatbed truck, move it to a rail yard at the edge of town, and place it on an unused siding, where volunteers stripped its exterior and reconditioned it. The organization placed it in a downtown park and repainted it as a Rock Island caboose. The Rock Island railroad was a major influence in the history of El Reno.

However, the center of the group's attention remains fixed on its major project: restoration of the Canadian County Jail and Stables, said Preservation El Reno president Roger Rinehart.

According to Senator Gustafson, Preservation El Reno acquired the old county jail and stables after the new county facility was constructed just north of the site, successfully negotiating a 99-year lease with Canadian County for the old jail building and the adjacent sheriff's stable. The group chose to work first on the stables, since the cost would be less and the time schedule shorter. "We plan to do an actual restoration project, bringing it as close to its original state as feasibly possible," said Senator Gustafson. "Once we've finished that, people in the community will have a clearer idea of what we intend for both buildings and should be more interested."

Both of the buildings are architecturally unique: the old Canadian County Jail building was designed by Solomon A. Layton, designer of the State Capitol, and the sheriff's stable is believed to be the only structure of its kind left in existence in the entire state. Both buildings are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Using private donations and a Preservation Services

Fund grant of \$2,300 from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the group hired Stan Gralla, Architects, which has offices in Lexington and Tulsa, to provide architectural study and plans for the stable project at a cost of \$7,700.

"Gralla gave us a bargain," said Senator Gustafson. "The firm is committed to supporting historic preservation efforts in Oklahoma's communities."

Using these plans as a guideline, Preservation El Reno cleaned and re-pointed the exterior brick and removed all modern elements from the interior of the stable building. The exterior work cost over \$2,000, which, said Senator Gustafson, the group also raised from private donors. In all, Preservation El Reno has invested over \$10,000 in the project.

More recently, the organization received a matching grant of \$25,000 from the Ashbrook Foundation in El Reno to continue work on the project. The next steps will be to replace the existing roof with a standing seam metal roof like the original, reconstruct the rooftop cupola, and repair or replace the wooden windows and doors. Preservation El Reno hopes to begin this work this summer.

Because the grant from the local foundation is a matching grant, the group must raise \$25,000 in other donations to receive the funds. The entire project is expected to cost over \$125,000.

"Many people conducting business in El Reno see only the courthouse area, including north Highway 81. Restoration of these two buildings will help to establish a progressive identity for El Reno and prove to the world that we have a bright future while building on our historic past," said Senator Gustafson.

If you would like more information, write to Preservation El Reno, P.O. Box 592, El Reno, OK 73036.



Preservation El Reno president Roger Rinehart in front of the old Canadian County Sheriff's Stable

Award Winning Survey focuses on State's Historic Bridges

In 1995, the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) received the Shirk Award for Historic Preservation from the Oklahoma Historical Society, State Historic Preservation Office for producing a

statewide survey of historic bridges: *Spans of Time, Oklahoma Historic Highway Bridges*.



The typical historic bridge in Oklahoma is a Pony Truss design

The study arose from a need to ensure that ODOT's necessary bridge replacement and improvement projects adequately took into account the historic significance of the state's bridges, some of which dated to the late 19th century. Before 1989, photographs and descriptive data on each bridge scheduled for removal and replacement with federal funds were individually submitted to the SHPO for review. While this technically complied with Section 106, it proved unsatisfactory because the significance of most of Oklahoma's historic bridges can only be assessed by determining how they fit in the context of available similar resources in the state. The vast majority of Oklahoma's historic bridges are not "landmark" structures such as the Brooklyn Bridge, nor are most known to be associated with significant historical persons or events. Instead, the majority are important principally because they constitute surviving examples of important engineering designs and construction processes developed during the late 19th and early 20th century -- processes that for the most part are no longer utilized. Consequently, the historic significance of an individual bridge must be determined in the context of other similar structures. Is it a good surviving example of a rare design, or is it only one of many unremarkable examples of a common design? This type of contextual data could not be provided as part of a case-by-case review process.

Between 1989 and 1993, the Center for Historic Preservation and Technology at Texas Tech University performed the study, surveying 1,555 bridges built before 1955. A total of 171 structures were eventually determined eligible for inclusion in the National Register, based principally on their condition, association with known bridge fabricating companies, and representative qualities. A management plan was developed to ensure that all avenues for the preservation of these structures is considered when they become obsolete or unsafe under modern traffic loads.

Route 66 Bridge given Grace Period before Demolition

A through-truss bridge over the Neosho River on historic Route 66 at Miami, in Ottawa County has been the focus of concern for historic preservationists. Last year, the Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) announced plans to demolish the existing bridge upon completion of the replacement bridge now under construction (ODOT Project MABRF58B-261). The bridge is considered a significant Route 66 landmark, because its opening in 1937 marked the completion of the last link in the paving of the national highway in Oklahoma, which has more miles of Route 66 than any other state, and because it is one of the longest single span truss bridges in the state.

In response to public concern, ODOT evaluated the feasibility of retaining the truss section of the bridge and two short stringer approach spans connecting to the east bank. ODOT's Bridge Division calculated that preserving the three spans "would not significantly increase the potential for upstream flooding." While only a small section of the entire bridge, it includes all portions that are architecturally noteworthy and is the section of the structure used for the 1937 Route 66 celebrations.

On February 1, ODOT announced in a press release that it had suspended demolition plans for the bridge for six months to allow advocates for the Route 66 landmark to find another "private or public group or individual that is willing to assume all maintenance responsibility and liability for the bridge." Interested applicants were asked to submit a formal statement including assurances they will have financial backing and support of the local government to properly maintain the bridge. "They must be willing to accept all liability. The bridge will be demolished if a new owner is not found. Questions should be directed to John Hartley, ODOT archaeologist, at (405) 521-3651. Written statements should be mailed by August 1, 1996, to Planning Engineer, ODOT, 200 N.E. 21st St., Oklahoma City, OK 73105-3204."

David Knudsen, executive director of the National Historic Route 66 Federation, and John West, a member of the Oklahoma Tourism Commission, have both lobbied the City of Miami to ask it to assume ownership of the bridge. Although Mayor Louis Mathia expressed interest in the idea, the city council opposes it, citing liability and fiscal considerations.

Scholarships Available for College Students

Applications are now available for Oklahoma college and university students who wish to attend the eighth annual Statewide Preservation Conference. Eligible applicants for scholarship assistance include full-time students enrolled for the 1996 fall session in an Oklahoma college or university who are pursuing a degree in history, anthropology, architecture, planning, geography, art history, or other preservation related field. The scholarship will cover the \$25.00 registration fee. Travel expenses, lodging, and per diem cannot be covered.

The scholarships will be awarded to the first twenty (20) eligible applicants. Applications can be obtained from the State Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma Historical Society, 2704 Villa Prom, Shepherd Mall, Oklahoma City, OK 73107, or by calling (405) 521-6249, or faxing to (405) 947-2918. Deadline for applications is May 1st. Scholarship recipients will be notified immediately upon receipt of the application form.

Preservation Conference

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Duncan's historic Patterson Hospital
(Drawing by Jay Upchurch for Main Street Duncan, Inc.)

Attention Architects, Planners, and Realtors:

Continuing education credits available for conference attendance!

Attendance at Oklahoma's eighth annual Statewide Preservation Conference will earn members of the American Institute of Architects AIA/CES learning units; planners, American Institute of Certified Planners' professional development hours; and, realtors, Oklahoma Real Estate Commission continuing education units. For further details about this special opportunity, contact Melvena Heisch, State Historic Preservation Office, at (405) 522-4484.

Investors Plan Rehabilitation of Historic McAlester Hotel

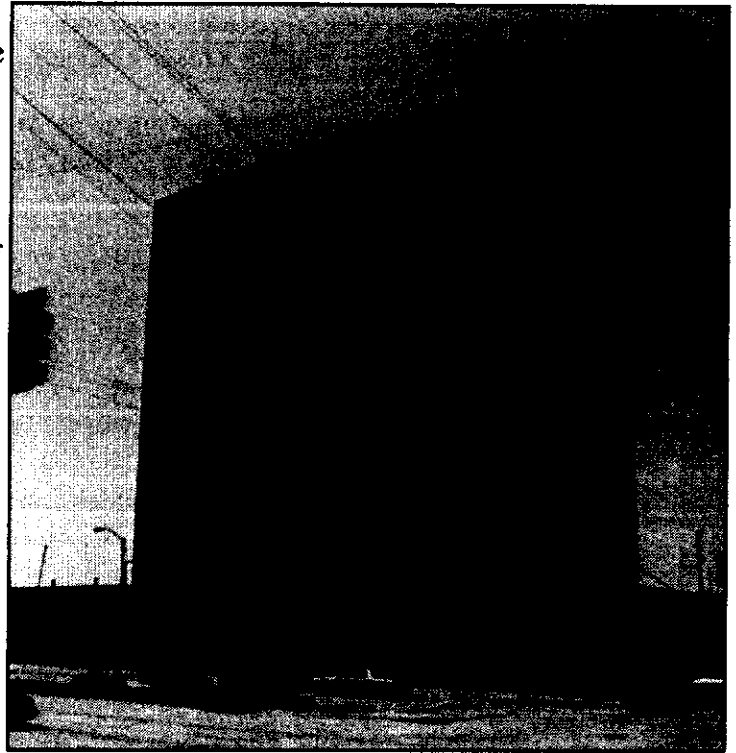
by Charles Rainbolt, State Director
Rural Economic Development Corporation

The historic Aldridge Hotel at 200 East Carl Albert Parkway in McAlester was bought last year by Aldridge Developers, Inc., which plans to rehabilitate the building as 73 units of low income housing for the elderly. The first floor of the facility will contain a laundry, commercial retail space, and the historic ballroom, which will be used for special events.

Aldridge Developers, Inc., plans to retain as many of the historic features of the ballroom as possible. There are also plans to try to open a coffee shop on the first floor where one originally existed.

The Aldridge Hotel was built in 1927 and is one of the oldest buildings in downtown McAlester. It was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in December of 1995.

Aldridge Developers, Inc., plans a \$4.4 million rehabilitation of the hotel, including restoration of many historic elements. A \$2.5 million loan will be provided through the U.S.D.A.'s Rural Economic and Community Development program, according to state director Charles Rainbolt. The group will also use the 20% federal investment tax credit for projects that meet the Secretary of the Interior's standards for historic rehabilitation.



The historic Aldridge Hotel in downtown McAlester

The existing units will be converted into 70 one-bedroom units and three two-bedroom units containing full amenities. Eleven units (ten one-bedroom and one two-bedroom) will meet the accessibility standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act, allowing one per floor.

Oklahoma Preservation Partners attend Statewide Coordinating Session

On March 7, Preservation Oklahoma, Inc., hosted the annual statewide coordinating meeting for Oklahoma's preservation partners. The meeting was facilitated by Libby Willis and Kelly Lally from the Southwest Field Office of the National Trust for Historic Preservation in Fort Worth.

This information exchange and strategy planning session was attended by Susie Clinard, director of the State Main Street Program; Robert K. Erwin, executive director of Preservation Oklahoma, Inc; Melvena Heisch, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Oklahoma Historical Society; and First Lady Cathy Keating and Preservation Oklahoma board member Marty Newman, Oklahoma's members of the National Trust's board of advisors.

The National Trust plans to hold this coordinating meeting annually to provide a venue for informational exchange and requests for assistance. The National Trust staff were impressed by the high level of cooperation and joint strategic planning displayed by Oklahoma's historic preservation partners.

Preservation Community Bulletin Board

- ▶ The National Park Service recently published a new guide to historic preservation treatments: *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring & Reconstructing Historic Buildings*. Choosing the most appropriate treatment for a property, based on its historical significance, existing condition, and proposed use will help ensure that its meaning can be understood and appreciated by future generations. This new comprehensive set of guidelines for treating historic buildings offers essential information for a broad audience, including owners and managers, project reviewers, preservation consultants, contractors, and students of historic preservation. The book is available from the Government Printing Office for \$12.00. Preservation Oklahoma, Inc., has order forms available; call Robert K. Erwin at (405) 232-5747.
- ▶ Downtown Stillwater Main Street was recognized in February by the Oklahoma Main Street Program as a *Five Million Dollar Main Street*. The organization has effectively directed reinvestment of over \$5 million in the historic commercial part of downtown Stillwater. Congratulations to Downtown Stillwater Main Street program manager Renee Harris.
- ▶ The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has discovered that among the items lost in the destruction of its offices last April 19 was its collection of county, city, and town maps. These maps are used for survey and Review and Compliance work, as well as for facilitating staff travel about the state. If you have a map of your city or county, please consider sending it to the SHPO, Shepherd Mall, 2704 Villa Prom, Oklahoma City, OK 73107, attention Cindy Smelker. Thank you for your help.
- ▶ A new publication in the National Trust's Information series, *History for Hire: Using Cultural Resources as Film Locations*, offers solutions to potential problems and provides information that will enable homeowners, house museum administrators, and business owners to make educated decisions regarding film activity and historic sites. Case studies illustrate the benefits and drawbacks of movie productions at historic buildings and sites. The booklet includes a sample location agreement that can be adapted to suit most filming productions involving historic sites. Order from Information Series, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1785 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036, or call (202) 673-4286.
- ▶ Congratulations to Susan Allen Kline, former SHPO staff member, who recently married and has moved to Maryland.
- ▶ Cindy Smelker has been promoted to the position of Architectural Historian on the SHPO's staff. Feel free to contact Cindy at (405) 522-4485 to discuss National Register nominations, determinations of eligibility under the Section 106 review process, and other general topics about historic properties in Oklahoma. Cindy has served as the SHPO's Preservation Research Assistant since November of 1993.
- ▶ A REMINDER: The deadline for National Register Nomination Grants, Round II applications, is June 3, 1996. Contact the SHPO at 2704 Villa Prom, Shepherd Mall, Oklahoma City, OK 73107, by fax at (405) 947-2918, or by calling (405) 521-6249 to request an application packet.

Preservation Oklahoma, Inc., to Hold Annual Meeting

Preservation Oklahoma, Inc., will hold its annual membership meeting and luncheon on Saturday, May 18, in Duncan. The meeting will function as the final session for the statewide historic preservation conference. Those interested in attending should make reservations for the luncheon when registering for the conference. The luncheon will be barbecue and the speaker will be Ralph McClamont.

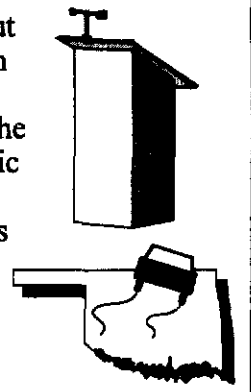
McClamont will speak on: *A Passion for Preservation -- sometimes you don't preserve a building because it makes economic sense, you preserve it because it's the right thing to do!* McClamont is a trustee emeritus of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, a past-president of the Oklahoma Historical Society board of directors, and a current member of the Preservation Oklahoma board of directors. He was instrumental in the campaign to revitalize the historic downtown district of Guthrie and continues to work on behalf of corporate efforts to support the community's historic resources.

The luncheon and meeting will also feature awards for contributions to historic preservation in Oklahoma, election of new officers for the 1996-97 fiscal year, and a slide presentation of the 1996 list of Oklahoma's Eleven Most Endangered Historic Properties.

NEED A SPEAKER FOR YOUR NEXT MEETING?

Preservation Oklahoma, Inc., gives presentations to groups and organizations throughout the state both as part of its advocacy program and in conjunction with its joint project with the State Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma's Eleven Most Endangered Historic Properties. Our staff is eager to give presentations on historic preservation and can tailor the format to your needs, whether it be a rudimentary explanation of the background of historic preservation, or a treatment of some issue near and dear to your heart. Several slide presentations are available, so choose the one that most suits your programming needs. It's fun and educational.

Organizations requesting a visit by our speakers bureau are asked to supply a carousel slide projector for the presentation and invest in an organizational membership in Preservation Oklahoma. To book an engagement, call Robert K. Erwin at (405) 232-5747.



Preservation Oklahoma is still working on a heritage education project in conjunction with the State Historic Preservation Office. Interested persons with backgrounds in education, particularly those familiar with fourth grade and ninth grade materials, are encouraged to contact us for volunteer work associated with this project. Call Robert K. Erwin at (405) 232-5747.

Become a member of the statewide historic preservation network . . .



JOIN PRESERVATION OKLAHOMA!



Preservation Oklahoma's mission is to foster the preservation of historic buildings and sites in Oklahoma through advocacy, education, and technical and financial assistance within a statewide network. To join, complete the form below, indicating type of membership desired, and send with payment to: Preservation Oklahoma, Inc., P. O. Box 25043, Oklahoma City, OK 73125-004

Name _____
Address _____
City/State/Zip _____

- | | | | | | |
|---|---------|---------------------------------------|----------|---|-------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual/Family: | \$15.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Corporation: | \$100.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Heritage Club: | \$1,000.00+ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Organization: | \$45.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Patron: | \$250.00 | | |

Preservation Oklahoma News

Serving the Statewide Historic Preservation Community



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