Preservation Oklahoma announces
$1 Million Low-Interest Loan Fund

On September 23 at the State Capitol Rotunda, representatives from MidFirst Bank and Preservation Oklahoma, Inc. announced the creation of a $1 million low-interest loan pool for historic rehabilitation projects in Oklahoma. According to Don King, vice president of MidFirst Bank in Oklahoma City, the loan pool will assist both commercial and residential historic preservation projects and there will be a concerted effort to serve both rural and urban clients.

“We consider this loan fund a landmark because of the eligibility of residential projects,” said Preservation Oklahoma, Inc. board president Marva Ellard of Oklahoma City. “In the past, this type of low-interest loan fund has been targeted almost entirely at commercial projects.”

The funding will be available for a period of one year within MidFirst Bank’s statewide network and will be serviced by the company’s Small Business Lending Department, which will actively promote it to likely candidates.

Under the program’s terms, up to $50,000 may be borrowed for any one project, amortized for a maximum of five years, at a fixed annual percentage rate of 8%. The funds may be used only for approved work on historic commercial building or house, which must comply with all applicable building codes.

Persons seeking loans should contact their local MidFirst Bank branch and, upon credit approval from the bank, projects will be reviewed by the Loan Fund Development Committee, comprising of representatives from Preservation Oklahoma, Inc., the Oklahoma Department of Commerce’s State Main Street Program, and MidFirst Bank, to determine if they meet the historic preservation criteria of the program.

“MidFirst Bank has shown by this agreement that it values reinvestment in the historic resources of Oklahoma’s communities,” said Robert K. Erwin, executive director of Preservation Oklahoma, Inc. “Apart from being a responsible corporate citizen, the bank is demonstrating good business sense, because reinvestment in the historic housing stock and commercial districts of our state’s communities is vital to their economic futures.”

The program under which this loan pool was created is a joint project between Preservation Oklahoma, Inc. and the Oklahoma Historical Society’s State Historic Preservation Office. In 1996, Citizens Bank and Trust in Okmulgee created the program’s first $100,000 loan pool at 5% interest to serve communities in Okmulgee County. Since then, the McLain County National Bank in Purcell and BancFirst Guthrie have created similar low-interest loan funds available to assist commercial rehabilitation projects in McLain and Logan counties.

The loan funds are available to approved applicants for rehabilitation work on historic buildings only. Historic buildings, under this program, are defined as listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, or locally designated as historic structures. For more information, contact Robert K. Erwin at (405) 232-5747 or Don King at MidFirst Bank at (405) 948-0085.
Dr. Bob Blackburn, who has been active in Oklahoma history publications, projects, and organizations for more than 20 years, was named in late July as the new executive director of the Oklahoma Historical Society (OHS). As the Society's executive director, he also serves as the State Historic Preservation Officer for Oklahoma.

The OHS board of directors, led by president Jack Haley, promoted Blackburn from deputy executive director. He replaces J. Blake Wade, who recently became director of the Oklahoma Capitol Complex and Centennial Commemoration Commission.

"We are extremely fortunate to have Dr. Bob Blackburn available to lead the OHS staff at this crucial time," said Haley. "We are in the midst of planning the new $46 million history center near the State Capitol, one of the most important projects in the 106-year history of the Society."

As deputy executive director for the last nine years, Blackburn was active in literally every corner of the state as well as in planning for the new history center. He has supervised or worked on projects in the 35 OHS museums and historic sites and aided numerous other museums and preservation projects. Annually, he presents the SHPO's Citations of Merit and other awards at the State Historic Preservation Conference.

Blackburn emphasized the organization's statewide goals and operations in his acceptance of the position, "We are planning the new History Center to reflect the history of every part of Oklahoma - the people and their aspirations as well as the historical places and events. It will emphasize the OHS's primary missions of preserving the history and heritage of Oklahoma and of educating the public about them.

"The Society also will continue its efforts to improve historical museums, historic sites, and research centers all over the state. Our goal is to make history accessible - a part of daily life that enriches both the individual and the community."

Blackburn is a native Oklahoman who grew up along Route 66 in Edmond. He holds a Ph.D. in history from Oklahoma State University in Stillwater and published his first book and several articles while in graduate school. He is well-known in the historic preservation community for his excellent books documenting the historic buildings of central Oklahoma and as an authority on the history of Oklahoma City's built environment. In 1979, Blackburn joined the staff of the Oklahoma Historical Society, where he became editor of The Chronicles of Oklahoma and director of the Publications Division.

**Ardmore HP Ordinance protects Historic Downtown Commercial District**

In July, the City of Ardmore extended the protection of the local preservation ordinance to a significant portion of its historic downtown district. Under the new ordinance, buildings locally designated as having historic significance are protected from insensitive alteration or demolition. Commercial districts tend to be more difficult to zone historic preservation, due to a general reluctance by merchants to agree to any kind of new overlay zoning. In order to garner the support needed to create a commercial historic preservation zoned district, a great deal of education and persuasion is usually needed. Ardmore is to be commended for taking this important step in the long-term effort to preserve its significant downtown historic resources.
In July, 1999, the City Commissioners for the City of Ponca City formally approved the community's first application of a historic preservation zoning overlay with the designation of the “Gateway to the Park Historic District.”

Because Ponca City has many significant neighborhoods, local preservationists consider the first step in a comprehensive effort to be the preservation of and encouragement of rehabilitation in sizeable parts of the city. The area approved for this first zoning consists almost entirely of large two-story Craftsman Four-Square houses. This quiet neighborhood was where the wealthy lived in the 1910's. It also has one of Ponca City's only late Victorian-era Colonial Revival homes. The well-kept houses line a brick street leading from Ponca City's Grand Avenue to the entrance of the city's oldest park.

One of the homes in the neighborhood was owned by O. F. Keck - Ponca City's most prominent builder during the earliest part of this century. He constructed many of Ponca City's most well-known homes and buildings. Also in the district are the homes of several lumber company owners and managers, bankers, and mayors from the period. Another of these houses was designed by prominent Oklahoma architect Solomon Andrew Layton - one of at least four homes and many buildings he designed for Ponca Citizens. Layton is perhaps best known as the architect of the Oklahoma State Capitol Building.

An unusual aspect of the zoning was the fact that it was petitioned for by the property owners. Mindy Littlecook and Timlynn Crank, both homeowners in the neighborhood, coordinated educational programs for their neighbors and circulated a petition for them to sign - and 98% of them did. The petition met the City Commission's requirements that support from property owners be shown for any historic preservation zoning.

“When it comes to older homes, the homes in this neighborhood have always been among the most desirable in town,” says Mrs. Littlecook. “Some of our neighbors, who were working overseas, only moved back to Ponca when a house here was available.” Also, since the zoning took effect, two homes have come on the market and sold within days of their listing. One home in the area that had been poorly maintained sold just prior to the zoning for about $30,000. Now it is getting a new foundation and complete restoration – with the help and guidance of the local Historic Preservation Advisory Panel.

For more information on Historic Preservation Zoning in Ponca City, the local contacts are: Todd Kennermer, city planner, City of Ponca City (580) 767-0334; Bret Carter, chairman, Historic Preservation Advisory Panel for the City of Ponca City and chairman of the Ponca City Landmark Conservancy (580) 767-4468; and Mindy Littlecook, 300 N. 6th (580) 767-1261.

State Law offers Incentives for Preservation
by Melvena Heisch, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

Local preservation efforts could greatly benefit from use of an existing state law. The Local Development Act (House Bill 1525), which was enacted by the legislature during Governor Walters’ term in office, provides that local governments can offer incentives and exemptions from taxation in certain areas; provide apportionment of an increment of local taxes; and make possible planning, financing, development, and redevelopment within certain areas.

The act provides that “historic preservation areas” are eligible for the local incentives. “Historic preservation area” is defined in the act as “a district listed on or nominated by the State Historic Preservation Officer to the National Register of Historic Places, or an historic structure or structures listed individually on or nominated by the State Historic Preservation Officer to the National Register, with such district or structure being subject to historic preservation zoning. Rehabilitation undertaken in an historic preservation area shall meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, latest revision, in order to be eligible for the incentives or exemptions granted pursuant to Section 11 of this act.”

The law was intended to help support the many community revitalization efforts underway across the state and encourage others to initiate such efforts.

Several Oklahoma communities already enforce local preservation zoning, including Anadarko, Ardmore, Cordell, Enid, Grandfield, Guthrie, Muskogee, Oklahoma City, Okmulgee, Ponca City, and Tulsa. If your community is interested in information about preservation zoning ordinances, contact the SHPO, which can provide local contact persons in communities with ordinances, provide sample ordinance language, and make suggestions about things to consider when adopting an ordinance. The SHPO staff will also be happy to discuss the National Register of Historic Places process with those who may find it useful in their local development efforts.

If your community could benefit from the Local Development Act, contact your municipal officials to discuss the possibilities.
The Underground Railroad (UGRR) refers to a multitude of routes taken by fugitive enslaved African-Americans to escape bondage in the decades before the close of the Civil War. The multi-faceted stories in the UGRR experience include heroic struggles for self-emancipation and clandestine networks of black and white abolitionists, enslaved African-Americans, Tribal Americans, and Mexican-Americans, who gave aid and refuge to fleeing slaves. Currently, the National Park Service (NPS) is implementing a national UGRR initiative to coordinate preservation and education efforts nationwide and integrate local historical places, museums, and interpretive programs associated with the UGRR into a mosaic of community, regional, national, and international stories. The NPS project builds upon and is supported by community initiatives around the country as well as legislation passed in 1990 and the UGRR Network to Freedom Act of 1998. Historic places and educational or interpretive programs associated with the UGRR will become part of a network, eligible to use or display a uniform symbol developed for this purpose.

The NPS's UGRR initiative consists of facilitating UGRR research and communication among interested parties; providing technical assistance in the preservation of UGRR sites and in nominating them to the National Register; and promoting and assisting in the development of interpretive materials related to the UGRR. The program is young but evolving quickly. While full implementation is still in the future, the program's expansion and success are based on the ability of the NPS to partner with other agencies, organizations, and interested parties to achieve the dual objectives of preservation and education.

The UGRR program has generated substantial interest in the Northeast, Southeast, and Midwest regions of the United States. Over 500 UGRR sites have been documented in Ohio alone. Yet, there has been a general lack of attention given to the UGRR story as it existed in its diverse forms in Texas, Oklahoma, and the American Southwest. Moreover, sites and other resource types in Mexico, to which thousands of Texas slaves fled, are yet to be incorporated into the UGRR program.

The NPS requests any information about UGRR sites or associated resources in Oklahoma. If you have information you believe may be of assistance to the NPS in furthering this initiative, contact Preservation Oklahoma, Inc. and we will mail you a Survey Card to fill out and return to NPS. Or, you may visit the NPS UGRR web page at http://www.nps.gov/nr/underground/ugrrhome.htm.

Route 66 Corridor Act signed by President

On August 10, the Route 66 Corridor Act was signed into law by President Clinton. The legislation, which was introduced by Senator Pete Domenici and Representative Heather Wilson of New Mexico with broad co-sponsorship, recognizes the national significance of Route 66 and the importance of preserving its resources and its story. It directs the Secretary of the Interior to establish, through the National Park Service (NPS), a major ten-year program of technical assistance and cost-share funding to stimulate study, planning, preservation, rehabilitation, and restoration of Route 66 cultural resources, among other responsibilities.

The Act provides authorization of $10 million to carry out its purposes between fiscal years 2000 and 2009. These funds would permit the hiring of full-time NPS staff to provide technical assistance in the areas of historic preservation and interpretation, as well as the capability to administer a cost-share grant program, establish a clearinghouse function, and coordinate a research program. With the legislation being approved so late this year, no funds could be specifically budgeted for this program as a line item in the FY2000 budget.

The NPS Long Distance Trail Group Office in Santa Fe, which was responsible for overseeing preparation of the 1995 Route 66 Scoping Resource Study and which administered the long-distance program of the National Historic Trails, will field the Route 66 Corridor Act. While it will not start the program this coming year, organizations with strong Route 66 components in their missions should contact them to begin preparing for the opportunities the Route 66 Corridor Act can make available, since most programs and grants will be extremely competitive (Route 66 runs through eight different states).

For more information, call John Cunoboy at the NPS (405) 988-6858. If you would like a copy of the legislation, contact Preservation Oklahoma, Inc. at (405) 237-5747.

Five National Register Nomination Grants awarded Statewide

This summer, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) awarded five matching grants to assist in preparation of nominations to the National Register of Historic Places. The grants, intended to pay for professional preparation of nominations, consisted of $750.00 from the SHPO to be matched by the applicant with $500.00. The grant recipients were:

* The City of Ardmore to nominate the Ardmore Carnegie Library, built in 1904-05. In 1925, the building's second floor was removed after damage from a tornado. The entire building was condemned and restored in 1963.
* Preservation El Reno, Inc. received two grants to nominate the Municipal Swimming Pool Bath Facility Building, built in 1935, which is included on Preservation Oklahoma, Inc.'s current list of Oklahoma's Most Endangered Historic Properties, and the other to nominate the El Reno High School Building.
* The Lincoln County Historical Society to nominate the St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Chandler.
* The Shortgrass Museum/Historical Society in Sayre to nominate the Sayre Rock Island Railroad Depot.

For more information about these grants, or how to nominate properties to the National Register of Historic Places, contact Jim Gabbert at the SHPO (405) 527-4478.
Three New Oklahoma Listings on National Register
by Jim Gabbert, SHPO Architectural Historian

The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) is pleased to announce the listing of three Oklahoma properties in the National Register of Historic Places. The three properties are: Gate School in Gate, Beaver County; I. W. W. Beck Building in Oologah, Rogers County; and the Owen Park Historic District in Tulsa.

The Gate School, located in the small town of Gate in eastern Beaver County, was built in 1937-38 utilizing WPA labor. Located in a part of the state that was among the hardest hit economically by the Great Depression, the little town of Gate was typical of the smaller communities that relied on agriculture as their economic base. The influx of money from various federal relief programs helped bolster local economies. Projects like the Gate School allowed for the greatest public good, giving an economic boost to out of work farmers by employing them as workers and giving the community a lasting, functional public building. The Gate School was nominated to the National Register as a good example of WPA vernacular architecture and for its importance to the community in the area of work relief.

The I. W. W. Beck Building was built in 1907 in the small town of Oologah. Oologah was a town built on coal mining near the end of the 19th Century. As a shipping point on the railroad, the town became the economic center for the east-central section of Rogers County. A thriving commercial district grew up along the town’s main street, Cooweescoowee Avenue. The I. W. W. Beck Building was commissioned by Isaac W. W. Beck and opened in 1907 as a dry goods store. Constructed of native sandstone, the one-story building is highlighted by a decorative pressed-metal facade capped with a dentiled cornice. Recently restored, the building stands out on the streets of Oologah. It was nominated as a rare example in Rogers County of a pressed-metal facade commercial building and for its long term significance in the commercial life of Oologah.

The Owen Park Historic District is located northwest of downtown Tulsa, separated from the city’s core by Highway 75 and Interstate 244. There are 5007 resources located in the district, primarily single-family homes. The Owen Park neighborhood derives its name from Owen Park, the city’s first municipal park, located on the east side and included in the district. The park opened in 1910 and immediately thereafter the areas to the west were platted as residential neighborhoods. The streetcar line that served the park was an impetus to the growth of the neighborhoods. Soon, the streets were lined with neat, tidy rows of bungalows, brick cottages, and larger houses. Schools and small businesses were built to serve the growing neighborhood which filled with Tulsa’s middle class. The Owen Park Historic District was nominated for its significance in the residential development of Tulsa and for its collection of Craftsman and Period Revival architectural styles.

The SHPO continues to work toward its goal of achieving 1,000 listings on the National Register from Oklahoma by the end of the year 2000. With the addition of these three properties, the number now stands at 937. For more information on these properties or the National Register of Historic Places, call Jim Gabbert at (405) 522-4478 or e-mail: jgabbert@ok-history.mus.ok.us.
Calendar of Upcoming Historic Preservation Events

Unless otherwise noted, all State Historic Preservation Office workshops will be held in the Oklahoma Historical Society Boardroom, Wiley Post Historical Building, 2100 North Lincoln Boulevard, Oklahoma City, with no registration fee required. If you desire to attend any of these events but have a disability and need accommodation, please notify the SHPO at least three (3) days before the event. For more information, call (405) 521-6249.

October

December
1 State and Local Governments as Preservation Partners in Oklahoma: the CLG Program (9:30 a.m. - 12:00 noon)
1 Introduction to the Section 106 Review Process/Update on New Regulations (1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.)
2 The Section 106 Review Process: What Happens When There is an Effect? Update on New Regulations (9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.)
3 Introduction to the National Register of Historic Places (9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.)

May 2000
4-6 Oklahoma's Twelfth Annual Statewide Preservation Conference, El Reno Registration Fee.
9-15 National Historic Preservation Week

June 2000
The June SHPO workshops will be held at the Stephens County Historical Museum (National Guard Armory), Fuqua Park, U. S. 81 and Beech, Duncan:
21 Introduction to the Section 106 Review Process (9:30 a.m. - 12:00 noon)
21 Determination of Eligibility under Section 106 (1:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.)
22 Introduction to the National Register of Historic Places (9:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.)
23 Federal Tax Incentives for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings (9:30 a.m. - 12:00 Noon)
23 Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings (1:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.)

SHPO seeks Nominees for Year 2000 Awards

The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) requests nominations for the year 2000 recipients of the Shirk Memorial Award for Historic Preservation and for the SHPO's Citation of Merit. The deadline for nomination is December 1, 1999. The awards will be presented May 5, 2000 during the Twelfth Annual Statewide Preservation Conference in El Reno.

The Shirk Award recognizes outstanding contributions to the furtherance of historic preservation on a statewide level. Individuals, organizations, business firms, and government agencies are all eligible. Previous recipients include Dr. George Carney of the Oklahoma State University Department of Geography, the federal General Services Administration, the Department of the Army and Ft. Sill, the Kirkpatrick Foundation, the Oklahoma Archaeological Survey, the Oklahoma Department of Transportation, the Oklahoma Main Street Program, Sally Ferrell, and Ann Henderson.

The SHPO's Citation of Merit is presented to individuals, organizations, business firms, and government agencies for important historic preservation efforts, including research, publications, public programming, restoration/rehabilitation, planning, leadership, and other endeavors.

Awards nomination forms and criteria are available from the SHPO, Oklahoma Historical Society, 2704 Villa Prom, Oklahoma City, OK 73107.

You may call (405) 521-6249, fax (405) 947-2918, or e-mail to cmurrell@ok-history.mus.ok.us to request nominations forms and/or more details.

SHPO Workshops scheduled

The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) will present its fall workshop series December 1 - 3. All sessions will be held in the Oklahoma Historical Society Boardroom, Wiley Post Historical Building, 2100 N. Lincoln Blvd., Oklahoma City. Registration is free.

The workshops are designed for community preservation leaders, preservation professionals, and government agency representatives. The workshops will cover the SHPO's Certified Local Governments program, the Section 106 Review program, and the National Register of Historic Places.

For specific workshop schedule information, see calendar inset, this page.

Because space is limited, you should contact the SHPO by telephone (405) 521-6249, by fax (405) 947-2918, or by e-mail: cmurrell@ok-history.mus.ok.us by 5:00 p.m., November 26, to reserve a seat.
Bits and Pieces:

Architectural Tour across Oklahoma

On October 29-31, the American Institute of Architects is sponsoring "The Prairie's Yield: Road Trip to Oklahoma -- 20th Century Architecture of Oklahoma (Bruce Goff, Frank Lloyd Wright, and More) a three-day tour. One bus only will be available. The price per person is $400. For full details, contact Gina Clark (214) 871-2788 or e-mail: gclark@dallasaia.org.

On Friday, the bus will visit Goff houses in Norman and Oklahoma City before heading to Tulsa for a dinner and lecture at the Tulsa Historical Society. On Saturday, the group will tour Boston Avenue United Methodist Church National Historic Landmark, Christ the King Parish Church, Adah Robinson Studio, and Westhope. The afternoon will focus on resources in Bartlesville and end with dinner at Woolarock. On Sunday, the group will finish the tour with visits to Oral Roberts University and resources in Sapulpa.

Y2K Main Street Planning Underway

On September 28, the Oklahoma Main Street Program held its application workshop for the Year 2000 Community Applications. New Main Street communities are chosen based upon strong public and private sector support; potential for the downtown to benefit from the program; willingness of the community to commit time and resources, be innovative, and try new ventures; evidence of need; and sufficient historic or architecturally significant buildings in the project area. For more information on the annual application process for new Main Street communities, call Les Hall, state coordinator or Shelly Tipton, marketing communications specialist at (800) 879-6552, ext. 115, or (405) 815-5115.

ADA Seminar in Santa Fe

On November 12, the Department of Justice seminar explaining the Americans With Disabilities Act will visit Santa Fe, New Mexico, the closest site to Oklahoma in the series. The series is partly sponsored by the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions.
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Pilot Heritage Education Program receives Award for Excellence

In September, the Oklahoma Museums Association held its annual conference and presented an award for program excellence to Sherri Vance of Advanc Consulting for the pilot heritage education program she developed for Preservation Oklahoma. Tested in two Oklahoma City public schools last spring, "Take Me Downtown" targets third grade students for instruction about the significant buildings critical to the life of any community using a set of historic downtown buildings. The pilot program, funded by the Kirkpatrick Foundation, ended with a field trip to visit the historic buildings the students had studied and received accolades from instructors and students alike.

Preservation Oklahoma hopes to use this pilot as a template for heritage education programs in other Oklahoma communities. If we want future generations to value good stewardship of historic resources, it is important to start teaching those lessons now.

New and Renewed Memberships

Individual/Family - $25.00:
- Dr. Bill Bryans, Stillwater
- M/M Jerry Butler, Purcell
- Dr. George O. Carney, Stillwater
- Capt. Margaret Deal-Saul (Ret.), Lawton
- M/M Wm. Goldsberry, Ponca City
- Jane and Pete Holcombe, OKC
- Marian Horning, OKC
- Kym Koch, OKC

Organizational - $50.00:
- Woodward Main Street

Patron - $250.00:
- Mary E. McMahon, Altus
- Joe Watkins, Norman

Senior/Student - $15.00:
- Julia Wheeler Miller, OKC
- Dale B. Reeder, OKC
- Charles F. Scott, Guthrie

Thank you all for your support!

Special Donations

We also want to thank those who donated to our 1999-00 National Trust Challenge Grant Match Fund:

- Dr. Bill Bryans, Stillwater
- Marian Horning, OKC
- Charley and Sherrill Morris, Cordell
- Nityanand and Ann Pai, Kansas
- Nicholas J. Praitakes, OKC