

2025 Governor's Award for Historic Preservation



Awardees: Charlevoix Historical Society; Freshwater Charch: a Design Build Firm; Smay Trombley Architecture; Richard Neumann Architect; Steven C. Seebohm Historic Paint Consultation; and the City of Charlevoix

Long-term stewardship of Charlevoix Historical Society Resources

In northwest Michigan, the Charlevoix Historical Society's care for three historic resources connects both residents and visitors with the city's history. Built in 1892, the Queen Anne-style Harsha House has been the home of the society and its museum for more than 45 years. Starting in 2016, a master plan for the property prioritized needed work, leading to a new roof, wood siding and masonry repairs, and a fresh repaint. On the interior, the foyer was restored, and other renovation work improved the society's exhibit and artifact storage space.

Across town, the unused Chicago & West Michigan Railroad depot was gifted to the society in 1992 and immediately stabilized. A phased rehabilitation effort began in 2018 to restore the original look of the building, including exterior restoration and a detailed paint analysis, which informed a complete repaint into

historically appropriate colors. In 2023, a Certified Local Government program grant helped to fund a new roof for the depot building, which is now used as an event venue.

The South Pier Lighthouse came under local ownership in 2006, requiring a long-term plan for restoration. Local fundraising was paired with several successive Michigan Lighthouse Assistance Program grants to replace corroded steel and concrete, repair ventilation equipment, repaint the lighthouse interior, and restore the exterior's fire engine red color. The lighthouse remains the city's most photographed landmark and celebrated its 75th anniversary in 2023.

With the Charlevoix Historical Society's leadership and support from the city, the history of this lakefront town will be in good hands for years to come.

Charlevoix Historic Sites

