

Governor's Awards for Historic Preservation

Governor Jennifer Granholm is leading the mission to strengthen and revitalize Michigan cities and neighborhoods. Historic sites and other cultural resources are key components of communities where people want to live – and those that people want to visit. The rehabilitation of historic buildings through the use of federal and state historic preservation tax credits is a key economic development tool.

- In FY 2007 alone, historic preservation tax credits stimulated nearly \$150 million in private investment in historic building rehabilitation projects in Michigan.
- This private investment had an overall positive impact of \$320 million on Michigan's economy.
- State historic preservation tax credit projects alone resulted in more than \$15 million in direct investment and \$33 million in economic impact.

With the Governor's Award for Historic Preservation, Governor Granholm recognizes outstanding historic preservation achievements: homeowners who rehabilitate their homes, developers who transform underutilized historic structures into vital economic assets, academic institutions, archaeologists, educational projects that inspire people to preserve historic buildings, and policy makers who demonstrate commitment to the preservation of historic resources through innovative planning activities and collaboration with the private sector.

2008 Governor's Award Recipients

Main Street Calumet for the Main Street Façade Rehabilitations

Inner City Christian Federation, Cornerstone Architects, and Rockford Construction Company, Inc. for the Rehabilitation of the D. A. Blodgett Children's Home, Grand Rapids

Lino and Guadalupe Ortiz, the City of Holland, and Design Plus Architects for the Rehabilitation of 168 West 13th Street, Holland

The People and City of Allegan for the Rehabilitation of the Regent Theatre

Harry Hepler, Turner+Callaway, and the Mannik & Smith Group, Inc. for the Prudden Motor Wheel Factory Building Rehabilitation, and Richard Karp, the Peabody Group, and Prater Development Ltd. for the Arbaugh Department Store Building Rehabilitation, which together transformed Lansing's vision of Historic Preservation

Excel-Artswalk LDHA LP, the Enterprise Group of Jackson, Quinn|Evans Architects, and Fryling Construction Company for the Rehabilitation of the Former Michigan State Prison Cell Blocks and Dormitory, Jackson

Cynthia F. Reaves for the Rehabilitation of the Michelson-Young House,
918 West Boston Boulevard, Detroit

Excel-Artswalk LDHA LP, the Enterprise Group of Jackson, Quinn|Evans Architects, and Fryling Construction Company for the Rehabilitation of the Former Michigan State Prison Cell Blocks and Dormitory, Jackson

When the Department of Veterans and Military Affairs sold the Jackson armory in 2005, the State Historic Preservation Office received an easement on the property, ensuring the office's involvement and review of redevelopment at the site. The only vision that many people could see in the site was a brick hulk. The 19-acre site includes 250,000 square feet of historic prison buildings and a stunning 25-foot-high turreted stone wall forming the perimeter of the property. The Enterprise Group of Jackson saw great potential for "Cool." Developer Peter Jobson, Quinn|Evans Architect, and Fryling Construction partnered with the group to rehabilitate the armory as an arts community. The resulting Armory Arts Village is a bold, innovative project using the arts, culture, creativity, and innovation as a catalyst for invigorating and reinventing the community. The project was declared a Cool Cities project in 2004, resulting in a \$100,000 Cool Cities Catalyst Grant, which also provided a number of other grants to the city as a result of the Cool Cities designation. The developer also received an award of Low-Income Housing Tax Credits.

Major rehabilitation work involved stabilizing the towers, cleaning and repairing masonry, and restoring the windows. In addition, interior space has been converted to artist apartments and work spaces. Through a combination of adaptive reuse of the historic prison buildings and compatible new development on the site, this unique place, representing \$26 million in investment in Michigan, has been transformed into Armory Arts Village.



Inner City Christian Federation, Cornerstone Architects, and the Rockford Construction Company, Inc., for the Rehabilitation of the D. A. Blodgett Home for Children, Grand Rapids

In 1887 the Blodgett and Clark families established the D. A. Blodgett Home for Children in what was known as the Clark Home. When that building was no longer suitable Delos A. Blodgett funded a new structure, a monumental Neo-classical building that was completed shortly after his death in 1908. When the home for children closed in 1948 the building was donated to the Mary Free Bed Guild for rehabilitative medicine and the treatment of polio survivors. Eventually a large connector and second wing were added to the façade of the original building, removing the portico. Mary Free Bed left the site in 1976, and 18 years later the building was slated for demolition.

The Inner City Christian Federation (ICCF), a nonprofit housing corporation, acquired the building in 2005. The ICCF hired Cornerstone Architects and Rockford Construction to rehabilitate the historic building. The exterior rehabilitation included the demolition of the 1950s wing and connector and the reconstruction of the original 1908 façade, including the grand Corinthian columns in the entrance portico – the most extensive reconstruction of terra cotta in Michigan. Replication of the original terra cotta elements that were missing was achieved through castings of glass fiber reinforced concrete. The intact historic interior spaces were restored along with the original terrazzo floor, cast iron stairwells, quarter-sawn white oak woodwork, and plaster cove ceilings.

The project, which resulted in \$14 million in total economic impact, allowed the building to resume fulfilling two important roles. The structure is once again a stunning landmark on the Grand Rapids skyline and it assists those who need it most.



Main Street Calumet for Façade Rehabilitation Projects

The rehabilitation of historic structures has played a key role in transforming Calumet. Since 2003, when the village became one of the first four Cool Cities Michigan Main Street communities, Calumet has been undergoing a change. Calumet's commercial building stock reflected the prosperity of the city at the heart of the Upper Peninsula's copper boom. The downtown originally boasted beautiful nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings with style, texture, and color, but through the years the façade had been modified or covered up, resulting in a loss of historic character for the entire downtown area. Main Street Calumet partners with the Calumet Downtown Development Authority, the village of Calumet, the Keweenaw National Historical Park, the Michigan State Housing Development Authority, the State Historic Preservation Office, and property owners to strengthen downtown through a façade improvement program. During the last four years, fifteen façade improvement projects have been completed. Main Street Calumet has encouraged the owners of downtown buildings to rehabilitate their façade and buildings through the use of local and state grants, historic preservation tax credits, and technical assistance. Three of the projects received Façade Improvement of the Year Awards from MSHDA in 2007. The façade improvements along with other Main Street Calumet programs have revitalized downtown.



Lino and Guadalupe Ortiz, the City of Holland, and Design Plus Architects, for the Rehabilitation of 168 West 13th Street, Holland

Lino and Guadalupe Ortiz, owners of the Mini Super Durango grocery store, were the first in the Washington Boulevard Historic District to participate in Holland’s Neighborhood Commercial Improvement Program, which pays for architectural design assistance in the neighborhood commercial districts.

Lino and Guadalupe Ortiz saw the future benefits of participating in a historic rehabilitation project. The project included rehabilitation of two apartments above the family-owned grocery store, a new roof, basic service upgrades, and a stunning façade rehabilitation. The building’s location in the historic district enabled the Ortizes to use the State Historic Preservation Tax Credits. The project also utilized other local and state public and private programs. Tina Perry and Sue Harder of the city of Holland’s Office of Community and Neighborhood Services assisted the Ortiz family throughout the process.

The building façade was the public face of this project and told the story as it unfolded. The original detailed wood façade had been damaged when aluminum siding and soffit materials were used to cover the entire façade. Using historic photographs and existing physical evidence, the architects prepared a plan to rehabilitate the façade to its original condition. The unveiling of the façade by the removal of the aluminum, the recreation of missing details, and a fresh paint color scheme all helped to return this face to its former glory. Also discovered during the project, after being hidden for years by the aluminum and paint, was a historic transom sign that reads: “Home of Quality.”

The rehabilitation of 168 West 13th Street took more than a year. Before it was even completed, the impact in the district was being felt as a second historic rehabilitation started next door. The city staff is hopeful that all four adjacent structures will be restored, bringing new stability and activity to this neighborhood-supported district. The magnitude of the needs for this property required creativity. The project shines as an example of the public and private sectors pulling together for its completion.



Cynthia F. Reaves for the Rehabilitation of the Michelson-Young House, 918 West Boston Boulevard, Detroit

A string of visionaries have owned 918 West Boston Boulevard, from lumberman Nels Michelson who built the house and carriage house in 1917 to present owner, attorney Cynthia Reaves. Michelson worked his way from lumberjack to owner of prime Michigan timberland, and his ties to the lumber industry are reflected in the house's elaborate wood detailing. The second owner, Leonard A. Young, made a fortune during the earliest years of the auto industry. It was Young who in 1926 built the Athletic Building, complete with an Olympic-sized swimming pool and two bowling alleys. The house is commonly called the "Motown Mansion" after Motown Record Company founder Berry Gordy Jr. who purchased the house in 1967. Gordy lived there until he moved his music empire to Los Angeles in 1969. He continued to own the house until he sold it to Cynthia Reaves in 2001.

When Cynthia Reaves moved back to Detroit from Washington, D.C., she contacted Gordy and offered to buy 918 West Boston, which is located across the street from her childhood home. She knew what it would mean for the neighborhood, the Boston-Edison Historic District, to have the house returned to its original magnificence and occupied once again. Gordy agreed to sell her the house. Using the State Historic Preservation Tax Credits, Reaves spent four years rehabilitating the house. She and family members stripped and restored the variety of wood surfaces and restored the decorative painting and plaster. She updated the mechanicals and restored the landscape – and she rehabilitated the Carriage House and most of the Athletic Building.

Cynthia Reaves hosts charitable and political campaign events in the house, which serves as a venue for the discussion of issues of importance to the city and state. The meticulous rehabilitation has been a gift to the Boston-Edison Historic District, the city of Detroit, and the state of Michigan. More financially monumental than most residential state tax credit projects, this project represents the efforts of homeowners throughout Michigan to preserve their homes and their neighborhoods.



Harry Hepler, Turner+Callaway, and the Mannik & Smith Group, Inc., for the Prudden Motor Wheel Factory Building Rehabilitation; and Richard Karp, the Peabody Group, and Prater Development Ltd. for the Arbaugh Department Store Building Rehabilitation, Lansing

Timing is everything. Harry Hepler or Richard Karp might have each been “one guy” doing a project. Instead, their projects – completed around the same time – changed the way people in Lansing view historic rehabilitation.

Early in 2005 Harry Hepler began the process of reclaiming the 1918 Motor Wheel Factory, the last building on a 20-acre brownfield. This project took the hulking, 178,900-square-foot, former factory building from derelict to dynamic by creating market rate industrial loft apartments. Hepler removed a large number of inappropriate alterations, carefully repaired and reused limited remaining historic materials, and initiated ground-breaking cooperation with a national window manufacturer to design and utilize a new window system that has been incorporated into a new line of production windows. In addition, he made energy efficiency a major part of the rehabilitation. This building, which stood as a moldering relic, has become a symbol of revitalization in Lansing.

Fellow Lansing developer Richard Karp saw the potential in a completely different type of building. When it was constructed in 1905 and expanded in 1915 Arbaugh’s was the largest department store in the capital city. A late 1970s remodeling included entombing the building within a gold mirror glass and plastic “cube,” replacing all but one of the original windows with inexpensive aluminum units, and subdividing the open interior into a maze of offices and conference rooms. Karp removed the glass cladding, carefully recreated the missing windows based on the single remaining example from the façade, and reintroduced traditional storefront display windows and the missing building cornice. Today this 88,000-square-foot architectural gem is a hub of a vital and growing downtown. The project’s 48 market rate loft apartments, ground floor office/retail spaces and underground on site parking have worked together to demonstrate that urban living can be more than a dream. It is a reality in Lansing.

Together these projects represent \$47 million in investment and the creation of more than 500 jobs. Richard Karp and Harry Hepler and their teams demonstrated the power of federal and State Historic Preservation Tax Credits in encouraging investment in historic structures. They also showed that historic rehabilitation can transform not only a point of view, but also a city.



The People and City of Allegan for the Rehabilitation of the Regent Theatre

The Art Deco-style Regent Theatre was originally built as a horse livery. In 1919 it became a theater, showing movies and live vaudeville stage acts. During the 1930s, the Regent received an Art Deco facelift, including a cream-colored vitrolite Façade with red and green highlights. The six second-story windows have been closed up and covered with vitrolite with abstract decoration on them. The late Streamline era marquee is lit with neon and light bulbs.

Public outcry and donations from all corners of the community saved the theater when it was threatened with demolition in 1990. The nonprofit Old Regent Theatre Company purchased and restored the theater's interior to its 1930s grandeur, celebrating a grand reopening in 1996. A year later the roof collapsed during a violent thunderstorm, and the theatre was threatened with demolition once again. The Old Regent Theatre Company was again able to raise money locally to rebuild the theater and preserve this very important community institution. The efforts to preserve and maintain the Regent Theatre have involved numerous independent citizens from throughout the community donating their time and effort to complete much of the necessary restoration work over the years, whether by cleaning up debris following the collapse of the roof or restoring the historic theater seating.

The city of Allegan eventually took ownership of the building in order to preserve it and return it to service as a focal point of the community. Since then, the Regent has been painstakingly rebuilt and restored once again, including recreating historic panels in the auditorium and the original 1930s carpeting. The building was rewired electrically, and new curtains were hung. The 20 x 30 foot original screen was salvaged, but needed repair. Throughout the next 12 years additional work was completed, culminating in the relighting of the marquee, restored by Ian Macartney of Neon Americana/Lumichron of Grand Rapids. In 2007 the marquee glowed once again as theatergoers filled the seats for the grandest opening yet. The continued preservation of this key cultural institution in the Allegan community has meant that an important physical piece of the shared history of the community has been preserved for the benefit of current residents and for future members of the community to share as well.

