The Art Deco Argonaut Building originally housed engineering and design studios for the General Motors Corporation, whose offices were across the road. The vast space, comprising 760,000 square feet, is located in Detroit’s New Center neighborhood.

The College for Creative Studies has redeveloped the building as a campus extension known as the A. Alfred Taubman Center for Design Education, which includes instructional space for the design and design research programs, student housing, a conference center, retail and gallery spaces, and a new charter school focused on art and design.

The rehabilitated building now draws approximately 2,000 people to the neighborhood daily, and anchors a corridor that will drive a creative economy from New Center to the Detroit River. The project represents $154.8 million in direct investment and the creation of 3,825 jobs.
When it opened in 1917, the 450-room Fort Shelby Hotel boasted a location near Union Station and passenger steamer docks, modern amenities, and elegant accommodations. After closing and reopening several times, the hotel closed its doors in the 1970s for what many people suspected was the last time.

The building moldered for nearly thirty years until it was purchased by a group of investors. Using Federal and State Historic Preservation Tax Credits, the new owners rehabilitated the building as a hotel and luxury rental apartments.

The project represents $83 million in direct investment and the creation of more than 2,000 jobs. For years the hotel was a gathering place for members of the press. The Fort Shelby has resumed that role once again.
Historic Preservation in Michigan

Governor’s Awards for Historic Preservation

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 Michigan in 2009 the state and federal historic preservation tax credit programs resulted in private investment in historic building rehabilitations of $554.8 million, leveraging an additional $632.5 million of indirect investment for an overall economic impact of nearly $1.2 billion.

With the Governor’s Awards 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.

2010 Governor’s Award Recipients

- The Friends of Point Betsie Lighthouse, Quinn Evans Architects, U.P. Engineers & Architects, Mihm Enterprises, Inc., Amy Ferris, Charles J. Clarke, and Benzie County Commissioner Mary Pitcher for the rehabilitation of the Point Betsie Light Station, Frankfort
- DeVries Companies, Cornerstone Architects, and Past Perfect for the rehabilitation of the Grand Rapids Water Filtration Plant
- The City of Kalamazoo and the Michigan Historic Preservation Network for the Kalamazoo Window Rehabilitation Workshops
- FNIPP, Inc.; the Protenogia Group, LLC; Siwek Construction; Gazall, Lewis & Associates Architects, Inc.; Kidorf Preservation Consulting; Perry Compton; and David White for the rehabilitation of 601 Martin Luther King (Witherbee’s Market), Flint
- College for Creative Studies, Larson Realty Group, Walbridge, Albert Kahn Associates, Inc., and SDG Architects and Planners for the rehabilitation of the Argonaut Building, Detroit

State Historic Preservation Office
Michigan State Housing Development Authority
michigan.gov/shpo
 DeVries Companies, Cornerstone Architects, and Past Perfect

DeVries Companies of Grand Rapids took the city’s vacant ninety-year-old water filtration plant and rehabilitated it as a stunning mixed use project of apartments and office space known as Clear Water Place.

Using Federal and State Historic Preservation Tax Credits, DeVries Companies took care during every step of the process to ‘do the right thing,’ including enlisting the aid of a local glass artisan to repair or replace more than 550 windows.

The project represents a total economic impact of more than $9 million, and it has generated much excitement in the community. City residents have contacted DeVries Companies to say ‘Thank you.’
The current emphasis on energy efficiency and the need to re-train workers converged to convince the city of Kalamazoo, the Michigan Historic Preservation Network (MHPN), and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) that Michigan needs more professionals who know how to repair existing wood windows.

During the summer of 2009, with a federal Certified Local Government grant from the SHPO, the city of Kalamazoo partnered with the MHPN and trained unemployed and underemployed contractors. The contractors have new skills, and some started new businesses.

The success of the first workshop spawned additional sessions for contractors and homeowners, resulting in the certification of 33 contractors and 24 homeowners in historic window rehabilitation.
The Friends of Point Betsie Lighthouse organized in 2005 and assisted Benzie County in acquiring the Point Betsie Light Station. Since then the Friends has partnered with the county to raise more than $1.5 million in grant funds and private donations.

The group hired architects and contractors with experience in lighthouse rehabilitation and meticulously restored the exterior and interior of the lighthouse and three additional outbuildings. The project involved extensive coordination among the Friends, Benzie County, the architects, the contractor, the State Historic Preservation Office, the US Bureau of Land Management, and the Michigan Lighthouse Project in order to complete the rehabilitation.

Collaboration among the many partners continues at the light station with the goal of ensuring its long term preservation and public access.
Looking at Flint’s Witherbee’s Market today, you would never recognize it as the vacant structure that stood at 601 Martin Luther King for so long. Established to serve the Carriage Town neighborhood and the city at large, Witherbee’s is the first grocery in Flint in more than thirty years.

The building, which was built in 1928 as a service station, was rehabilitated with the help of a $135,000 Cities of Promise Cool Cities grant and State Historic Preservation Tax Credits, and it represents an investment of nearly $1.1 million, leading to the creation of 24 jobs.

The project is a ‘billboard of change’ in Flint and exemplifies what can happen when private citizens, business, and local and state agencies collaborate.