

Historic Preservation in Michigan

Governor's Awards for Historic Preservation

Historic structures and archaeological sites tell us about the past and help us maintain Michigan's unique identity. The preservation of these sites is vital to Michigan's revitalization as a place where people want to work, live, and spend their leisure time. Each year the State Historic Preservation Office and the State Historic Preservation Review Board identify worthy recipients to receive the Governor's Awards for Historic Preservation, which are presented in May during National Historic Preservation Month. The awards recognize homeowners who rehabilitate their homes, developers who transform underutilized historic structures into vital economic assets, academic institutions, archaeologists, nonprofits, and local governments, among others, who strive to preserve Michigan's important historic and cultural resources.

2013 Recipients of the Governor's Award for Historic Preservation

- **Ferris State University and its Kendall College of Art and Design, Christman Capital Development Company, the Christman Company, TowerPinkster Architects, Hopkins Burns Design Studio, and the City of Grand Rapids**
For the rehabilitation of the US Federal Building (Kendall College of Art and Design), *Grand Rapids*
- **The Old Rugged Cross Foundation, Inc., D. Layman Construction Company, and the Community of Pokagon Township**
For the restoration of the First Methodist Episcopal Church of Pokagon (Old Rugged Cross Church), *Pokagon Township*
- **Tibbits Opera Foundation and Arts Council, Inc.; Tom Roberts; Owen-Ames-Kimball Co.; Grand River Builders, Inc.; and the Greater Coldwater Community**
For the restoration of the Tibbits Opera House, *Coldwater*
- **Glenn D. and Jeanine Head Miller**
For the rehabilitation of the Milton and Kittie Geer House, *Superior Township, Washtenaw County*
- **Neighborhood Service Organization; Fusco, Shaffer and Pappas; O'Brien Edwards Construction; and Kidorf Preservation Consulting**
For the rehabilitation of the Michigan Bell and Western Electric Warehouse (NSO Bell Building), *Detroit*
- **The Detroit Land Bank Authority**
For demonstrating a true understanding the value of historic preservation through the NSP2 rehabilitations it completed in Detroit historic districts



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The NSP2 rehabilitations of historic properties in Detroit



Detroit Land Bank Authority

The Detroit Land Bank Authority has been an outstanding steward of historic properties in its ownership. Faced with rehabilitating residences in some of Detroit's most visible historic districts, the authority consulted with the State Historic Preservation Office and "did the right thing" to preserve the historic character of the houses it was rehabilitating.

The Detroit Land Bank Authority (DLBA) received funding through the federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP2). Under provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act, the DLBA worked with the State Historic Preservation Office on a number of projects to ensure the historic character of the properties was maintained during rehabilitation. Throughout the process it was clear the land bank understood historic preservation and the power it has to stabilize neighborhoods and provide residents with high quality and energy efficient housing.

The actions of the Detroit Land Bank should serve as a model for other local housing organizations.





The rehabilitation of the Milton and Kittie Geer House, Superior Township, Washtenaw County



Glenn D. and Jeanine Head Miller

When Glenn D. and Jeanine Head Miller purchased the Italianate-style Geer House in 2000, they acquired a derelict building that Superior Township residents nevertheless thought of as “everyone’s favorite house.”

The Millers devoted ten years to rehabilitating the structure, doing 85 percent of the work themselves. When contractors wanted to rip out the original plaster, the Millers found an expert who agreed to repair rather than replace. The Millers paid attention to every detail: recreating shutter hinges, hanging period-appropriate wallpaper, and investigating original paint colors. The Millers also restored outbuildings that were part of the original farm complex, and they rescued a Monroe County barn by relocating it to their property.

The Millers committed to “do everything right” and used State Historic Preservation Tax Credits for the project. Today, the complex of buildings once again reflects rural life in Washtenaw County. It is a source of community pride and a focal point for those who travel Ann Arbor Road.



The rehabilitation of the Michigan Bell and Western Electric Warehouse (NSO Bell Building), Detroit



Neighborhood Service Organization; Fusco, Shaffer and Pappas; O'Brien Edwards Construction; and Kidorf Preservation Consulting

The Michigan Bell and Western Electric Warehouse deteriorated for years, its recognizable Yellow Pages sign visible to drivers along the Lodge freeway in Detroit. In 2012 the Neighborhood Services Organization (NSO) completed a historic rehabilitation of the building that transformed it into space that provides 155 housing units and supportive services for formerly homeless individuals. In addition, NSO's partnership with the FOCUS: Hope organization provides job training nearby.

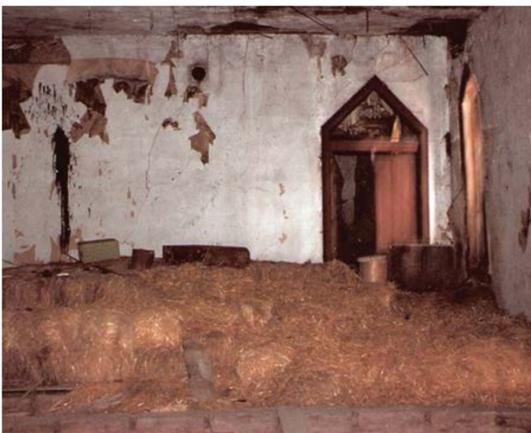
The Neighborhood Services Organization used Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits in addition to federal Low Income Housing Tax Credits and HOME/Community Development Block Grant funds.

The project represents a \$50 million investment in the city of Detroit. The Bell Building rehabilitation, along with two new affordable housing developments across the street, has enlivened the surrounding neighborhood and revitalized one of Detroit's most familiar buildings.

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The restoration of the First Methodist Episcopal Church of Pokagon (Old Rugged Cross Church), Pokagon Township



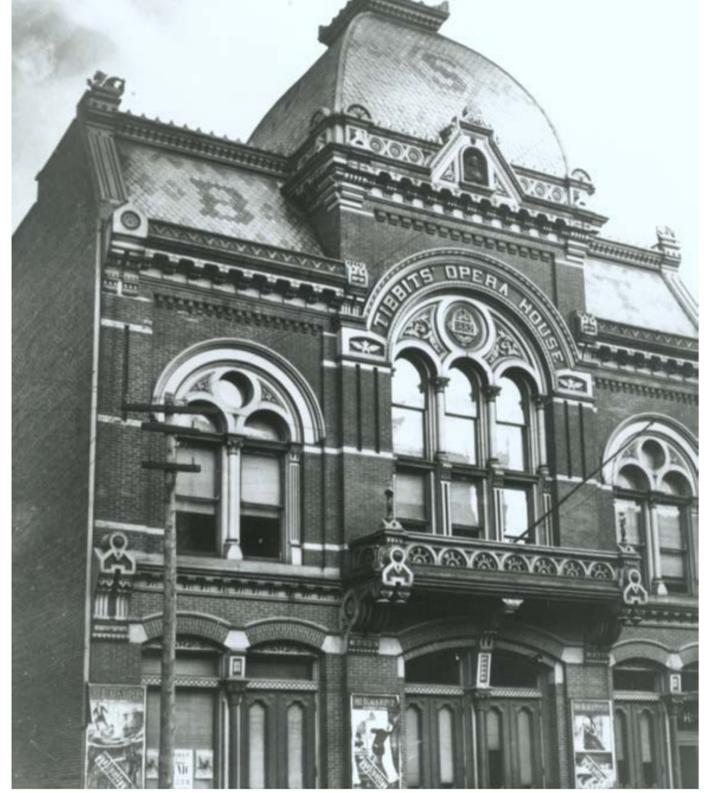
The Old Rugged Cross Foundation, Inc., D. Layman Construction Company, and the Community of Pokagon Township

The First Methodist Episcopal Church of Pokagon began its life as a hops barn. In 1876 the local Methodist Episcopal congregation purchased the building as a church. Here, in 1913, the hymn the "Old Rugged Cross" was sung in its entirety for the first time. A year later, however, the building was sold and returned to use as a barn.

In 1998 Robert and Molly Shafer purchased the building and formed the Old Rugged Cross Foundation, Inc. By then the building was home to wildlife and was rotting from the bottom upward. The foundation sought and achieved historic designation of the church and raised money to restore it. Although funds came in from grants and from people around the world, the generosity of the Pokagon community was critical to success.

The foundation and the contractor were committed to accurate restoration throughout the project and consulted with the State Historic Preservation Office, resulting in a remarkable transformation.

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The restoration of the Tibbits Opera House, Coldwater

Tibbits Opera Foundation and Arts Council, Inc.; Tom Roberts; Owen-Ames-Kimball Co.; Grand River Builders, Inc.; and the Greater Coldwater Community

The Tibbits Opera House façade was renovated during the 1930s and again during the 1960s when the façade was covered with brick, window openings were covered, and a mansard roof was added. The homely exterior belied the ornate interior theater space and it detracted from the fine architecture present in Coldwater's downtown historic district.

In 1999 Tibbits Opera Foundation and Arts Council, Inc. began efforts to restore the opera house exterior. In 2011 the plain exterior was removed, and restoration began in 2012. The restoration effort rallied the Coldwater community and the surrounding area, as permanent residents and summer residents alike contributed funds to the project.

The spectacular restoration of the Tibbits Opera House has renewed community pride. The project has inspired appreciation for and understanding of the value of historic preservation, and it has spurred interest in the rehabilitation of other historic properties in downtown Coldwater.

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The rehabilitation of the US Federal Building (Kendall College of Art and Design), Grand Rapids



Ferris State University and its Kendall College of Art and Design, Christman Capital Development Company, the Christman Company, TowerPinkster Architects, Hopkins Burns Design Studio, and the City of Grand Rapids

Built in 1909, the US Federal Building in Grand Rapids served its original purpose until 1981 when it became home to the Grand Rapids Art Museum. The museum relocated in 2007, and the building remained vacant until Ferris State University redeveloped the structure for its Kendall College of Art and Design. Christman Capital Development led a public/private partnership to rehabilitate the structure while preserving the historic character of the monumental Beaux Arts building. Using State Historic Preservation Tax Credits and Brownfield Tax Credits, Christman undertook a historic rehabilitation to provide an auditorium, an art supply/book store, exhibition galleries, classrooms, and more for students.

The rehabilitation of the US Federal Building represents a \$22.4 million investment in downtown Grand Rapids and has helped revitalize the Division Avenue corridor, which continues to emerge as a hub for creativity, innovation, and higher education in West Michigan.