

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MHPN AWARD WINNERS!
37th Annual Statewide Preservation Conference
“Imagine the Power of Partnerships”
May 17-20, 2016, Emmet County/Petoskey, Michigan

(900 words)

The Michigan Historic Preservation Network (MHPN) is pleased to announce our 2017 Historic Preservation Awards winners. Thirteen award winners from across Michigan were selected in seven categories, including: Building, Citizen, Community, Preservation Gem, Government/Institution, Tax Credit, and Lifetime Achievement. The awards ceremony is one of the highlights of the 37th Annual MHPN Conference, “Imagine the Power of Partnerships.” A reception and awards presentation will be held Friday evening, May 19, 2017, at the Crooked Tree Arts Center in Petoskey, Michigan.

The Building Award is presented to restoration or rehabilitation projects completed within the last three years. While many think of preservation as the multi-million dollar restoration of large historic landmarks, preservation is not limited by size, location or cost. This year’s winner is the St. Joseph North Pier Inner and Outer Lights restoration. The meticulous restoration of the historic 1907 lights and the elevated walkway connecting them was a model of collaboration and planning between city leaders, dedicated citizens, and restoration experts.

The Citizen Award is reserved for an outstanding individual or individuals, who through personal effort and/or involvement in historic preservation projects have made a significant contribution to the preservation of Michigan’s heritage. This year’s Citizen Award winner is Phil Porter, longtime Director of the Mackinac State Historic Parks, for his outstanding leadership of historical, archaeological, and historic preservation activities in Northern Michigan.

The Community Award is presented to a community; e.g. neighborhood association, business preservation group, historical society, etc., that has engaged in a comprehensive plan for historic preservation related projects. The 2017 Community Award is presented to The Friends of the Port Hope Depot for the restoration of Port Hope’s 1904 Pere Marquette Railroad Depot. The restoration of this historic railroad depot united the Port Hope community and returned a deteriorated building to a new life as a beloved community resource.

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The Government/Institution Award is presented to an agency, city, or institution who, by its actions, has accomplished significant positive changes in the historic preservation climate and activity in the State of Michigan. Two awards are being presented in this category in 2017. They are:

- The Rochester Hills Museum at Van Hoosen Farm, for the “Pioneer Family – On Van Hoosen Farm” film documentary. The film, which tells the story of the families who gave the museum its name, aired on Detroit Public Television in December 2016.
- The City of Ypsilanti and the Friends of the Ypsilanti Freighthouse for the restoration of the Ypsilanti Freighthouse. Long used as a city community center, the now-restored Freighthouse stands as a reminder of a time when train travel was common in Michigan.

The Preservation Gem Award is presented to an outstanding preservation project that includes restoration or rehabilitation of an element of a building, or of a structure or an object. The 2017 Preservation Gem Award honors the Kimball House Museum Porch Restoration, in Battle Creek. Efforts by preservation trades students and volunteers restored this modest but elegant porch to its appearance when the stately 1886 Queen Anne home was built.

The Tax Credit Award is presented to outstanding projects completed in the last three years that included qualified use of federal and/or state tax credit programs. Three awards are being presented in this category in 2017. They are:

- The Bay City Times Building/Times Lofts, Bay City. This project rehabilitated the century-old former Bay City Times newspaper building into a 31-apartment residential space. The unique layouts in each apartment preserve the traces of the building’s original function.
- The Davenport Apartments, Detroit. This 1905 apartment building in the city’s Cass-Davenport Historic District was restored to its original exterior beauty to offer eight units of safe and affordable housing to community residents.
- The Strand Theater, Pontiac. The rehabilitated Strand Theater, built in 1921 and remodeled in 1949, is serving as a catalyst for the redevelopment of the commercial downtown.

The winners of the final award category, the Lifetime Achievement Award, are selected by consensus of the Network’s senior leadership. The individuals who receive this award have worked throughout their careers to promote historic preservation in the State of Michigan. In 2017, four recipients have been selected to receive the MHPN Lifetime Achievement Award.

Julie A. Avery and Stephen J. Stier, Empire. Julie Avery and Steve Stier share a commitment to preserving Michigan’s rural cultural heritage and promoting traditional building trades. They are both founding members of the Michigan Barn Preservation Network.

Robert O. Christensen, Lansing. Bob Christensen is capping a career of over 35 years as the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office’s National Register of Historic Places Coordinator, to which he has brought a passion for documenting, promoting, and celebrating Michigan’s significant historic resources.

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Richard L. Moehl, Pinckney (In Memorium) Dick Moehl was an enthusiastic and determined supporter of historic preservation in Emmet County and across the state. He loved Great Lakes lighthouses and was the founder of the Great Lakes Lighthouse Keeper's Association.

Rick Neumann, Petoskey. Over his long career, Rick Neumann has exhibited outstanding leadership in historic preservation in northern Michigan in his many roles as architect, teacher, community activist, and promoter of rural conservation.

The Michigan Historic Preservation Network is a non-profit organization that advocates for Michigan's historic places to contribute to the state's economic vitality, sense of place, and connection to its past. Field assistances for local preservation efforts is provided by Network staff and volunteers and technical assistance is funded through small grants. For more information visit www.mhpn.org.

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The MHPN is Michigan's statewide preservation organization and the advocacy and resource group for preservationists from all backgrounds. Founded in 1981, the MHPN has hosted this annual educational conference every year since it was founded, moving it around the state to reach more and more people each year. For information about MHPN, please visit our website at: www.mhpn.org.