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PRESERVATION IOWA ANNOUNCES 2019 MOST ENDANGERED PROPERTIES

Preservation Iowa has designated 7 properties across Iowa for 2019 Most Endangered Designations. Here are the 2019 Most Endangered Properties:

Marshalltown Downtown Historic District, Marshall County
C. C. Wolf Mansion, Parkersburg, Butler County
Wetmore Building, Sioux City, Woodbury County
St. Patrick Church, Council Bluffs, Pottawattamie County
Preston's Station Historic District, Belle Plaine, Benton County
Central Battery Building, Waterloo, Black Hawk County
Bickett-Rate Memorial Preserve Barn, Cedar County

Preservation Iowa's Most Endangered Property program was started in 1995 and was implemented to educate Iowans about the special buildings and historic sites that are slowly and gradually slipping away from us. In the past 20+ years, Preservation Iowa has designated over 150 homes, churches, archeological sites, landscapes, commercial buildings and a variety of other properties.

The Most Endangered Properties program helps to bring to the public's attention the risks to a designated historic property and introduces owners of an endangered property to preservation advocacy and resources that can help preserve their historic property. Additionally, there have been interest groups who have been able to use the designation as a mechanism to leverage other financial resources to restore and preserve properties. For more information about the Most Endangered Program, check out Preservation Iowa's website at www.preservationiowa.org or contact Preservation Iowa at info@preservationiowa.org.

This press release includes additional information on each of the designated properties.

#1 Marshalltown Downtown Historic District, Marshall County

The Marshalltown Downtown Historic District encompasses the 200 block of East Main to 100 block of West Main, and side streets from 3rd Street to 3rd Avenue from Church Street to State Street. The historic district was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2002 and is a representative collection of

the commercial architectural styles and vernacular building forms that appeared in Marshalltown from the 1860s through the 1940s. Since 2002, 25 buildings in the downtown historic district have received new facades, building code upgrades and entire building renovations with over \$100 million dollars invested.

On July 19, 2018, a SF 3 Tornado devastated the historic downtown. Over 95 percent of the buildings in the district suffered significant damage to roofs, windows, and store fronts. As a consequence of the wind and rain in the days following, building interiors were damaged as well and inventories of many businesses were lost. It is estimated that up to 13-15 buildings were totally destroyed by the storm.

The storm's devastation will continue to have a profound effect on Marshalltown's downtown but has also raised a new awareness of the historic architecture, character, and importance of downtown to the community. The Marshalltown Main Street program has been working closely with Main Street Iowa and the Iowa Economic Development Authority to provide preservation-based technical assistance to downtown building/business owners as well as creating financial incentives to help offset the cost of rehabilitation. The City has also received funding to develop a Master Plan for the downtown.

#2 C. C. Wolf Mansion, Parkersburg, Butler County

The C.C. Wolf Mansion at 401 5th Street was built in 1895 for local banker and land speculator Charles C. Wolf and his wife Mary. Designed by architect Harry E. Nectott of Independence, this grand Richardsonian Romanesque style home sported copper gutters, a slate roof, three-story tower, and elaborate roof décor including a gargoyle. The interior woodwork featured more than fourteen types of wood. The curved glass windows were provided by the Libbey Glass Company with the leaded glass, sidelights and transoms imported from France. The house had indoor plumbing and an original built-in ice box and zinc sink remain in the kitchen.

Eventually financial difficulties from failed business ventures plagued the family. Charles Wolf died in 1921 and the house, furnishings, and surrounding property were sold at public auction in 1926. The buyer, Gustavious Pfeiffer, deeded the home a short time later to the City of Parkersburg and for many years it held a library and meeting rooms utilized by community organizations. In 1970, it became the home of the Parkersburg Historical Society. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979.

Now the passage of time has taken its toll on the infrastructure of the home and the challenge is to find funding for several maintenance projects including bat mitigation and to replace the third- floor windows (including those in the tower) where the wood frames have rotted and allowed moisture to creep in. This in turn has jeopardized the plaster walls and ceilings as well as carpet and wood flooring.

#3 Wetmore Building, Sioux City, Woodbury County

Built between 1916 and 1918, the three-story structure at 615 Douglas Street was designed as a motor-mart for automobile dealership owner Harry A. Wetmore. The Wetmore Automobile Agency sold Chalmers and Saxon automobiles as well as Waterloo Boy farm tractors. Wetmore began manufacturing his own farm tractors in the building in 1918. Wetmore tractors won a number of plowing competitions including setting a world's record at a 1920 plowing competition held in Craig, Iowa. The Wetmore plowed five acres in two hours, 18 minutes. It also outperformed 14 other leading makes of tractors at Dakota City, Nebraska. In 1921, the Wetmore Tractor Manufacturing Company moved to a new facility on Sioux City's west side. The Wetmore Automobile Agency continued to operate from the Douglas Street building through the 1920s.

The structure has a reinforced concrete frame and an elaborate public façade made from locally-manufactured brick and stone. The design is typical of a number of Sioux City downtown commercial buildings of the era and reflects the influence of Louis Sullivan with elements of Chicago Commercial, Sullivanesque, and Prairie School.

The Wetmore Building has been unoccupied since 2006 and is suffering from major water damage and deferred maintenance. The parapet cap and gutter on the southeast exposure of the building has come away from the building and water has invaded the wall. The masonry is deteriorating throughout the exterior of the building and bricks periodically fall into the adjacent alley, exposing the interior tile wall.

Window glazing, roofing, and gutters are also items that are critical to the continued integrity of the building's structure.

The Sioux City Inspections Department placed the building on the Red Tag/Placard List in 2017 due to numerous code and safety violations and the building may be razed if there is no resolution of the violations. The current owner has taken no action to correct the code violations, to date, and has shown no interest in purchase offers from local developers. Ultimately, the Sioux City Council could move to demolish the building but has deferred this action for the present in the hopes the building can be saved and ultimately returned to use.

#4 St. Patrick Church, Council Bluffs, Pottawattamie County

St. Patrick Parish was organized in 1924 with the purpose of serving the growing Catholic community in northeast Council Bluffs as well as those who worked at Mercy Hospital nearby. Construction of the English Gothic style church was completed in 1926. The red granite cobblestones used in the church are purported to have originally paved a main thoroughfare through Council Bluffs. Many prominent members of the Council Bluffs community have been members of St. Patrick Church.

The church underwent an extensive interior renovation in the 1970s and 1990s and an exterior rehabilitation around 2005. The church closed in the spring of 2018 when a new St. Patrick Church opened several miles away. Although the old church has not been publicly listed for sale, a potential buyer interested in the property has plans to tear down the church and other extant buildings including the former rectory (built 1946) for a parking lot.

The Historical Society of Pottawattamie County is working to publicly raise funds with the goal of purchasing the church and its grounds in order to save and preserve the building and its history. Time is running out to raise the funds needed to purchase the church before it is sold.

#5 Preston's Station Historic District, Belle Plaine, Benton County

Preston's Station Historic District is comprised of a gas station, garage, and motel which sit along the old Lincoln Highway, the nation's first transcontinental highway.

The filling station built in 1912 was purchased by G. W. Preston in 1923 and moved to its present location on 13th Street between 1928 and 1930. Originally constructed as a house-with-canopy gas station, the post canopy was removed sometime before 1965. The exterior walls are wood siding and covered with antique advertising signs on all four sides. Historic and family memorabilia is displayed inside the station. The adjacent concrete-block garage was constructed in 1943 and features a sliding barn door on which more antique signs are displayed. The building served as a repair garage and then George H. Preston's personal roadside museum and continues to house many items from Preston's collection. A single story, three-unit motel on the property was built sometime after 1949. In its heyday, this business was a mainstay along the popular route and at present there is no other location like this left on the Lincoln Highway in Iowa.

Today, the property is still owned and maintained by the Preston family and continues to be a popular tourist attraction for enthusiasts looking for history and nostalgia along the historic route.

Overall, the District, however, is showing a lack of maintenance and deterioration. The advertising signs throughout the District demonstrate evidence of long exposure to the elements and need to be preserved. The Station's interior and collection of historic and family memorabilia also show signs of deterioration due to exposure to sun and moisture. The screws used to fasten the tin roof of the garage/museum are deteriorating, pulling away, allowing exposure to the elements and causing the ceiling to fall on the collection of historic and family memorabilia in the building. The windows of the building are boarded up and need to be replaced. There are also signs of wood rot and possible termite damage on the buildings which need to be addressed.

A not-for-profit has been formed with the goal of raising money for the preservation of the buildings. Initial plans call for completion of a structure review and the development of a Historic Structure Report to direct preservation planning efforts for the site.

#6 Central Battery Building, Waterloo, Black Hawk County

The Central Battery Building at 217-221 West 5th Street is one of the few office over retail structures left on Waterloo's west side. The Arts and Craft style building was built in 1912 and is unusual for its use of white and green brick on the facade. Situated near the recently designated Waterloo West Commercial Historic District, the building was noted as being National Register eligible during the District's nomination survey.

The building has been vacant for a number of years and the current owner's plans to remodel the structure into artist lofts never materialized. In the meantime, the vacant building has deteriorated and been the subject of vandalism. There have been calls for the city to take possession of the structure which would most likely lead to its demolition. Several other buildings on the block including one to its west have already been bulldozed and are largely used for parking lots.

The character of the Central Battery Building, however, has a lot of potential to bring additional businesses into the downtown's west side. It sits adjacent to the Russell-Lamson Hotel and Fire Station 2 both of which are on the National Register of Historic Places and with a restored Central Battery Building the area could become part of an expansion of the West Commercial Historic District. In addition, the city is looking to invest in street-scape improvements in the area attracting more potential commercial traffic.

#7 Bickett-Rate Memorial Preserve Barn, Cedar County

The Bickett-Rate Memorial Preserve Barn is located near the unincorporated village of Buchanan. It is a structure on property associated with the 1854 Hannah Morse Fowler Hall House which was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1998. The red painted barn was built in 1922 by the Stoltenberg Brothers of rural Tipton to replace the original barn destroyed by fire the previous year.

The gabled barn has a centrally located sliding door for access of hayracks, etc. in both the north and south elevations. The barn also includes a passage door for the farmer on the east end of the north side and a smaller hinged access for animals on each corner of the south side. A central driveway provides access to the interior for the storage of hay, machinery, grain and other varied typical uses of a farm barn.

The property was continuously owned by the Hall/Rate family from 1848 until they deeded it to the Cedar County Historical Society in 1995 with the purpose of establishing the Bickett-Rate Memorial Preserve. From 1891-1995, the site operated as an agriculture tenancy, a cooperative with the owner and tenants utilizing a shared rental agreement.

Since 1995 the farm land has been cash rented and the farm buildings left vacant. The 1922 barn has significant foundation, roof & siding problems partially caused by raccoons and groundhogs requiring rehabilitation before plans can move forward for it to become a working museum displaying small agricultural equipment that tell the story of what a farm was like 100 years ago. The Cedar County Historical Society plans to work with Cedar County Conservation and FFA to develop conservation education and Ag in the Classroom events with animals for elementary students in the barn.