

2012-05-09 News

## Museum project earns award

Restoration of Almont building lauded by preservation group

by Tom Wearing

write the author

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ALMONT – The Almont Community Historical Museum will be recognized with the Michigan Historic Preservation Network's 2012 "Building Award."

The award presentation will take place this Friday, May 11 at the Durant Hotel in Flint.

The prestigious award is presented annually to an outstanding rehabilitation project that makes a significant contribution to preserving Michigan's heritage.

The historic building at 149 S. Main St. is currently occupied by the Almont Community Historical Society and is owned by the Almont Downtown Development Authority.

The rehabilitation of the mid-19th century structure began in spring 2010, and included replacing deteriorating windows and constructing new wooden replica doors for the front entrance.

The building is one of the last intact all-wood structures in Almont's downtown district. Prior to the recent rehabilitation, the building had retained most of its original storefront facade, though portions of the upper cornice and decorative brackets were missing.

The building had required only minor alterations in the past and most of the building's unique structural features remain unchanged.

Prior to being the home to the Almont Historical Society, the building served as a post office, law office, antique shop, children's clothing store and was the home of Mr. and Mrs. Rueben Braidwood.

At one point, the building was slated to be moved to Crossroads Village in Flint. Through the efforts of Richard and Debbie Muir and others, the building was kept in Almont and is now considered a community landmark.

Downtown Development Authority Director Nancy Boxey said she and fellow DDA Board members are pleased to have been recognized by the Historic Preservation Network.

"We are honored," said Boxey. "This building represents not only a part of Almont's history, but plays a critical role in preserving the character of our downtown.

"This was a cooperative effort," she continued. "It shows how people working together can accomplish great things."

Boxey noted that the total cost of the museum restoration project was about \$60,000, with all of the funding coming from the DDA's coffers.

"With the exterior of the building now in shape to last another 100 years," said Boxey, "the historical society has undertaken improvements to the interior, including painting, reorganizing exhibits and renovating a rear storage space."

In the coming weeks, Boxey said she plans to hold once-weekly DDA office hours at the museum.

"We want to increase the accessibility for the public to visit and learn more about our local history," she said.

Boxey acknowledged RLA Associates architectural firm, Advantage Carpentry, Earth Environments of Romeo and Grabill Windows and Doors of Almont for their contributions to the project.

She encouraged residents and visitors to stop by the museum on Sat., May 19 from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. in conjunction with the 2012 Almont Spring Fling.

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Tom Wearing started at the Tri-City Times in 1989, covering the Village of Capac as a beat reporter. He later served stints as assistant editor and editor. Today, he covers Imlay City and Almont as a staff writer. He enjoys music and plays drums and sings with various musical groups in the Detroit Metropolitan area.