

BUILDING ON THE FUTURE OF OUR PAST

This plan sets forth our goals and objectives for Preservation for the state
of Nebraska for the next five years.

State Historic
Preservation Plan for
the State of Nebraska,
2017-2022

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Executive Summary

Every five years, the Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office (NeSHPO), a division of the Nebraska State Historical Society, prepares a statewide preservation plan that provides a set of goals regarding preservation for the entire state. This plan sets forth our goals and objectives for Preservation for the state of Nebraska for the next five years. In developing this plan, we engaged with the people of Nebraska to learn about their aspirations and opportunities regarding preservation in their communities.

This plan seeks to create a new vision for the future and set goals that will address the needs of stakeholders and ensure the support, use and protection of Nebraska's historic resources.

2017-2022 Historic Preservation Goals

Goal 1: Identify and Work with Preservation Partners

Partner with community stakeholders to preserve and enhance historic downtowns and rural communities. This may be done with local preservation advocacy groups or Certified Local Governments, statewide organizations such as the Nebraska Main Street Network, THPOs, or with minority or under-represented groups to document and preserve their historic resources.

Goal 2: Identification and Assessment

Intensify efforts to locate and assess Nebraska's significant historic and cultural places through identification, survey, research, evaluation, and registration.

Goal 3: Increase Access to our Inventory Data

For several decades the Nebraska Historic Resources Survey and Inventory and the Nebraska Archeological Survey have accumulated thousands of records on archeological and historic sites. There is public demand to put our databases online in some form, being mindful to protect sensitive information, for researchers, preservation advocates, federal agencies and consultants.

Goal 4: Funding and Incentives for Historic Preservation

Work cooperatively with federal and state agencies to publicize the availability of sources of funding for preservation; promote the use of the Federal Investment Tax Credit Program, the Nebraska Historic Tax Credit Program, and the Valuation Incentive Program.

Chapter 1

Public Participation Process

In developing this plan, a large number of constituents and preservation partners joined to provide input. This process was designed to include general audiences through a survey hosted on SurveyMonkey™. Many of these were identified through objectives addressed in the 2012-2016 statewide preservation plan.

SurveyMonkey™ Survey

The Nebraska State Historical Society used a SurveyMonkey™ survey to solicit opinions regarding preservation. The online survey was advertised on the NSHS website, NSHS social media (Facebook and Instagram), and through Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office newsletters and targeted emails to groups who were known to have a stake in preservation's future.

Groups contacted:

Nebraska State Historical Society staff, board members, and trustees

State Senators

Nebraska Certified Local Governments (CLGs)

Main Street Nebraska Network

Preservation Association of Lincoln

Restoration Exchange Omaha

Gage County Heritage Preservation

Plattsmouth Conservancy

Nebraska Association of Professional Archeologists (NAPA)

National Park Service Midwest Archeological Center (MWAC)

Nebraska Archeological Society

Nebraska Association of County Officials (NACO)

League of Nebraska Municipalities (LMN)

Nebraska Land Trust

Nebraska Environmental Trust

American Institute of Architects, Nebraska Chapter

Nebraska Department of Economic Development

Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT)

Nebraska Tourism Commission

Nebraska Byways

Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ)

Nebraska Arts Council

Nebraska Game & Parks Commission

Nebraska Museums Association

Ponca Tribe of Nebraska Historic Preservation Office (THPO)

Santee Sioux Nation Historic Preservation Office (THPO) Omaha Tribe of Nebraska Historic Preservation Office (THPO)

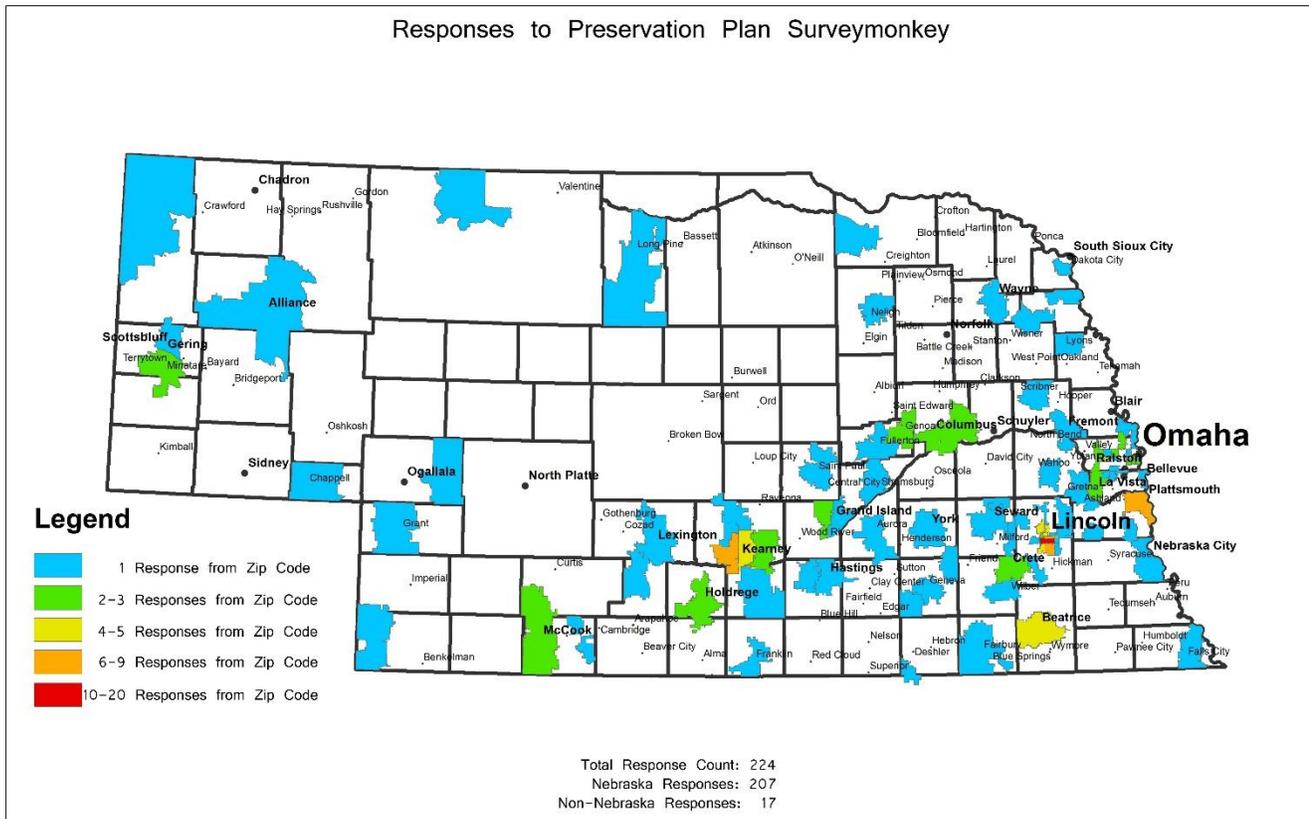
Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska Historic Preservation Office (THPO)

Concordia University

Creighton University

Nebraska Wesleyan University

Peru State College
 University of Nebraska, Kearney
 University of Nebraska, Lincoln
 University of Nebraska, Omaha
 local libraries
 local museums/historical societies



The various means of communicating the survey netted 224 responses, representing approximately two thirds of the counties in the state. Ninety-five responses (or 45%) came from Congressional District 1, the most populated area in our state located around Omaha. District 2, a large swath of the state that encompasses the eastern half of the state to roughly the 6th Principal Meridian (excluding District 1), was represented by 37 respondents, or 17% of survey takers. The western two thirds of Nebraska make up District 3, and they had 65 respondents or 30% of the total. We also had seventeen responses from outside of the state, former Nebraskans who maintain an interest in their state. They responded from western states: Idaho, California, New Mexico, Oregon, and Washington.

Survey Results

The vast majority of respondents stated that they were either concerned citizens and amateur historians, local or county historical society members, or owners of historic properties, followed by

smaller numbers of educators and librarians, state government officials or staff, Main Street or downtown development organizations, and local government officials, staff or commission members. We also asked that our respondents identify their age within a range of years. Out of the 224 responses we received, 29% were in the age group between 20 and 39, 31% fall between ages 40 and 59, and 40% were over age 60.

Among the various questions, respondents were asked to identify the top 5 preservation activities out of 21 options that those in the preservation movement in Nebraska should focus on in the coming years. The options were devised from previous suggestions coming from the public, with the additional option for the respondent to provide comments or suggestions. Below is how they ranked according to the vote count.

Partnering with other groups to preserve and enhance historic downtowns and rural communities	98
Promoting communication and awareness of historic and archeological records	63
Making historic and archeological inventory information more accessible	57
Surveying/collecting information about historic properties	53
Working with communities to develop or repair state historical markers	49
Federal and state incentives for preservation projects	48
Cemetery preservation	47
Assisting local preservation commissions	47
Working with minority/under-represented groups to document and preserve their historic resources	47
Promoting Tribal Historic Preservation programs	46
Training/workshops for preservation-related trades	42
Making it easier to submit, track, and look up project/property information through our website	42
Nominating properties to the National Register of Historic Places	38
Hosting or participating in conferences, lectures, and webinars	37
Notification of possible funding sources/opportunities	30
Identifying/surveying archeological properties	29
Providing technical assistance to constituents	29
Coordinating with state and local planning agencies	29
Funding Certified Local Governments	15
Developing mobile apps	14
Providing information on energy efficiency and green building practices for historic properties	14

In terms of age-related findings, we discovered that equal proportions of respondents across all ages supported the Nebraska SHPO partnering to preserve downtowns. Fifty-one percent of the support for “promoting communication and awareness of historic and archeological resources” came from respondents over the age of 60. Meanwhile 51% of the support for “making historic and archeological information more accessible” came from respondents between the ages of 20-39, an age group that seems most likely to try to access information on the internet. Half of the support for “developing and repairing state markers” came from respondents over the age of 60.

Forty-six percent of the support for “coordinating with state and local planning agencies” came from respondents between the ages of 40-59. It could be that this age demographic is most likely to represent the group that works with local or state planning agencies and so they are prioritizing an option that resonates and would be of use to them in their work.

Fifty-seven percent of the support for “energy efficiency and green building practices for historic properties” and 43% percent of the support for “working with minority/under-represented groups” came from respondents between the ages 20-39. This may be reflecting the millennial generation’s penchant for environmentalism and social justice.

In some cases, the relatively low numbers of responses for certain preservation activities gives us some necessary feedback. “Funding Certified Local Governments” scored very low on the survey, however many of the activities that our work with Certified Local Governments does ticks a lot of the boxes of the higher scoring activities, such as “partnering with other groups to preserve and enhance historic downtowns and rural communities,” and “assisting local preservation commissions.” It is likely that we have not done enough to publicize the CLG program and make sure that our constituents understand how the program works. Growing the program by adding additional communities would help spread the word.

Respondents were asked to make some general statements about the importance of preservation. Many were poignant.

“How do we know where we are going if we don’t know where we have been? Understanding and appreciating Nebraska’s history through architecture is critical to maintaining a tie to the past.”

“The preservation of Nebraska’s heritage is important to me because I recognize that it’s not just about me – it’s about maintaining access to information for future generations.”

I want future generations to be able to walk into buildings with good bones and histories behind them... Give me an old building with its quirky character any day over a new construction!

An additional question asked respondents to comment on what they viewed as the most important preservation issues facing Nebraska now and in the next five years. The most common response involved a concern about funding for preservation projects and activities, both for national, state and local organizations trying to preserve historic places, and also financial incentives for property owners for rehabilitating their historic properties. Therefore, we surmise there is an interest in both seeking additional funding and cooperative partnerships with agencies that provide grants that would apply to historic buildings, as well as continued efforts to defend the Nebraska Historic Tax Credit to the Nebraska legislature, and the Federal Investment Tax Credit to Congress, both of which occasionally seek to limit or terminate them.

“I think the most pressing issue is pending legislation targeting the elimination of the state historic tax credit. I think it is hard for many, especially in smaller communities, to see the value of preservation when it is not inherently linked with a financial incentive, making the tax credit such an important part in proving the worth of preservation...”

There were a number of statements that rued the loss of or threats to particular property types, and perhaps what those losses represent.

“The continuing decline of downtown business districts. The loss of historic schools. The loss of historic churches. The lack of historical perspective on the part of most of the population.”

Others worried that perhaps mid-Century architecture is not sufficiently appreciated that it might suffer significant losses prior to an appreciation for the genre being developed.

And lastly, a large percentage of respondents replied with statements that emphasized a need to take advantage of improving technologies and suggested a new website, the digitization of all kinds of records and data, and making all available on the new website.

We also asked those surveyed to comment on the kinds projects or activities in which their communities or organizations need training. Almost one hundred respondents skipped the question, but those that did respond illustrated an interest in the following:

Basic dos and don'ts for historic building rehabilitation projects	70
Historic building maintenance and repair	65
Historic preservation laws and how they work in Nebraska	57
How to research a property's history	54
How the public can get involved in archeology	39
Energy conservation for historic buildings	37
Applying for historic tax credits	36
Getting properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places	32
Disaster preparedness for historic properties/historic communities	27
Best practices incorporating ADA into historic buildings	26
Pre-history in Nebraska using archeological information	23
Best practices for a "green" rehab	21
Other	16
Following the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation	12

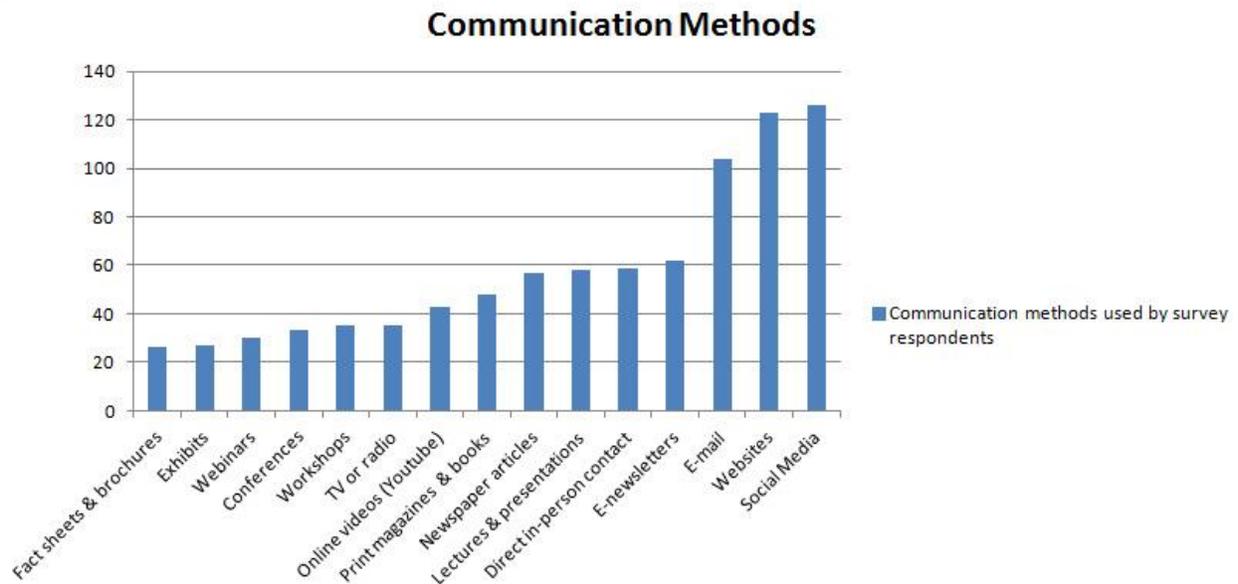
Lead activities appear to be programs on basic dos and don'ts for historic building rehabilitation projects, information on the maintenance and repair of historic properties, preservation laws in Nebraska, and how to research a historic property. Some of these are topics that are often available at the annual Restore Omaha conference hosted by Restoration Exchange Omaha, held every March. Perhaps there is an opportunity to record talks and make them available on the internet for property owners to access. Some are also programs that the SHPO could prepare for groups and organizations when they have a need. Under "Other," respondents indicated an interest in how to foster an appreciation for historic properties, how to finance preservation projects, particularly if the properties are not income-producing, and how to utilize the 10% tax credit.

Survey takers were asked what they were willing or able to do to advance the goals of historic preservation in Nebraska. There were a variety of responses that called upon the writers' particular skill sets, such as the architect who wants to help streamline the tax credit application process, the writer who offered to write columns about preservation for the Nebraska Press Association, and a city council

member who offered to help work with locals to find funding for projects. Many offered to volunteer at local events, give talks on topics about which they are knowledgeable, and utilizing social media to spread the word about important historic properties or events. Some recognized that financial support to local and state organizations, such as Restoration Exchange Omaha or the Nebraska State Historical Society is a good way to support preservation in Nebraska. Twenty-four of the respondents provided us with their contact information so that we may keep them informed about our activities.

All of the information correlated from the survey and our other outreach was compiled to develop a set of four goals to advance the aims of preservation in our state.

And lastly, we asked our respondents how they preferred to learn about SHPO activities. In general, the most popular methods for gathering information seemed to be some version of electronic media – social media such as Facebook, emails and electronic newsletters, and updates on our website. Still another sector appreciated the personal touch of meeting us at public meetings or site visits, and lectures. We will keep in mind that different demographics such as age groups or types of constituents may have different preferences, and will cater our communications to the groups we are trying to reach.



Chapter 2

Summary of Current Knowledge of Nebraska Historical Periods

Prehistory

Paleo-Indian Period, 12,000+ to 9,000 years- ago

The first Nebraskans were people who migrated into the region from Asia. These people subsisted on the hunting of late Pleistocene animals such as the mammoth and large forms of bison. Their diet was supplemented by gathering edible wild plants. These people were highly nomadic. This is reflected in similar projectile point styles which can be found from Canada down through the Plains to Texas. Few sites of this period are recorded in the State. One of the more well-known sites is the Hudson-Meng site north of Crawford, Nebraska.

Archaic Period, 9,000 to 2,000 years- ago

The end of the Pleistocene period and the transition into our modern climatic regime (Holocene) occurred around 9,000 years- ago. With it began a new period in how the people of Nebraska adapted to the climate change and the new species of animals that accompanied it. Many of the former Pleistocene animals became extinct including camels, ground sloths, mammoths and horses. Bison persisted, however, in a smaller form. Bison, elk, deer, and antelope became the primary large animals hunted. Wild edible plants were increasingly gathered to new extent. People began to become less nomadic and more regionalized. Camping sites often appear to have been occupied on a seasonal basis. The period of occupation was interrupted by what appears to have been approximately 3,000 years of dry/warm, dry weather conditions. No sites of these people have been previously identified in Nebraska during this period. The few sites known are in refuge areas such as the nearby Black Hills. By 5,000 years- ago the climate became more hospitable and people returned to this area.

Plains Woodland Period, 2,000 to 1,000 years- ago

This period is ushered in by the introduction of some new technologies from sources out of the west and from the eastern woodlands. The major innovations included the bow and arrow, and pottery. It was also a period of somewhat increased moisture over the Plains. Sites of this period are more sedentary than the previous period. The remains of small lodge structures are often found made from woven saplings and covered with brush or hides. The people continued to live by means of hunting and gathering.

Central Plains Period, 1,000 to 500 years- ago

The introduction of horticulture created a major impact on the lifestyle of people living in Nebraska. We see the first farmers emerge in the area. People now began living in locations year-around round, and dwelling in substantial houses called earth- lodges. Hunting and gathering were still important sources of subsistence, but were supplemented by the cultivation of maize, beans, squash, and other plants.

Large Village and Nomadic Period, 500 years- ago to the 19th century

At about A.D. 1600, large villages of large earth- lodges can be found in parts of eastern Nebraska. It is at this period that, we can first begin to assign sites to known historic tribal groups. The Pawnee, Omaha, and Oto are the major groups in eastern Nebraska. Western portions of the state appear to be

mostly occupied by nomadic hunters and gatherers. Some of the site remains in western Nebraska appear to be related to the Plains Apache. Other tribes that utilized the western portions of the state include the Lakota, the Cheyenne, the Arapaho, the Kiowa, and the Crow.

Much of what is known about the various prehistoric cultures has arrived in the files as the result of federal compliance investigations or in advance of development. A spatial analysis of sites therefore displays skewed results regarding the presence of archeology in Nebraska as many known sites have been identified in those areas that have been extensively developed or are in the process of being developed, particularly in eastern Nebraska and along transportation corridors. To achieve a more equal representation those areas, such as the Sandhills where little development and Section 106 projects occur, should be investigated for archeological sites.

Euro-American Pre-Territorial Period, 1804-1854

The Nebraska Territory came to the United States as part of the Louisiana Purchase. Prior to the acquisition of this land by the United States from France in 1803, limited exploration and trading activity conducted primarily by the Spanish and French occurred in this area. Once the U.S. laid claim to the land, President Jefferson actively encouraged the surveying and mapping of it. This resulted in the Lewis and Clark expedition, which entered the Nebraska Territory in 1804. Coinciding with this government sponsored venture, traders and trappers began operating at an increased rate in the area. Several military installations were established to protect the transportation routes across the country; the first was Fort Kearny on the Platte.

The Platte River saw the opening of numerous road ranches, where pioneers traveling the various trails westward were able to procure supplies. Other establishments, founded along the Missouri River, served as freighting terminals for western settlements such as in Utah, Oregon, and California.

Many of the trading post, transportation, and military related sites from this period are represented as archeological sites located along the major water and overland transportation routes. Numerous ruts and well-known landmarks along trails such as Bald Knob and Chimney Rock are extant, but as they are natural in their materials, are subject to erosion. Some of the Oregon Trail ruts in the western part of the state are threatened by the development of powerlines which would cut across them. Negotiation through the Section 106 process is ongoing.

Territorial Period, 1854-1867

As a result of a compromise on the slavery issue and to open a new territory, Congress passed and the President signed, the Kansas-Nebraska Act. The legislation opened the Nebraska Territory to legal settlement on May 30, 1854. Almost immediately, new towns began to develop up and down the Missouri River, where before, Peter Sarpy's trading post at "La Belle Vue" and scattered places along the Platte had been the only real settlement.

In 1854, the initial population of the Nebraska Territory was scattered in small clusters along the Missouri River. By 1867, areas in the South Platte region and along the Platte as far as North Platte were becoming populated. Settlers also occupied land along the Elkhorn River as far north as present day Norfolk. Prior to 1857, speculation in the development of commerce and industry in towns was responsible for most of the settlement while the role of agriculture was minimal. By 1859 this began to change. More people came to Nebraska because of the farming opportunities. In that same year the

territory exported enough agricultural goods to pay for imported products. Also assisting in the development of the area during this period was the construction of the transcontinental railroad.

Political turmoil began with the creation of the territory. A debate over the location of the territorial capital ended with Omaha being selected as the site. Even attempts to make Nebraska a state resulted in political conflict that saw the first two constitutions rejected. Finally on March 1, 1867, Congress accepted the territory's constitution and application for statehood.

Physical evidence from Nebraska's territorial period is exceedingly rare today. Most of the properties constructed during this period, such as sod houses or log cabins, have made the transition to archeological remains. Those territorial era properties that do exist are generally residential and located in smaller towns or rural communities along the eastern half of the state. Development pressure has almost completely eliminated territorial era properties in the larger cities. Transportation and commerce related properties are the other major component from this period and have fared comparatively well with several extant mills, stage stations, and visible trail ruts. Commercial properties have the least representation in the inventory compared to how many were constructed during this early settlement of Nebraska. Primarily these resources have disappeared from towns due to subsequent boom and bust cycles.

Settlement and Expansion, 1867-1890

Realizing the area's rich soil and vast amounts of viable farmland, the new state would base its economy on farming and industry based on the processing of agricultural products. Because of this, the state's economic, political, and social life would reflect periods of prosperity and depression in the agricultural sector. One political question that was not based on the farm economy was the location of the state capital, which found a permanent home in Lincoln on June 14, 1867.

About the same time that Nebraska achieved statehood, a major period of immigration into the area began that would last for the next 25 years. Like settlement in the old Northwest Territory and the northern Great Plains, Nebraska and the central Great Plains received high percentages of immigrants from parts of Europe not represented among the old immigrants of the eastern seaboard, including Poles, Czechs, Swedes, Danes, Norwegians, Germans from Russia, and large numbers of Germans from the southern provinces.

Several push-and-pull factors encouraged this movement of people. One of the most important "pulls" was the development of the railroad, which made settlement more practical away from the Missouri River, as well as providing means to ship agricultural products. Also the railroads as well as other agencies actively promoted the colonization of Nebraska. The federal government assisted in the populating of the state through land policies such as the Homestead Act of 1862, and the Timber Culture Act of 1873. Finally outside factors in the eastern United States and Europe – unemployment, lack of opportunity, and general restlessness – helped draw people to Nebraska. Due to the population increase, thirty-one new counties came into existence between 1870 and 1873.

As previously noted, however, Nebraska's prosperity was dependent on the agricultural situation. In 1873, the farm economy took a turn for the worse which hurt not only the financial status of the state, but also reduced the number of immigrants who came to the area. Adding to the problem was a grasshopper plague that destroyed hundreds of acres of crops and added to the frustration and hardship of the pioneer farmer. By the late 1870s and early 1880s, the economy began to improve, and with it

emigration to the state again began to rise. Also in the 1870s and 1880s, the cattle industry began to thrive in Nebraska and continues to be an important economic factor.

The strong farm economy in the 1880s once again encouraged settlers to come to Nebraska. Between 1880 and 1890, the state's population more than doubled, and resulted in the organization of twenty-six new counties.

Resources from this period are better represented in our historic inventories than many of the others. From commercial properties in towns to rural farmsteads, many of these pioneer resources were the focus of preservation efforts during the 1960s and 1970s. Still though there are gaps in our knowledge. For instance, our knowledge of those property types associated with everyday laborers and small-scale specialty farmers is limited. The more modest the small family farm was, the more likely it was to have been demolished. Where several generations ago, a drive down a section line road originally would have yielded a view of a quaint farmstead every quarter mile or so, these farms are largely gone, lost to central pivot irrigation systems and pragmatic farmers who prefer a few more acres of crops and fewer buildings subject to property taxes. Even twenty years ago, the sight of an abandoned farmstead, paintless and windowless but stalwartly surviving the weather of the Plains, was not uncommon. Today they are hard to come by.

Even though we have substantial research on many property types from this period, there is an increasing threat to the preservation of these resources as they age and attempt to meet modern demands. Additionally, resources from this period often represent the first buildings in many small towns that now are decreasing in population and turning into ghost towns. Future survey work should focus on intensive recordation of these resources before they are lost due to abandonment or demolition.

Development and Growth, 1890-1920

By 1890 virtually all the free arable land had been occupied and the settlement period in the history of the state was in many respects over. Also in the last decade of the 19th century, the state had nearly attained what was to be a relatively stable population.

But this same period was also marked by bad economic times that began with the Panic of 1893. Farm prices again fell to very low rates, and the state's economy suffered because of it. As a result of the depression, there was very little urban growth in the decade. Finally by the late 1890s, the panic came to an end, and the state was on the road to recovery.

Although Nebraska's population grew very little between 1890 and 1910, significant changes did take place. The period is characterized by a redistribution trend that resulted in more people moving to the cities. Even as the cities grew, the farmers were experiencing a period of prosperity. Prices for agricultural goods rose, as did the number of acres being planted, which resulted in increased production. More land under cultivation was not the only reason for better yields. Good weather, labor saving inventions, and improved varieties and strains of crops and livestock also helped bring about higher production rates. These kinds of changes illustrated that the frontier conditions as they had existed during the pioneer years were coming to an end.

As Nebraska was adjusting to the transition taking place within its borders, world events forced further rapid change upon the state. World War I started in 1914, and with it, an increased demand for

food. When the United States entered the war in 1917, even more food requests needed to be filled. With an economy based on agriculture, Nebraska eagerly expanded its food producing capacity to meet the wartime needs. Also as a result of the war, a potash industry developed in the state, a balloon school was established in Omaha, and many young Nebraska men served their country in Europe.

But it was the agricultural expansion that had the biggest and longest lasting impact on the state. To cash in on higher farm prices and to meet the rising demands, farmers increased their acreage and production. After the war ended in 1918, prices maintained their high levels; and in 1919, they actually continued to rise which led to speculations that the new agricultural rates were permanent. The post-war period also saw the rise of mechanization, something which has continued unabated to the present day.

Other changes were also taking place during this time. A constitutional convention was held in December 1919 that eventually resulted in forty-one amendments being adopted in 1920. In the area of transportation, the automobile, which did not appear until after 1900, had an almost immediate impact on the people of Nebraska. As the use of cars increased, more and better roads were built. Also, there was some movement away from rural reliance on nearby small towns. As motorized trucks became more popular, the amount of goods shipped on railroads began to fall.

For many of Nebraska's counties the period from 1890 to 1920 was the peak in their populations as the flow of settlers dwindled and homesteading tapered off. This period has the highest representation on the National Register compared to all of the other periods discussed. Additionally, this period is the highest represented in the historic resources inventory. Generally, farmsteads, urban residences, and commercial downtown properties make up the majority of the properties from this era. New property types seen in this period such as those related to the automobile, have been a priority for research in the past and are well-represented in files. The biggest threat to resources dating to this period is those from population shift as many of the farmsteads and small towns that boomed at the turn of the century are now dwindling in population as rural communities find it increasingly difficult to maintain populations and economic viability. Buildings that have been long abandoned or vacant often present difficulties to rehabilitation, like leaking roofs that have undermined the stability of the structure, or open windows or holes that have allowed pigeons to roost and damage a building. Sometimes the state of the wiring creates a fire hazard. But any combination of these things can prove to be enough of a disincentive to rehabilitate them that some are lost to severe neglect. Some extensive restoration projects simply cannot be recouped through a successful business in a town with decreased economic vitality. Increased intensive level documentation should be focused on those counties where the greatest losses of population are being seen.

Spurious Economic Growth, 1920-1929

For many, the 1920s were a period of economic prosperity in the United States. While this statement may be safely applied to much of the nation, it was not true of Nebraska. The farm prices that had risen so quickly during and immediately after World War I fell just as rapidly. The demand for extra agricultural produce, which had brought prosperity to Nebraska, dried up suddenly in 1920. According to one author, "...the Twenties – even in the midst of relatively good crops and many superficial signs of prosperity – basically were depression years in Nebraska" (Olson, p. 285). Because of agricultural prices after the war, many farmers mortgaged themselves to get additional, high priced land to plant more crops. When demand fell in mid-1920, farmers were stuck with debts they could not pay. Although there

was some recovery of prices as the 1920s continued, farmers' income did not keep up with inflation. Adding to the problem was a sharp devaluation in land prices.

The poor agricultural economy hurt the state in general. Banks with assets tied up in real estate and crop mortgages were especially hurt. Although Nebraska did have a net increase in population during this time, the bad financial times also created a considerable emigration out of the state. Most of the people coming into the state went to the cities as did some people from rural Nebraska, resulting in an increased urban population.

The majority of resources that have been identified from this period are urban residences or commercial properties. Additionally, a number of transportation related resources have also been identified in association with past multiple property research on historic highways in Nebraska. Some of the areas that could use further research include agriculture-related properties and historic suburb development.

The Great Depression, 1929-1941

As bad as conditions were in Nebraska during the 1920s, the crash of 1929 made them that much worse. By December 1932, agricultural prices were the lowest in state history, and the farmers' purchasing power continued to decline. Adding to the problems was a severe drought that damaged crops and reduced production. As in the 1920s, the agricultural decline affected the state's overall economy. Only this time the situation was worse because the entire nation was in a depression.

Steps were taken, especially by the federal government, to ease the plight of the people. The agricultural sector was given aid through mortgage assistance, readily available farm credit, and the establishment of a price support system. Other programs not specifically related to agriculture were also created. The Social Security Act provided monthly payments to the elderly, while the Federal Emergency Relief Administration allowed for direct assistance to needy individuals. Emergency work relief programs resulted in the construction of highways, bridges, and countless public buildings. One of the actions taken by the state legislature was the creation of the Unicameral in 1937, which remains a governmental feature unique to Nebraska.

Resources associated with the Great Depression period are mostly government relief-related. A variety of relief programs led to the construction of all kinds of properties from cooperative farms, roads, community facilities, and many more. A great deal of research has been done by the Nebraska SHPO on the specific properties that were built under these programs, and many primary resources have already been gathered. These buildings are largely threatened because of their lack of ADA compatibility with stairs to auditoriums and offices and bathrooms. All of them have plumbing, electrical and HVAC systems that are inefficient and out of date, and which are costly to replace. Communities are tempted by the ease with which they could replace one of these buildings with a simply erected modern pole barn that would be all on one level and have modern bathrooms.

World War II, 1941-1945

While people of Nebraska were trying to overcome the effects of the Depression, world events once again became the center of attention. On December 7, 1941, the United States entered World War II, a conflict that had been in progress since 1939. Just as in the previous war, demand for agricultural goods increased, which resulted in a more prosperous state economy. Nebraska contributed to the war effort in other ways also. While men and women from the state served in the armed forces, some of the

civilians who remained behind worked in ordnance factories or at the heavy bomber production plant in Omaha. Nebraska was also home to training facilities and prisoner-of-war camps. As the war drew to a close, a new and lasting prosperity had begun in the state, as had changes that would leave a lasting mark.

Nebraska's WWII resources are spread across the state and comprise a wide variety of property types that have been identified previously. The work that remains to be done however consists of better providing recognition of these places and making information on these sites more readily available. We have already identified in past surveys the twelve WWII Army Air Field in Nebraska, and nominated Fairfield to the National Register of Historic Places. We have listed a WWII era chapel from the Lincoln Army Air Field as well. The Naval Ammunition Depot located in Clay and Adams Counties is well documented as well. Most of the WWII era resources included far more buildings than remain, with barracks and other support buildings sold off following the war and moved to other locations. Remnants of bases remain with the largest, least mobile or destructible buildings or bunkers left behind.

Post-World War II, 1946-1965

The agricultural prosperity that began during World War II continued on into the 1950s and 1960 helping to maintain a strong farm economy through technological advances that efficiently increased production. So while the number of farms and the rural population decreased, agricultural output increased to new highs. During this same time, the population of the urban centers grew, especially in Omaha and Lincoln. The city growth was aided, in part, by development of new industries which also benefited the state by diversifying the economy.

Construction was widespread in the post-war period. During the two decades after the war, road construction and improvement took place on a large scale. Increasing reliance on the automobile by both rural and urban populations, helped state and county roads receive much needed maintenance and upgrading. At this same time, the building of Nebraska's section of the Interstate Highway System began and would be completed in the early 1970s. Additionally, Nebraska saw extensive construction as a result of a Cold War military facility building boom. Numerous missile facilities were constructed across the state and Offutt Air Force Base saw improvements befitting a base of such preeminent importance in national defense.

The majority of post-war period resources exist as residences, particularly ranch houses. While other historic periods have seen more research, the post-war period is in need of increased attention. Several post-war suburbs in Omaha and Lincoln have been surveyed, and two in Lincoln have been listed in the National Register of Historic Places. One conveys the history of a neighborhood that was developed by one particular builder/developer, Strauss Brothers, who developed their own distinct style of ranch style house called the Trend Home with the help of architects Unthank and Unthank. The other was developed by Peterson Construction, which platted the area and sold lots to a wide variety of builders who were active in the housing market at the time. Additional neighborhoods will no doubt be surveyed and nominated in coming years. The impact and significance of the military build-up in Nebraska is another subject which has been researched in the past, but could be improved upon by compiling the information into a single document.

Chapter 3

A Vision of Preservation in Nebraska

In Nebraska, numerous non-profit organizations and local, state, and federal governmental agencies serve the fields of preservation, or alternatively may impact historic preservation while they try to accomplish other goals related to housing or natural resources. If we are aware of demographic and statistical trends in our state, we are all better able to react for the best of all programs.

For instance, while five counties in Nebraska are growing rapidly in population, they are also growing in area, potentially causing sprawl or the loss of agricultural historic properties that may have been present. Meanwhile, a larger number of our counties, particularly in the western part of the state, are experiencing population losses.¹ These losses might indicate that there are historic properties that are being vacated and left empty, or that shrinking schools will need to consolidate leading to the abandonment of half an area's historic schools, or that there are not as many agricultural jobs because of farm consolidations and corporate farming.² Changes in our agricultural economy have a direct effect on our tax revenues and the state's ability to pay for programs that support Nebraskans and Nebraska's historic properties, as well as the properties that we often seek to preserve.

In another example, Preservation as a movement is often considered quite aligned with the Environmental movement in the United States, for how best can you keep building materials out of the landfill than by reusing the building stock you have? However, some green movements potentially bring some impacts to historic properties. Wind farms are considered to be an excellent source of clean energy, but they do take up a great deal of space, and may damage archeological resources in open fields, or may be located so close to historic agricultural resources that they create a visual impact. Similarly, new products for buildings promise energy efficiency if they are used to replace historic materials, but in many cases, the time required to recoup the costs of the materials and start to see a money from your energy savings may take longer than the lifetime of the product.

In an effort to mitigate these sorts of changes, the NSHS studies our historic resources, records information for posterity and makes the information available to the public, and promotes preservation through grants to CLGs and preservation incentive programs.

Nebraska State Historical Society (NSHS)

In Nebraska, the Nebraska State Historical Society not only operates several programs focused on the history of place, but also administers the state's official historic preservation program. The NSHS's programs, described below, support public and private involvement in historic preservation.

Statewide Survey Programs

The basis for any planning and management of cultural resources hinges upon successfully identifying the resources involved. As development progresses in some communities and shrinks in others, time

¹ Lincoln Journal Star, "More Nebraska Counties Seeing Population Growth," March 24, 2016.

² University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources Cropwatch. "Number of Nebraska Farms Decreases in 2016." <http://cropwatch.unl.edu/2017/nebraska-farms-decrease-2016>. Viewed August 23, 2017.

and humanity take a toll on cultural resources. In order to accurately understand what exists and is at stake, surveys become a necessary ongoing project.

The Nebraska Historic Resources Survey and Inventory and the Nebraska Archeological Survey are the two state programs responsible for recording Nebraska's cultural resources. The goal of both programs is to accurately document the resources of the state through research, and written and photographic records. Information gathered contributes to the understanding of our state's history and is utilized when determining eligibility for the National Register, evaluating the impact of federally sponsored projects, developing local preservation plans, preparing educational materials on historical themes, and evaluating eligibility for rehabilitation based financial incentives.

Nebraska Historic Resource Survey and Inventory (NeHRSI)

The NSHS began amassing survey files on various historic buildings in 1961. Though quite limited in scope and activity, this was the start to document historic resources throughout the state. Survey efforts were bolstered by the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act, which established the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and required statewide inventories. In 1974, with increased funding offered to the SHPO by the National Park Service (NPS), a comprehensive survey program was formed called the Nebraska Historic Resource Survey and Inventory. This newly organized survey program provided a systematic methodology and priorities for the completion of surveys. Over time, procedures and levels of documentation have changed but the goal of creating an archive of information about the historic resources of the state holds firm.

The inventory consists of over 83,000 properties and includes historic buildings, agricultural structures, bridges and roads, cemeteries and many more types of historic places. The Nebraska Historic Resources Survey and Inventory is open to the public for research. Information usually includes basic location data and photographs; however, more in-depth information such as deed research, floor plans, and historic photographs may be available for some properties. While the Nebraska State Historical Society still has many hard copy files, they also have many forms and maps digitized. Historic property information is currently maintained in a MS Access database and is linked to a Geographic Information System (GIS).

The purpose of NeHRSI is to help local preservation advocates, elected officials, land-use planners, economic development coordinators, and tourism promoters understand the value of historic properties in their communities. Properties included in the inventory have no use restrictions placed on them and inclusion does not require any type of special maintenance. Rather, the inventory acts as an archive of properties that add to our knowledge of a community's historic development.

Since the last Preservation Plan was written in 2011, the Nebraska SHPO and the Certified Local Governments (CLGs) have completed the following Nebraska:

- Aksarben Reconnaissance Survey for Omaha CLG
- Burt County Reconnaissance Survey
- Butler County Reconnaissance Survey
- Colfax County Reconnaissance Survey
- Elmwood Park Reconnaissance Survey for Omaha CLG
- Indian Village Reconnaissance Survey for Lincoln CLG
- North Omaha Reconnaissance Survey for Omaha CLG

- North Plattsmouth Intensive Survey for Plattsmouth CLG
- Park Manor Intensive Survey
- Plattsmouth Intensive Surveys for Plattsmouth CLG
- Saline County Reconnaissance Survey
- State Owned Buildings Intensive Survey
- Streetcar Nodes of Commercial Development Intensive Survey for Omaha CLG
- West Haymarket Intensive Survey for Lincoln CLG

Nebraska Archeological Survey

The NSHS maintains several programs to identify, interpret, and preserve the information contained in archeological sites. In 1988, the NSHS began a program of archeological survey to identify unrecorded sites. The survey program is guided by a geographical analysis using watersheds to most efficiently place the archeological surveys. Prior to the beginning of the SHPO survey program approximately 167,000 acres had been surveyed in Nebraska. As of 2017, over 90,000 additional acres have been surveyed and new sites have been identified. These have consisted of high-priority areas where either little research has been collected or in areas where development pressures have come to bear on archeological sites. A total of 257,000 acres have been surveyed.

The Collections Division of the NSHS maintains the files, database, and GIS for the inventory of archeological records called the Master Archeological Site Survey. This is the main repository for information related to archeological sites from across the state. The inventory currently contains information on over 11,000 sites ranging from 12,000 years ago to present.

The major challenge for all preservation projects is the availability of funding. Survey work is a time consuming and costly process. The archeological survey in particular is in need of increased focus as only a small portion of the state has been surveyed. The NeHRSI program has conducted reconnaissance surveys in every county of the state, however much of the earliest data is now three decades old and requiring re-survey and updates as many properties have aged into being considered historic. The earliest county surveys from the late 1970s and early 1980s were completed, but reports were never prepared. In the coming years these counties will be the focus for reconnaissance survey. Additionally, the survey program has focused primarily on reconnaissance level surveys in an effort to perform countywide surveys in every county, so now with the baseline of information established, more intensive level survey work should be performed to add content to the inventory.

The second major challenge to the survey programs involves making information more accessible while maintaining data security. The NSHS has already begun the process of digitizing and backing up the information created in the respective inventories. However, there is a sizable amount of information yet to be digitized and will require staff time and technology to maintain. These paper collections of information must be digitized to protect the archive and to make the information more accessible to the public. Additionally, GIS databases are expensive to maintain, but they are basic, vital tools that are indispensable. Many, including staff, personnel from other state offices, consultants, local governments, and members of the general public, rely daily on this important information. If the information is to be made more accessible, the NSHS will need to emphasize developing an online database that takes into consideration data security issues.

Highway Archeology Program

Since 1959, the NSHS and the Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT) have cooperated in identifying sites that could be potentially impacted by construction. The DOT provides Society archeologists and historians with construction plans several years prior to project construction. Staff then conducts background literature searches, in-field reconnaissance, and test excavations to locate historic sites and evaluate them for eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places. When such extraordinary sites are discovered, NSHS and DOT Project Development Division staff work together to craft a mitigation plan. Because of the several year lead time, in many cases mitigation can be accomplished by minor redesign to avoid the property. If avoidance is too costly or otherwise not feasible, the Department of Transportation funds investigations.

In the past decade, the Highway Archeology Program has evaluated over 1,750 proposed highway improvements, discovered over 300 previously unrecorded archeological sites, and photo documented hundreds of standing structures. The Department of Transportation also completed an evaluation of all bridges in the state for their historic significance. About 100 were found to be eligible for the National Register. When these are scheduled for replacement, they will be recorded, moved, or preserved in place. In the rare cases when National Register-caliber archeological sites cannot be avoided, systematic excavations are undertaken to recover valuable scientific information. Such information has advanced our understanding of past Plains cultures and increased tourism appeal.

National Register of Historic Places

One of the goals of the survey programs is to help identify properties that may be eligible for listing in the National Register. The National Register is our nation's official list of significant historic properties. Created by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Register includes buildings, structures, districts, objects, and sites that are significant in our history and prehistory. These properties and objects may reflect a historically significant pattern, event, person, architectural style, and/or archeological site. National Register properties may be significant at the local, state, and/or national levels.

Properties need not be as historically rich as Fort Robinson or architecturally spectacular as the Nebraska State Capitol to be listed in the National Register. Local properties that retain their physical integrity and convey local historic significance may also be listed.

As of December 31, 2016, there were 1141 National Register listings for Nebraska. Of those listings, 115 are archeological sites. We present a range of twelve to twenty nominations to the NPS annually.

Education and awareness remain the largest challenges facing the National Register program nationally and throughout Nebraska. Many individuals and organizations resist National Register listing for fear of regulation. Conversely, many assume that listing provides automatic protection and funding. The myths are abundant and difficult to dispel. It is only through education regarding the program that the public, and even state and federal agencies, will understand the National Register and what it does and does not mean for historic properties. In order to meet this challenge, the NSHS needs to work towards increasing public engagement. Suggestions include more media coverage of recently listed sites and an updated National Register website.

National Register Listings from 2012 to 2016

2012

Christian Kupke Farmstead – Cass County
Gottfried Gustav Pitz Barn – Cass County
Capitol Garage – Douglas County
St. Richard’s Catholic School & Rectory – Douglas County
Beatrice Creamery Company, Lincoln Plant – Lancaster County
Brownbilt Residential Historic District – Lancaster County
Rose Kirkwood Brothel – Lancaster County
Mathewson-Gerecke House – Madison County
Greenwood Stage Station – Morrill County
Superior City Hall and Auditorium – Nuckolls County
Massow-Schutz House – Otoe County
Miles Ranch – Richardson County

2013

Olson’s Market – Douglas County
Omaha Park & Boulevard System – Douglas County
The Ottawa Block – Douglas County
Meyer & Raapke Building – Douglas County
The Nottingham Apartments – Douglas County
Traver Brothers Row Houses – Douglas County
Lincoln Highway Seedling Mile – Hall County
Rouse Ranch – Holt County
Bethphage Mission – Kearney County
Park Manor Historic District – Lancaster County
Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery – Lancaster County
Grand Theater – Madison County
Stubbs-Ballah House – Madison County
Evangelical United Brethren Church, Nance County
Farmers State Bank – Phelps County
Citizen’s State Bank – Platte County
Falls City Commercial Historic District – Richardson County
Harold J. Homestead Cabin (Bone Cabin Complex) Amendment – Sioux County
Agate Springs Ranch/Agate Fossil Beds National Monument – Sioux County

2014

Kester Planing Mill – Antelope County
Apartments, Flats and Tenements in Omaha, NE from 1880-1962, MPD – Douglas County
Attached Dwellings of Omaha, NE from 1880-1962, MPD – Douglas County
Drake Court Historic District – Douglas County
Hupmobile Building – Douglas County
John E. Reagan House – Douglas County
Memmen Apartments – Douglas County
Minne Lusa Residential Historic District – Douglas County

Turner Court Apartments – Douglas County
Burlington Railroad Depot – Hall County
Temple Craft Building – Hamilton County
Alma City Auditorium and Sale Barn – Harlan County
Amel H. Koop House – Lancaster County
Lincoln Haymarket Historic District – Lancaster County
Auburn Historic District – Nemaha County
Hoffman Building- Saunders County
Kacirek-Woita General Store – Saunders County
Detroit-Lincoln-Denver Highway in Nebraska, MPD
Potash Highway in Nebraska, MPD
U.S. Highway 20 in Nebraska, MPD

2015

Hastings Brewery Building & Bottling Works – Adams County
Lowe and Fair Commercial Block – Buffalo County
Finch Memorial Library – Custer County
Stillman P. Groat House – Custer County
10th & Pierce Car Barn – Douglas County
North Broad Street Residential Historic District – Dodge County
Druid Hall – Douglas County
Omaha Power Plant Building – Douglas County
Polish Home – Douglas County
Johnson Cabin Museum – Gage County
Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer – Hall County
Front Street – Keith County
Wesleyan Hospital and Nurses' Training School – Lancaster County
Rinne Farm – Pawnee County
R. A. Clark House – Richardson County
Way Side Stock Farm – Richardson County
Engineer Cantonment – Washington County

2016

Foote Clinic – Adams County
Gibbon Baptist Church – Buffalo County
Peter E. Ruffner House – Cass County
Schuyler Downtown Historic District – Colfax County
Allas Apartments – Douglas County
Danish Brotherhood in America National Headquarters Building – Douglas County
Hanscom Apartments – Douglas County
Holy Sepulchre Cemetery – Douglas County
Beatrice Downtown Historic District – Gage County
Alkali Station – Keith County
Memorial Building – Otoe County
Crete Downtown Historic District – Saline County

Certified Local Governments

Nebraska's Certified Local Government (CLG) Program is a local, state, and federal partnership that promotes community preservation planning, prehistoric and historic resource protection, and heritage education. It emphasizes local management of historic properties with technical and grants assistance provided by the NSHS. The Nebraska SHPO administers the program for the NPS. A CLG is either a county government or local municipality that has adopted preservation as a priority.

Nebraska's Certified Local Governments

City of Auburn
City of Fairbury
City of Lincoln
City of North Platte
City of Omaha
City of Plattsmouth
City of Red Cloud
City of Sidney

The NPS certifies a local government's CLG status while working with the SHPO, and there are general rules to follow. A community considering CLG status is given broad flexibility with these guidelines when structuring its program. To become a CLG a local government must establish a preservation ordinance that includes protection for historic properties at a level the community decides is appropriate, conduct and maintain a historic building survey, establish a mechanism to designate local landmarks, and create a preservation commission to oversee the preservation ordinance and the CLG program.

The advantages of achieving CLG status include:

- Eligibility to receive matching funds from the NSHS that are available only to CLGs.
- Potential eligibility for preservation tax incentives for contributing buildings within local landmark districts without being listed in the National Register.
- Having an increased voice in reviewing federal undertakings.
- Having an additional tool through the use of their landmark and survey programs when considering planning, zoning, and land-use regulations related to historic properties.
- Having the ability to monitor and preserve structures that reflect their community's heritage.
- Having access to a nationwide information network of local, state, federal, and private preservation institutions.
- Having a built-in mechanism to promote pride in, and understanding of, a community's history through their ordinance and commission.

The greatest challenge to the CLG program is increasing program awareness within local governments. In the 2017 SurveyMonkey questionnaire, one of the areas of least interest to the public was the CLG program, which we assess to be a failure of outreach and publicity. We will endeavor in the coming years to grow the presence of CLGs and knowledge of their activities through marketing and promoting quality projects within those communities.

Preservation Incentives

Federal Investment Tax Credit Program

Since 1976 the Internal Revenue Code has contained provisions offering tax credits for the certified rehabilitation of income-producing historic properties. Historic properties are defined as those listed in the National Register, or as buildings that contribute to the significance of a National Register historic district or Local Landmark historic district that has been certified by the Secretary of the Interior. An income-producing property may be a rental residential, office, commercial, or industrial property. Historic working barns or other agricultural outbuildings may also qualify.

A certified rehabilitation is one that conforms to the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation. The standards are a common sense approach to the adaptive reuse of historic buildings. It is important to remember that this program promotes the rehabilitation of historic properties so that they may be used to the benefit and enjoyment of the property owner and the community. The program is not necessarily intended to reconstruct or restore historic buildings to exact/original specifications.

- The tax incentive program in Nebraska has been responsible for reinvesting millions of dollars for the preservation of historic buildings.
- Encouraging the adaptive reuse of previously under or unutilized historic properties in older downtown commercial areas.
- Helping to broaden the tax base.
- Giving real estate developers and city planners the incentive to consider projects in older, historic neighborhoods.
- Helping stabilize older, historic neighborhoods.

Certification of the historic character of income-producing property—usually by listing the property in the National Register—and certification of the historic rehabilitation is made by both the NSHS and the NPS. Since 2011, fifty-one federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives projects have been completed with over \$165,000,000 in qualified rehabilitation expenditures. These figures do not include the numerous other projects currently in various stages of review.

Valuation Incentive Program

Authorized by the legislature and implemented in 2006, the Valuation Incentive Program (VIP) is a property tax incentive that assists in the preservation of Nebraska’s historic buildings. Through the valuation preference, the current assessment year’s (“base”) valuation of a historic property is frozen for eight years, starting with the first assessment year after the project is completed and approved by the NSHS. The valuation then rises to its market level over an additional four-year period.

From 2011 to 2016, a total of 31 VIP rehabilitation projects have been completed and approved by the Nebraska State Historical Society. The completed rehabilitation projects that utilized VIP alone represent a private investment total of at least \$5,000,000. The program has been particularly popular with private homeowners, who have no access to other historic preservation incentives. The completed rehabilitation projects utilizing VIP along with the federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program represent a private investment total of nearly \$33,000,000.

Nebraska Historic Tax Credit

For many years, one of the most common questions the NSHS received was if Nebraska possessed a state tax credit similar to those utilized by many other states across the country. Developers and architects who worked in states that had tax credits knew the financial benefits that could be had by combining a state tax credit with the Federal Investment Tax Credit program. In addition, studies of the effectiveness from such programs elsewhere supported factually what we knew to be true anecdotally: more incentives leads to more investment in historic properties. Indeed, our last statewide preservation plan recommended that we investigate the possibility of creating a program similar to those that have been so successful in other states. And to that end, a legislative bill was introduced to the 2013 Nebraska legislature that proposed to create a state tax credit program which would closely mirror the Federal tax credit, providing a 20% credit on state tax liabilities. The bill passed into law during the 2014 legislative session, signed by the Governor on April 16, 2014.

The final law made available \$15 million in credits annually, with projects capped at \$1 million. Credits for the first year became available on January 2, 2015, and the \$15 million were quickly obligated by February 17th. In the first year, 46 projects were allocated tax credits, and thirteen of the projects were completed. A preliminary total of total expenditures on projects completed during the first year amounted to \$67.17 million. Economic impact models showed that these projects had a \$79.84 million impact on the Nebraska economy, and yielded 1,033 full time jobs. \$35.07 million in wages were created for Nebraska workers. The projects contributed \$45.26 million to the state's gross state product, and \$3.22 million in state and local taxes.³

In February 2017, a follow up study on 2015 projects, more of which had been completed by then, provided an even more encouraging set of data. Economic impact models showed that the projects undertaken in 2015 had a total impact of \$120.66 million on the Nebraska economy. The projects yielded 1,635 full time jobs in Nebraska and generated over \$53.44 million in wages for Nebraska workers. The projects contributed \$69.84 million to the state's gross state product, and \$5.11 million in state and local taxes.⁴

Grants

The most common question received by the NSHS is if there are grants available for supporting the rehabilitation of historic properties. While the NSHS does not possess any grant program for physical repair or improvements, there are other government and private sector grants out there that can and have been used for rehabilitations. To assist the public, the NSHS should focus on creating a unified list of potential grant programs for those interested in rehabilitating historic properties.

³ The Annual Economic Impact of the Nebraska Job Creation and Mainstreet Revitalization Act. Prepared for the Nebraska State Historical Society by the Bureau of Business Research from the UNL College of Business Administration. August 23, 2016.

⁴ The Economic Impact of the Nebraska Job Creation and Economic Revitalization Act: An Update. Prepared for the Nebraska State Historical Society by the Bureau of Business Research from the UNL College of Business Administration. February 15, 2017.

Federal Project Review

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires federal agencies take into account the effect of their undertakings on historic properties; develop and evaluate alternatives that could avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects their projects may have on historic properties; and afford the federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation an opportunity to comment on the project and its effects on historic properties. The regulations that govern the Section 106 process, as it is known, also require that the federal agency consult with the NSHS when conducting these activities. Note that a property need not actually be listed in the National Register to be considered for protection, only to have been determined eligible for listing. This process is to take place early enough in the planning effort to allow for alternatives that would avoid adverse effects to historic properties.

It is important to note that public participation in this process is critical. The Section 106 process requires the federal agency to seek public input if adverse effects to historic properties are discovered through consultation with the NSHS. The NSHS staff examines information provided by the federal agency, the NeHRSI, and the National Register; although, often the most useful information comes from public comments. Section 106 was included in the National Historic Preservation Act to protect locally significant historic properties from unwitting federal action. It is truly a law that gives the public a voice.

The future challenges before the review and compliance program primarily involve the streamlining of the review process. This effort in streamlining will undoubtedly require increased cooperation with others in the development of programmatic agreements and memoranda of agreements. Additionally, the creation of an online submittal process of reviews would assist in expediting projects and is frequently being requested by compliance users.

Public Outreach and Education

The Nebraska SHPO assists communities in preserving significant buildings, sites, and structures that convey a sense of community history. The most powerful tool available to the Nebraska State Historical Society Historic Preservation Office in this regard is public education. For this reason, Nebraska State Historical Society staff spends considerable time conducting public meetings and workshops and disseminating information to the public.

There is a great need in Nebraska for preservation education and training. A key element to the success of education and training will be the inclusion of the youth, non-professionals, construction and development professionals, and other preservation professionals. Providing regular and frequent education opportunities to the public and government officials is one of the best ways to proactively advocate for preservation. The ultimate goal for education is that people consider preservation not just an activity, but a part of their everyday lives and community's culture.

Other Preservation-Related Programs in Nebraska

Several other preservation programs exist through non-profit organizations and federal agencies. The following is only a partial list of some of the more well-known organizations or programs involved in identifying and protecting our shared history.

Tribal Historic Preservation Programs

Tribes are keepers of Native American culture and history. Tribal governments and its members serve to promote the rights and address problems common to Native Americans in Nebraska. Tribes may participate in the federal preservation program, directed by a Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO). Tribal officers can accomplish comprehensive planning and consult on federal undertakings consistent with both their own plans and this statewide plan. All Nebraska Tribes are currently enrolled as having THPO programs.

National Park Service

The NPS manages several programs within their system as the federal guardians of our national cultural and environmental heritage. In Nebraska, the NPS system consists of National Historic Trails, National Monuments, a National Recreational River, a National Scenic River, and National Historic Landmarks.

National Historic Landmarks

National Historic Landmarks are nationally-significant historic places designated by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior because they possess exceptional value or quality in illustrating the heritage of the United States. Just over 2,500 historic places located across the country bear this distinction. A total of 21 historic and prehistoric places across Nebraska have been designated as National Historic Landmarks. NSHS staff members are responsible for monitoring these nationally-significant resources on behalf of the NPS.

National Historic Landmarks in Nebraska (as of 4/19/2017)

ASH HOLLOW CAVE GARDEN COUNTY
William Jennings BRYAN HOUSE (Fairview) LINCOLN, LANCASTER COUNTY
CAPTAIN MERIWETHER LEWIS (Dustpan Dredge) BROWNVILLE, NEMAHA COUNTY
Willa CATHER HOUSE RED CLOUD, WEBSTER COUNTY
COUFAL SITE HOWARD COUNTY
FATHER FLANAGAN'S BOYS' HOME BOYS TOWN, DOUGLAS COUNTY
FORT ATKINSON WASHINGTON COUNTY
FORT ROBINSON AND RED CLOUD AGENCY DAWES AND SIOUX COUNTIES
USS HAZARD OMAHA, DOUGLAS COUNTY
LEARY SITE RICHARDSON COUNTY
MORTON, J. STERLING, HOUSE NEBRASKA CITY, OTOE COUNTY
NEBRASKA STATE CAPITOL LINCOLN, LANCASTER COUNTY
George W. NORRIS HOUSE McCOOK, RED WILLOW COUNTY
OMAHA UNION STATION, OMAHA, DOUGLAS COUNTY
PALMER SITE HOWARD COUNTY
DR. SUSAN LAFLESCHE PICOTTE MEMORIAL HOSPITAL WALTHILL, THURSTON COUNTY
PIKE PAWNEE VILLAGE SITE WEBSTER COUNTY
ROBIDOUX PASS SCOTTS BLUFF COUNTY
SCHULTZ SITE VALLEY COUNTY
SIGNAL BUTTE SCOTTS BLUFF COUNTY
WALKER-GILMORE SITE CASS COUNTY

Non-Profit Preservation Programs

Nebraska Main Street Network

The Nebraska Main Street program was founded in 1994. In 2013, Nebraska Main Street Network became a non-profit organization that works with communities across the state to encourage revitalization of their downtown commercial business districts through historic preservation. The program helps communities rebuild and strengthen the businesses that make sustainable, vibrant, and unique communities. Through affiliation with the National Trust for Historic Preservation's National Main Street Center, Nebraska Main Street communities tap into the collective wisdom and experience of more than 1,500 communities in 43 state, regional, and urban programs.

Local Preservation Organizations

Nonprofit historic preservation organizations are dedicated to increasing community awareness in local historic places. Local organizations act as the grassroots core of preservation. As the most knowledgeable source regarding preservation in their community, local organizations are the most important component in advocacy and protection of historic resources.

Restoration Exchange Omaha

Restoration Exchange Omaha is comprised of a volunteer group of historians, architects, preservationists, and other professionals interested in preserving resources in the Omaha and Council Bluffs, Iowa region. Every year the Restore Omaha conference brings together a variety of speakers and practitioners in the field of preservation. The conference regularly achieves several hundred people in attendance. The group also coordinates advocacy efforts and tours of historic homes and neighborhoods.

Pioneer and Heritage Farm Program

The AKSARBEN Foundation program honors Nebraska farm families who have owned the same land for 100 years or more through the Pioneer Farm Award and for 150 years or more through the Heritage Farm Award. The Nebraska Farm Bureau and Nebraska Association of Fair Managers support the awards. To date, they have honored more than 9,000 families in all 93 Nebraska counties. They present recipients with both a plaque and gate post marker during the annual county fair in which the land is owned.

Chapter 4

A Five-Year Vision for Historic Preservation in Nebraska

Preservation planning is most effective when we listen to public comments, examine trends, understand our resources, and examine our current programs for strengths and weaknesses. Public comment is crucial for ensuring that the preservation community is working toward goals supported by the people they serve. It is also important to take into account the current trends in population growth or decline, technology or environmental concerns, in order to have statewide preservation planning grow along with the communities and the concerns of the collective. Comprehending our lives within a broader context of life in our state makes all of this more effective. We must understand the historic and cultural resources that encompass aspects of our state's history to evaluate the programs, preservation partnerships and state and federal legislation that can be used to preserve these resources and their relative successes and failures.

With this in mind, the plan seeks to form a new vision for the future and set the following goals that will help address the needs of Nebraska's resources.

2017-2022 Historic Preservation Goals

Goal 1: Identify and Work with Preservation Partners

Partner with other groups to preserve and enhance historic downtowns and rural communities. This may be done with local preservation advocacy groups or Certified Local Governments, statewide organizations such as the Nebraska Main Street Network, THPOs, or with minority or under-represented groups to document and preserve their historic resources.

Goal 2: Identification and Assessment

Intensify efforts to locate and assess Nebraska's significant historic and cultural places through identification, survey, research, evaluation, and registration.

Goal 3: Increase Access to our Inventory Data

For several decades the Nebraska Historic Resources Survey and Inventory and the Nebraska Archeological Survey have accumulated thousands of records on archeological and historic sites. There have been requests for us to put our databases online in some form, being mindful to protect sensitive information, for researchers, preservation advocates, federal agencies and consultants.

Goal 4: Funding and Incentives for Historic Preservation

Work cooperatively with federal and state agencies to publicize the availability of sources of funding for preservation; promote the use of the Federal Investment Tax Credit Program, the Nebraska Historic Tax Credit Program, and the Valuation Incentive Program.

Goal 1: Identify and Work with Preservation Partners

Partner with other groups to preserve and enhance historic downtowns and rural communities. Preservation successes hinge on local support for and recognition of the importance of these resources. Increasing support for preservation may be achieved by working with local preservation advocacy groups or Certified Local Governments, statewide organizations such as the Nebraska Main Street Network, THPOs, or with minority or under-represented groups to document and preserve their historic resources.

Strategy 1: Encourage preservation as a valuable partner in the economic development of commercial business districts.

Action 1: Recruit communities to participate in the Certified Local Government and Nebraska Main Street Network programs by promoting the successful projects of existing CLGs and Main Street programs.

Action 2: Fund historic resource surveys and National Register of Historic Places historic district nominations to encourage participation in Preservation activities.

Action 3: Promote the use of the Federal Investment Tax Credit Program, the Nebraska Historic Tax Credit, and the Valuation Incentive Program to promote commercial rehabilitation.

Action 4: Communicate with private property owners and local organizations about the economic potential and cultural preservation benefits of establishing agritourism opportunities

Strategy 2: Develop relationships with governmental agencies and organizations to evaluate funding sources, programs and policies that support historic preservation.

Action 1: Increase collaboration with the Department of Economic Development, USDA – Rural Development, the Nebraska Center for Rural Affairs, Nebraska’s economic development districts, and the Nebraska Department of Transportation.

Action 2: Increase collaboration with Native American Tribes that have a presence or connection to Nebraska concerning current or future legislation that helps preserve and protect Native and historic cultural properties.

Strategy 3: Increase knowledge about diverse groups and support diversity in historic preservation.

Action 1: Continue development of a coalition of Nebraska Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs) and seek opportunities for collaboration with THPOs.

Action 2: Seek opportunities for sharing stories about historic sites associated with diverse ethnic and cultural groups across the state.

Goal 2: Identification and Assessment

Intensify efforts to locate and assess Nebraska’s significant historic and cultural places through identification, survey, research, evaluation, and registration.

Strategy 1: Engage in research to expand knowledge of the state’s cultural resources for the purpose of better planning and decision-making.

Action 1: Increase in-person or electronic public engagement opportunities.

Action 2: Conduct project specific surveys that vary from reconnaissance to intensive level recordation and address local historical themes that may be present.

Action 3: Enable the public the complete survey forms and research on properties that are of interest to them, or represent a culture or other under-represented group.

Strategy 2: Maintain high standards for archeological research and survey within Nebraska.

Action 1: Increase in-person or electronic public engagement opportunities.

Action 2: Increase coverage of archeological survey statewide, especially in areas subject to development pressures.

Action 3: Continue to digitize survey data for cultural resource management purposes.

Action 4: Expand collaborative opportunities among professional and avocational archeologists across the State.

Action 5: Increase the number of publications and public engagement opportunities describing past and current archeological research.

Goal 3: Increase Access to our Inventory Data

For several decades the Nebraska Historic Resources Survey and Inventory and the Nebraska Archeological Survey have accumulated thousands of records on archeological and historic sites. There have been requests for us to put our databases online in some form, being mindful to protect sensitive information, for researchers, preservation advocates, federal agencies and consultants.

Strategy 1: Development of a robust cultural resources GIS

Action 1: Continue to update and develop GIS, to best manage information and make information accessible.

Strategy 2: Disseminate non-restricted data to the public, partner agencies, and consultants.

Action 1: Investigate the best possible options for the type and amount of data to be released based on the groups to be served, including best practices of other SHPOs. This may include only topical information for the average user, with more comprehensive information including location for consultants, secured behind a pay wall.

Action 2: Normalize databases by establishing and maintaining consistent data standards for terminology, spelling, ease of search, and relevance.

Action 3: Investigate options for online distribution of supplemental records (photos, architectural drawings, site plans, reports, etc) via a database with a focus on integration of these records with surveyed properties in GIS.

Goal 4: Funding and Incentives for Historic Preservation

Work cooperatively with federal and state agencies to publicize the availability of sources of funding for preservation; promote the use of the Federal Investment Tax Credit Program, the Nebraska Historic Tax Credit Program, and the Valuation Incentive Program.

Strategy 1: Promote existing programs for the preservation, acquisition or development of historic properties in order to broaden support for historic preservation.

Action 1: Promote the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program, the Nebraska Historic Tax Credit, and the Valuation Incentive program by reaching out to broader audiences, such as Nebraska economic development districts, local governments, developers, realtors, planners, and architects.

Action 2: Continue to publicize the economic impacts of the Nebraska Historic Tax Credit Program and educate the public across the state regarding the availability of the credits for historic property owners who are undertaking substantial rehabilitation of their properties.

Action 3: Work to eliminate misconceptions about the requirements attached to tax incentive programs, the National Register of Historic Places, and other state and federal programs.

Strategy 2: Secure increased private funding for historic preservation at all levels.

Action 1: Seek private endowments, foundations and donors to fund statewide programs related to preservation.

Action 2: Create an endowed fund for small planning grants and feasibility studies to public and non-profit organizations.

Action 3: Establish a fund to be directed to critical issues or emergencies where immediate responses are required.

Action 4: Address funding to properties that are substandard, threatened or endangered. This may include properties that represent under-represented groups or ethnicities.

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