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Article Summary: This article presents a brief description of Pilgrim Holiness Church in Arthur, Nebraska, constructed of rye straw bales in 1927-1928.

Cataloging Information:

Place Names: Arthur, Nebraska; Lincoln, Nebraska

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Photographs / Images: Image of the Pilgrim Holiness Church, Arthur, Nebraska

Nebraska's Straw Bale Church



One of the most well known of Nebraska's baled biomass buildings is Pilgrim Holiness Church in Arthur, constructed of rye straw bales in about 1927–28. The church includes a sanctuary and a pastor's dwelling. Since this photograph was taken (1929), its stuccoed walls have been painted and a modest belfry has been added. It was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1979. Today Pilgrim Holiness Church is a museum and community building operated by the Arthur County Historical Society, P. O. Box 134, Arthur, NE, 69121-0134.

In Nebraska buildings can be declared historic in several ways. Local governments, alone or in partnership with the State Historical Society, can designate local landmarks. The Lone Oak building, for example (*See "Bold and Daring. . .," p. 10*), is a local landmark designated by Lincoln's historic preservation program, administered by the Lincoln-Lancaster County Planning Department.

Qualifying buildings can be nominated for the National Register of Historic Places, a nationwide inventory of historic properties. Administered by

the National Park Service, the National Register supports identification, evaluation, and protection of national historic, cultural, and archeological resources. The Nebraska State Historical Society nominates Nebraska properties to the National Register.

Last year an act of the legislature created the Nebraska Historic Building Valuation Incentive Program (VIP) that allows owners who are rehabilitating historic properties to apply for a temporary "hold" on increases in property tax valuation. Valuation remains at the pre-rehabilitation level for eight years, and then is gradually increased to the higher assessed value over the next four years.

To qualify, property owners must have a project certified by the Historical Society. For more information contact the Historic Preservation Division, Nebraska State Historical Society at (402) 471-4787, or visit www.nebraskahistory.org. 

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