

The Nebraska Task Force on Historic Preservation
“A Decade of Building on the Historic and Cultural Foundations of Nebraska”

A REPORT CARD

[1995-2005]

Introduction

Historic places embody the traditions and contributions of all who have lived in Nebraska. If we want our state to remain a distinctive place with a high quality of life, then our historic places - buildings, neighborhoods, towns, and landscapes - are an essential resource for the present and the future. Our challenge is to build on these foundations without discarding or obliterating the distinctive legacy of our past.

Recognizing this challenge and preservation's potential, the 1992 session of the Nebraska Legislature authorized a task force on historic preservation. The task force included the director of the Nebraska State Historical Society and eleven members appointed by the governor. Membership included citizens with interest and expertise in historic preservation, assisted by representatives from the Nebraska Department of Economic Development, the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, the Nebraska Department of Roads, and staffing assistance from the Nebraska State Historical Society.

The task force held eight public forums statewide to identify preservation issues. The task force also commissioned a Nebraska Social Indicators Survey, conducted by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Bureau of Sociological Research, to obtain public comments on the importance of historic preservation to quality-of-life issues.

The task force found Nebraskans to be unified in their recognition of the quality of life in their communities, and urgently concerned with preserving the historic and cultural foundations of the state.

In 1995, the task force concluded its study and released its report on Nebraska's historic preservation issues, activities, and existing laws. The report, entitled: "Nebraska Task Force on Historic Preservation: Strategies for Preserving the Historic and Cultural Foundations of Nebraska" was presented to the Governor and Ninety-Fourth Legislature of the State of Nebraska in May of 1995.

Findings from the public forums included:

- An overwhelming majority of Nebraskans (98 percent) felt historic preservation is important, an opinion consistent across demographic categories. In addition, participants identified the importance of preserving entire neighborhoods, deteriorated inner cities, small town business districts, family farms and ranches, and the environment.
- A clear majority of Nebraskans (90 percent) felt historic preservation is important to the officials who are responsible for tourism and economic development in their communities.
- Financing is one of the most important preservation issues. Participants frequently recognized a close link between historic preservation and economic development.
- Preservation and education on local history are important needs, both within and beyond the school systems.

"The spirit and direction of the state are founded upon and reflected in its historic heritage."

-LB 706, an act of the Nebraska Legislature establishing the Task Force on Historic Preservation

THE CHALLENGE...

Nebraska’s historic places are being lost at an alarming rate, and the issues confronting historic preservation are many. The loss of historic places creates a sense of personal and community loss and of opportunities unrecognized.

“The historic and cultural foundations of the state should be preserved as a living part of our community life and development.”

-LB706

...THE OPPORTUNITY

Communities across Nebraska can point to critical needs in economic development, quality housing, tourism promotion, and land use planning. Historic preservation has demonstrated a remarkable record of addressing the issues confronting Nebraskans.

But as the challenges are great, so are the opportunities. In the revitalization of rural communities, opportunities must be found for Nebraska’s main streets by rehabilitating older buildings, encouraging a diverse mix of businesses, developing tourism, and fostering local pride by preserving the unique personality of these smaller communities. In reviving Nebraska’s urban centers, historic preservation can bring together new and old. In enhancing Nebraska’s quality of life, opportunities abound in: the conservation of important sites and rural landscapes; in providing quality affordable housing in redeveloped historic buildings; and in educating present and future generations by preserving historic places as living parts of all communities.

Historic places are the record of who we are. They reflect our traditions and sense of place. They define our quality of life in Nebraska. If the historic and cultural foundations of Nebraska are its historic places, we must build on these foundations in a way that will maintain and find vision in the past.

This document is an update on the findings of the Nebraska Task Force on Historic Preservation and the accomplishments made in addressing the recommendations of its 1995 report. This “Report Card” includes overall policy, measures of ongoing public participation and study, and ‘milestone’ accomplishments that have furthered the work of the Nebraska Task Force on Historic Preservation. This report does not address every project or activity in the state. It highlights those that have served to best address the issues and recommendations of the 1995 report.

Public Policy

The 1995 report concluded that historic preservation be recognized in public policy, comprehensive legislative initiatives, and coalitions of public and private groups with common goals in matters of Nebraska's environment, community development, and quality of life.

Nebraska's public policy for historic preservation is largely vested in a federal-state-local partnership that was first established under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and amendments. This act recognizes the role of states in participating in federal historic preservation programs and delegates responsibilities for planning and formulating policy to the state level.

- In 1967, the Nebraska Legislature accepted the provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act and delegated the administration of the state's historic preservation program to the Nebraska State Historical Society. As such, the Nebraska State Historical Society serves as the state's principal agency to administer historic preservation programs and public policy. The Director of the Nebraska State Historical Society serves as State Historic Preservation Officer. The State Historic Preservation Office, a division of the Nebraska State Historical Society, manages historic preservation programs which include:
 - The nomination of properties to the National Register of Historic Places.
 - The "Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey" and archeological surveys.
 - Consultation with federal agencies and their designees on projects or undertakings that may involve historic places, commonly known as Section 106 Review.
 - Review and comment on projects that are proposed for a federal investment tax credit, an income tax incentive for rehabilitation of historic, income-producing properties.
 - Certification of local historic preservation programs that have established ordinances and commissions to identify and preserve historic places.
 - Activities that promote and encourage public participation in historic preservation.
 - Conducting and maintaining a state historic preservation plan.

- The National Park Service is the federal agency that oversees programs and the participation of states under the National Historic Preservation Act. State programs are supported with an annual grant, administered by the National Park Service.

*Foundations:
Strategies for
Preserving the
historic and cultural
foundation of
Nebraska, A Report
to the Governor and
Legislature of
Nebraska (May 1995)*

This report by the Nebraska Task Force on Historic Preservation was adopted as Nebraska's "Statewide Preservation Plan," a requirement of Nebraska's participation in federal programs under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The National Park Service approved Nebraska's "Statewide Preservation Plan." In its July 1995 approval, Michael D. Snyder, Superintendent, Rocky Mountain System Support Office of the National Park Service stated:

*"(This) report...
reflect(s) an
outstanding
statewide strategic
planning process.
The identified issues,
goals, and
recommendations
were developed with
broad public
participation, and
provide a clear vision
for preserving
Nebraska's rich
heritage. In addition,
the plan clearly
establishes the link
between the state's
historic preservation
efforts and broader
societal issues, such
as economic
development,
downtown
revitalization,
housing, heritage
tourism, education,
community image,
and quality of life."*

- The federal-state partnership is extended to local governments. Local government historic preservation programs may be certified to participate in the Federal historic preservation program and receive funds that are made available through Nebraska's annual allocation. By enacting local preservation ordinances and establishing a local preservation commission, communities can further historic preservation through advocacy, comprehensive planning, and other activities.
- Tribes are the keepers of Native American culture and history. Tribal governments may participate in the federal historic preservation program through status as a Tribal Historic Preservation Office. The Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs monitors legislation and coordinates activities among tribes, organizations, and state and federal agencies. Its members serve to promote the rights and address problems common to Native Americans in Nebraska.
- Other federal or state agencies, regional councils, development districts, and metropolitan planning agencies are partners in historic preservation through missions that support or enhance historic places, recognize cultural preservation through statewide planning, and programs that can and do support preservation activities in Nebraska.
- Professional organizations, local and regional preservation and historical associations, community development organizations, tourism councils, and others supporting historic preservation through advocacy and public awareness.

Public Participation in Planning

A significant milestone in furthering the work of the Nebraska Task Force on Historic Preservation was action by the 2000 Nebraska State Legislature authorizing an interim study resolution, LR414, to:

Up-date the work of the Nebraska Task Force on Historic Preservation, compile additional information on the various strategies for providing economic and tax incentives, determine the most efficient, economical, and effective means for encouraging historical preservation, and provide a rationale for its adoption.

—LR414

The study was conducted by the Revenue and Urban Affairs Committees of the Legislature, in cooperation with the Nebraska State Historical Society. The study team hosted a session for “Community Quest 2000,” the annual conference of the Nebraska Community Improvement Program, held in Seward. The session was attended by more than 75 people who identified a range of issues regarding preservation and recommendations that could better address historic preservation within the context of neighborhood and community development, tourism enhancement, quality housing, and downtown revitalization.

Through the combined efforts of the American Society of Public Administration, Community Development Society-Nebraska Chapter, and the Nebraska Development Network, the study team participated in a statewide “Development Forum Video Teleconference.”

An interim hearing of the Urban Affairs Committee was held in Omaha. Testimony was heard from citizens and professionals, who affirmed the following roles for historic preservation:

1. the importance of preservation incentives within the context of downtown or “main street” revitalization, comprehensive planning strategies for Nebraska communities, and support to local government preservation activities.
2. the importance of preservation incentives within the context of affordable and quality housing in urban neighborhoods, as well as incentives for leveraging private investment in historic properties; and
3. the importance of historic preservation incentives within the context of older neighborhood revitalization, investment in the property tax base and planning strategies for urban cores.

A public dimension assessment for the Nebraska State Historical Society was completed in October 2003. This self-study included measures for evaluating public perceptions, public experiences, and public involvement in Nebraska history. The Society’s stated goals for the assessments were: to assess and develop a more specific and sophisticated understanding of the audiences it currently serves and how the audiences can be better served; how underserved

or unserved audiences can be reached; to create mechanisms for a more integrated educational approach; and to identify strategies for effective response to shifts in population, demographics, leisure choices and affiliations.

Cultural Preservation

Nebraska history is steeped in cultural and ethnic diversity, apparent in the place names of the state itself, its towns, rivers and natural landmarks, sites of traditional importance, and tribal communities. It is found in communities and neighborhoods that celebrate and sustain their culture and history through organizations, museums, and festivals. The cultural and ethnic groups who brought a unique heritage to Nebraska deserve greater recognition. Opportunities afforded by historic preservation can serve contemporary social needs, such as cultural tolerance and respect, housing, and neighborhood renewal.

In developing these recommendations, the task force contacted Nebraska advocacy organizations and cultural and community representatives to identify specific priorities, needs, and goals. The Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs, which includes representatives of the tribes and off-reservation Indian communities in the state, adopted a resolution supporting the work of the task force and sponsored a series of three focus groups on Native American cultural preservation.

Issues

- Apparent apathy among younger generations threatens the preservation of ethnic heritage.
- Insensitivity to cultural heritage and sacred ritual, sites, and objects often results in strained intercommunity or intercultural relations.
- Cooperative efforts to identify and preserve places associated with ethnic or cultural history are not established.
- Historic preservation is not considered in contemporary issues of quality housing, access to the physically challenged, and cultural awareness.
- Preservation is broader than properties, buildings, and objects. Language, arts, food customs, songs, dances, and oral traditions are also worthy of respect and renewal.

Recommendations

1. Multicultural education, both in and outside of school programs, should include the full range of Nebraskan's ethnic backgrounds, both to celebrate traditions and foster understanding.
2. Traditional preservation efforts to identify, evaluate, and preserve historic places should include a wide range of properties representative of Nebraska's diversity. The Nebraska State Historical Society, local groups, and cultural organizations should strengthen their capabilities to locate and understand diverse sites.
3. The Nebraska State Historical Society should encourage and assist with establishment of tribal cultural preservation programs including tribal historic preservation offices, archives and museums.

4. State and local jurisdictions should advance legislation to protect sites of cultural significance, including sacred grounds and archeological sites.
5. Nebraska's public interpreters of history - the Nebraska State Historical Society, the Nebraska Game & Parks Commission, local historical societies, libraries and preservation programs - should seek dialogue with and guidance from the "keepers" of the full range of Nebraska's traditions.

A Report Card on Cultural Preservation

Multicultural education. Promoting the diversity of a full range of ethnic backgrounds fosters greater cultural understanding, both institutionally and educationally. In 2003, the Mid-America Arts Alliance, in partnership with the Nebraska Arts Council, conducted a statewide study of small museums and libraries. The project, “Training Needs Assessment for Nebraska Museums and Libraries,” sought to investigate the needs, interest, and competency levels of Nebraska’s cultural organizations in areas such as public programming, marketing, fundraising, technology, volunteerism, collections care, and education. The result, “Help for Small Museums,” Executive Summary, October 2004, applauded “state and local efforts to deliver broader organizational education in issues of multiculturalism and inclusivity.”

Native American cultural preservation. In partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts, Nebraska Arts Council, Nebraska Humanities Council, and Nebraska State Historical Society a March 2000 summit was held to determine tribal history and cultural preservation needs. Native American tribes represented were the Santee Sioux, Ponca, Winnebago, Omaha, and Sac Fox.

That summit was followed a year later with a meeting in Omaha to examine the issues relating to the preservation and conservation of Native American cultural heritage and to define its challenges. For two days, representatives from American Indian museums, libraries and archives, historic preservation offices, and cultural preservation groups met with other professionals from museum and funding organizations associated with the collection and preservation of cultural materials to explore needs and opportunities. A report, “A Race Against Time: Preserving Indian Cultural Heritage,” was published as a summary of the discussions, the issues raised, and a sampling of observations.

Native American representation in Nebraska includes four sovereign Nations within the political boundaries of Nebraska: Omaha Tribe of Nebraska; Ponca Tribe of Nebraska; Santee Sioux Tribe of Nebraska; Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska.

Tribal governments having historical and cultural affiliations with Nebraska include, but are not limited to: Sac and Fox Nation of Missouri; Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma; Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma; Cheyenne-Arapahoe Tribes; Oglala Sioux Tribe; Iowa Tribe of Kansas & Nebraska; Oto-Missouria Tribe of Oklahoma; Commanche Nation.

- Ongoing collaboration of Tribal Councils, the Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs, and the Nebraska State Historical Society is needed to advocate for endangered archeological sites, legislative needs, and sound communication. Federally funded or licensed projects are frequently the subject of consultation with Tribal governments when burials, archeological sites, or places of traditional culture are identified within the scope of Federal undertakings. Ongoing consultation has been established

A Race Against Time. As tribes reclaim their cultural heritage, preservation issues grow increasingly critical. Indian peoples face “a race against time” in preserving their heritage. The certain way to lose the race against time is not to act. Dynamic cultures constantly change: What should we try to save? Partnerships between tribes and professional institutions should be encouraged. We must come together to win this race against time. The preservation of Native American cultural heritage is unquestionably essential to the preservation of our National heritage. Our history and our national character is inextricably bound to our relationships with Native Americans, then and now. As we move forward into the twenty-first century, we must ensure the survival of Native American material culture and its integral context. We must do this as a regional and national effort, marshalling all of our resources and skills. –

“A Race Against Time: Preserving Indian Cultural Heritage,” 2001

between the Nebraska State Historical Society, the Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs, and Tribal governments when unmarked human remains are discovered.

- At the request of Tribes, the services of divisions within the Nebraska State Historical Society are provided to the Tribal keepers of Native American culture and history. This work has included:
 1. training and assistance for archival collections of the Ponca Tribe of Nebraska;
 2. storage and preservation of historical tribal records and materials of the Omaha and Santee Tribes;
 3. consultation with the Omaha Tribe and Pawnee Tribe of Oklahoma on development of cultural and historical museums;
 4. preservation assistance to the Ponca Tribe of Nebraska following the Tribe's acquisition of the historic Ponca Community Building, listed in the National Register of Historic Places and now a cultural center for Ponca tribal members statewide.
 5. preserving and interpreting the Genoa Indian School, a significant property associated with social assimilation policies prescribed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.
 6. representing the Northern Cheyenne Tribe in a boundary expansion for the Fort Robinson National Historic Landmark, which will include lands recognized for both historic and cultural importance to the tragic Cheyenne Outbreak of 1879.
 7. mitigating the area of Massacre Canyon, listed in the National Register of Historic Places, when it was threatened by the construction of an ethanol plant. The mitigation involved the Pawnee Tribe of Oklahoma, the Nebraska State Historical Society, and the Nebraska Department of Economic Development.
 8. Other activities have included research on the homeland of the Ponca Tribe in Nebraska and Chief Standing Bear of the Ponca Tribe, whose actions in court culminated in a precedent setting case for Native Americans rights.

- The sharing of cultural traditions includes Tribal Pow-Wows and other events. Historic places and traditions associated with Native Americans in Nebraska have been promoted through events such as "National American Indian Heritage Month." Since 2001, the Nebraska State Historical Society has submitted entries for the National Park Service's National Register feature for that month.

Mexican American traditions. In 1995, the Nebraska Mexican American Commission and the Nebraska State Historical Society joined forces to explore ways to increase the amount of public information available on Mexican American history and culture in Nebraska. The two agencies jointly developed a proposal for the "Mexican American Traditions in Nebraska" project. Funding from the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Community Folklife Program, the Nebraska Humanities Council, and state funds appropriated by the Nebraska Legislature supported a two-year project to explore and document the

traditional arts, beliefs, and oral histories of persons in the Mexican American communities of Grand Island, Lincoln, Omaha, and the Scottsbluff vicinity.

- Also in 1995, the Nebraska State Historical Society completed a Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey in Scotts Bluff County and a report, with special emphasis on the beet sugar industry, about the immigrants from several ethnic groups who worked in the sugar beet fields and factories. An inventory of adobe houses built by Mexican Americans was compiled in collaboration with the Mexican American Historical Society in Scottsbluff.
- By 1997, a traveling photographic exhibit, “Un Tesoro de Nebraska (A Nebraska Treasure): Discovering Our Mexican Legacy,” a five-part broadcast on the Nebraska Public Radio Network entitled “The Best of Both Worlds: Hispanics and Nebraska,” and a segment on the nationally distributed “Latino USA” program were produced. While the project included the traditions and culture of the Mexican American, community and places of social, religious, and traditional culture have been identified and ongoing efforts have been supported to enhance institutions such as the Mexican American Historical Society of Scottsbluff and El Museo Latino in Omaha. All are places where Mexican American history and culture are preserved and shared.
- A final product of the Mexican American Traditions project was the bilingual publication, “Nuestros Tesoros (Our Treasures): A Celebration of Nebraska’s Mexican Heritage” co-published in 1998 by the Nebraska State Historical Society and the Nebraska Mexican American Commission. The publication was sent to public and school libraries and all local historical societies as a way to inspire teachers, students, and members of the general public to learn more about the unique legacy of Mexican Americans in Nebraska. A collection of oral interviews with members of the Mexican American community in Nebraska is now curated in the collections of the Nebraska State Historical Society.

African-American contributions. The contributions of African-Americans in Nebraska have been substantial. The context of African American settlement extends both to rural and urban places, social and cultural institutions, and individuals significant in history.

- A project, “African-American Historic and Architectural Resources in Lincoln,” was done by the City of Lincoln, funded in part by Certified Local Government (CLG) pass-through grants administered by the Nebraska State Historical Society. The project included archeological investigations, oral interviews, and a multiple property study that resulted in the nomination of four properties significantly associated with African-Americans in Lincoln, Nebraska.

- The Nebraska State Historical Society organized and hosted a three-day public event highlighting the contributions of African Americans to the historic and cultural shaping of Nebraska: “Another Nebraska: A Look at our Black Heritage.” As a result of the Lincoln project, a significant collection of photographs was located, resulting in an exhibit, “Recovered Views: African American Portraits, 1912-1925,” released for a national tour sponsored by ExhibitsUSA, Mid America Arts Alliance. An exhibition catalog was produced to accompany the exhibit.
- A Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey of Adams County included a study of African American properties in Hastings. The findings were printed in the survey report, “Adams County, Nebraska: Historic Buildings Survey” (Nebraska State Historical Society, September 1999). Following research and publication of the Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey of Adams County in 1999, a local sponsor and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln hosted an intern from the Summer Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program (SUROP) program of Historically Black Colleges and Universities. The student conducted African American documentation and an oral history project in Hastings.

Women’s history. Women’s history is reflected in a diversity of historic properties that represent both the traditional role of women and nontraditional activities in women’s history. Several themes represented by the National Register of Historic Places include, social and health care reform, women’s suffrage, education, culture, arts and humanities. Restoration of associated sites, identification of properties significantly associated with women’s history, and other programming has provided an excellent opportunity to interpret women’s history:

- The former hospital of Dr. Susan LaFlesche Picotte in Walthill, the nation’s first Native American physician and health care reformer, has been designated as a National Historic Landmark and now houses exhibits and community services. During the restoration of the William Jennings Bryan House in Lincoln research revealed the major role played by Mary Baird Byran, a trained attorney and advocate of women’s rights, now recognized for her role of formulating political platforms of her famous husband.
- Historic buildings surveys in Lincoln and Omaha have identified the role of African-American women who contributed to religious social institutions, education, and the arts. A Lincoln project, funded by grants offered to the local Certified Local Government program, was the recipient of the 1999 Nebraska Preservation Award to recognize this important project. Nebraska’s historic Carnegie libraries reflect the active role that local women’s groups played in the establishment of permanent libraries in Nebraska towns.
- Programs and events focusing on women’s history are provided through the Nebraska Humanities Council, which currently lists over twelve programs on its popular speaker’s bureau and Chautauqua series.

Economic opportunity. Contemporary issues that these and other Nebraskans face cannot all be addressed by historic preservation. But several successes can be jumping off points for other work.

- In the South Omaha business district, listing in the National Register of Historic Places and sound local planning has resulted in a renaissance in this historically diverse community. European immigrant groups found job opportunities in the stockyards and meat packinghouses and established their own businesses in the area. Now, South Omaha is a diverse business district of many cultures. Complementing the historic district is the museum, *El Museo Latino*, and a *Mercado* or marketplace.
- Job opportunities have today attracted many new arrivals from far-flung nations in Africa, Central and South American, and Asia. Where local industry has provided jobs for Nebraska's newest immigrants, many have found small business opportunities. In Lexington, for example, its diverse population now exceeds 50%. For the Lexington Main Street program, revitalization and business opportunities for Nebraska's traditional "Main Streets" aims to promote a new mix of downtown business. Thanks to work funded in part by the Nebraska Lied Main Street Program, businessmen and women have a new understanding and appreciation of different cultures and how they do business.

Planning & Law

Because of the role of historic preservation in community development and planning, all levels of government should strengthen the protection and enhancement of historic places as a public purpose. Preservation should be accorded standing in governmental decisions on economic development, code enforcement, and planning. Historic preservation and comprehensive planning share the core goal of efficiently utilizing existing public and private improvements and wisely guiding future growth and investments.

Issues

- State government lacks an effective and efficient process for planning to avoid harming historic places, for reviewing the results of its actions, for limiting adverse effects, and for establishing cooperative efforts in historic preservation.
- Comprehensive planning by Nebraska's local governments is inconsistent and often insufficient to support effective decision-making. Lack of funding and technical support undermine good comprehensive planning, hampering local governments in the guidance and enforcement of land use policies, zoning, capital improvement planning, building codes, and preservation of natural, cultural, and historic resources.
- State enabling legislation on zoning does not specifically authorize local governments to implement preservation regulations.
- Rehabilitation of historic buildings is often made more difficult by conflicting and inflexible code requirements intended primarily for new construction. Preservation of historic value should be recognized as a positive aspect of rehabilitation and the "Uniform Code for Building Conservation" should be adopted for building rehabilitation.

Recommendations

1. Nebraska should adopt cultural resource legislation to strengthen its process for planning and reviewing the effects of public actions on historic and cultural resources.
2. Nebraska should adopt a public policy recognizing and encouraging the necessity of cooperative efforts between preservation programs and state programs on the environment, transportation, tourism, community development, and housing.
3. State enabling legislation on local comprehensive planning should consistently and explicitly require recognition and protection of historic resources as an essential element of planning and zoning codes.
4. Nebraska should adopt the "Uniform Code for Building Conservation" and encourage its use at the local level.
5. The Nebraska State Historical Society, the State Fire Marshal, and advocacy groups (in accordance with the Americans With Disabilities Act) should work together to provide accessibility to buildings and programs while respecting historic character.

A Report Card on Preservation Planning and Law

Codes. A report commissioned by the Nebraska Affordable Housing Commission (“Cost Reduction Opportunities in Housing,” BBC Research & Consulting, September 1995) cited code interpretation and inconsistencies in applying codes as an impediment to affordable housing. Downtown development organizations participating in the Nebraska Lied Main Street program also found that code interpretation was sometimes seen as either a cost factor or impediment to rehabilitating older, historic buildings, especially for upper floor housing.

- The Uniform Code for Building Conservation (UCBC), a companion to the Uniform Building Code, offers communities, local officials, and property owners options to encourage the rehabilitation of older buildings while achieving appropriate levels of life-safety requirements. Recognizing the importance of adopting the UCBC into the state building code, legislation was supported by the Nebraska State Historical Society, American Institute of Architects-Nebraska Chapter, Nebraskaland Conference of Building Officials, Nebraska Affordable Housing Commission, Nebraska Lied Main Street program, and Nebraska Rural Development Commission. The Uniform Code for Building Conservation was adopted as part of the State Building Code by action of the Nebraska Unicameral Legislature in 1996.

Community development. Joint conferences of the Nebraska Community Builders, Nebraska Lied Main Street program, Nebraska Rural Development Commission, and Nebraska Community Improvement Program have highlighted recommendations and strategies on the topics of historic preservation, rural revitalization, community development, and tourism opportunities.

- The Nebraska State Historical Society conducted a series of meetings held statewide for Nebraska Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) councils. RC&Ds are regional organizations affiliated with the U.S. Department of Agriculture with focus on rural development, conservation and the environment, and tourism.
- “A Dialogue on the Arts,” was telecast by Metro Community College in Omaha featuring historic preservation and urban design.

Comprehensive planning. Local government comprehensive planning provides the most substantial opportunity to recognize historic places.

- Faced with growing development pressure from the rapidly expanding Omaha metro area, a pilot project integrated historic preservation, comprehensive planning, land-use, and transportation enhancement to save a well-preserved, rural segment of the old Lincoln Highway near Elkhorn. Partners included the City of Elkhorn, Douglas County, the City of Omaha (Planning Department and Parks, Recreation and Public Property

Department), Metro Area Planning Agency, Nebraska Department of Roads, and Federal Highway Administration. Local governments adopted the plan and an interagency agreement with participating state agencies was adopted in 2003.

- Certified Local Government preservation programs have been successful in integrating historic preservation in older neighborhoods, housing creation, and quality of life.

The Nebraska State Historical Society funded downtown preservation plans for the communities of Fremont and Alliance, part of the services that can be offered to communities participating in the Nebraska Lied Main Street program. The plans were integrated into comprehensive plans for both communities.

Housing. The “Technical Assistance Review Process” (TARP) has been established as a partnership of State and Federal agencies that assist housing programs. Partners in TARP include the Nebraska Department of Economic Development, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Nebraska Investment Finance Authority, U.S. Department of Agriculture/Rural Development, and Nebraska State Historical Society. This team facilitates housing projects and funding sources through the Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund, Federal urban and rural development programs, and Federal Investment Tax Credits available for both historic preservation and low-to-moderate income housing. Team members are committed to building greater capacity to develop housing opportunities in Nebraska and interact with the widest range of community housing organizations, development authorities, and community development organizations. TARP has facilitated a number of housing projects in historic buildings. Some examples:

- A former high school in Fairbury is being redeveloped into 26 two-bedroom affordable housing units for seniors. The project will combine tax credits authorized by the Nebraska Investment Finance Authority and the Investment Tax Credit for rehabilitating historic buildings. Other funding sources include the Nebraska Department of Economic Development, Community Development Block Grant funds, and the Federal Home Loan Bank.
- The development of the historic Strehlow Terrace Apartments by the Omaha Housing Authority addresses important housing needs in an underserved community of Omaha. The Federal Investment Tax Credit for historic preservation was used in the funding package.
- The redevelopment of the Walnut School in Grand Island now serves low-to-moderate income residents and community uses. The Federal Investment Tax Credit for historic preservation was utilized in the project.
- TARP has identified means by which the Federal low-income housing Investment Tax Credit can be combined with the Federal historic rehab Investment Tax Credit.

Opportunities for housing in historic buildings. The National Trust for Historic Preservation has identified an initiative for historic schools, focusing on options to keep these buildings in use as community and neighborhood schools. In Nebraska, school consolidation and the closing of rural schools often leave older and historic schools vacant or surplus.

- The Nebraska State Historical Society conducted a Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey to prepare a database of schools, a historic context on education and school development in Nebraska, and a series of case studies on reuse of former school buildings. The database of school buildings and questionnaires sent to school superintendents and local school districts identified more than 600 school buildings. Half of those are no longer used as schools and about 40 buildings were identified as vacant or surplus. Project results were presented to an annual conference of the Nebraska Development Network.
- Several successful school conversions to housing, community centers, and small businesses or small business development centers can be found in the Nebraska communities of Glenville, Kimball, Inland, and Holbrook, among others.

Serving persons with disabilities. Codes aren't the stumbling block to historic building rehabilitations. Accessibility for persons with physical challenges becomes both a cost and matter of dignity, especially in public buildings.

- Architects, local government officials, private property owners, and staff of the Nebraska State Historical Society often collaborate on identified options for accessibility. Provisions within the "Americans with Disabilities Act" for historic properties are often unfamiliar to contactors, design professionals, or local officials.

Energy conservation. The application of energy conservation techniques sometimes becomes a preservation issue in terms of cost and historical appropriateness.

- "Rebuild Otoe County," was a demonstration project to show that energy efficiency and historic preservation can work together to improve and maintain historic buildings. In cooperation with property owners, specific buildings in Otoe County were selected for demonstration. The project was a cooperative effort of the Nebraska Energy Office, the Nebraska State Historical Society, and the River Country Economic Development Corporation. "Rebuild Otoe County" was affiliated with "Rebuild America," a national energy efficiency program of the U.S. Department of Energy. The project resulted in a planning guide for buildings, "Energy Efficiency and Historic Preservation" in 2001.
- "Courthouse Trail" has been a pilot project to demonstrate cost-effective improvements in historic courthouses, funded by the Nebraska Energy Office.

Preservation planning by state agencies. Preservation is extended to agencies that share missions that can include historic preservation, funding opportunities, and the establishment of complimentary roles for programs and services delivered by state agencies.

Transportation planning. In 1994-95, the Nebraska Department of Roads conducted a series of statewide meetings to develop a statewide long-range transportation plan. Partners included local governments as well as state agencies that participate indirectly or in complimentary roles enhancing Nebraska transportation: Partners were the Department of Aging; Department of Economic Development/Travel and Tourism Division and Rural Development Commission; Nebraska Natural Resources Commission; Nebraska Energy Office; Department of Social Services; the University of Nebraska; and the Nebraska State Historical Society.

- In July 1995, Nebraska’s Statewide Long-Range Transportation Plan, “Future Transportation in Nebraska: 1995-2015” was released. The plan incorporates in full the final report of the “Nebraska Task Force on Historic Preservation”, Nebraska’s state preservation plan.

Building a Better System for the Future: Highlights of selected issues and goals from Nebraska’s Statewide Long-Range Transportation Plan

“Enhance Tourism and Recreation” including more emphasis on scenic byways, historic sites, and hiking and biking trails. Promote suitable development of tourism, historical, and recreational facilities, including directional signing and historical markers. Identify and develop, where feasible, scenic byways, and biking and hiking trails that include provisions for scenic attractions, heritage tourism development, and historic preservation enhancement. Participate in Nebraska Statewide Tourism Plan and development, including emphasis on heritage tourism development and relation to travel and transportation issues. Improve the process for coordinating land-use and transportation to recognize and enhance older and historic neighborhoods, town centers and downtowns, archeological sites, rural and cultural landscapes, and other historic places and their environs.

“Better Coordination between Land-Use and Transportation” including the impact of bypasses on downtown business and mitigation of economic and/or social impact of transportation projects on the older center of communities, historic districts or neighborhoods.

“Recognize and Preserve Historic, Environmental, and Scenic Resources” including the protection and enhancement of historic sites and the environment through construction and maintenance practices. Historic preservation has important interrelationships with transportation planning and policy in areas of community development and planning, protection, and enhancement of the environment. Optimize the preservation and mitigation of historic and archeological sites under Nebraska Highway Survey program and the National Historic Preservation Act.

-“Future Transportation in Nebraska: 1995-2015” (July 1995)

- The Nebraska Transportation Enhancement program was established under the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act. Administered by the Nebraska Department of Roads, the program funds three categories of projects: trails, scenic and historic byways, and historic preservation. Through fiscal year 2004, the program has funded projects totaling \$44,471,111. Thirty-eight scenic and historic byway projects have been funded in the amount of \$6,054,123; forty-one historic preservation projects have been funded in the amount of \$5,953,271. The program has become the single largest funding source for bricks-and-mortar restoration and rehabilitation in Nebraska.
- The Nebraska Department of Roads is a partnering agency in the Nebraska Lied Main Street program, with representation on both the management team and governing board. Funding from the Transportation Enhancement program has been made available for projects in member Main Street communities as well as technical assistance on transportation issues confronting local communities.
- Nine Nebraska Byways have been established under provisions of the National Scenic Byways programs. Grassroots organizations promote scenic and historic attributes of these highways, visitor services, and attractions by implementing a “Corridor Management Plan” for each byway.

Recreation planning. The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission is using planning to enhance recreation and recognize the value of historic places within the “mix” of recreation and trails development.

- The Nebraska Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) includes a diverse group of professionals, agencies, and associations in its development. The plan includes National Register properties generally accessible to the public, National Monuments and Sites, Nebraska Historical Parks administered by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, and Nebraska Historic Sites administered by the Nebraska State Historical Society.
- Nebraska’s Comprehensive Trails Plan, “A Network of Discovery,” was released in May 2004 as the master plan for a network of statewide trails, regional trails, community trails, and trails that accommodate specialized constituencies and user groups. The plan was developed by a diverse group of professionals, agencies, and associations. Trail resources and opportunities include interpretive resources, the network of scenic and historic highways, and historic places: “The state trails system explores (Nebraska’s) rich history by exposing trail users to the places that tell these and other stories. Trails can interpret history, increasing our understanding of the forces that shaped Nebraska, its people, and its communities” (A Network of Discovery, 2004).

Economics

Historic places are key components of economic growth and development. They contribute to rural and urban economies through downtown revitalization, housing in older neighborhoods, tourism, enhanced community image, and quality of life. Investment in revitalized business districts and neighborhoods attracts new business and industry, provides jobs and appropriate growth. In order to realize these opportunities, preservation requires a partnership of public programs and private investment.

Issues

- Deterioration and demolition of historic places due to indifference, inaction, or intentional neglect. Urban development strategies frequently do not consider historic preservation and, likewise, rural economies often do not support preservation.
- Absence of financial resources and incentives to owners of single-family residences who wish to undertake historic preservation, and underutilization or lack of resources to commercial property owners. Higher property valuations and correspondingly higher property taxes resulting from improvements discourage owners from investing in properties with high preservation standards. Rural real estate markets do not allow a return on investment for rehabilitation beyond minimal maintenance.
- Inability to secure acquisition, construction, and long-term, permanent financing at reasonable loan terms, and lenders' concerns about the costs and requirements of historic rehabilitation and lender liability in case of foreclosure.
- Underutilization or lack of existing programs, incentives, resources, and laws for the development of historic properties and related activities by public and nonprofit organizations.
- Lack of access to economical evaluation, removal, or abatement of hazardous materials, including asbestos, underground storage tanks, and lead-based paints found in some historic properties.
- Lack of focus on the development of regional historic preservation planning, economic impact, and identification of regional development strategies. There is no mechanism to identify and prioritize sites or to initiate medium to long-term strategic planning in the identification, acquisition, and development of historic properties.
- Lack of procedures and support networks to identify historic properties, build public/private partnerships, and receive assistance in commercial business revitalization, affordable housing, and community development.

Recommendations

1. Community Development: Preservation is an essential component of effective and successful efforts for community revitalization, housing creation, and economic development. Historic properties and preservation programs should be included in community development efforts at the state, regional, and local levels, to wit:

- Expand existing tax credit programs such as LB270 to broaden business development in historic districts and buildings.
- Establish historic preservation as a priority under the Community Development Block Grant program administered by the Nebraska Department of Economic Development.
- Implement a state housing tax credit for affordable housing development in historic buildings.
- Expand tax-increment financing (TIF) availability to properties on the National Register of Historic Places or locally designated landmarks, regardless of current “blighted area” requirements.
- Study TIF funding mechanisms to identify and allow innovative financing methods to maximize community benefits, such as expanding the availability of private-source financing for TIF or establishing a revolving fund for TIF loans.
- Require uniformity of applicable TIF availability across the State of Nebraska.

2. Income Tax Provisions: The federal historic preservation tax provisions have demonstrated the potential for attracting private investment in historic buildings and older areas of cities and towns. State tax policy should address the economic and community development potential of historic preservation.

- Establish a state rehabilitation income tax credit for individual and corporate taxpayers tied directly to the federal tax credit for qualified, historic rehabilitation expenditures.
- Allow Nebraska income tax payers a passive loss deduction on properties qualifying for federal certified historic rehabilitation tax credits.
- Establish a Nebraska program for certifying significant historic buildings and extend the recommended state income tax incentives to include rehabilitation of certified, owner-occupied residences.
- Provide taxpayers an opportunity to voluntarily “check off” a contribution of \$1 or \$2 for historic preservation purposes when filing the Nebraska Individual Income Tax Form (Form 1040N).

3. Property Tax Provisions:

- Freeze property tax valuation increases for a fixed period for certified historic properties that receive substantial maintenance, repair, or rehabilitation, to encourage preservation and reduce blight.
- Make the Land Reutilization Commission process available statewide on an expanded county or regional basis (patterned after Douglas County) to return historic tax-delinquent properties to tax rolls and expand development opportunities.

4. Sources of Funds: Create a Nebraska Heritage Trust Fund, authorized to seek private, foundation, and public support to assist a wide range of preservation activities. Potential sources of public funds include tax check-off, documentary tax stamp increase, lodging tax (specifically for tourism support), and lottery funds (for educational and environmental projects).

5. Heritage Tourism: Development and promotion of historic places should be a leading element of the state's travel and tourism strategy.

- The Nebraska Department of Economic Development, with assistance from the Nebraska State Historical Society, should develop a statewide heritage tourism marketing plan to promote significant historic sites and activities in Nebraska.
- Coordinate regional economic development coalitions to promote heritage tourism activities.
- The Nebraska State Historical Society and the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission should coordinate the interpretation and promotion of state historical parks and sites as flagships of Nebraska's heritage tourism.

6. Resource and Information Networks: Develop resource guides for developers including sources of builder's risk, hazard, and liability insurance on historic properties throughout the state, involving the State Insurance Commissioner on issues of the statutory requirement of availability; preservation /renovation issues; environmental hazards such as asbestos, lead paint, and leaking underground storage tanks; bank funding and financing opportunities.

A Report Card on the Economics of Historic Preservation

“Check-off” for historic preservation. The Nebraska Department of Revenue and the Nebraska State Historical Society completed two analyses on a voluntarily “check off” earmarked for historic preservation purposes for taxpayers filing the Nebraska Individual Income Tax Form (Form 1040N). The statistics for Nebraska’s check offs were compiled in 1996 and 2005. Existing check-offs are for non-game wildlife, campaign finance, and the Nebraska State Fair. For the tax years 2000-2003, revenue has averaged \$75,000 for non-game wildlife and \$9,400 for campaign finance. In 2003, the first year for the State Fair check-off, contributions totaled \$36,596. Total receipts and refunds cause annual fluctuations in the check-off proceeds. The Revenue Department also assesses a \$50,000 fee over the first three years to establish the necessary computing system. History from other states indicates that revenue for individual check-offs declines as the number of choices increases.

“Consolidated Plan” for economic development and housing. The “Nebraska Consolidated Plan” is a comprehensive planning document identifying the state’s needs for housing, homelessness, community and economic development. The Nebraska Department of Economic Development is required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to complete a consolidated plan every five years to receive federal funds for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, HOME Investment partnerships, and Emergency Shelter Grant program. Two other State funded programs are included in the plan, Homeless Shelter Assistance Trust Fund and Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund. Nebraska’s Consolidated Plan for 2000-2005 has guided housing and community development programs administered by the Nebraska Department of Economic Development, Division of Community and Rural Development. The plan serves to extend and strengthen partnerships among organizations in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. Several pertinent areas of planning and programming have been identified in the 2000-2005 plan or have been implemented from the previous plan of 1995-2000:

- In 1996, a bill was passed that clarified the use of the Local Option Municipal Development tax for housing purposes. This defines a “redevelopment project” in order to allow developers to use Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to construct new housing and to rehabilitate existing housing.
- An objective identified in the 2000-2005 plan is to “promote public awareness of historic preservation and its role in housing development.” This resulted in a series of informational meetings with the Nebraska State Historical Society, Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs) and the Nebraska Lied Main Street program, conducted by representatives of the Nebraska Department of Economic Development. Several projects resulted from combining both the Investment Tax Credits for historic properties and the Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

Nebraska is one of only three states in the nation that offer no incentive for the preservation of historic properties. Most states have recognized the importance of public incentives that encourage the preservation of cultural and historic resources and that recognize the role historic preservation serves in the broader context of a state's quality of life.

Nebraska is home to a wealth of historic and cultural resources that deserve support.

Nebraska's historic places tell us important stories about our State's history. Historic places enrich our communities by providing visual landmarks of our shared history.

Nebraska's historic places are worthy of preservation in their own right. What is less recognized is that historic preservation can also provide communities a unique and invaluable economic development tool. Rehabilitation of historic buildings is a community development tool that boosts economic viability of older commercial "main streets" and older housing stock.

Preservation can stabilize and improve older neighborhoods. Historic preservation can provide needed development in rural and urban communities alike.

-Findings of the LR414 study team

- Infrastructure needs in older downtown areas have received priority ranking under the CDBG program. Historic districts, such as Hooper, Fairbury, and Brownville have received funding for critical work to curb, gutter, sidewalk, accessibility, and storm water systems.
- Funding from the CDBG program has been set-aside for a Nebraska Tourism Development Initiative (TDI). Funds have been used to enhance heritage tourism, encouraging visitation to sites by enhancing historic buildings and sites.

Historic preservation and the Nebraska tax system. Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a development tool used by local governments to finance public improvements that may be needed to assist a development project. The property tax increases resulting from a private development project are targeted for public improvements, such as water, sewer, roads, or parking associated with the development.

- In 2000, the Nebraska Legislature considered a measure to extend the use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to historic properties under the general definition of "substandard and blighted." The bill was never approved and further study recognized that although a number of large-scale historic preservation rehabilitation projects have benefited from this tool, it would not provide substantial benefits to the larger range of historic properties, such as those improved for small town business, a residence, or a family farm. Further study was authorized under LB414.

The Nebraska Legislature authorized two interim study resolutions for methods and options that would provide financial assistance or incentives to encourage owners of historic properties:

- The Nebraska Legislature, in its first session of 2001, authorized the Revenue Committee and the Nebraska State Historical Society to conduct an interim study, (LR231) to "Compile information on programs that offer tax incentives to promote preservation of historic properties."
- In 2002, the Legislature authorized a second study (LR417), to "Compile information on programs in other states that offer tax incentives to promote preservation of historic properties."
- As a result of these studies, LR14CA and LB1301, the "Community Preservation Assistance Act," were introduced in the 2001-2002 session of the Legislature to enable Nebraska to adopt a property tax policy addressing the role of historic preservation as a key element of community revitalization and economic viability in Nebraska towns and neighborhoods. The measures were laid aside during a massive debate on the state budget.
- In 2003, LR2CA was introduced calling for a proposed constitutional amendment to place the issue of changes in the property tax before the

voters in 2004. Lawmakers passed the proposal and the question was on the November 2004 ballot as Amendment One. Voters passed the proposal by a margin of 58% to 42%. Enabling legislation was introduced in the 2005 session of the Legislature and passed. As a result, an eight year moratorium on property tax assessment increases for eligible historic property, with a four-year phase-in to follow, will become law on January 1, 2006.

Coalitions. A Community Preservation Coalition was organized to advocate for Amendment One. Members included state and local government, preservation and “Main Street” organizations in support of the community development and historic preservation provisions of the measure.

Strengthening communities by preserving the past. The Nebraska Lied Main Street program provides Nebraska communities the opportunity to revitalize their commercial core through the National Trust Main Street Center’s Four-Point Approach™ to downtown revitalization. It is an incremental yet comprehensive program of design, organization, promotion, and economic restructuring using historic preservation. First established in 1994 with start-up funds from the Lied Foundation Trust, the program is a unique partnership of Nebraska agencies and organizations that commit technical assistance, staff and resources to provide non-duplicating, community-specific services to each community enrolled in the program. Those partners include the University of Nebraska-Lincoln/College of Architecture, Nebraska Community Foundation, Nebraska Department of Economic Development, Nebraska State Historical Society, and Nebraska Department of Roads.

- Preservation plans have been funded for downtown areas in Alliance and Fremont, both conducted in cooperation with local main street organizations.

Preservation ordinances assist local Main Street efforts by advocating preservation, bringing sound design recommendations to owners of historic properties, and serving to promote preservation programs that can be used in the context of Main Street revitalization. Certified Local Government status can develop a community’s capacity to promote historic preservation, both within Main Street project areas and community-wide.

- Each time a new community enrolls as a local Main Street program, fieldwork or a general assessment is conducted for the Nebraska Historic Building Survey to evaluate historic downtown districts and individual buildings for eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places and to encourage the use of the Federal Investment Tax Credit for the rehabilitation of historic, income-producing properties. Communities that have existing historic districts have potential to promote rehabilitation projects. These communities include: Sidney, where an existing historic district was reevaluated and expanded; Fremont’s downtown historic district; Plattsmouth (previously listed); and Red Cloud (previously listed). Where possible, county surveys for the Nebraska Historic Building Survey are scheduled in anticipation of interest that may be generated in historic

Strengthening Communities by Preserving the Past. The announcement of the new Nebraska Lied Main Street Program was made shortly before the Nebraska Task Force issued its report. The Nebraska Lied Main Street program celebrated “Ten Years of Preserving Communities” in 2005. In the first ten years, the Nebraska LIED Main Street program has enrolled local programs in twenty-one communities, networked with twenty-four member communities, and provided technical assistance to thirty-three communities as part of its statewide services. The success of the program’s first ten years can be measured by the following facts provided by local Main Street organizations:

More than \$22 million has been spent on building and façade rehabilitation projects.

An additional \$21 million has been spent for new construction

Over \$3.6 million dollars has been spent on public improvement projects.

Net new businesses now number 383 and 1,076 net new jobs have been created.

In total, community investment has been more Than \$52 million.

--Source: Nebraska Lied Main Street Program

places. These have included Cass County (Plattsmouth), Wayne County (Wayne), Kimball County (Kimball), Dodge County (Fremont), and Box Butte County (Alliance).

Highways and byways. In 1998, the Nebraska Byways program was established by Nebraska Administrative Code. The statewide program is co-administered by the Nebraska Department of Roads and Nebraska Department of Economic Development/Travel and Tourism Division.

- In 1999, nine highway corridors were selected, based on exceptional scenic and historic attributes. Each corridor program has since developed a corridor management plan, which identifies an inventory of sites and attractions available along the byway and a comprehensive development program for the byway. The following state agencies serve as advisors to the Nebraska Byways program: Nebraska State Historical Society, Nebraska Game & Parks Commission, and Nebraska Department of Natural Resources.

Archeology

Archeological resources consist of physical remains left by people of the past. They provide a record of the human experience and add to oral and written history, which is sometimes incomplete, biased, or unclear. While archeology in Nebraska has traditionally focused on Native American culture, archeology can offer insights into all aspects of the early life of our state. Land-leveling, construction, and other development are destroying archeological sites at a rapid rate. Archeological sites are fragile; once destroyed or damaged they can never be recreated, and this record of Nebraska's past is lost.

Issues

- Public entities are not required to consider archeological sites in the planning and execution of projects unless there is federal involvement.
- Archeological research needs to be more consistent and coordinated. Nebraska lacks state-of-the-art archeological restoration and curatorial facilities, and current facilities duplicate costly graphics and drafting equipment that could be more economically centralized. Modern computer-based techniques for maintaining and distributing site information have not been fully implemented anywhere in Nebraska.
- There is no single spokesperson or advocate for state archeological issues who can provide a central source for public or agency assistance and technical guidance. Public awareness of the state's archeological heritage is limited due to a lack of public education and support for avocational archeology.
- Private property owners are offered no incentive to preserve archeological sites.
- Partnerships are not established in the preservation of properties that have natural, environmental, scenic, and cultural importance.
- There is no program for acquiring title, options, or easements to preserve significant archeological sites and there is currently no organization or agency sufficiently equipped to manage archeological properties.

Recommendations

1. Archeological resources should be accorded full recognition and protection within Nebraska State Historical Society survey and evaluation efforts, and by adoption of cultural resource legislation to consider the effects of public actions on archeological sites (See Planning and Law).
2. Nebraska should establish a State Archeology Office under the direction of a state archeologist to oversee and implement archeological preservation laws and regulations. The State archeologist would:
 - protect Nebraska's archeological resources,
 - engage in research to promote knowledge of the state's past,
 - manage and preserve information on Nebraska's archeological sites and materials, and
 - disseminate the results of archeological investigations within the state.

3. The state should provide better protection of archeological resources on private properties through tax, grant, and easement incentives for landowners. Legislation could also provide compensation to owners of land with unmarked burial sites. Sample legislation was drafted as part of the 1995 Task Force Report aimed at:
 - Encouraging the preservation of Nebraska's archeological places;
 - Educating the public about the value and nature of the state's archeological resources;
 - Facilitating organized amateur archeological activities within the State;
 - Advocating the interests of archeological site preservation to governmental and private entities; and
 - Promoting high standards of archeological research within the State and the dissemination of information resulting from archeological research.

A Report Card on Archeology

Legislation. “Model” legislation drafted by the Nebraska Task Force on Historic Preservation was first introduced to the Nebraska Legislature in its 1997 session. This legislation and several versions that followed were unsuccessful. In 2005, the legislation was introduced with its purpose to create a State Archeology Office within the Nebraska State Historical Society. The purpose of the “Nebraska Archeological Resources Protection Act” would be to: promote and advocate archeological resources; maintain a “master” archeological site file; advise state agencies, political subdivisions and private entities; implement a program of emergency salvage archeology; and adopt and promulgate rules and regulations.

Easements. Probably the most important incentive to preserve archeological sites is the use of easements. Nebraska enabling law, adopted in 1981, recognizes the use of easements for the protection of properties for conservation and preservation purposes. Several land trusts have become active in developing easement programs and holding easements for properties meriting conservation and preservation. Since 1995, several programs have been established to fund or otherwise enhance properties for conservation and preservation purposes.

- The Nebraska Land Trust Board of Directors includes representation by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, Natural Resource Districts, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Nebraska State Historical Society. The collaboration of these agencies and other representatives holds great potential for future collaboration on cultural resources and methods to preserve the environs and landscapes associated with these resources.
- In 2002, the United States Department of Agriculture authorized the Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program (FRPP), which includes provisions for the acquisition of easements on “farm and ranch land that has prime, unique, or other protective soil, or that contains historical or archeological resources.” Advisors to the program include representatives of the Nature Conservancy, Audubon Nebraska, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, and Nebraska State Historical Society. To date this program has funded the acquisition of an easement for “The Tower,” a property in northeast Nebraska documented as a land feature and site significantly associated with the Lewis and Clark Expedition. The Northern Prairies Land Trust in cooperation with the landowner has led negotiations for the easement.
- Partnerships are ongoing with organizations that can and do hold easements that forward the preservation of archeological sites. These include the Nebraska Land Trust, represented by membership of the Nebraska State Historic Society, the Audubon Society, and the Archeological Conservancy.

Policy. The Nebraska Environmental Trust was established in 1992, with proceeds from the Nebraska Lottery. Rules and regulations incorporate requirements that projects address existing cultural resources and procedures

have been in place with the Nebraska State Historical Society to review and comment on projects. The process helps to identify other compliance issues that may arise. In a number of cases, projects have been designed to enhance cultural resources. The Nebraska Environmental Trust has also funded projects that have enhanced environmental elements associated with historic places, including historic parks in Columbus and David City, Spring Creek Prairie, the Brownville Historic District, Nine-Mile Prairie, Wyuka Cemetery, and the Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center. All of those properties are included in the National Register of Historic Places.

Archeological constituencies. Collaboration by the professional archeological community and Tribal Governments is perhaps the most important activity. These people include ownership and land management of important cultural and archeological sites, comment on Federal projects that may affect sites of significance, and advocacy for State legislation and the preservation of sites significant to Native American religion and culture.

- The Iowa Tribe now owns and manages the Leary site, a National Historic Landmark. Both the Tribe and the Nebraska State Historical Society have collaborated on its protection.
- Advocacy by the Nebraska State Historical Society and Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs to pass state archeological legislation, the preservation of sites threatened by Federal and nonfederal projects, and repatriation of human remains and funerary objects under the Nebraska Unmarked Burials law.
- The University of Nebraska, Department of Anthropology and State Museum, the Nebraska State Historical Society, and Federal agencies often sponsor field schools where volunteers and students participate in archeological investigations. These field schools provide both an educational opportunity for students and a chance to enroll interest by lay citizens. In one example, funding was obtained to sponsor Pawnee students to travel from Oklahoma and participate in a field study.

The Nebraska Association of Professional Archeologists (NAPA) was formed as a non-profit organization to promote the preservation and conservation of archeological sites. NAPA members include scholars and professors affiliated with the University of Nebraska, and archeologists serving in cultural resource management with state and federal agencies, and archeological consultants in Nebraska.

- NAPA has been dedicated to encouraging the preservation of Nebraska's archeological places; educating the public about the value and nature of the state's archeological resources; facilitating organized amateur archeological activities within the State; advocating the interests of archeological site preservation to governmental and private entities; and promoting high standards of archeological research within the State and the dissemination of information resulting from archeological research.

An association of avocational archeology has offered important opportunities to share sound methods of archeology collecting and preserving sites.

- The goals of the organization provide a forum for non-professionals to share experiences and learn more about archeology, encourage members to participate in research and other activities conducted by professional archeologists, and promote the ethic of preserving Nebraska's irreplaceable archeological past.

Partnerships. Archeological resources present unique cultural management techniques. Since most archeological sites are located on private land, partnerships are ongoing with landowners and other interested citizen groups. Landowners and local advocates often collaborate with professional archaeologists and organizations facilitating archeological research and protection of sites.

Managers of conservation areas, wetlands, and wildlife habitat often bring special sensitivity to the preservation of archeological sites that may be within their property.

- Audubon Nebraska preserves and interprets historic trail ruts of the Nebraska City-Fort Kearny Cutoff as part of its Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center. The trails ruts, now listed in the National Register of Historic Places, are interpreted within the context of tallgrass prairie, native habitat and wildlife that serve as a backdrop to the Center's educational outreach.
- Nine-Mile Prairie, listed in the National Register of Historic Places, is conserved and used as a classroom for some students at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Survey and planning. Nebraska Archeological Surveys have been accomplished within large-scale regions, focusing on water drainage. The surveys have been prioritized by the Nebraska State Historical Society under two 5-year plans to collect information about areas of the state that have not been adequately surveyed.

Education

The need for better Nebraska heritage education pervaded the findings of the task force. Heritage education draws on history, literature and the arts, architecture, and the social and natural sciences to study the past in today's natural and built environment, in material culture, in written documents, and in community practices and traditions. Although the task force found that many Nebraskans are committed to preservation, overall public awareness of preservation is low. Increased effort in heritage education, both within school and for the broader public, enhances the climate for historic preservation and for more effectively teaching local history, respecting cultural backgrounds, and dealing with community change. Developing mutual respect for heritage is a building block for appreciating diverse cultures and traditions.

The task force further researched issues in heritage education through two surveys, the first sent to local historical societies and other heritage organizations, and the second to Nebraska's fourth grade history teachers. The task force found great interest and innovative approaches to utilizing local historic resource in education, but also a lack of readily available tools to assist classroom teachers and local historical societies.

Sound decision-making about historic preservation requires an understanding of the past. Recognition of a community's history and sense of place is essential to developing a positive self-image and the ability to recognize community assets. If Nebraskans are to care about preserving historic places, formal and informal education should teach why historic places are important.

Issues

- Broad-based preservation action is hindered by a lack of heritage education. Many public officials are not aware of preservation's potential for economic and community development.
- Preservation, historical, and educational associations do not always recognize that utilizing and exploring historic places is central to the success of their missions. There is a lack of locally-based heritage education materials in historic preservation and education.
- Heritage education could provide common ground for individuals of diverse backgrounds. Developing a respect for heritage is a building block for appreciating diverse cultures and traditions.

Recommendations

1. Incorporate heritage education techniques within continuing education programs for elementary teachers.
2. Expand the existing education programs of the Nebraska State Historical Society, with corresponding increase in resources as necessary to:
 - Develop curriculum materials for teachers in the area of heritage

education, utilizing the research on historic places embodied within the Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey, and incorporating opportunities for local historical societies and local historic places. Working with local educators, funds could be sought from the Education Innovation Fund.

- Develop a statewide heritage education network to share the innovative ideas and programs developed by teachers statewide, utilizing newsletters, annual conferences, and electronic networking.
 - Develop workshops on heritage education through the Nebraska State Historical Society's field services program for local museums and historical societies.
3. Informal educational opportunities for the general public-heritage festivals, walking tours, house museums, historical markers, slide programs-are an essential part of heritage education.
- A statewide preservation advocacy group should promote local efforts to produce walking tours, heritage festivals, and other preservation programs.
 - The Nebraska State Historical Society and the Nebraska Department of Economic Development Division of Travel and Tourism should produce a historic place map of Nebraska as a joint project.
 - The Nebraska Department of Economic Development Division of Travel and Tourism, with assistance from the Nebraska State Historical Society, should develop models and support programs for including accurate information on local historic places in tourism material throughout the State.
4. The Nebraska State Historical Society should develop workshops and a historic preservation technical assistance manual for local officials, organizations, and individuals, providing information on federal and state programs, as well as examples of successful local efforts, emphasizing preservation's potential for economic and community development.

A Report Card on Preservation Education

Teacher training. “The Nebraska Institute: Teaching Nebraska History and Culture through Social Studies and the Humanities” has enabled teachers to explore resources, issues, instructional strategies and technologies to bring Nebraska history into the classroom. In turn, teachers develop lesson plans that are used in educational settings.

About the Nebraska Institute.

The “Nebraska Institute: Teaching Nebraska History and Culture through Social Studies and the Humanities” was first piloted in July 1998 as a two-week teachers workshop focusing on how to teach with historical documents, place, objects, and the wisdom of elders. The “Nebraska Institute” has been sponsored by the Nebraska State Historical Society, Nebraska Wesleyan University, and Lincoln Public Schools, with initial funding from the Cooper Foundation. The Institute is opened to K-12 teachers statewide and introduces teachers to Nebraska history resources and new perspectives and methods for infusing Nebraska history and culture into their classrooms.

- The Nebraska Institute has included a walking tour of Lincoln’s “South Bottoms,” a historic district associated with immigration of Germans from Russia, sites associated with African-American culture in Lincoln, and attendance at the annual Pow-Wow of the Omaha Tribe.
- Because of a substantial grant, the Nebraska Institute now serves Lincoln Public School teachers under the name “Bringing American History Scholarship into the Classroom” (BAHSiC) and includes five additional courses.

In 1997-98, a group of classroom teachers from across the state participated in an “Educators Advisory Committee” to assist and advise the Nebraska State Historical Society on history education. This effort followed a “Colloquy on Social Science Education in Nebraska,” held by the Nebraska Department of Education.

Teaching with historic places. Studies in teaching with historic places involve educational activities developed by teachers that use local historical, architectural, and cultural resources.

- Projects have included a Central City middle school project as a collaboration with that city’s Main Street revitalization program, classroom projects in rural public schools in Holt and Otoe counties, and a workshop and field study for teachers in northeast Nebraska, all sponsored by the Nebraska State Historical Society’s historic preservation program.
- The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) funded a teacher workshop at Fort Robinson in July and August 2004. The two one-week workshops, entitled “Shifting Power on the Great Plains: Fort Robinson and the American West,” was one of 17 funded by the NEH program, “Landmarks in American History” teacher workshops open to teachers nationwide. The teachers in residence learned of the Native American experience, the conflicts of cultures, and the places representing and interpreting this part of history.

Multicultural education. A number of individual projects have been developed within schools to explore multicultural history and culture.

- The Nebraska State Historical Society has sponsored two-day archeological lectures to students, employees, and residents of the Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma.

- Archeological internships were sponsored for members of the Pawnee Tribe of Oklahoma who assisted with excavations in the Omaha and Lincoln areas.
- Archeological investigations have been conducted for African-American pioneer settlement in Nemaha County by the Nebraska State Historical Society. On-site classroom instruction was developed by an Omaha high school teacher.
- A program was piloted for the American Association for State and Local History to involve youth from inner city neighborhoods, “Pathways: Discovering Your Connections to History.” Fourteen youth from inner city neighborhood schools in Lincoln participated. Students researched and wrote about three buildings of significance to them: Park Middle School, Everett Elementary School, and the F Street Recreation Center. Their research was published in the [Lincoln Journal-Star](#).
- African-American study materials were developed as a result of a documentation project initiated by the City of Lincoln’s Certified Local Government (CLG) preservation program.
- Lesson plans developed by an Omaha high school instructor are used to study the livestock and packing industry in South Omaha and the ethnic diversity brought to that area, both past and present.
- Two of a series of “Nebraska Trailblazer” are available for teachers, “African-American Homesteaders and Soldiers in Nebraska” and “Mexican Americans in Nebraska.” The Trailblazer series is produced by the Nebraska State Historical Society and is available to teachers across the state for classroom use.

Nebraska studies. A website, *nebraskastudies.org*, jointly owned by the Nebraska State Historical Society, Nebraska Educational Telecommunications, and the State Department of Education offers teachers, students, and history buffs access to materials and resources about the history of Nebraska from pre-1500 to the present. Classroom resources are largely designed for grades 4 and 8, in which Nebraska and American history are normally taught. Modules are accompanied by lesson plans written by Nebraska teachers to meet state curriculum standards. Teacher resources, suggested classroom activities, tools, source materials, and Nebraska educational standards are all linked within the site.

- Brief articles tell the stories of Nebraska history, linked from the timeline. These articles include photographs, animated charts, and video clips that bring history alive. Between 9,000 and 10,000 items are linked to a searchable database of digitized photographs, letters, and other primary resources.

- By linking to the Nebraska State Historical Society’s website, visitors can access materials on Nebraska’s historic places such as county survey reports and a county-by-county listing of Nebraska properties included in the National Register of Historic Places.
- During the 2003-2004 school year, the website was visited 378,000 times by 173,000 users, an average of almost 1,400 visits a day. Each visitor looked at an average of nine pages on the site.

Community-based education. A “Community Cultural Development Partnership Grant” program was established to award small planning grants to towns and neighborhoods for projects that increase their sense of community and build upon their cultural assets. The Nebraska Arts and Nebraska Humanities Councils, the Nebraska State Historical Society, the University of Nebraska Humanities Center, the Nebraska Rural Development Commission, the Urban Community Improvement Program at the UNL College of Architecture, and the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, cosponsored the program.

Continuing education. Other venues for education include informational and training sessions for local governments, training and continuing education credits for local officials and professional organizations, “lifelong learning” for adults and seniors, and programming for community development volunteers.

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- American Institute of Architects, Committee on Historic Preservation
- American Planning Association, Nebraska Chapter
- Friends of Amendment One
- National Park Service
- National Trust for Historic Preservation and The Charles Evans Hughes Fund
- Nebraska Archeological Society
- Nebraska Association of Professional Archeologists
- Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs
- Nebraska Department of Economic Development
- Nebraska Department of Roads
- Nebraska Downtown Association
- Nebraska Game & Parks Association
- Nebraska History Network
- Nebraska Lied Main Street Program
- Nebraska Museums Association
- Nebraska Preservation Council, Inc.
- Nebraska State Historic Preservation Board
- Nebraska State Historical Society