

## The Frauenthal Center for the Performing Arts, 425 West Western Avenue, Muskegon

Originally known as the Michigan Theater, the theater was built in 1929 by Muskegon movie mogul, Paul Schlossman. The Moorish themed theater was designed by Michigan's premier theater architect, C. Howard Crain of Detroit, and cost \$690,000 to build. It opened on September 17, 1930. Almost thirty years later the theater was "modernized." It closed in the 1970s until a citizens group organized to save it. Funding came from the Community Foundation of Muskegon County through a gift from local industrialist A. Harold Frauenthal. In 1992 Muskegon County voters approved a bond issue to renovate the theater and work began in 1998.



## Getty 4 Drive-In Theater, 920 Summit Road, Muskegon

This drive-in was constructed in 1949 by Nick Kuris of Muskegon and was originally known as the N-K Drive-In. Jack Loeks purchased the outdoor theater in 1967, changing the name to the Getty Drive-In. In 1980 the Getty added three additional screens. The original screen was damaged in an October 2005 storm and removed in 2006 for safety reasons, though the metal frame still remains.



## Harbor I & II 1937 Lakeshore Drive, Muskegon

The theater originally opened in 1921 as the Rivoli Theater. It was renamed Our Theatre in 1931. In 1977 the theater suffered a major fire. It was gutted and reopened in 1979 and an additional screen was added in 1981.



## Strand Theater

25-41 E Broadway, Muskegon Heights

The theater was built in 1920, when Paul Schlossman became the secretary-treasurer of the Strand Amusement Company of Muskegon Heights. The State Theater building includes a retail space on the lower level and several small living residences above the auditorium level.



## Howmet Theater

304 S. Mears, Whitehall

Originally known as the Playhouse Theater, the Howmet was built in 1916 by a local businessman James Nufer and managed by Frank Ramsey Adams. According to the University of Oregon archives, where Adams' papers are preserved, Adams was the owner of the Sylvan Beach Resort Company from 1916 to 1932. Educated at the University of Chicago, Adams was a respected director, author, playwright, and lyricist penning the popular song "I Wonder Who's Kissing Her Now" in

1909. He wrote the script for the Gary Cooper movie "The Cowboy and the Lady" in 1938. The theater was purchased by Blue Lake Art camp 1973 and operated by them until 2007.

**Lyric Cinemas**, 206 S. James, Ludington

The Lyric Theater, which opened in 1925, was once operated by the W. S. Butterfield theater chain. It closed in September 2007.



## Theater

27 S. State Street, Hart

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## Overview of Highway Construction in Michigan

### Early Trails

Southwest Michigan includes some of Michigan's earliest transportation routes that first served as Native Americans trails:

- **Sauk Trail** - Located in Berrien County, the Sauk Trail was one of the state's earliest and most important roadways connecting Detroit and Chicago via Jackson, Coldwater, Niles and New Buffalo. Originally a major migratory route for Native Americans, in the nineteenth century it became known as the Chicago Road and served as an early military road when Michigan was a territory. It became a major stagecoach and wagon route for settlers entering the state in the 1830s after the opening of the Erie Canal. The road grew in importance with the rise of the automobile in the early twentieth century and became one of the first designated state trunk lines, known as M-23, in 1917. It was designated as U.S. 12 when it was incorporated into the nation's first federal highway system in 1926.
- **Territorial Road** - The War of 1812 showcased the need for improved transportation in the Michigan Territory to facilitate the protection of federal lands. In 1816 the U.S. War Department sent surveyors to Michigan to determine strategic locations for harbor improvements and road construction. Federal funding was also appropriated to build up a key system of military roads throughout the state. Construction began on the Territorial Road, which ran from Detroit to Benton Harbor, in 1816 though the road was not completed until 1829.
- **Grand River Trail** - Once the major transportation route connecting Detroit to West Michigan, the Grand River Trail crossed the middle of the state via Lansing and Grand Rapids and terminated in Grand Haven. It originally served as a Native American trail and was improved into a wagon road in the 1840s as more settlers moved into the western portion of the state. By 1850, a plank road company had improved the road between Lansing and Detroit and charged a toll for using the road. The Grand River Trail was included as one of the original routes in the proposed state trunk line system and in 1917 was officially designated as M-16. In 1926 it became part of the federal highway system and was known as U.S. 16. Soon after, the highway's terminus was changed from Grand Haven to Muskegon with the road following an interurban line that ran through Fruitport. As U.S. 16, the road was part of a national highway that ran through the northern Midwestern states to Yellowstone National Park.



Grand Haven State Park—The Western Terminus of Grand River Road From Detroit to Grand Haven.

## Early Road Construction in Michigan

When Michigan became a state in 1837 there was little federal funding available for road construction. Except for the few major roadways improved by the federal government, the majority of roads in Michigan were developed locally at the township or village, level or by private individuals. For the first fifty years after statehood, the townships most often bore the responsibility for road construction in Michigan. As a result, there was no systematic growth to Michigan's roads and almost none of the improved roads met or joined together to form a continuous transportation route. By the end of the nineteenth century Michigan's roads were in a disastrously poor condition. The state's rapid increase in population in the 1840s had overburdened its existing road system. Michigan's dirt roads had been sliced into deep ruts by narrow wagon wheels; its sand roads were unimproved and impassable. Michigan was not alone, few states had legal authority to build or care for roads so it was left to local communities to address the challenge on their own.

## Good Roads Movement

Concern for improving America's roads started with the bicycling movement in the late nineteenth century. The invention of the safety bike in the 1880s and its subsequent improvement and mass production by American manufacturers led to a bicycling craze in the United States. By 1889 over one million safety bikes were being produced. However, the poor conditions of the nation's roads made cycling hazardous. To correct the problem, cyclists organized the League of American Wheelmen in part to lobby for road improvement. The Rhode Island faction of the league had established a Good Roads Movement in 1880 in an effort to introduce legislation that would lead to improved roads and make cycling safer and easier. But it was not until the invention of the automobile and its immediate popularity at the turn of the twentieth century that a new group of supporters for good roads changed transportation in America forever.

In Michigan, the Good Roads Movement had little impact until Horatio S. Earle, a young bicycle salesman from Detroit, joined the Michigan branch of the League of American Wheelman in 1896. Earle was appointed chair of the organization's Michigan Highway Improvement Committee in 1898 and then chief counsel of the Michigan Division of the League in 1899. In that position, he organized an International Congress on Good Roads that was held in Port Huron. He also organized a "good roads train" in which a caravan of different types of motor vehicles would drive from one point to another documenting any problems they encountered along the way. Earle used the exposure he received from these events to get elected as a Michigan state senator on a Good Roads platform. As a result, the first formalized political effort in support of a system of good roads for Michigan emerged. Though bicyclists had been complaining about poor road conditions for some time, it was only after the automobile became a common means of transportation that poor roads came to be viewed as a national crisis. In 1895 there were only four registered automobiles in the United States—within five years there were over eight thousand.

Michigan began to take the first serious action on improving its roads when it appointed the first State Highway Commission in 1892. To ensure the construction of continuous, improved roadways the Michigan legislature passed a law in 1893 enabling the citizens of a county to vote on whether their county should adopt a county road system. Only eighteen counties in Michigan, including Mason and Muskegon counties took advantage of the opportunity to adopt a county



road system when the law was passed. Berrien County adopted its county road system in 1908 but appropriated no funding until about 1912.

Though it is difficult to comprehend today, road improvement was a hotly contested issue in its time. Farmers especially did not want to be taxed for road improvements. They thought that good roads benefited only the rich, who could afford automobiles and had the leisure to tour in them. To win the farmers over, in 1907 Horatio Earle developed a Good Roads display that was exhibited at agricultural fairs around the state. Earle knew that he needed to get the farmer's support for building a system of improved farm-to-market roads if the Good Roads movement in Michigan was to be a success. Fortunately, in Southwest Michigan farmers were quick to see the benefit of good roads in moving their produce to market. It was advantageous to them to get delicate fruit crops to market as fast as possible and they strongly supported the Good Roads movement when other farmers in the state were not yet convinced of its importance. For example, as late as 1922 both the Grange and the Farm Bureau sent petitions to the Michigan legislature calling for a stop to road construction and a cap on bond issues for road construction. By that time, the West Michigan Pike, the first continuous hard surface road along the Lake Michigan shore, had already been completed.

## The Creation of the Michigan State Highway Commission

In 1905 the Michigan legislature unanimously passed a constitutional amendment that enabled the state to provide aid for the improvement of public wagon roads. Public Act 146 of 1905 established the State Highway Department and set up a system in which all license fees for motor vehicles went to securing good roads in the state. Horatio S. Earle was appointed Michigan's first State Highway Commissioner. Under Earle, the State Rewards Law was implemented. This law enabled the state to develop specifications for a variety of road types (gravel, stone, and macadam). A county or township would receive a specific amount of funding for the construction of up to two miles of improved road if they agreed to follow the state's specifications. Road construction was still the responsibility of the townships and counties; the state's jurisdiction was limited to inspecting roads that were built with state reward road funds. The result was a piecemeal system of roads, inconsistent in material and quality of construction that often did not link together. At a meeting of the Michigan State Horticultural Society H. J. Edgell of South Haven stated the system did not work well: "it's everybody's business to build roads—so it's nobody's business."

In 1910 Horatio Earle announced a plan to connect all of Michigan's county seats with a network of good roads. In 1911 William Bryant of Kalamazoo proposed the construction of an automobile highway through southern Michigan that would connect Kalamazoo to Chicago. Plans like these planted the seeds for the development of a state trunk line system, a continuous system of improved roads that would connect the major population centers within the state.

## Trail Associations

Before state highway systems were in place, local leaders often took road improvement into their own hands. Between 1900 and 1926, trail associations were formed to develop improved regional or interstate roadways. Trail associations typically worked in conjunction with a chamber of commerce or local tourist bureau to bring tourist dollars to the community by improving access to it. They raised private funding through donations and subscriptions to improve and promote a trail. Trail association roads could be inconsistent in quality and often did not live up to expectations.

Trails were often given romantic names that would appeal to a donor or traveler such as "the Old Spanish Trail" or "the National Parks Trails." According to the *Michigan Highways* website "These routes were designated with names—sometimes fanciful, oftentimes utilitarian or descriptive—and marked with colored bands on telephone and electric poles." The first documented trail association in America was the National Trail Association whose goal was to create a national

highway between Baltimore and Los Angeles. The most famous and enduring trail association was the Lincoln Highway Association whose purpose was to create a trail between New York City and San Francisco. The Lincoln Highway received the backing of one of Henry Ford's business associates, Carl Fisher, who was responsible for the construction of the Indianapolis Speedway.

In Michigan two of the earliest trail associations were for the West and the East Michigan Pikes, which were established around 1911. The two roads were to meet in Mackinaw City creating a continuous improved highway around the perimeter of the Lower Peninsula.

## State Trunk Lines

The State Trunk Line Act was passed in 1913 (Public Act 334) which gave the State Highway Department the authority to build any bridge over thirty feet in span on a designated state trunk line. The roads themselves were still to be constructed by local governments. The act enabled the State Highway Department to develop standardized plans for highway bridges. C. V. Dewart, the former assistant bridge engineer for the Pere Marquette Railroad, was placed in charge of the trunk line bridge program.

From the beginning, Michigan's state trunk line system was built with the purpose of attracting tourism to the state. At the end of the nineteenth century a resort industry had been established in northern Lower Michigan that relied on passenger steamer and railroad travel. Astute state leaders saw the automobile emerging as the primary mode of transportation in the twentieth century. In order to maintain and increase the state's tourism industry, they realized that Michigan would not only have to build good roads; the roads would have to be scenic and provide amenities to tourists undertaking automobile trips from Chicago to the resort areas in Traverse City, Petoskey, Charlevoix and points north. From their conception, Michigan's state trunk lines were envisioned as a system of tree-lined parkways that would provide lake vistas, picnic areas, camping sites and access to some of the lakes best scenic and recreational areas. The State Highway Department under Horatio Earle first promoted the creation of scenic highways, and subsequent state highway commissioners carried out Earle's theories until World War II changed how people thought about highway travel. Articles in construction trade magazines like *Michigan Roads and Forests* pointed out that road construction to increase tourism could not always be looked at "entirely from a dollars and cents standpoint" but must take into account that "people who came to this region for their summer are attracted by the scenic beauty."

Michigan's legislature adopted the Covert Act in 1915, which enabled counties to construct roads from funds acquired through a special assessment of adjacent property owners who agreed to participate in a road-building program. The Covert Act encouraged construction of secondary roads and increased the amount a county had to contribute toward the cost of building a state trunk line through the county. A number of roads in the project area were built as "tests" of the Covert Act funding system, most notably the Scenic Highway in Muskegon County, which connected Muskegon State Park to the resort area at White Lake.

In 1917 the state was given authority over the construction of federal roads in Michigan under the Federal Highway Act. Michigan became the second state in the Union, behind Wisconsin, to officially establish a state trunk line system that finally gave the State Highway Department the legal authority to construct the actual roadbeds. At first, the Michigan State Highway Department designated a continuous system of already existing roads to create the original state trunk line system. It then worked to improve them to hard surface roads with a uniform appearance. On the western side of the state, the major north-south trunk line, running from New Buffalo to Mackinaw City was created from the West Michigan Pike and designated as state trunk line M-11. The creation of the state trunk line system led to standardized road specifications, standardized designs for bridges and culverts, a standardized road marking system, and informational signage to increase safety. The highway department also worked to legislate the concept of the right of way and to adopt a road beautification policy.



## Establishment of Federal Highways

In 1926 the United States Numbered Highway System was created, an idea born of the America Association of State Highway Officials (AASHO), which was established in 1914. The United States Numbered Highway System was not a product of the federal government and no direct federal aid was provided to the numbered highways. AASHO's vision was supported by the Automobile Association of America (AAA) whose leaders found the proliferation of named trails and highways created by the trail associations to be confusing, inadequate, and off-putting for the average motorist. AASHO envisioned a system of numbered highways national in scope that crossed state lines. The result would be a network of standardized, improved roads that made moving about the country quicker and easier. AASHO worked with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Public Roads to develop the proposed numbered routes. The system came about in part to take better advantage of a requirement in the Federal Aid Act of 1914 which provided 50 percent of the construction costs of major roads within a state and required that 7 percent of the roads utilizing the funds be interstate in nature. The first United States Numbered Highways in west Michigan included U.S. 112 (M-23) also known as the Chicago Road, which ran from Detroit to Chicago and later became U.S. 12; U.S. 31 (M-11), which was to run from Mackinaw City to Mobile, Alabama; and U.S. 10, which was to run from Detroit to Seattle with a ferry connection at Ludington.

## Road Improvement and the Federal Relief Programs of the 1930s

When the Great Depression loomed in 1929, only about half of the roads in Michigan had been improved with a hard surface. The Michigan legislature passed the McNitt Act in 1931, which was meant to provide property tax relief by returning a vehicle weight tax to the counties for road construction. The act also enabled the consolidation of township roads into a county system to increase efficiency in road building and maintenance and provide for the absorption of township roads into a countywide system within a five-year period. The McNitt Act enabled counties to put funding into the most heavily traveled or most needed roads, rather than leaving road development to the townships.

The Depression era (1933-1941) saw unrivaled road construction throughout Michigan as the state and its counties took advantage of the federal relief programs offered under President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal. As early as 1929, the state had shown interest in developing a continuous shoreline road around the Lower Peninsula that would show off Michigan's Great Lakes and their beautiful sand dunes. The possibility of receiving federal relief funding to make that happen was an opportunity that Michigan's State Highway Commissioner, Murray D. Van Wagoner, could not pass up. In 1935 Van Wagoner announced plans for a forty-two million dollar road program that would include the construction of a system of tourist and farm-to-market roads and improvements to Michigan's state trunk lines. Van Wagoner's vision was for the development of a new perimeter highway system to be called "Shoreline Highway." He estimated that with the proposed road improvements, 50 percent of a tourist's driving time would be within sight of a Michigan lake or stream. The proposed highway program would include relocating and straightening highways and paving them with a hard surface aggregate. Michigan was the seventh state to submit a request for federal aid for road construction. Work was to begin with small projects that could be completed in sixteen months. One of the earliest federal relief road projects in Michigan was the construction of a new entry into the state from the Indiana state line just south of New Buffalo. This section of road was to connect U.S. 12 to the Dunes Highway, an improved road that followed along the southern edge of Lake Michigan through Indiana and Illinois into Chicago. From New Buffalo to the state line, U.S. 12 was straightened and landscaped in native plant material in the Prairie landscape style popularized by Chicago-based landscape architect Jens Jensen. The U.S. 12 improvement project also included the construction of a tourist lodge at New Buffalo, the first of its kind in the nation. Dedicated on May 9, 1935, the welcome center was wildly successful providing an opportunity to give tourists information about the state and to collect statistics on tourist visits to Michigan. As a result, two other welcome



centers were built at Michigan entry points, in Menominee and Monroe, and the construction of welcome centers became a common practice in states across the country. In 1936 the highway department announced that construction of the first portion of the proposed “Shoreline Highway” would begin between Bay City and Cheboygan on Michigan’s east coast.

The Works Progress Administration (WPA) embarked on a program to improve Michigan’s farm-to-market roads in 1937. These were roads that connected rural farm communities to large regional markets where farm produce could be sold or shipped to cities. Under the WPA the dirt farm-to-market roads were stabilized with a mix of gravel and crushed stone saturated with a small amount of calcium chloride. The resulting surface cost little and required minimal upkeep. The program employed local farmers providing them with income to help them weather the financial difficulties brought on by the Great Depression. According to the *Michigan Farmer*, Michigan was among the first state’s to recognize the importance of improving these roads.

## Post World War II Expressways

The seeds for a limited access interstate highway system were planted when President Franklin Roosevelt signed the Federal Highway Act of 1938, which enabled the creation of a national interstate toll road system. However, World War II and the redirection of funds and personnel to the war effort brought a temporary end to any such plans. After the war, the Federal Highway Act of 1944 allocated funding for the construction of interstate highways; Michigan’s Highway Department first revealed a plan to create a system of limited access expressways in 1946. Within the project area, the plans called for U.S. 31 from New Buffalo to U.S. 10 in Ludington to become a four-lane, divided highway that would bypass major cities along the route. Implementation of the expressway began in 1948 with work on the construction of a section of two-lane divided highway on U.S. 31 between Holland and Grand Haven (completed in 1950). In 1951 the Holland Bypass, a four-lane section of limited access highway that ran from U.S. 21 south and reconnected with the old U.S. 31 along Washington Avenue was begun. It was completed in 1955. That same year, a strip of highway in Oceana County now known as Oceana Drive, which ran from Monroe Road to the Mason County line was designated the Pentwater Bypass.

In 1956 President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the Federal Highway Act of 1956, which provided fifty-nine billion dollars in funding for forty-one thousand miles of an interstate system of limited access highway to be constructed between 1957 and 1969. As a young army officer in 1919, Eisenhower had participated in a transcontinental exhibition convoy that went from Washington D. C. to San Francisco in an effort to show how desperately the country needed a national road system. Some of the army’s heaviest artillery and equipment were driven along America’s highways to emphasize the need for standardized road specifications. These convoys would often get mired in mud or crush a poorly constructed bridge as they tried to traverse it, graphically making the point that the nation’s roads were inadequate for national security. The experience had a strong influence on Eisenhower, leading him to sign the National Interstate and Defense Highway Act when he became president.

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## The West Michigan Pike

By the late nineteenth century a successful resort industry had developed in the northern portion of West Michigan thanks to the construction of the Bay View Resort Association near Petoskey in 1875. The land had been provided to the Methodist Assembly by the railroad in exchange for a Chautauqua program that would bring more people to the area. Passenger steamer lines initiated routes between Chicago and Milwaukee that helped increase the popularity of the developing resorts near Petoskey and Harbor Springs. The completion of a north-south rail line along Michigan's west side from Chicago to Petoskey by the Chicago and West Michigan Railroad in 1894 really helped to open up the southern portion of west Michigan to the resort trade as towns petitioned for the establishment of a depot. But the railroad's reign as the dominant mode of passenger transportation in West Michigan was brief, quickly giving way to the automobile. It was through the foresight of a number of businessmen that West Michigan was able to improve and expand its successful resort industry and cash in on automobile tourism. At a time when lumbering was waning and local communities were experiencing an economic downturn, these men began actively looking for a way to jumpstart the region's economy. They were convinced that West Michigan's resort trade would prosper if a well-marked, hard surface road could be built from the state line to Mackinaw City. That road was the West Michigan Pike. They worked hard to convince state and county government officials as well as local citizens that the expense would be well worth the benefits it would reap.

The roads in West Michigan at the turn of the century were abysmal. Deep ruts, mud, and sand made travel difficult. When the automobile came into prominence, road conditions became even more intolerable. Stories of an automobile's tires being buried in sand up to the hub were common. In the early 1900s business and civic leaders would often create a highway association and develop a catchy name for a "motor way" as a means of rallying local support and raising funds for the construction of a good road in their area. The Lincoln Highway and the Dixie Highway are examples of some of America's most recognized named highways, but there were hundreds of such road organizations across the country. Oddly, there was no comprehensive approach to road construction and it was not unusual for improved sections of a road to be separated by long stretches of unimproved road...

In 1911 the West Michigan Lakeshore Highway Association was formed to promote the construction of an automobile touring route along Lake Michigan from New Buffalo to Mackinaw City. It was to be called the West Michigan Pike. Dr. William DeKleine of Grand Haven served as the organization's first president. At their initial meeting, held on January 10, 1912, in Muskegon, the association determined that their first priority was to conduct an assessment of the current condition of roads along the proposed route. To conduct the survey, Dr. DeKleine took a train to South Haven where Dr. G. F. Young, chair of the South Haven Community Club, joined him. The two men took Dr. Young's Runabout to St. Joseph and then drove the most direct route they could find to Holland, recording the roads they took and their condition. To generate interest, the Runabout was decorated with banners reading "West Michigan Lakeshore Highway Association." Other community leaders joined the two doctors along the way and soon a small group of automobiles was driving the route. In Pentwater, they met with John I. Gibson, Secretary of the West Michigan Development Bureau; in Glen Haven, lumberman Daniel H. Day joined the excursion and continued on with them to Mackinaw City. The trip took one week.

Once the survey was completed the association organized a promotional tour of the proposed route for the second week of July 1912. One dozen automobiles left St. Joseph; by the time the group reached Traverse City, fifty automobiles were participating. In 1913 the West Michigan Lakeshore Highway Association reorganized and changed its name to the West Michigan Pike Association. (A sister organization on Michigan's east coast was working to develop the East Michigan Pike). The West Michigan "Pikers" as they were called held summer automobile rallies between 1913 and 1922, driving the proposed roadway to call attention to how it was developing. These rallies served as fundraising and public relations events. Subscriptions were sold and the

funding was used for road improvements. The efforts of the West Michigan Pike boosters helped the counties along the route focus their road construction efforts on a connected road system through the region.

In 1914 William LeToutit of Grand Haven took over as president of the Association and for the first time there was enough improved road for the “Pikers” to drive all the way to Mackinaw City during their annual summer rally. It was also the first year that the road was marked along its entire route with metal signs. In 1916 the metal signs were replaced by concrete mile markers erected along the length of the Western Pike to make it easier for travelers to distinguish the route. These markers were eight feet tall and weighed 350 pounds; an example of one can be found at Fulton and 7<sup>th</sup> Streets in Grand Haven. That same year, the “Pikers” met up with members of the Dixie Highway Association in Mackinaw City where the two roads joined. A ceremony was held to dedicate a cobblestone obelisk (demolished) were the East and West Pikes met.

Early improved roads were typically bituminous macadam—crushed stone in a tar like substance with the surface treated with calcium chloride. In 1909, Michigan became a leader in road construction techniques when the first mile of concrete highway constructed in the world was laid on Woodward Avenue between Six and Seven Mile roads in Wayne County. The Pike’s designation as state trunk line M-11 in 1917, helped push the case that it should become a concrete road. Concrete construction of the roadway began in the southern and northern most counties and continued until a continuous, concrete road met in the middle. An article in the South Haven *Daily Tribune* on April 27, 1918, states that a concrete road was to be constructed through Ganges Township that year. The road would follow the West Michigan Pike from the Casco Township line north to Glenn then head east one mile and then north five miles to the township line. The concrete road was to be sixteen feet wide and cost \$143,600. Gravel for the concrete was to be taken from the beach.

By 1918 West Michigan resorts accessed from the Pike, like Macatawa Park and Ottawa Beach near Holland, were already being advertised in Chicago newspapers. In addition the *Holland City News* noted, “the West Michigan Pike means more to Holland than its citizens realize.” In 1920 nine and a half miles of concrete road between Grand Haven and Holland were constructed in what the State Highway Commission considered to be its greatest achievement for that year. The construction of this portion of the road coincided with improvements to Grand Haven State Park that “provided the motoring public with that long wished for convenience which is a free parking place on the shores of Lake Michigan.” The park dedication on November 7, 1921, included the unveiling of a 40 foot steel flagpole, courtesy of the Grand Haven Exchange Club. Grand Haven State Park was the official western terminus of another new state trunk line M-16. The park’s concrete oval offered a place for auto tourists to camp right at the beach. Grand Haven State Park had officially opened in June 1921 and a survey conducted that year found that about two thousand automobiles traveled to visit the park each day. Ninety-one percent of the visitors were from outside the Grand Haven area-- thirteen percent of those were from states outside of Michigan. Another celebration took place in December of that year when a stretch of concrete road between South Haven, Saugatuck, Muskegon, and Holland was completed.

The West Michigan Pike Association conducted its final summer rally in 1922. Called the “Tour De Luxe” it was a victory tour that signified the successful completion of the group’s work—a

## West Michigan Pike Association

First meeting was held January 10, 1912 in Muskegon. Lee H. Trott of Muskegon was elected president, but by April found he was unable to serve and Dr. William A. De Kleine was named President. The group first called themselves the West Michigan Lake Shore Highway Association.

**President:** Dr. William A. De Kleine, Grand Haven  
**Secretary-Treasurer:** Richard M. Hoffman, Manistee

## Executive Committee

Frank Hamilton, Traverse City  
John I. Gibson, Grand Rapids  
David H. Day, Glen Haven  
J. E. Merritt, Manistee

## County Representatives

L. E. Shay, Emmet  
A. M. Wilkinson, Charlevoix  
W. J. Letoutit, Benzie  
P. G. Olsen, Manistee  
C. W. Jones, Mason  
W. A. Eaton, Oceana  
Tom J. G. Bolt, Muskegon  
Austin Harrington, Ottawa  
William Takken, Allegan  
J. C. Monroe, Van Buren  
Berrien and Antrim Counties were not represented

continuous hard surface road between New Buffalo and Mackinaw City. The tour began in Chicago and the “Pikers” stopped for lunch at the Whitcomb Hotel in St. Joseph. Nine touring cars then left for Grand Haven where they dined at the Highland Park Hotel. The next day they ate lunch at the Stearns Hotel in Ludington sponsored by J .S. Stearns of Stearns Lumber. While the first auto tour conducted by Dr. DeKleine in 1911 had “plowed through sand a good portion of the way,” by 1922 only one mile of unimproved road existed between New Buffalo and Mackinaw City. A large percentage of the road south of Oceana County was classified simply as “hard surface pavement.” However, through Ottawa County for twenty-miles between Holland and Grand Haven it was celebrated as a “continuous stretch of splendid 18 foot concrete road.” This was in large part due to the efforts of William “Concrete” Connelly, a member of the Ottawa County Road Commission who had been elected to the Michigan State Senate on a “Good Roads” platform. Connelly, whose home was in Spring Lake, was a strong supporter of concrete highways. He pushed for the adoption of a \$50 million dollar bond for road construction when the Michigan State Highway Commission was formed, in order to achieve that end. While it had always been State Highway Commissioner Horatio Earle’s vision to construct a scenic highway on the west coast of Michigan to encourage tourists from other Midwest states to travel to Michigan’s resorts, he acknowledged that it was the work of the West Michigan Pike Association that inspired the people of West Michigan to hasten the improvement of the West Michigan Pike for their own immediate benefit and the general benefit of the state.

In 1926 the West Michigan Pike was incorporated into the federal highway system as U.S. 31. According to the Michigan State Highway Department Biennial Report for 1930-32, “State Trunk Line M-11. Better known as the West Michigan Pike, it is one of the most important tourist roads in the state serving as a route for the Michigan resorts along Lake Michigan from which the state derives an immense amount of business during the course of a year.” (p. 37)

## **West Michigan Pike and the Dixie Highway**

The Dixie Highway Association was established in 1914 to create a national improved highway from Miami, Florida to the Straits of Mackinaw. The road was the idea of Carl Graham Fisher who had been a strong supporter of the country’s first continuous improved road, the Lincoln Highway, which ran from New York to San Francisco. Fisher was also behind the establishment of the Indianapolis Speedway and at the time was developing a resort community in southern Florida that became the city of Miami. To help generate interest in his development, Fisher called for a continuous improved highway that ran north to south. At first, the road was to run from Chicago to Miami, but Michigan representatives to the 1915 Dixie Highway Association meeting had so much support from the state and from their local communities they were able to convince the association to consider two branches of the northern section of the highway—one that began in Chicago and one that began in Sault St Marie and ran along Michigan’s eastern coast to Toledo. By 1916 Phil T. Colgrove, president of Michigan’s Good Roads Association, had become a trustee of the Dixie Highway Association and strongly promoted the highway’s development in Michigan. The success of the Lincoln Highway and other named highways around the country had shown communities what a “good road” could do for a local economy. The cities along Michigan’s western shore asked to be included in the Dixie Highway initiative. Eventually a western branch was added that ran from Mackinaw City to Traverse City and south, including Ludington, Pentwater, and Muskegon after which it veered inward to Grand Rapids. In 1922 the lakeshore communities south of Muskegon to Benton Harbor and then inward to Niles petitioned to be included in the western branch of the Dixie Highway and their request was granted. Michigan was second only to Georgia in hosting the most miles of the Dixie Highway. At a meeting of the Dixie Highway Association held in 1923 it was conceded that, because so much work had been done to improve the West Michigan Pike, “Michigan . . . has surpassed all other states in construction of this great interstate thoroughfare.” Participation in the Dixie Highway required uniformity in how the road was constructed and marked. In addition to Michigan’s main east and west branch lines, a number of loop drives to adjacent cities were included in the Dixie Highway Association’s tour guides.

## Revival of the West Michigan Pike Association

In 1929 the original organizers of the West Michigan Pike Association revived the group with a new mission. The original road had been a linking of piecemeal roads constructed by townships, cities and counties. The result was a narrow, meandering, curving road that could no longer sustain the increasing amount of automobile traffic that used it. Prior to 1926 the West Michigan Pike was a significant tourist draw for West Michigan—just wandering up or down the road in your automobile stopping at villages, campgrounds, and beaches on a whim was a vacation in and of itself. However, in the mid-twenties the Pike became a victim of its own success. It had become so congested and dangerous that the region's tourism entrepreneurs now saw it as a detriment to tourism. Tourist traffic had continuously increased on the road between 1918 and 1926. Tourist traffic on the Pike declined after 1926 and the top complaints were traffic congestion and the condition of the road. Thus, the West Michigan Pike Association proposed the construction of a new superhighway for the western Lower Peninsula. The proposed concrete highway would be forty feet wide and would closely hug Lake Michigan providing scenic views of the lake wherever possible. At a February meeting of the West Michigan Pike Association, seventy representatives from western Michigan, from Berrien to Muskegon County, were in attendance (the majority of attendees were from Benton Harbor, St. Joseph and South Haven). The group voted to oppose the Dykstra Bill, proposed legislation that would split the funding for road construction collected from the gas tax (established in 1925) three ways between cities, townships, and counties. They believed such an action would dilute the state's ability to construct good roads.

In April 1929 Michigan's new state highway commissioner, Grover Dillman, was invited to speak to the West Michigan Pike Association. His speech revealed the state's plan for a \$30 million road project to construct a forty-foot wide shoreline road around the entire Lower Peninsula. Dillman stated that the first phase of the project would be to widen U.S. 31 from the Indiana state line to Manistee. Work had already begun on developing what was referred to as a "superhighway" from New Buffalo to St. Joseph (today known as Red Arrow Highway). The plans included major relocations of the road in three areas south of Grand Haven. From Benton Harbor to South Haven the road would be moved closer to the lakeshore to shorten the route by five miles. The new road would accommodate increased tourist, bus, and commercial traffic. A tourist lodge was planned for just north of the Indiana state line to provide tourists with information about Michigan's attractions. Because the state was already meeting the needs of West Michigan in its proposed plan for an improved scenic shoreline road, the West Michigan Pike Association thought its work complete, and disbanded for good.

Much of the work outlined by Dillman in his speech to the West Michigan Pike Association was carried out in the 1930s through the use of federal relief funding. When Murray D. Van Wagoner became the state highway commissioner in 1933, he continued to support the creation of a shoreline highway. The route of the West Michigan Pike served as the basis for the western arm of the proposed road and the significant improvements made to the route with federal relief money throughout the 1930s were undertaken with that goal in mind. The Michigan State Highway Department Biennial Report for 1934-36 stated

The West Michigan Pike Association was directly responsible for the educational propaganda that inspired the people of the western portion of the state to hasten the improvement of this main highway, state trunk line 11, for our immediate benefit and the general benefit of the state

Especially important was the further development of the system of tourist and shoreline roads and roadside parks and landscaping . . . Service to visiting tourists seeking recreation and sport in Michigan was improved and extended with the completion of the Tourist Information Lodge at New Buffalo which has met with such favor from the traveling public that other lodges are planned for Menominee, Monroe, and Sault St Marie.

According to James Glasgow in his 1939 dissertation *Muskegon, Michigan: the Evolution of a Lake Port*, "The development of the West Michigan Pike, a north-south highway passing through Muskegon, was the pioneer movement of its kind in the state." Until 1912 little effort had been made in Michigan to connect the main roads of different counties into one continuous, improved road. By doing so, the West Michigan Pike completely changed the landscape of West Michigan.

## Promoting the West Michigan Pike – The Michigan Tourist and Resort Association

The Michigan Tourist and Resort Association (MTRA) was established in Grand Rapids in 1917 to promote West Michigan. According to historian Willis F. Dunbar it was "the first regional association formed to promote the tourist and resort industry" in Michigan. Hugh S. Gray, a native of Lakeville, Michigan, and a former employee of the Pere Marquette Railroad, served as president of the Association from its beginning until his death in 1943. Gray was a tireless promoter of Michigan and laid the foundation for a number of programs that had a lasting effect on tourism in the state such as the establishment of the Manistee State Forest, the establishment and promotion of state parks, the appropriation of state funds for tourism advertising, and the development of hotel management courses at Michigan State University. Gray understood the interconnection between aesthetics, natural resource conservation, and a healthful environment and their importance in attracting visitors to Michigan.

The tourism foundation that Gray and the MTRA set forth in the 1920s served Michigan well for decades to come. Gray established the *West Michigan Vacation Directory* that listed resorts, beaches, golf courses and other recreation activities. (The publication was renamed *Carefree Days in West Michigan* in 1936.) The MTRA began the heavy advertising of West Michigan as a vacation spot in Midwestern cities like Cincinnati, Omaha, and St. Louis. In 1921 the West Michigan Tourist Association established a Chicago office with an annual budget of thirty thousand dollars. The office provided maps, resort brochures, and road condition assessments to potential tourists.

Hugh S. Gray and the MTRA understood the significance that automobile tourism could have on West Michigan and were strong supporters of the West Michigan Pike. In 1920 Gray and the MTRA developed a plan for West Michigan that would result in it being "the first resort region in the land to offer auto tourists standardized sleeping and eating accommodations." The plan called for the creation of a "chain of high grade tourist camps" that would serve travelers to Lake Michigan's northwestern resorts. The camps would provide "comfortable beds," "wholesome appetizing meals," and good service. It was hoped that these camps would "divert travel up to the Great Lakes from other touring regions just as standardized Harvey eating houses years ago turned western traffic toward Santa Fe. . . ." (*Michigan Roads and Highways*, April 1920) (Fred Harvey was an entrepreneur hired by the Atchison, Topeka and the Santa Fe Railroad in 1876 to provide food and lodging along their route in an effort to establish a strong tourism market in the Southwest.) The Michigan Tourist and Resort Association wanted to "make travel to permanent resorts more pleasant" by "establishing camps all the way up the West Michigan Pike from the Indiana state line to the Straits and on the Mackinac Trail from the Kalamazoo to the Straits." The camps were to be located at scenic spots at intervals that could easily be traveled between meals or, at the least, between breakfast and dinner. Five camps were proposed for construction in 1920. In the project area free municipal campsites were to be constructed at St. Joseph and Holland, and the campsites in state parks at Grand Haven, Mears, and Silver Lake were to be included in the campaign. There was also a plan for Holland to have a loop pavement "thereby imitating the Chicago Lakeshore famous loop." The Holland plan called for paving Seventh Street from Lincoln to Pine and connecting Seventh and Eighth Streets. The Great Lake Way Association was formed to carry out the plan. Fred Rowe of Grand Rapids served as president of the Association. Directors from the project area included John Klock, Benton Harbor; S. A. Miller, Macatawa Park; Charles W. Parrish, Saugatuck; A. H. Landreth of Holland, and Harry Hoag and J. P. Townsend of Saint Joseph.

In 1936 the MTRA established its office at 22 Sheldon NE in Grand Rapids in what is now Veterans Memorial Park. Hugh Gray was honored in 1938 with the construction of a stone cairn off U.S. 31 in Antrim County, four and one-half miles north of Elk Rapids. It is no doubt that the success of the West Michigan Pike in bringing tourists to West Michigan is in large part due to the innovative thinking and continuous promotion of Hugh S. Gray.

## Other Names for the West Michigan Pike

Over time the West Michigan Pike was incorporated into Michigan's state and federal highway systems. As noted above it, it became M-11 in 1917. In Berrien County it was known as M-112 in 1926 and later US 12, while north of Benton Harbor it became US 31. The West Michigan Pike became part of the Dixie Highway system in the 1920s. The road was realigned and improved throughout the 1930s. This improved route was designated the Blue Star Memorial Highway in 1952. US 12 in Berrien County was designated as the Red Arrow Highway in 1953.

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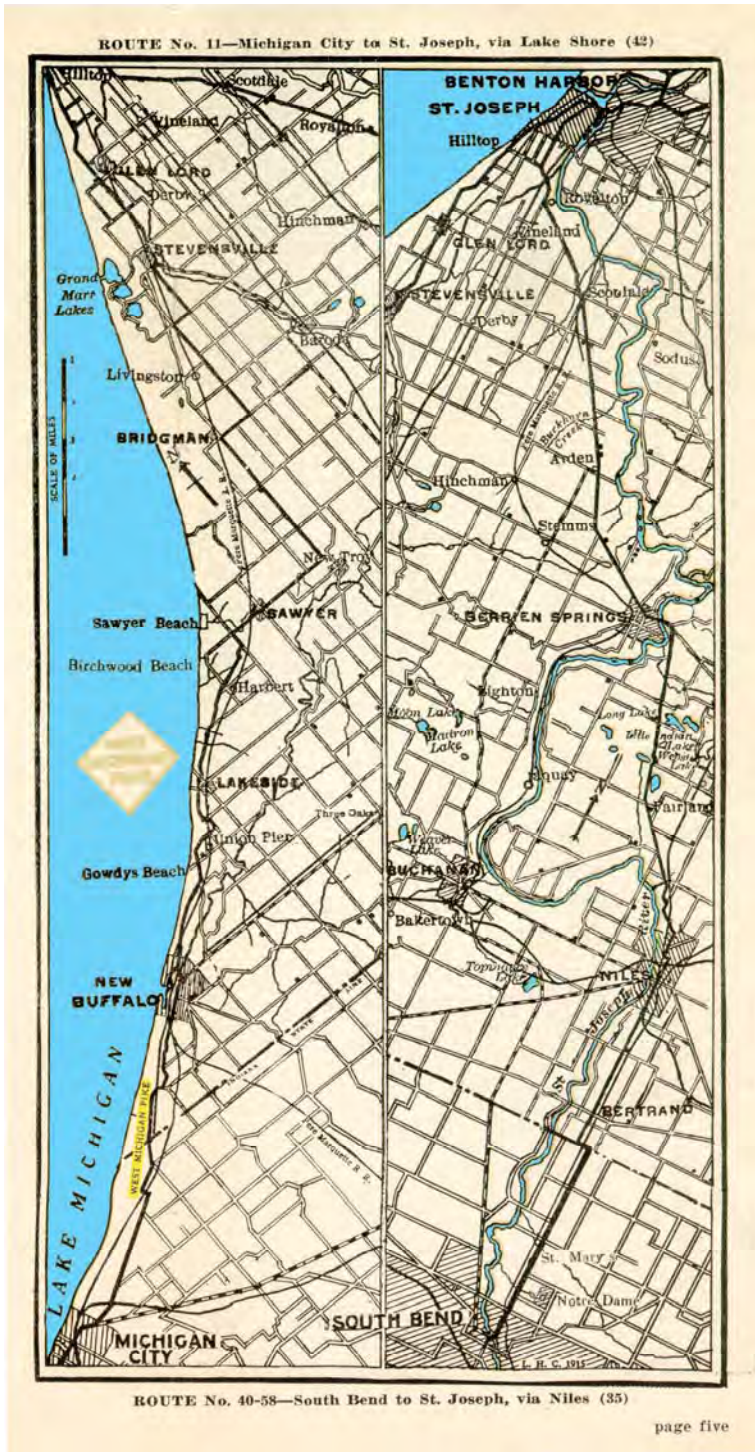
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## West Michigan Pike 1922 Route

Indiana State Line to Saint Joseph



From **Indiana State Line** North on Grand Beach Road, West on Wilson Road, East on Buffalo Road (U.S. 12) to **New Buffalo**, West on Whittaker, North on Rivera Road continue North on Marquette Road to Union Pier, North on Lakeshore Road through **Lakeside**, North on Red Arrow Highway through **Harbert**, Northeast on Old M-11 into **Sawyer**, East on Sawyer Road, North on California to **Bridgman**, East on Shawnee, North on Jericho Road, East on Linco, North on Jericho Road to **Stevensville**, East on Johnson Road, North on Holden Road, West on Glenlord, North on Red Arrow Highway into **Saint Joseph**

The map is from the West Michigan Pike Tour Guide 1922. The written description is based on information from *Scarborough's Official Tour Book: Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois and Wisconsin Trunk Lines*. Indianapolis: Scarborough Motor Guide Company, 1917.

## West Michigan Pike 1922 Route

Saint Joseph to South Haven



From **Saint Joseph**, North on State Street, East on Ship Street, Northeast on Main Street into **Benton Harbor**, North on Water Street, East on Territorial Road, Northeast on Red Arrow Highway through **Coloma**, East on Paw Paw Road into **Watervliet**, Northeast on Watervliet Road, West on 52<sup>nd</sup> Avenue (Hagar Shore Road, North on Paw Paw Lake Road (M-140) through **Covert** continue North into **South Haven**, North on LaGrange Road, Northwest on Phillips, North on Broadway, West on Dyckman, North on North Shore Drive

The map is from the West Michigan Pike Tour Guide 1922. The written description is based on information from *Scarborough's Official Tour Book: Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois and Wisconsin Trunk Lines*. Indianapolis: Scarborough Motor Guide Company, 1917.

## West Michigan Pike 1922 Route

### South Haven to Holland



**South Haven**, North on La Grange, Northwest on Phillips, North on Broadway, West on Dyckman, North on North Shore Drive, East on Blue Star Highway (70<sup>th</sup> Street in Ganges Twp) North on 70<sup>th</sup> Street to **Glenn**, East on 114<sup>th</sup> Street, North on 68<sup>th</sup> Street (Old U.S. 31) to **Douglas**, East on 138<sup>th</sup> Street, North on Center, North on Washington, Cross bridge to **Saugatuck**, Northwest on Lake Street, West on Culver Street, North on Butler, East on Francis, Northeast on Holland, North on 64<sup>th</sup> Street, East on 32<sup>nd</sup> Street. North on Lugers, East on South Shore Drive into **Holland**, East on 17<sup>th</sup> Street to River Street.

The map is from the West Michigan Pike Tour Guide 1922. The written description is based on information from *Scarborough's Official Tour Book: Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois and Wisconsin Trunk Lines*. Indianapolis: Scarborough Motor Guide Company, 1917.

## West Michigan Pike 1922 Route

### Holland to Grand Haven



From Holland, East on 17<sup>th</sup> Street to River Street, North on 136<sup>th</sup> Street, through **Agnew**, North on 160<sup>th</sup>, West on Ferris, North on 168<sup>th</sup> Street into **Grand Haven**, West on Washington, North on Seventh, Cross Bridge, North on 174<sup>th</sup> Street through **Ferrysburg**, North on Grand Haven Road

The map is from the West Michigan Pike Tour Guide 1922. The written description is based on information from Scarborough's Official Tour Book: Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois and Wisconsin Trunk Lines. Indianapolis: Scarborough Motor Guide Company, 1917.

## West Michigan Pike 1922 Route

### Grand Haven to Montague



From Ferrysburg, North on Grand Haven Road through **Norton Shores**, Northwest on Business U.S. 31, Northwest on Merriam in **Muskegon Heights**, West on Summit, North on Peck Street into **Muskegon**, Northwest on 3rd, East on Western Avenue, West on Eastern Avenue, and Northeast on Ottawa Street, Northwest on Memorial Causeway, Southwest on Lake Street, Northwest on Center, North on Witham Road, North on Whitehall Road, West on Riley Thompson Road, North on Lorenson, East on Lakewood Drive, North on Durham Street, West on Colby Street into Whitehall, Cross bridge to Montague

The map is from the *West Michigan Pike Tour Guide 1922*. The written description is based on information from *Scarborough's Official Tour Book: Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois and Wisconsin Trunk Lines*. Indianapolis: Scarborough Motor Guide Company, 1917.

## West Michigan Pike 1922 Route

### Montague to Pentwater



From **Montague**, Northwest on Dowling, North on Lamos Road, West on Post Road, North on Old 99 Road, East on Meinert Road, North on 56<sup>th</sup> Street, East on Arthur, North on 64<sup>th</sup> Street, East on Hayes (in 1922 the route from Montague was changed to Whitehall Road), North on Oceana Drive through **Shelby**, West on Water Street to State Street through **Hart**, Cross bridge, East to Oceana Drive, West, West on Monroe Street through **Pentwater**

The map is from the *West Michigan Pike Tour Guide 1922*. The written description is based on information from *Scarborough's Official Tour Book: Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois and Wisconsin Trunk Lines*. Indianapolis: Scarborough Motor Guide Company, 1917.

## West Michigan Pike 1922 Route

Pentwater to Ludington



From **Pentwater**, West on Sixth Street, North on Hancock, East on Park to Business U.S. 31, North on Meyers, West on Hesslund, North on Lenz, West on Sixth Street into **Ludington**, North on Madison, West on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, North on Washington, West on Dowland, North on James Street to Ludington Avenue, East Ludington Avenue (U.S. 10) to Scottville

*The map is from the West Michigan Pike Tour Guide 1922. The written description is based on information from Scarborough's Official Tour Book: Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois and Wisconsin Trunk Lines. Indianapolis: Scarborough Motor Guide Company, 1917.*



## Verbal Description of the 1922 Route of the West Michigan Pike

From **Indiana State Line** North on Grand Beach Road, West on Wilson Road, East on Buffalo Road (US 12) to **New Buffalo**, West on Whittaker, North on Rivera continue North on Marquette Road to Union Pier, North on Lakeshore Road through **Lakeside**, North on Red Arrow Highway through **Harbert**, Northeast on Old M-11 into **Sawyer**, East on Sawyer Road, North on California to **Bridgman**, East on Shawnee, North on Jericho, East on Linco, North on Jericho to **Stevensville**, East on Johnson Road, North on Holden Road, West on Glen Lord, North on Red Arrow Highway into **St. Joseph**

From **St. Joseph**, North on State Street, East on Ship Street, Northeast on Main Street into **Benton Harbor**, North on Water Street, East on Territorial Road, Northeast on Red Arrow Highway through **Coloma**, East on Paw Paw Road into **Watervliet**, Northeast on Watervliet Road, West on 52<sup>nd</sup> Ave (Hagar Shore Rd), North on Paw Paw Lake Rd (M-140) through **Covert** continue North into **South Haven**, North on La Grange, Northwest on Phillips, North on Broadway, West on Dyckman, North on North Shore

**South Haven**, North on La Grange, Northwest on Phillips, North on Broadway, West on Dyckman, North on North Shore, East on Blue Star Highway through **Glenn**, East on 118<sup>th</sup>, North on 68<sup>th</sup> (Old 31) to **Douglas**, East on 138<sup>th</sup>, North on Center, North on Washington, Cross bridge to **Saugatuck**, Northwest on Lake Street, West on Culver Street, North on Butler, East on Francis, Northeast on Holland, North on 64<sup>th</sup> Street, East on 32<sup>nd</sup>, North on Lugers, East on South Shore into **Holland**, East on 17<sup>th</sup> Street to River Street.

**From Holland**, East on 17<sup>th</sup> Street to River St, North on 136<sup>th</sup> Street, through **Agnew**, North on 160<sup>th</sup>, West on Ferris, North on 168<sup>th</sup> Street into **Grand Haven**, West on Washington, North on Seventh, Cross Bridge, North on 174<sup>th</sup> Street through **Ferrysburg**, North on Grand Haven Road

North on 168<sup>th</sup> Street into **Grand Haven**, West on Washington, North on Seventh, Cross Bridge, North on 174<sup>th</sup> Street through **Ferrysburg**, North on Grand Haven Road through **Norton Shores**, Northwest on Business 31, Northwest on Merriam in **Muskegon Heights**, West on Summit, North on Peck Street into **Muskegon**, Northwest on 3rd, East on Western, West on Eastern, and Northeast on Ottawa Street, Northwest on Memorial Causeway, Southwest on Lake St, Northwest or Center, North on Witham, North on Whitehall Road, West on Riley Thompson Road, North on Lorenson, East on Lakewood, North on Durham St, West on Colby Street into Whitehall, Cross bridge to Montague, Northwest on Dowling, North on Lamos, West on Post, North on Old 99 Road, East on Meinert, North on 56<sup>th</sup>, East on Arthur, North on 64<sup>th</sup>, East on Hayes (in 1922 the route from Montague was changed to Whitehall Road)

From **Montague**, Northwest on Dowling, North on Lamos, West on Post, North on Old 99 Road, East on Meinert, North on 56<sup>th</sup>, East on Arthur, North on 64<sup>th</sup>, East on Hayes (in 1922 the route from Montague was changed to Whitehall Road), North on Oceana through **Shelby**, West on Water Street to State Street through **Hart**, Cross bridge, East to Oceana Drive, West on Monroe through **Pentwater**

From **Pentwater**, West on Sixth, North on Hancock, East on Park to Business 31, North on Pere Marquette Highway, West on Sixth into **Ludington**, Right on Madison, Left on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, Right on Washington, Left on Dowland, Right on James Street, to Ludington Avenue, East to Scottville



## The Dixie Highway

The Dixie Highway Association was established in 1914 to create a national improved highway from Miami, Florida to the Straits of Mackinac. The road was the idea

of Carl Graham Fisher who had been a strong supporter of America's first continuous, improved national road, the Lincoln Highway, which ran from New York to San Francisco. Fisher was also behind the establishment of the Indianapolis Speedway and at the time was developing a resort community in southern Florida that later became the city of Miami. To help generate interest in his Florida development, Fisher called for the construction of an improved north-south highway equal to the Lincoln Highway.

At first the road was to run from Chicago to Miami, but Michigan representatives to the 1915 Dixie Highway Association meeting had so much support from the state and from local community leaders they were able to convince the association to consider two branches of the northern section of the highway—one that began in Chicago and one that began in Sault Ste. Marie and ran along Michigan's eastern coast to Toledo. In 1916 Phil T. Colgrove, president of Michigan's Good Roads Association, had become a trustee of the Dixie Highway Association and strongly promoted the highway's development in Michigan. Construction on the Dixie Highway ran from 1915 to 1927 and when completed it ran for 5,706 miles from Ontario, Canada, to Miami, Florida.

The success of the Lincoln Highway and other named highways around the country had shown communities what a "good road" could do for a local economy. The cities along Michigan's western shore asked to be included in the Dixie Highway initiative. Eventually a western branch was added that ran from Mackinaw City to Traverse City and south through Ludington, Pentwater, and Muskegon, where it veered inward to Grand Rapids. In 1922 the lakeshore cities between Muskegon and Benton Harbor petitioned to be included in the western branch of the Dixie Highway.

Michigan was second only to the state of Georgia in hosting the most miles of the Dixie Highway. At a meeting of the Dixie Highway Association held in 1923 it was conceded that "Michigan . . . has surpassed all other states in construction of this great interstate thoroughfare." Participation in the



Dixie Highway 1923 map from the U.S. Highways website

Dixie Highway required a commitment to uniformity in how the road was constructed and marked. The route was marked with a white sign with a red band and the letters DH.

In addition to Michigan's main east and west branch lines, a number of loop drives to adjacent cities were included in the Dixie Highway Association's tour guides. The main western Michigan route of the Dixie Highway became U.S. 31 when the federal numbered highway system was introduced in 1926.

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## Blue Star Memorial Highway

The Blue Star Highway is an early realignment of the original West Michigan Pike. Work began in 1930 near Benton Harbor to straighten the road and eliminate sharp turns and curves. Work continued through Allegan County in 1934 and ended with the completion of the Saugatuck bypass in 1937.

The Blue Star Highway program was the idea of the president of the Garden Club of New Jersey, Mrs. Lewis M. Hull, who in 1945 first suggested creating a living memorial by planting a section of highway with trees and shrubs to honor the American men and women who served in the armed forces during World War II. Named for the star on the service flags that were hung in the windows of homes with family members serving in the armed forces, the first Blue Star Memorial was a six-mile strip of New Jersey highway planted with dogwood trees. Billboards were banned from the designated memorial highway area. In 1946 the New Jersey Highway Commissioner spoke about the project at the annual meeting of the National Council of State Garden Clubs (NCSGC) held in New York City. At that meeting, the clubs voted to implement the idea of a living memorial on a national basis. Each state garden club petitioned their state legislature to designate a section of highway as a Blue Star Memorial. The NCSGC developed guidelines for the plantings of the memorial highway. These guidelines encouraged the “naturalist plantings of diversified indigenous trees and shrubs to blend with the existing landscaping at the location.” The plantings required the approval of the state highway commissioner and led to a unique partnership between the garden clubs and their state transportation departments. In 1947 Mrs. Frederic R. Kellogg, former president of the New Jersey Garden Club, donated the design for the bronze Blue Star Memorial marker used in designated areas to provide a unified look for the memorial highways. The program was expanded in 1951 to memorialize all veterans as well as the men and women currently serving in the armed forces.



In Michigan the Federated Garden Clubs adopted the Blue Star Memorial project in 1947. At their request, the legislature designated 379 miles of US 31 from the Indiana state line to Sault Ste. Marie as Michigan’s Blue Star Memorial Highway in 1952. Ten bronze markers were erected along the route between 1948 and 1958 at Niles, South Haven, Saugatuck, Muskegon, Hart, Traverse City, Elk Rapids, Mackinaw City, St. Ignace, and Sault Ste Marie.

In the 1960s, a two-lane portion of the Blue Star Highway (US 31 from M-63 near Hagar Shores to the junction of Business 31 and I-196 south of Holland) that had been in service since the 1930s was bypassed by a newly constructed freeway. According to the *Michigan Highways* website, Mrs. Gene Temple of Saugatuck, who owned a motel on the bypassed section of road, became concerned about the effect of the bypass on local businesses. Her advocacy with state and county officials led to the adoption in Michigan of the County-Designated Highway system in 1970. The Blue Star Highway in Berrien and Allegan Counties received the A-2 designation.

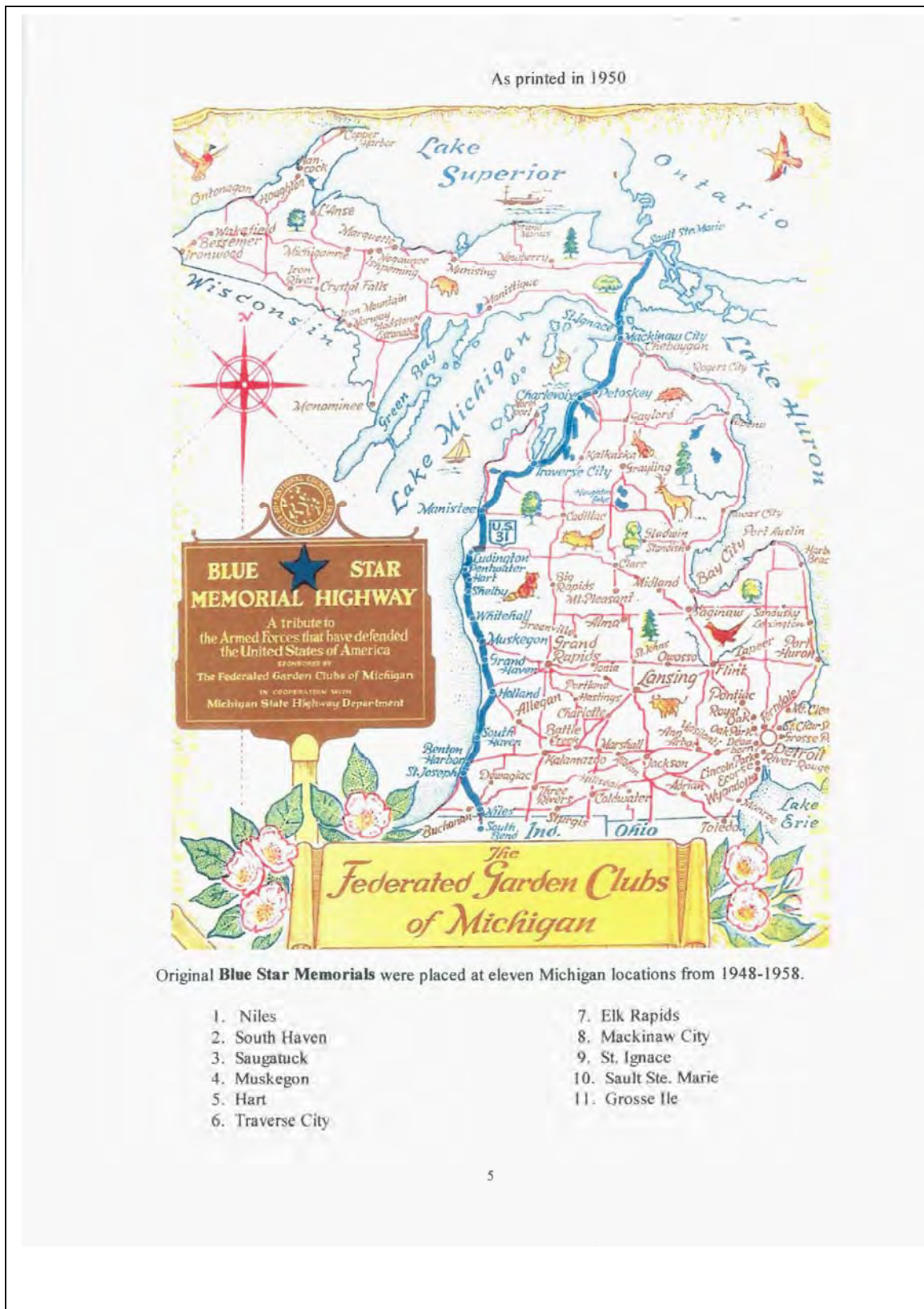
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*Courtesy of the Federated Garden Clubs of Michigan*



## Red Arrow Highway

The route of the Red Arrow Highway through Berrien County marks the first major improvement/realignment of the West Michigan Pike, undertaken between 1927 and 1929 to provide a scenic entry into the state for automobile tourists. The road runs from just south of Townline Road in New Buffalo Township to the village of Coloma.

The Red Arrow Highway was named as a tribute to the 32nd Division, a group of Michigan and Wisconsin National Guardsmen that served in France during World War I. The group trained in Texas and used a Red Arrow as their insignia. They arrived in France between January and March of 1918 and fought in the trenches on five fronts until Armistice was declared. Over half the men in the battalion were killed or wounded. At the onset of World War II, they were the first American Division to be shipped overseas after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. According to an article by Frank Passic for the Albion *Morning Star*:

Following World War II, a plan was devised to designate US 12 through southern Michigan and U.S. 32 in Wisconsin the "Red Arrow Highway" in honor and memory of the sacrifices made by "our boys" of the 32nd Division. These were the days before Interstate-94 was built. The route would be connected together via roads in Indiana and Illinois. In March 1953, Red Arrow Highway dedication ceremonies were held across Michigan in such communities as New Buffalo, St. Joseph, Paw Paw, Kalamazoo, Galesburg, Battle Creek, Albion, and Jackson. Signs were posted, including in Albion, officially marking this route as the Red Arrow Highway.

After I-94 was completed in 1960, the old road was rarely referred to as the Red Arrow Highway except in Berrien County where the designation is still used as the common name.

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## Timeline of Changes and Realignment to the West Michigan Pike

Over time the Michigan Highway Department worked to make the highway safer by reducing excessive turns and sharp curves and bypassing downtowns in order to provide a more direct route north. Below is a list of the major changes and realignments that occurred to the original route of the West Michigan Pike between 1922 and 1959.

### Changes to the West Michigan Pike Route (U.S. 12, Red Arrow Highway)

In Berrien County, the West Michigan Pike became state trunk line M-11 in 1917 and later was named U.S. 12 (also known as the Red Arrow Highway) as part of the United States Numbered Highway System.

**1926.** Berrien County. New Buffalo Township. West Michigan Pike (M-11) in Berrien County is designated as a portion of the new United States Numbered Highway System as U.S. 12.

**1927.** Berrien County. Lake Township. The first major realignment of the West Michigan Pike to current route of the Red Arrow Highway from Sawyer to Linco Road south of Stevensville.

**1928.** Berrien County. Lincoln Township. Stevensville Bypass. Realigned to the current route of the Red Arrow Highway from Linco Road to Glenlord Road.

**1929.** Berrien County. Benton Township. Realigned to current route of the Red Arrow Highway from Glenlord Road to Cleveland Road south of Saint Joseph.

**1934.** Berrien County. New Buffalo Township. The Michigan State Highway Department undertook a major landscaping project to beautify the highway as a major automobile tourist entrance to the state. The project ran from the Indiana state line three and a half miles to the north. Landscape plans followed the principals of the Prairie School promoted by Chicago landscape architect Jens Jensen using native plants. This portion of the road was part of the Dunes Highway, which circled the lower portion of Lake Michigan.

**1935.** Berrien County. New Buffalo Township. The first automobile tourist Welcome Center in the nation was built in on U.S. 12 just south of New Buffalo.

**1960.** Berrien County. I-94 opens and the Red Arrow Highway becomes a local road.

### Changes to the West Michigan Pike Route (U.S. 31, Blue Star Highway)

From the Van Buren County line north, the route of the West Michigan Pike became U.S. 31 (also known as the Blue Star Highway).

**November 11, 1924.** Grand Haven Swing Bridge was opened.

**Between 1922 and 1930.** Muskegon County. Fruitland Township. Realigned to Whitehall Road, Northwest on Bell, West on Lakewood to Durham

**August 20, 1927.** Muskegon County. Muskegon Heights. Realignment of US 31 from Merriam to Lincoln Avenue to Peck St

**September 10, 1930.** Muskegon County. Fruitland Township – Realignment to Whitehall Road Road.

**1930.** Berrien County. Benton Township. Realigned to a new shoreline route from Benton Harbor to South Haven. North from Benton Harbor the new route follows Paw Paw Road to the current Blue Star Highway alignment.

**June 30, 1930.** Muskegon County. Muskegon Bypass. West on Sherman, North on Getty, West on Marquette, Northeast on Ottawa

**July 22, 1930.** Mason County. Ludington Bypass. Follows Pere Marquette Highway North from 6<sup>th</sup> Street to Ludington Ave called 31A

**July 12, 1933.** Oceana County. Shelby Township. Realignment to Oceana Drive from Hayes to Water Road (between Shelby & New Era)

**October 10, 1934.** Allegan County. Ganges Township. From 114<sup>th</sup> Street in Glenn to the current route of Blue Star Highway.

**August 30, 1937.** Allegan County. Saugatuck Bypass. Realigned to the current route of the Blue Star Highway.

**August 30, 1937.** Mason County. Pere Marquette Township. Realigned to the route of Pere Marquette Highway from Hesslund Rd

**August 30, 1937.** Allegan County. Lake Town Township. From 64<sup>th</sup> Street North of Saugatuck, Northeast via Blue Star Highway, North on 58<sup>th</sup> Street, North on Michigan Street, to corner of River & State in Holland.

**1940.** Oceana County. Hart Township. Realignment. From Water Street, North on present day Oceana Drive, West on Russell/Polk Rd in Hart

**1942.** Van Buren County. South Haven Township. Realignment from M-140 via the present route of Blue Star Highway to North Shore Drive.

**October 27, 1949.** Berrien County. St. Joseph. Blossomland Bascule Bridge opens. Road alignment follows US 12 into Benton Harbor.

**1950.** Muskegon County. Muskegon Bypass. From Grand Haven Road, East on Hile Road, North on Harvey, West on Marquette to US 31

**November 30, 1950.** Ottawa County. Port Sheldon Township. From Chicago Drive (M-21) in Holland, Northwest to West Olive (9.6 mil )

**August 3, 1955.** Oceana County. Pentwater Bypass. Oceana Drive between Monroe and Washington Streets.

**June 17, 1957.** Ottawa County. Grand Haven Township. Present day alignment of Beacon Boulevard to Jackson Street in Grand Haven.

**November 25, 1957.** Oceana County. Hart Bypass. From Russell Road, North along the east city limits.

**July 24, 1959.** Muskegon County. Norton Shores. From Sternberg Rd to the new alignment at Airport Road

**October 24, 1959.** Muskegon County. Muskegon. Seaway Drive Realignment (Norton-Glade Expressway). Splits in two in downtown Muskegon-Northbound Muskegon Ave and Southbound on Webster



**June 12, 1959.** Bascule Bridge over the Grand River between Grand Haven and Ferrysburg.

## **Timeline of Changes and Realignments to U.S. 31**

The West Michigan Pike became a state trunk line (M-11) in 1917 and part of the United States Numbered Highway System in 1927. Over time the Michigan Highway Department worked to make the road safer by reducing excessive turns and sharp curves and bypassed downtowns in order to provide a more direct route north. Below is a list of the major changes and realignments that occurred between 1922 and 1959.

**November 11, 1924.** Grand Haven Swing Bridge was opened.

**Between 1922 and 1930.** Muskegon County. Fruitland Township. Realigned to Whitehall Road, Northwest on Bell, West on Lakewood to Durham

**August 20, 1927.** Muskegon County. Muskegon Heights. Realignment of US 31 from Merriam to Lincoln Avenue to Peck St

**September 10, 1930.** Muskegon County. Fruitland Township – Realignment to Whitehall Road Road.

**1930** – Berrien County. Benton Township. Realigned to a new shoreline route from Benton Harbor to South Haven. North from Benton Harbor the new route follows Paw Paw Road to the current Blue Star Highway alignment.

**June 30, 1930.** Muskegon County. Muskegon Bypass. West on Sherman, North on Getty, West on Marquette, Northeast on Ottawa

**July 22, 1930.** Mason County. Ludington Bypass. Follows Pere Marquette Highway North from 6<sup>th</sup> Street to Ludington Ave called 31A

**July 12, 1933.** Oceana County. Shelby Township. Realignment to Oceana Drive from Hayes to Water Road (between Shelby & New Era)

**October 10, 1934.** Allegan County. Ganges Township. From 114<sup>th</sup> Street in Glenn to the current route of Blue Star Highway.

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**August 30, 1937.** Mason County. Pere Marquette Township. Realigned to the route of Pere Marquette Highway from Hessler Rd

**August 30, 1937.** Allegan County. Lake Town Township. From 64<sup>th</sup> Street North of Saugatuck, Northeast via Blue Star Highway, North on 58<sup>th</sup> Street, North on Michigan Street, to corner of River & State in Holland.

**1940.** Oceana County. Hart Township. Realignment. From Water Street, North on present day Oceana Drive, West on Russell/Polk Rd in Hart

**1942.** Van Buren County. South Haven Township. Realignment from M-140 via the present route of Blue Star Highway to North Shore Drive.

**October 27, 1949.** Berrien County. Saint Joseph. Blossomland Bascule Bridge opens. Road alignment follows U.S. 12 into Benton Harbor.

**1950.** Muskegon County. Muskegon Bypass. From Grand Haven Road, East on Hile Road, North on Harvey, West on Marquette to U.S. 31

**November 30, 1950.** Ottawa County. Port Sheldon Township. From Chicago Drive (M-21) in Holland, Northwest to West Olive (9.6 mil )

**August 3, 1955.** Oceana County. Pentwater Bypass. Oceana Drive between Monroe and Washington Streets.

**June 17, 1957.** Ottawa County. Grand Haven Township. Present day alignment of Beacon Boulevard to Jackson Street in Grand Haven.

**November 25, 1957.** Oceana County. Hart Bypass. From Russell Road, North along the east city limits.

**July 24, 1959.** Muskegon County. Norton Shores. From Sternberg Road to the new alignment at Airport Road

**October 24, 1959.** Muskegon County. Muskegon. Seaway Drive Realignment (Norton-Glade Expressway). Splits in two in downtown Muskegon-Northbound Muskegon Ave and Southbound on Webster

**June 12, 1959.** Bascule Bridge over the Grand River between Grand Haven and Ferrysburg.

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## The Scenic Highway System

In a radio address on WKAR in 1928, J. W. Hannen spoke about a new trend in Michigan's highway development. Hannen noted that after the establishment of the State Highway Department in 1905, road development was focused on linking "county seats, important commercial and industrial centers and more remote areas via a state trunk line system." The passage of the State Trunk Line Act in 1913 facilitated this goal. According to Hannen "It has only been within a comparatively few years that the scenic element of our highways and the localities they penetrate have come to pronounced attention . . . In the development of its roads the State Highway Department and the state authorities have a keen regard for conserving in every possible way the natural beauties which cannot be duplicated." Hannen noted that "the West Michigan Pike . . . was one of the first in Michigan to be designated a real scenic highway."

That same year, the State Goods Road Association voted to continue as an organization and to make the construction of scenic roads one of their focuses. The association stated they would "assist the State Highway Department in a systematic plan of beautifying our state highways which have become one of the state's greatest public assets." In 1922 the State Highway Department hired its first landscape architect.

The idea of constructing a scenic highway along Lake Michigan was introduced in 1923 with an editorial in the *Grand Haven Tribune*. The editorial suggested that an improved road should be built that would run along the Lake Michigan shore between Holland and Grand Haven. The road should follow the existing Lakeshore Road that had not been incorporated into the West Michigan Pike when that route was laid out in 1911. Locals had always "deplored the fact that the West Michigan Pike was not built along the old Lakeshore Road," which they thought was "much more interesting and picturesque." However, in October of that year William Connelly of the Ottawa Road Commission indicated that the county's first priority was to build a paved road between Grand Rapids and Grand Haven to improve access to the Port Sheldon Beach Association. Connelly encouraged the community to keep the idea of a scenic Lakeshore Road as "a vision for the future."

In 1925 Muskegon County, using its authority under the Covert Act of 1915, prepared to build an improved highway from North Muskegon to White Lake in order to create an access to Lake Michigan for automobile tourists. The road was to follow an existing sand road that cut through the newly established Muskegon State Park. The proposed road, known as the Scenic Highway, would cost four hundred thousand dollars and would run along the south side of White Lake, pass the Michilinda Resort, and end at Sylvan Beach Road. It was to be the first concrete "purely scenic highway along the Lake Michigan coast" and "the first highway to wind through west Michigan's sand dunes" providing vistas of Lake Michigan and its beaches.

As the Muskegon Scenic Highway neared completion, *Michigan Roads and Pavements* reported that Ottawa County officials were receiving pressure from resort developers and lake front property owners clamoring for the construction of more roads that would provide access to Lake Michigan's dune land from the state trunk line (the West Michigan Pike). In Ottawa County, a syndicate from Grand Rapids wanted a road built to connect a resort at Port Sheldon to U.S. 31. A proposed resort development to the north of the Goetz Farm, known as the Tennessee Beach project, asked for a three-mile road to connect their resort to Port Sheldon Road. (This road was built but was designated a utility road, not a scenic road since it went through level ground). The Ottawa County Road Commission had already approved plans to construct a road from U.S. 31 to Grand Haven beach north of Ferrysburg as well as a Scenic Highway that would connect Grand Haven to Muskegon Heights. This road was to begin on the north side of Spring Lake channel near Lake Michigan and head "due north to the county line" then "north and west between Black Lake and Lake Michigan" to the intersection of Lake Harbor and Henry Street. The scenic road would run the full length of the property of the Pontaluna Country Club. Covert Act funds were to be used to construct it.

In March of 1928 Muskegon County officials announced their support of a regional effort to create a “forty mile bi-county Scenic Highway . . . which would run along the shores of Lake Michigan about six miles south of Grand Haven to the Oceana County line on M-99 north of Montague.” The proposed highway would “create in Muskegon and Ottawa Counties a scenic drive comparable to those at Palm Beach, drives along the ocean in Florida and drives along the Gulf of Mexico at Gulfport and Biloxi.” This proposed scenic highway would take five years to construct. It would begin at

the terminus of the new bridge street road leading from Grand Rapids to Lake Michigan crossing U. S. 31 at Agnew. From here, six miles north to the Grand River outlet at Grand Haven. Ferry service would link from Ferrysburg to the north side of the river on Lake Michigan. It would follow the proposed scenic road that was being built by Ottawa County between Grand Haven and Muskegon Heights following Lake Harbor Road north from Pontaluna Road. In Muskegon it would follow the south side of Lake Harbor Channel through Bronson Park to Pere Marquette Park and the Sunset Circles. A connecting link would be constructed from the north side of Muskegon channel to the Scenic Highway that was about to be opened in Muskegon State Park that takes auto tourists to the Michilinda resort and a ferry that would cross White Lake.

At the same time, Berrien County announced that U.S. 12/M-11 was being rerouted between Saint Joseph and Sawyer to a “scenic section close to the lake and bordering the dunes.” It was expected that the rerouted road would “result in rapid development of a summer resort section heretofore a wilderness of sand dunes, broken here and there by fruit farms.” Though the new route missed the community of Bridgman by half a mile, a road had already been constructed there from the West Michigan Pike to Lake Michigan and “hundreds of acres of duneland were being subdivided by local and Chicago developers.”

In May 1928 Ottawa County announced it was pushing construction dates on its scenic drive plan forward due to a “labor supply resulting from a dull manufacturing season”—an ominous sign of the impending stock market crash and the Great Depression. One of these accelerated projects was the construction of a scenic paved road between the West Michigan Pike and the Goetz Farm Zoo. Originally known as Alpena Beach Road, upon its completion the road was renamed Lakewood Boulevard in honor of George Goetz and his Lakewood Farm and Zoo. The other project was simply referred to as the Grand Haven Beach project and consisted of the construction of a scenic road north of the city of Grand Haven that would run from U.S. 31 through Ferrysburg to Lake Michigan then follow the shoreline north to the coast guard station on the north pier (North Shore Drive) in Muskegon.

A new scenic trail in Muskegon County northeast of Whitehall announced in July 1928 was the result of a partnership between the White Lake Exchange Club and the manager of a resort called the Rochdale Inn. Known as the Indian Head Trail it followed the White River valley for about twelve miles and highlighted sites such as Big Blue Lake, a fire tower, Pike’s Peak vista point, and the oxbow river bend between Muskegon and Oceana counties. Guide signs were to be Indian heads punched from old sheet metal and painted in bright colors

Road construction was one of the centerpieces of the Federal relief programs of the 1930s. When Murray D. Van Wagoner was named State Highway Commissioner in July 1933, the state embarked on an ambitious program to develop scenic highways that would “aid tourist business which has become one of the state’s big industries.”

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## Scenic Drive

In order to attract tourists to the area, Muskegon County prepared to build an improved highway from North Muskegon to White Lake in 1925 using its authority under the Covert Act of 1915. The road was to follow an existing sand road that cut through the newly established Muskegon State Park. It would run along the south side of White Lake, past the Michilinda Resort, and end at Sylvan Beach Road. The proposed road, to be known as the Scenic Highway, was to cost four hundred thousand dollars and was to be the first paved “purely scenic highway along the Lake Michigan coast.” The Muskegon County Board of Supervisors approved a bond issue to fund the road’s construction in January 1926. In June of that year it was announced that the Charlevoix Abstract & Construction Company had been awarded the contract to build the concrete road. The road was to be a “10.63 mile length of 20-foot surface” and was “part of the general boulevard plan developed for Muskegon county” and as such, “will not be subjected to heavy traffic as other highways.”

The concrete road was “the first highway to wind through west Michigan’s sand dunes” providing vistas of Lake Michigan and its beaches. Completed in 1927 the Scenic Highway, with its gentle curves and landscaping that blended into the natural environment, was considered a shining example of Michigan’s road beautification policy—over 140,000 evergreens were planted in the two hundred-foot right of way. Michigan State Highway Department director Murray Van Waggoner envisioned a scenic highway along Lake Michigan’s shore that would extend from the Indiana state line north to the resort districts of Harbor Springs. It was announced in March 1928 that a ferry was being constructed to connect Muskegon County’s Scenic Drive with U.S. 31. The ferry, a twenty-two by forty-foot scow that could hold a maximum of seven automobiles, was privately owned and operated by Robert Deyman and Thomas Breen. It was propelled on two submerged cables by a forty-horsepower gasoline motor. The ferry carried automobiles from Sylvan Beach across White Lake to an access point on the Old Channel Trail, which auto tourists could take to U.S. 31 and Old M-99.

In May 1929 the plans for expansion of the Scenic Highway were revealed and an improved road was planned from “the Bronson Farm through the dunes to the Muskegon Channel.” This one and a quarter mile stretch of the Scenic Highway was built under a new law that enabled the use of state funds to build roads in or to state parks. In July 1929 Muskegon’s Scenic Highway had to be closed due to lake erosion. It was determined that a sea wall would have to be built to shore up the road.

The *Muskegon Chronicle* reported in an October 24, 1934, article that the Whitehall Chamber of Commerce had voted to partner with the North Muskegon Board of Trade on a beautification program for the Scenic Highway from the War Memorial Causeway to the Whitehall. Colonel Brownriggs who was in charge of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp for Muskegon State Park offered the services of the CCC landscape engineers to “design improvements for the entire highway. The article went on to state that the Montague Progressive Club would be invited to participate in the endeavor.

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## Other Memorial Highways and Named Trails

Memorial highways and named trails were used as a public relation tools to encourage local citizens to support the construction of good roads prior to the establishment of the state trunk line system. Subscriptions were sold to fund road construction and local “boosters” would extol the benefits of a good road to the local community. According to LeRoy Barnett in *A Drive Down Memory Lane: The Named State and Federal Highways of Michigan*, “The era of naming rather than numbering motorways was quite limited, as by 1926 the state and federal governments had both established digital systems” for highways. While the Red Arrow, Blue Star, and Dixie Highways have special significance because they formed part of the roadway that was once the West Michigan Pike, other memorial highways and named trails existed in the project area including:

### **Detroit–Chicago Paved Way (Territorial Road)**

This road ran from Detroit, through Ypsilanti, Ann Arbor, Jackson, Albion, Battle Creek, Kalamazoo, Paw Paw, Watervliet, Saint Joseph, Benton Harbor and south to the Indiana state line.

### **Victory Highway**

The Victory Highway Association was founded in 1919 to promote a 342-mile improved mail truck route between Benton Harbor/Saint Joseph and Port Huron. Fred Allen of Flint served as president and P. Cady of Benton Harbor served as vice president. This memorial highway was to commemorate armed service personnel that died in World War I. The Daughters of the American Revolution proposed placing boulders with bronze plaques at intervals along the highway. Plans also included the planting of over one hundred walnut trees along the roadside. The trees were grown from seeds obtained from George Washington’s home, Mount Vernon, in Virginia. The road was later included in the state trunk line system.

### **Wolverine Paved Way**

Also known as the Grand River Road, the Wolverine Paved Way came about when a group of citizens formed the Wolverine Paved Way Association in September 1915. The highway, which ran from Detroit through Lansing and Grand Rapids, terminated at the “sunset oval” in Grand Haven State Park, which was completed in 1920.

### **The Chicago Road, Pulaski Highway (U.S. 12)**

New Buffalo, in the southern most portion of the project area, contains a portion of one of the oldest transportation routes in Michigan. Originally the Sauk Trail, a significant piece of a Native American trail system that crossed the state, for centuries it has served as the central transportation route across the southern portion of the state. Michigan’s earliest explorers, missionaries, and fur traders also used the trail. As the Michigan territory opened up to settlers, it became apparent that the trail would need to be improved to allow for the passage of wagons. In 1824, through the urging of U.S. Representative Father Gabriel Richard, the United States Congress appropriated three thousand dollars for a survey of the trail from Detroit to Chicago and concluded that it should be developed as a wagon road. Construction began in 1829 and was completed in 1835. The trail became known as the Chicago Road and was a main transportation route in the settlement of Lower Michigan, bringing thousands of settlers from New York and New England to Michigan. In 1916 the road was assigned the number M-23 by the newly established Michigan Highway Department. It became U.S. 112 in 1927 and U.S. 12 in 1962. In Berrien County it is sometimes known as the Pulaski Highway. It was designated Michigan’s first Heritage Route in 2004.



U.S. 12 was designated as part of the Kasimir Pulaski Memorial Highway, named in honor of the Polish military commander and American Revolutionary War hero, through Public Act 11 of 1953.

## **Willow Drive (U.S. 16, Spring Lake)**

In April 1929 plans were undertaken to preserve Willow Drive along M-16 from the village of Spring Lake to U.S. 31. Spring Lake settler Thomas Savidge had planted willows and poplars along the drive. As the willows aged, the poplars were cut down. By 1919 the willows were reaching the end of their life cycle. A plan was developed to replace the willows with elms. Elms would be planted in between the willows and once the elms were established, the old willows would be cut down.

## **The Dunes Highway (U.S. 12)**

The Dunes Highway was proposed by the Indiana State Highway Department as a twenty-five-mile section of improved highway from the Michigan state line to Chicago through the scenic Indiana Dunes. In 1920 it was decided that Michigan trunk lines ending in Berrien County, such as the Victory Highway, the West Michigan Pike, and the Detroit-Chicago Paved Way (Territorial Road), would converge and access the Dunes Highway making it the main gateway into both West Michigan and the city of Chicago. In 1922 the Michigan and Indiana Highway Departments signed an agreement stating that the state of Indiana would build a highway, using federal aid money, from the Michigan state line to Gary, skirting the Indiana Dunes. Michigan agreed to build a federal aid road from New Buffalo to the Indiana state line that would connect the Dunes Highway with the West Michigan Pike. In 1927 the Michigan Highway Department Biennial reports noted an enormous amount of traffic on U.S. 12 requiring them to make this a concrete road. At that time, the road was relocated to take advantage of the beautiful views afforded on this trip through the dune country and greet tourists "with those vistas which he traveled so far to see."

## **The Michigan Avenue Highway Association**

The Michigan Avenue Highway Association was formed in 1929 and included state representatives Ray Davis from Berrien County and Merle Young from Van Buren County. Eighty-seven representatives attended the association's first meeting and only three were from rural areas, which supported the idea that state trunk lines were more important to cities than to rural communities. (The Michigan Avenue Highway Association opposed the Dykstra Bill, which proposed to divide the auto weight tax revenue by dividing it in half giving half to the state and half to counties and townships. ) The organization said that U.S. 12 had been the direct route to Chicago from Detroit for over one hundred years. They wanted to bring back the through traffic they had lost and wanted the road widened. In 1930 the state highway commissioner announced that the highway department's plans to complete the connection south of Saint Joseph to the Indiana Line. They also promoted the construction of a superhighway between Detroit and Chicago. The plan was to develop a new highway that touched on no cities but instead a belt line within two miles of the city center would be created. This would enable cars to travel quickly and safely. U.S. 12 between Kalamazoo and Detroit was seen to be a hazard.

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## Roadside Parks

Michigan, along with Oregon and New Hampshire, pioneered the establishment of roadside parks in the 1920s to provide a rest area for automobile travelers. It is unclear when the first roadside park was established in Michigan. A state historical marker indicates that Michigan's first roadside park was established in Iron County in 1918. The Michigan State Highway Department adopted the idea and worked to enhance the "conveniences of those who travel by motor car" by building and installing amenities such as picnic tables and stoves and supplying drinking water and toilets along the state's most popular tourist routes. A log shelter, such as the one pictured here, was



a standard design feature of Michigan's roadside parks. The goal of the program was to have a roadside park within a one-hour drive from any point on a state trunk line road. The federal relief programs of the Great Depression, particularly the Works Progress Administration (WPA), enabled the expansion of Michigan's popular roadside parks program. At the request of the public, in 1937 the Department of Transportation was able to almost double the number of picnic tables along Michigan's highways from nine hundred to fifteen hundred tables. The Michigan State Highway Department took great care to landscape these roadside parks in an inviting manner so they would appeal to travelers. The log well shelter was a common feature of these parks. According to a 1945 map of the Blue Star Highway, there were once roadside parks in Benton Harbor, Muskegon, White Hall, and Ludington. By 1953 Michigan had a total of seventy-five roadside parks, each about two acres. The state also maintained over two thousand six hundred small picnic areas.

In the project area, roadside parks were found in Hagar Township, Berrien County, and in Saugatuck in Allegan County.

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## Neon Signs

Though the concepts behind the development of a glowing tube light were first recognized in France in 1625, it wasn't until Edison's invention of the electric light bulb in 1879 and the discovery of neon in 1898 that the materials and technology were both in place for the invention of the electric neon light. A French engineer, Georges Claude, is credited with creating the first neon lamp by sending an electric charge through a glass tube filled with neon gas. Claude first displayed his neon lamp in Paris in 1910 and established a company, Claude Neon, to market his lamps and signs. Neon signs were introduced in America in 1923 when a Los Angeles Packard dealer purchased two advertising signs from the Claude Neon Company. The bright, colorful signs quickly caught on and were a good match for the nation's newly developing highway systems.

Neon signs were placed along the West Michigan Pike in the mid-1920s to mark the entry roads to communities on the route. One such sign can still be seen at Saugatuck. It is not known when Saugatuck's neon entry sign was installed, but it is likely that it was placed sometime between 1925 and 1930. Information found in *Michigan Roads and Pavements* indicated that the signs were popular with communities along state trunk line M-11.



The May 27, 1926, edition of *Michigan Roads and Pavements* reported that two signs that had already been erected at Muskegon, on M-11 at Mona Lake and at Marquand's Island in North Muskegon, would be repainted, indicating that they had been in service prior to 1926. The article also stated that 150 three-foot by four-inch signs in the shape of a pointing hand with the name "MUSKEGON" printed on them would be placed along the major roads in the area. It was noted that the "Detroit-Chicago people will visit the city that has taken the most pains to put up advertising."

Two neon signs were placed on U.S. 31 in July 1929 to mark the entrance to the city of Holland from the north and the west. The name "HOLLAND" appeared in large white letters on the side marking the approach. The other side listed points of interest. "The signs are well lighted and have the windmill transparency and are suspended on cables and can be seen from quite a distance." In March 1930 the village of Whitehall requested that an electric neon sign be placed across U.S. 31 at the village limits east of town similar to the signs that had been erected at Holland.

As automobile traffic increased due to the construction of improved hard surface roads, neon outdoor advertising signs lit up the dark landscape and called attention to nearby towns and villages. Neon retained its popularity throughout the 1930s and 1940s and reached a peak in popularity during the 1950s as the concept of the "drive-in" dominated American culture.

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## Neon Signs - Muskegon





New Buffalo



Benton Harbor



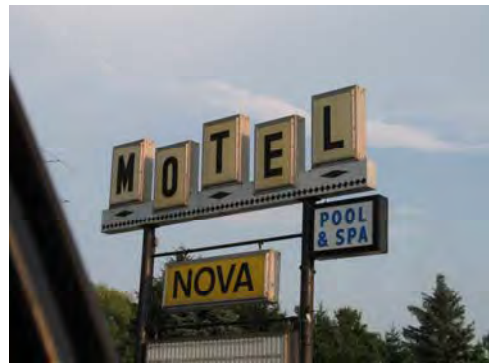
Saugatuck



Holland



Montague



Ludington

## Railroads and Interurbans

### Railroads

Due to a recurring cycle of boom and recession in the Michigan Territory, railroad construction started later in Michigan than in adjacent states. In 1832 the Michigan Territorial Council granted approval to the Erie & Kalamazoo Railroad for the construction of a rail line but work on the line was slow. After Michigan became a state in 1837, the new state legislature passed the Public Improvement Act which created a state railroad program to address Michigan's growing transportation needs—but that effort was not successful. By 1850 Michigan had only four hundred and seventy-five miles of completed track while Indiana had more than 1,800 miles and Ohio and Illinois both had over two thousand miles of track in place. In 1856 the U.S. government began awarding public land to railroad companies in an effort to speed the construction of railroads across the continent. Michigan received 3,809,826 million acres from the federal government and supplemented it with 1,695,510 acres of state land. Legislation specified that certain commerce and shipping points had to be connected by the railroads. One of these was an east-west line that ran from Flint to Ludington and Grand Haven. The rapid rise in Michigan's population, which increased by over five hundred thousand between 1840 and 1860 with the passing of a land grant act in 1856, and increased subsidies to railroad companies resulted in a railroad building boom in the state that lasted from 1860 to 1890.

According to Michigan historian Willis Dunbar in his book *All Aboard! A History of Railroads in Michigan*, cities and railroad companies competed with each other to build a railroad station that would become "the status symbol of the city." It was common for a city that was served by more than one rail line to have more than one station or depot. In addition, a city could have both a passenger and a freight station for the same railroad company. While railroad depots in larger cities were often elaborate architect designed buildings of brick or stone, stations in rural towns were typically small frame structures built according to a standard plan developed by the railroad company. A rural depot would typically have a central waiting area, an adjacent ticket office with a bay window to enable the rail agent to see up and down the track, and an attached storage space for freight.

The coming of the railroad had a tremendous positive impact for cities along the rail line, increasing prosperity and creating regional commerce centers where outlying communities would come to ship their produce and wares.

### The Michigan Central Railroad

A rail line connecting Detroit to Saint Joseph was first proposed in 1832. Actual construction by a private rail company began in 1836 but it was short lived due a downturn in the economy. With funding secured by the Public Improvements Act in 1837, the state backed the building of the Detroit to Saint Joseph rail line, which became known as the Michigan Central. By 1843 Michigan Central tracks had been completed as far as Jackson. Passengers traveling from Detroit to Chicago would disembark at Jackson and take a stagecoach to Saint Joseph, a trip of 120 miles that took twenty-six hours. At Saint Joseph they boarded a steamer to complete the trip to Chicago via Lake Michigan. The original proposed route to Saint Joseph, which would have followed the stagecoach line, was later abandoned because the line would have gone through undeveloped forest land on the other side of Kalamazoo. Instead the railroad chose a more southern route to New Buffalo, which enabled them to meet the transportation needs of farmers in the established agricultural area along Michigan's southern border and provide direct service to the lucrative Chicago market. The Michigan Central Railroad began making improvements to the New Buffalo harbor and moved their steamer service from Saint Joseph to New Buffalo in 1847. Passengers and freight completed the trip to Chicago by steamer from New Buffalo until the rail line to Chicago was completed 1852.

## Chicago & West Michigan Railroad

One of the most important rail lines in the project area began in 1869 as the Chicago & Michigan Lake Shore Railroad when twenty-seven miles of track was completed between New Buffalo and St. Joseph. The line was extended in 1871 with stations at Grand Junction, Pullman, Bravo, Pearle, Fennville, New Richmond, East Saugatuck and Holland. It was later extended on to Muskegon, Montague, and Pentwater and eventually completed to Petoskey. The Panic of 1873 caused the company to declare bankruptcy and reorganize as the Chicago & West Michigan Railroad (C&WM) after which it began to acquire feeder lines to the north. In 1882 citizens from the village of Hart donated land and raised money for the construction of a spur line and depot. By 1894 the rail line had been completed all the way to Petoskey and Bay View. To reach Chicago, passengers riding the C&WM would change to the Michigan Central Railroad at New Buffalo. The C&WM Railroad was an early promoter of Michigan's lakeshore resorts and operated the Ottawa Beach Hotel in Holland. By 1917 the railroad had become part of the Pere Marquette Railway Company.

## Pere Marquette Railroad

In 1904 the Pere Marquette Railroad became one of Michigan's largest railroads with the merger of three railways:

- One of the first land grant railroads in Michigan, the Flint & Pere Marquette was established in 1856, though construction on the line did not actually begin until 1862. The rail line was to run from Flint to Ludington via Midland, Clare, and Reed City. The railroad reached Ludington in 1874. The Flint & Pere Marquette was built to accommodate the lumber industry and provide access to Michigan's timberlands in the northern Lower Peninsula.
- The Chicago & West Michigan Railroad (see above), and the
- Detroit, Grand Rapids & Western, begun as the Detroit and Howell Railway in 1864 and was completed to Howard City in 1871.

Though the Pere Marquette began by catering to the lumber industry, it quickly became the major railroad providing passenger service to the newly developing resort industry along the eastern Lake Michigan coast. The Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad gained control of the Pere Marquette in 1926 and the merger was complete in 1946.

The Pere Marquette offered passenger service from Toledo, Detroit and Chicago with car ferry service to Milwaukee, Manitowoc, and Kewaunee Wisconsin via the car ferry at Ludington. In June 1904 the Pere Marquette introduced the first *Resort Special*, a train that ran from Chicago to Bay View accessing the resort communities along Lake Michigan. Later, a resort train also ran out of Detroit to Grand Rapids and then west to connect with the north-south line. The *Resort Special* ran from late June to early September and at its peak in the 1930s offered four trains a day. Service on the *Resort Special* was suspended during World War II but was revived in 1946. The Detroit section never regained popularity and closed in 1948 but the Chicago train continued to operate until 1957. The train left Chicago in the evening around 7:45 pm and vacationers could sleep on the train in air conditioned comfort and arrive at their vacation destination early the next morning.

## Grand Trunk Railroad

The Detroit & Milwaukee Rail Road was a land grant railroad under an 1856 federal act. The act stipulated that a rail line was to be built from Port Huron to Grand Haven. Two companies received contracts to build the railroad: The Detroit & Milwaukee was responsible for construction



from Grand Haven to Owosso and the Port Huron & Milwaukee received the contract to build the rail line from Owosso to Port Huron. The two rail lines later consolidated under the name of the Grand Trunk Railroad.

With monetary assistance from the Canadian Great Western Railroad, the Grand Trunk rail line from Detroit to Grand Haven was completed in November 1858. According to Willis Dunbar, the railroad built a large depot/hotel on the west side of the Grand River. A ferry was needed to carry passengers across the river into the downtown. In 1868 Grand Haven's citizens petitioned the railroad to move its terminal to the east side of the river and offered funding to redo the tracks. The railroad agreed and a new depot was constructed in 1870 on Washington Street. Docks were built nearby to accommodate a car ferry across Lake Michigan operated by another vendor. In 1903 the Grand Trunk Railroad established its own ferry line between Grand Haven and Milwaukee. The Grand Trunk ferry was moved to Muskegon in 1933. Architects Spier and Rohns typically designed the Grand Trunk depots.

## Car Ferries

The first car ferry associated with a railroad was put into operation at Frankfort, Michigan when the Ann Arbor Railroad had two wooden ferries constructed in 1892. In 1895 naval architect Robert Logan was contracted by the Flint and Pere Marquette Railroad to develop the first steel car ferry to travel on Lake Michigan. Named the *Pere Marquette*, ferry traveled between Ludington and Manitowoc, Wisconsin. Its first voyage was in 1897. By 1900 the Pere Marquette Railroad operated a rail line that ran from Toledo to Ludington with ferry service across Lake Michigan to Wisconsin. The SS *Badger*, which still operates out of Ludington, began service in 1953.

Ferry service between Grand Haven and Milwaukee had already been in operation for at least fifty years before a federal railroad land grant act passed in 1858 mandated the establishment of ferry service as the continuation of the Detroit & Milwaukee Railroad line. In 1869 the railroad contracted with the Engelmann Transportation Company to operate the ferry service. The Northwestern Transportation Company took over operation of the ferry in 1875 and in 1881 the Goodrich Transportation Company began operating the service. In 1883 the railroad decided to operate the ferry service itself and purchased three steamers from the Goodrich Company. In 1903 the Grand Trunk Railroad launched its first car ferry between Grand Haven and Milwaukee. Early on, the Grand Trunk car ferries included passenger space and carried automobiles as well as freight. In 1936 after consolidations and legal battles, the Grand Trunk Railroad moved its terminus from Grand Haven to Muskegon.

## Interurban Electric Railways

Electric railways came into popularity in urban areas at the end of the nineteenth century. By 1916 there were 981 miles of interurban rail lines in Michigan. In larger communities, the interurbans were responsible for some of the nation's earliest subdivision development enabling middle class workers to purchase a large lot of their own outside the grime and dirt of the city. Wherever an interurban stop was located, a residential subdivision would soon develop around it. The electric railways became such a popular method of transportation within the inner cities that electric rail companies soon extended service to neighboring rural towns. Short haul electric railways were also used to connect a town to a popular recreation area. Interurban companies often built their own parks on the outskirts of towns in order to increase ridership. According to Willis Dunbar in West Michigan interurbans were an important connection to the lake steamer lines at Saint Joseph, Grand Haven and Muskegon. They took passengers from Chicago to and from West Michigan's resort areas. Numerous electric railways operated throughout the project area. Some of the known interurban lines included the following:

- The Saugatuck, Douglas, and Lakeshore Railway began service between Holland and Saugatuck in 1890 and was the first electric interurban built in Allegan County. The north

terminal was at Macatawa Beach in front of the hotel where the Grand Rapids, Holland and Chicago Electric Railway also ended. The southbound line made a stop at Castle Park, then turned in an easterly direction and eventually ran parallel with the road in front of the Red Barn Theater, turning west again just south of Clearbrook Country Club and coming into Saugatuck on North Street (134<sup>th</sup> Avenue). It then followed the Holland line to the end of Water Street. The railway merged with the Chicago & Holland interurban in 1913 and stopped service in 1920.

- The Grand Rapids, Grand Haven and Muskegon Railway Company, sometimes called the Lake Line, ran forty-five miles from Grand Rapids to Muskegon via Spring Lake and Fruitport. At Fruitport a branch line ran to Grand Haven. This line connected Grand Rapids residents to Lake Michigan beaches and resorts. The line operated until 1928.
- The Grand Rapids, Holland, and Lake Michigan Rapid Railway was completed to Holland in 1902 accessing resorts at Macatawa Park and Saugatuck. The line operated until about 1925.
- The Northern Indiana Railway built a connector line to Saint Joseph in 1906. Berrien County benefited from interurban lines that connected it to South Bend, Indiana, and other cities east of Chicago. In addition to people, the Berrien County interurbans would also carry fruit. Lines were built to connect Eau Claire and Watervliet and enabled fruit to be transported to the market at Benton Harbor and Chicago markets. The Benton Harbor-Saint Joseph Street Railway ended in 1918. A line operated by the Northern Indiana Railway company was in business until 1934.
- The Epworth League Railway in Mason County was built to the Epworth Heights Resort in 1895 to provide access to the Methodist resort colony that was being constructed north of Ludington. Known locally as the “Dummy Train,” it pulled two or three open-air cars to Epworth Station. Justin Stearns of Ludington bought the railway in 1902 and extended rail service to the resorts on Hamlin Lake. Stearns renamed the train the Ludington and Northern Railway and operated it until 1919.

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## Steamships

Steamships began operating on Lake Michigan in the 1850s. They began as cargo vessel but soon began offering passenger service. There were two major steamship companies that operated on Lake Michigan the Graham and Morton Transportation Company which provided service to the southern most portion of the lake and the Goodrich Transit Company which operated in the Grand Haven-Ludington area.

### Graham and Morton Transportation Company

The Graham and Morton Transportation Company (G & M) was founded in Saint Joseph, Michigan, in 1875 by John Graham with financial backing from J. Stanley Morton and Andrew Crawford. The company was established to take advantage of the enormous fruit cargo generated by the peach boom in Berrien County. The G & M dock in Chicago was located at the Rush Street Bridge and Dearborn Street very near to Chicago's produce and fruit markets on South Water and Clark Streets. In Michigan, G & M built docks in Benton Harbor and Saugatuck and provided steamship service to southern Lake Michigan for forty-nine years. They became the largest fruit carries on the Great Lakes. Typically fruit was transported across Lake Michigan in the cool of the evening, arriving in Chicago in the early morning when buyers began making their rounds at the city's produce market. Passengers bound for Michigan's resorts were then boarded in the morning for the return trip back. According to James Elliot in his book *Red Stacks on the Horizon* "No one has ever attempted to calculate the millions of tons of fresh Michigan fruit carried to market by the G & M steamers, but it must be a staggering sum. The cheap transportation afforded by the water route certainly made it possible for a great industry to grow and thrive in southern Michigan's fruit belt. The travel by boat by hundreds of thousands of Chicagoans to the summer resorts of the Western Shore of the beautiful state of Michigan stamped that state as a delightful summer resort area." p. 257

The Graham & Morton Transportation Company was forced to sell its Chicago docks in 1924 when plans were implemented to redevelop the area for automobile traffic resulting in the construction of Wacker Drive. At that time the Chicago produce market was moved to Randolph Street. G & M never regained its footing after the sale as commercial trucking quickly usurped its business. The company declared bankruptcy in 1932.

### Goodrich Transit Company

Albert Goodrich established his steamship line around 1856. He purchased land on the south bank of the Chicago River and offered service to Milwaukee and later to Manitowic, Wisconsin. In 1863 he attempted to start service to Muskegon but the harbor was blocked by a sand bar and the idea was abandoned. Instead the company docked its ships at Grand Haven until the Muskegon harbor was dredged in 1865. The Goodrich Transit Company became the largest steamship operator on Lake Michigan. Between 1876 and 1883 they were under contract with the Pere Marquette railroad to ship bulk freight across Lake Michigan that the railroad brought to Grand Haven, Muskegon, and Ludington. Though Goodrich lost the railroad contract in 1883 when the Pere Marquette purchased its own steamers, the company continued to thrive as its passenger service increased. The World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago in 1883 attracted over 27 million visitors to the city in a six month period. To accommodate these visitors, Goodrich built a luxury passenger liner called the *Christopher Columbus* to carry passengers in style across Lake Michigan. Thousands of visitors from Chicago used the Goodrich steamers to visit mineral baths and luxury hotels in Spring Lake and Grand Haven. As West Michigan's resort industry grew so did the Goodrich's fortunes and by 1885 they were operating seven steamers. Passenger travel peaked on the Goodrich lines in 1912 when two hundred thousand people were transported between Chicago and Grand Haven and it remained high until the onset of World War I. The Goodrich family sold the line in 1920. Though it continued to operate it went into decline due to the popularity of automobile travel and declared bankruptcy in 1932. The Goodrich

Line provided service to the upper portion of Lake Michigan for seventy-seven years and was the largest steam ship company operating on Lake Michigan. Its ships could be identified by their distinctive red-orange stacks with a wide black band.

## **Crawford Transit Company**

Established in 1909 by August Crawford of Saugatuck, the line was meant to bring resort passengers from Chicago directly to Saugatuck, which had been unsuccessful in its bid to become a stop of one of the larger steamship companies. With the completion of the Big Pavilion in Saugatuck, Crawford believed the number of people visiting Saugatuck's resorts would increase. Crawford also established steamer service between Saugatuck and the resorts at Holland, Michigan. The company filed for bankruptcy in 1924.

## **Georgian Bay Transit Company**

Known as the Georgian Bay Line, the service was established in 1912 by a former passenger agent for the Goodrich Transit Company, Robert C. Davis. The company ran a passenger excursion line between Chicago and Duluth. Between 1913 and 1923 the Georgian Bay Company's ships were wintered in Saugatuck but in 1924 there were moved to Holland where a dock and warehouse were built at the foot of Sixteenth Street. The company ran three ships the *North American*, the *South American* and the *Alabama*. The boats were used as floating hotels during Tulip Time. Line ended in 1967 after the U.S. Coast Guard ruled that no ships with wooden superstructures could serve as overnight passenger carriers.

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## Harbor Country, Berrien County

Harbor Country communities have not taken full advantage of local, state and federal historic preservation programs. The region’s historic resources are underrepresented in Michigan’s inventory of designated historic sites. Only one resource is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the Lakeside Inn in Lakeside, which was listed as part of this project. A handful are listed in the State Register of Historic Sites, as seen by the chart below. A Michigan Historical Marker on the West Michigan Pike will be placed in New Buffalo as part of this project.

National Register of Historic Places, State Register of Historic Sites, and Michigan Historical Marker Designations for Harbor Country Area, Berrien County					
Resource	Address	Community	National Register	State Register	Historical Marker
Carl Sandburg Home	Birchwood Court	Chikaming Twp		1972	
Lakeside Inn	1521 Lakeshore	Chikaming Twp	2009	2007	2007
Warren Dunes State Park	Red Arrow Highway	Lake Twp		1959	
Saint John German Evangelical Church	200 W Buffalo St	New Buffalo			1984
New Buffalo Welcome Center	Mile Marker 1, I-94 E	New Buffalo Twp		1985	1986
West Michigan Pike		New Buffalo			2009

### Recommendations

- **County Certified Local Government Designation** - Because of the rural nature of the area, Harbor Country communities may want to consider working with Berrien County to establish a countywide historic district ordinance and historic district commission. Berrien County could then apply to become a Certified Local Government (CLG), which would enable communities throughout the county to participate in the CLG grant program. Such a system has been implemented in Washtenaw County and has enabled smaller communities to take advantage of preservation programs and incentives they would otherwise have been unable to access.
- **Michiana** – Because the community’s population is less than five thousand, residents could qualify for state historic preservation tax credits to rehabilitate historic properties if historic resources are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The original log homes built in the 1920s and 1930s should be surveyed and nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. Michiana should consider adopting a local historic district ordinance and designating a local historic district to protect its log homes and rural character from teardowns and inappropriate new construction.
- **Grand Beach** – This resort community should be surveyed and evaluated for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The resort reportedly began with the construction of a few kit homes from Sears, Roebuck and Company. These should be documented. Listing the community in the National Register would qualify the Grand Beach Inn for federal historic preservation tax credits and residential property owners for state historic preservation tax credits for rehabilitation. A Michigan Historical Marker about the development of the community would be appropriate for Grand Beach. Other recommended actions included:
  - **Ernest Vosburgh House** - Designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, the Vosburgh House is individually eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, which would qualify the property owner for state preservation tax credits. As the most intact of the

remaining Frank Lloyd Wright homes in Grand Beach, the property should be protected by a preservation easement or a local historic district ordinance.

- **Grand Beach Golf Course** – The Grand Beach Golf Course should be researched and evaluated to determine if it retains enough historic integrity to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The golf course was reportedly designed by noted golf course architect Thomas Bendelow and landscaped by Jens Jensen. If it qualifies, the course could be marketed as a historic golf course along with other National Register-eligible golf courses located along the proposed heritage route.
- **Grand Beach Road** – Grand Beach Road is the original route of the West Michigan Pike. Though only a small section remains, it still retains the setting and feeling of a 1920s highway. Efforts should be made to retain and protect the significant features, such as the historic trees and the entry gate, that help give it its historic feeling. A historic overlay zone is a possibility.
- **New Buffalo** - The New Buffalo downtown commercial district should be designated as a National Register of Historic Places historic district to enable property owners to participate in the federal tax credit program for rehabilitations. Coupled with other incentives, developers in other communities have had tremendous success using historic building rehabilitations as a catalyst for further economic investment. New Buffalo should work to find a balance between the new development that is occurring and the retention of its remaining historic character.
- **New Buffalo Welcome Center** - This was the first such welcome center built in the United States and symbolized Michigan's commitment to developing automobile tourism to bolster the state economy when lumbering ended. The Welcome Center is highly significant to the history of the West Michigan Pike and should be protected by a preservation easement or local historic district designation. It should also be listed on the National Register of Historic Places. A Michigan Historical Marker about the history of the Welcome Center was placed at the new Welcome Center on I-94 but it would be more appropriately placed at the original building on U.S. 12 and should be relocated.
- **Camp Sokol** - A Bohemian summer camp founded in 1905, Camp Sokol should be listed in the National Register of Historic Places. A Michigan Historical Marker should be considered for the camp.
- **Union Pier** - A historic resource survey of Union Pier should be conducted. The community retains a large number of historic resorts and inns, which should be evaluated for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. There appears to be enough of a concentration of resort resources to warrant a historic district but if further research determines there is not, then individually qualified resources should be listed. Listing in the National Register would enable property owners to utilize federal preservation tax credits. It would also enable the community to use the National Register designation in its tourism promotions. Because of its close proximity to Chicago, Union Pier has the greatest potential to be threatened by inappropriate development. Every effort should be made to identify and protect the key historic features that contribute to Union Pier's unique sense of place before they are lost. Examples include entryways like the one at Paradise Villa, hedges that were historically used to define property lines, old growth trees, etc. Protective measures could include the adoption of a local historic district ordinance and designation of a local historic district, establishment of a historic conservation or overlay district, or the placement of preservation easements on qualifying properties.

- Union Pier has a strong heritage of ethnic diversity since a wide range of immigrant groups from Chicago, especially Eastern Europeans and Lithuanians chose to summer here. This ethnic diversity is unique to the Harbor Country area and could be much better used to define the community character of Union Pier and make it distinctive. One example, establish a Lithuanian homecoming type event that invites former resorters to the village. The event could highlight Lithuanian traditions, foods and crafts and include a chess tournament, since chess was once a popular pastime in the community.
- **Lakeside** - Lakeside has a unique history due to its association with the University of Chicago, the Art Institute of Chicago, and social pioneers like Jane Addams of Hull House. Much as Cornish, New Hampshire, became known as the summer resort area for New York City's artists and writers, Lakeside was the summer resort area chosen by Chicago's social activists and intellectuals. This history should be developed and promoted and used to create a stronger sense of identity for this community. A Michigan Historical Marker should be placed at Lakeside to promote this history.
    - Stanley Fairclough was a local architect that designed a number of English Tudor-inspired homes and buildings in the Lakeside community. He also supervised the reconstruction of the Shakespeare House for the Chikaming Country Club. A survey of Fairclough's work should be conducted and the resources should be listed in the National Register of Historic Places to call attention to his imprint on the community.
    - **Shakespeare House.** The Shakespeare House at the Chikaming Country Club was originally constructed for the International Livestock Exposition held in Chicago in 1924. It was purchased for use as a clubhouse, dismantled, and shipped to Lakeside. Local architect Stanley Fairclough supervised its reconstruction. The Shakespeare House should be listed in the National Register of Historic Places and a Michigan Historical Marker placed at the site. It should be protected with an easement or a local historic district designation.
    - **Wilkinson General Store.** A Michigan State Historical Marker should be placed at the Wilkinson General Store building. Wilkinson was one of the founders of Lakeside and the store building was moved from the beach to its present location on the Red Arrow Highway when auto-tourism replaced lumbering as the foundation of area's economy.
    - **Lakeside Inn.** Criteria should be developed and a special "Authentic Michigan" or "Pure Pike" emblem designed that can be applied to qualifying historic sites, such as the Lakeside Inn, along the West Michigan Pike. A qualifying historic resource should provide an above average, authentic experience and maintain its historic material integrity and physical setting and feeling.
  - **Harbert** – Harbert is home to two significant summer camps:
    - **Prairie Club** - The Prairie Club historically had ties to Chicago landscape architect Jens Jensen, and the club's history directly relates to the conservation of Lake Michigan's sand dunes and the creation of Michigan's state park system. The Prairie Club's Hazelhurst Camp in Harbert should be listed in the National Register of Historic Places. This site should be protected through a preservation easement or as a local historic district. At a minimum, design guidelines that protect and preserve its historic character should be adopted. A Michigan Historical Marker should be placed at the entry. Because of its conservation history, the Prairie Club could be included in the development of a larger "green" initiative in Southwest Michigan.
    - **Bethany Beach Camp** - Harbert is also home to the Bethany Beach Camp, a Swedish Lutheran summer camp. A historic resource survey should be conducted of



Bethany Beach to determine if it is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

- **Harbert Swedish Bakery.** The Harbert Swedish Bakery, which has been in operation since 1896, is a local landmark. Though the building has been altered, a Michigan State Historical Marker about the area's Swedish heritage should be placed at the bakery.

The historic themes that have the most significance to Harbor Country and could be used to promote cultural heritage tourism in the region are:

**Transportation - The West Michigan Pike** - The West Michigan Pike Association was a private organization that existed between 1911 and 1922 to promote the construction of the first continuous improved road built in West Michigan. The road ran from Chicago to Mackinaw City and served as the main artery for the new automobile tourism that was developing at the turn of the century. In Harbor Country, the West Michigan Pike route was:

from Indiana State Line north on Grand Beach Road, west on Wilson Road, east on Buffalo Road (US 12) to New Buffalo, west on Whittaker, north on Rivera continue north on Marquette Road to Union Pier, north on Lakeshore Road through Lakeside, north on Red Arrow Highway through Harbert, northeast on Old M-11 into Sawyer, east on Sawyer Road, north on California to Bridgman, east on Shawnee, north on Jericho, east on Linco, north on Jericho to Stevensville, east on Johnson Road, north on Holden Road, west on Glen Lord, north on Red Arrow Highway into Saint Joseph.

In 1917 the West Michigan Pike became part of the newly adopted state trunk line system and was renamed M-11; in 1926 it became part of the first federal numbered highway system and was renamed U.S. 31 (U.S. 12 in southern Berrien County). The first major realignment of the road began in 1929. Harbor Country was the entry point into Michigan for travelers along the West Michigan Pike; special attention was paid to the development and beautification of the highway. Historic landscaping plans should be reviewed and efforts should be made to retain historic features and perhaps recreate those that have been lost.

New Buffalo and Chikaming Townships have remnants of the original West Michigan Pike roadway that still retain their historic character and retain the setting and feeling of a 1920s highway. Standing on Grand Beach Road provides a good view of the two iterations of the roadways, which run parallel to each other. Other sections of the original road that exist in the area are Marquette/Riviera Road in New Buffalo and Lakeshore Road through Union Pier and Lakeside. A short piece of the original road north of Harbert is still called Old M-11. A historic gas station and tourist cabins existed on the site at the start of this project, but the cabins have since been demolished. The historic character of the road should be protected. A driving tour of the old road through Harbor Country highlighting key resources such as the State Highway Department's Tourist Lodge and the log tourist cabins at Judy's Motel should be created.

**Transportation - Red Arrow Highway.** Establishing the Red Arrow Highway as its own tourist destination amid the context of the larger heritage route will give the communities south of Saint Joseph the opportunity to create their own unique, regional brand.

- The Red Arrow Highway was dedicated in 1953 as a tribute to the 32<sup>nd</sup> Division, a group of Michigan and Wisconsin National Guardsman that served in France in World War I. They were also the first Division shipped overseas after the attack on Pearl Harbor. Because of its association with the Armed Services, expanded Memorial and Veteran's Day events could be held along the road. Increasing the number of decorations (flags, bunting, flowers) during these holidays could make the Red Arrow Highway a destination site at the beginning and end of the tourism season.

- In 1927 the Red Arrow Highway through Berrien County became the first major improvement and rerouting of the West Michigan Pike undertaken by the State Highway Department to provide a scenic entry into the state for automobile tourists. A highway beautification program based on the guidelines developed by the State Highway Department circa 1927 could be reinstated to ensure that the highway retains its historic character and remains aesthetically pleasing to tourists.

**Roadside Architecture – Vernacular Auto-Tourism Buildings.** U.S. 12 and the Red Arrow Highway in Harbor Country are lined with simple vernacular buildings that were constructed between 1911 and 1940 when automobile tourism was at its peak. Many are single story concrete block or brick structures that were garages, roadhouses, tourist court offices, drive-ins and fruit stands. The Sawyer area, for example, has two or three vernacular Modern style buildings from the 1960s. These humble, unassuming structures contribute to the rural character of Harbor Country and should be protected and preserved. Establishing a historic conservation district along the old highway route would help to protect these resources and ensure that any new construction was in keeping with the feel and setting of the historic road.

**Roadside Architecture – Gas Stations.** Along the Red Arrow Highway in Harbor Country are a number of gas stations that represent the evolution of the architecture associated with this property type. Some excellent examples include the small stucco gas station with large overhang that was once part of Prussa’s Resort near Union Pier; the former Texaco Gas Station at Union Pier that showcases the streamlined industrial design of Walter Dorwin Teague; and the well-maintained Frazon’s Shell Station in Sawyer. Paired with the residential style gas stations that exist along the Red Arrow Highway farther north, within the city limits of Saint Joseph, and other stations found along the route of the West Michigan Pike and U.S. 31, these resources are a visual representation of an important piece of automobile tourism history. A thematic national register nomination of gas stations on the West Michigan Pike would enable the property owners to utilize preservation tax credits. These gas stations could be used as part of a marketing initiative to attract historic automobile enthusiasts. Even something simple like creating a placemat with a “scavenger hunt” driving tour that provides historic information about gas station development and challenges families to find the stations as the drive along the highway would heighten awareness and interest in these resources and provide a linear focus for the heritage route.

**Roadside Architecture – Drive-In Restaurants.** Harbor Country has one of the few operating drive-in restaurants found within the project area—Mikey’s at 9096 Red Arrow Highway in Sawyer. Mom and pop drive-ins were once a common sight on America’s highways but many were put out of business when national fast food chain franchises burgeoned in the 1970s. Mikey’s is a unique automobile-related cultural resource that should be protected and promoted. Mikey’s Drive-In should be included in a regional promotion of roadside architecture drive-ins found on the West Michigan Pike including Roxy’s in Saint Joseph, and Dog n Suds in Muskegon and Montague.

**Recreation/Entertainment – Resorts, Inns, Motels and Tourist Courts.** U.S. 12 was the entry point for automobile tourists into Michigan between 1911 and the 1960s. As a result, a number of inns, tourist courts, resorts and “mom and pop” motels were constructed. Over thirty were identified as still existing in Harbor Country, and it is likely that more could be identified. While many of the inns have been revamped as bed and breakfasts, the majority of the motels and tourists courts are undervalued. Judy’s Motel on U.S. 12 in New Buffalo still retains at least four log tourist cabins. These should be rehabilitated and protected with a local historic district ordinance.

We recommend developing programs that will assist the owners of “mom and pop” hotels along the West Michigan Pike to improve the condition of their properties and the services they offer—turning them into moderately priced boutique motels. Consistency in quality of service is needed

to attract a new type of consumer. A region-wide approach to marketing mom and pop motels and tourist courts should be undertaken to create critical mass.

**Ethnic – Ethnic Resorts** - Harbor Country is unique in that its communities once served as resort areas for a diversity of ethnic groups from Chicago. For example, Grand Beach was historically associated with Irish Catholics from South Chicago, including Mayor Daly's family; New Buffalo was popular with Czech families due to the establishment of the nearby Camp Sokol; Union Pier was extremely popular with Lithuanian's; and Harbert was popular with Swedes whose children attended the Bethany Beach camp. Greeks frequented New Buffalo, and the Greek Orthodox Church there houses an exhibit of Berrien County's Greek heritage and hosts an annual Greek Dinner. Italians established a resort colony in the Glenlord Road area near Stevensville. The ethnic diversity of the area should be explored in depth and the cultural associations—food, music, holidays, etc.—and history of the different ethnic groups better utilized to create a unique sense of character for each community.

**Ethnic - German Heritage.** Berrien County has the world's largest concentration of Germans from Volhynia, Russia (Ukraine). A large population of German immigrants entered New Buffalo and the surrounding township in the 1850s. Claus H. Schultz of Holstein, Germany, arrived in 1852 and became a local leader in the community. Trained as a blacksmith, Schultz began manufacturing ornamental rustic work for gardens. He also cultivated wild grasses and imported flowers and for over thirty years operated a successful fruit and flower nursery for the Chicago market. Schultz built a number of buildings in the village and served as its president. New Buffalo should survey its historic buildings to determine which are associated with Schulz. By 1906 half the population of New Buffalo Township was German. The St. John German Evangelical Lutheran Church at 200 West Buffalo in New Buffalo is affiliated with this population.

**Conservation – Warren Dunes State Park and Grand Mere State Park.** Eco-tourism is a popular niche tourism market. Telling Southwest Michigan's conservation story would enhance the visitors experience to the region's natural resources. In Harbor Country, Edward Kirk Warren, owner of the Warren Featherbone Company in Three Oaks, was a leading force in the development of Southwest Michigan. A lifelong philanthropist and an early conservationist, he was a founding member of two prominent Chicago-based conservation groups, the Prairie Club and Friends of Our Native Landscapes. Warren purchased land that contained some of Berrien County's most significant natural features along Lake Michigan and the Galien River. After his death in 1919 these became Warren Dunes State Park and Warren Woods State Park. Conservation is an important theme within the Preserve America project area. Eight state parks were established between New Buffalo and Ludington before 1930. Conservation went hand in hand with new highway construction, reforestation of logged over lands, and the state's efforts to beautify Michigan in order to develop a tourist economy. As a result, Michigan was at the forefront of conservation in America. The story of past conservation efforts would make a good companion to today's environmental concerns and "green" efforts in energy and construction technology.

## Benton Harbor, Berrien County

The city of Benton Harbor contains some of the finest historic architecture in Southwest Michigan but has not taken advantage of historic preservation programs to help rehabilitate these resources for a new use and to protect them for future generations. As seen in the chart below, the city has only four resources listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

National Register of Historic Places, State Register of Historic Sites, and Michigan Historical Marker Designations for Benton Harbor, Berrien County				
Resource	Address	National Register	State Register	Historical Marker
Fidelity Building	162 Pipestone	2002		
Fruit Belt Commemorative Historical Marker	Bond and 11th St		1957	1958
House of David, Shiloh House Administration Building	Britain Ave	1972	1971	
Mary's City of David	1158 Britain Ave	2009	2009	2009
Morton Cemetery	Territorial Rd		1986	
Morton House	501 Territorial Rd		1964	1964
Wendell & Harriet Robbins House	680 Pipestone Rd	2007	2007	2007

### Recommendations

- Designate the downtown commercial district as a National Register of Historic Places historic district to enable property owners to participate in the federal tax credit program for rehabilitations. Coupled with other incentives, developers in other cities have had tremendous success in using historic building rehabilitations as a catalyst for further economic investment. Benton Harbor has some of the best commercial building stock in the project area.
- Designate the Mary's City of David Hotel building as a National Register of Historic Places resource (individually or as part of a larger commercial district) and as a local historic district. Located in the heart of the Benton Harbor's downtown the Mary's City of David Hotel is a one of a kind resource—that uniqueness could be used to define the city's historic character. The hotel is significant not only for its architecture, it was designed by engineers affiliated with the House of David and is constructed of concrete with hematite chips in the aggregate, but also for its association with the Mary's City of David organization that contributed so much to Benton Harbor's social and economic history. Listing the building in the National Register of Historic Places would qualify it for the federal historic preservation tax credit. As a true Michigan original, the hotel deserves to be protected through local historic district designation. The city should work with Mary's City of David to create an enhanced tourist destination at their site on Napier Road, which has tremendous potential as an authentic and unique cultural heritage tourist site.
- The city should apply for National Park Service Certified Local Government (CLG) status. Certification would enable the city and nonprofit organizations within the city to apply for CLG grants, which would provide funding for the establishment of a preservation-planning program. CLG grants can be used for historic resource identification and registration, historic preservation planning, rehabilitation planning (feasibility studies or condition assessment reports) and rehabilitation work for qualified historic resources. One example, CLG grants could be used to hire a consultant to write a National Register nomination for the downtown commercial district. Benton Harbor has already adopted a local historic district ordinance, which is one of the criteria for CLG application.

- The city of Benton Harbor should apply for *Preserve America* Community status. This would enable the city and non-profit organizations within the city to apply for *Preserve America* grant funds for research and documentation, interpretation and education, planning, marketing, and training projects. Nonprofits such as the Morton House museum could benefit from Preserve America grants.
- Designate the proposed historic district on Pipestone Avenue as a local historic district so that property owners can utilize the state historic preservation tax credits for upgrading and rehabilitating these significant historic properties.
- Adopt design guidelines for new construction in historic residential areas. The city of Benton Harbor has experienced a number of demolitions within its historic neighborhoods. In their place, new homes have been constructed that follow the design patterns more appropriate for suburban subdivision development and are incongruent with the city's historic fabric. The city should look at setback, size, massing, materials and style of new construction so that it is compatible with existing homes. Implementation of historic conservation zones might be in order in some neighborhoods. Historic neighborhoods with a high degree of integrity should be designated local historic districts to enable property owners to use the state historic preservation tax credits.

The following are some of the significant themes for Benton Harbor that could be used in the development of a cultural heritage tourism program.

**Transportation - The West Michigan Pike.** The West Michigan Pike Association was a private organization that existed between 1911 and 1922 to promote the construction of the first continuous improved road built in West Michigan. The road ran from Chicago to Mackinaw City and served as the main artery for the new automobile tourism that was developing at the turn of the century. In the Benton Harbor area, the West Michigan Pike followed the following route

Main Street out of Saint Joseph into Benton Harbor, then north on Water Street, east on Territorial Road, northeast on Red Arrow Highway, east on Paw Paw Road into Watervliet.

Historic resources along the West Michigan Pike route within the city of Benton Harbor should be researched and included in a region wide interpretation of the Pike.

**Transportation - Territorial Road.** One of three of the earliest transportation routes in Michigan is the Territorial Road, which ran from Detroit across the lower tier of counties to the Benton-Harbor/Saint Joseph area. Approved by the federal government in 1829, road survey and construction did not begin in West Michigan until the late 1830s. A history of the Territorial Road should be developed and an inventory of historic resources should be undertaken to create a driving tour of the road within Benton Harbor and Berrien County. One of the city's most significant resources, the Morton House, is located on Territorial Road.

**Agriculture - Fruit Market.** Benton Harbor was a center for Southwest Michigan's lucrative fruit industry. Though the Benton Harbor Fruit Market has moved out of downtown and the original buildings demolished, this history should be utilized in promoting the city. In this age of the Food Network and the popularity of locally grown produce, Benton Harbor should capitalize on its agricultural history as the center of Michigan's Fruit Belt. A farmer's market of significant size could be reinstated in downtown Benton Harbor and/or a retail fruit market established at the existing fruit market to attract tourists and promote Michigan produce.

**Ethnic History - African American.** African Americans began arriving in Michigan in numbers between 1830 and 1840. Many were freed slaves or escaped slaves that came up through the Underground Railroad. Early on, Southwest Michigan was an area where former slaves felt comfortable settling. In 1836 a group of southern Quakers had established a colony in Calvin

Township near the community of Vandalia in Cass County in the Chain of Lakes region. The Quakers were abolitionists and they helped a number of former slaves escape and settle in the area via the Underground Railroad. These people stayed in the region and more soon joined them establishing a rural community of African Americans in the Chain of Lakes area of Calvin and Porter Townships in Cass County. By 1850, while the city of Detroit had the highest concentration of African Americans in Michigan with 697 residents, Cass County and the adjacent Berrien County had the second and third largest populations of African Americans in the state at 376 and 215, respectively. Many of the ancestors of these early African American settlers made their way to Southwest Michigan's larger towns such as Benton Harbor and Muskegon. The earliest African American settlement in Benton Harbor was known as "Out East" and was located on Crystal Springs Road near Boynton, Bard, and Hull roads. By the 1880s the town of Covert, twenty miles northeast of Benton Harbor, was an integrated community and African Americans owned farms and held local government offices. In the 1930s, Benton Harbor's mayor, John Sterling, headed to the southern states to encourage both African Americans and whites to come to the Benton Harbor area to work as migrant workers picking fruit. The migrants worked a circuit picking strawberries, raspberries and cherries in Berrien County in the early summer then migrating to Ludington to pick sour cherries, traveling to Bay City to bring in the beet crop, and then returning to Benton Harbor for the peach and apple harvest. At the beginning of World War II, a second wave of African Americans came to Benton Harbor; most were from Arkansas, to take jobs in the city's forges. They settled in an area known as "the Flats" off Territorial near Little Italy. The buildings of the Flats were razed through Urban Renewal in the 1960s.

The African American history of Southwest Michigan extends beyond Benton Harbor and is a unique and interesting one. With a population of 95 percent African American, Benton Harbor is encouraged to take on a leadership role in developing the story of African Americans in Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren counties. The city could serve as a gateway to African American historical sites and local history perhaps through the development of a regional history museum downtown.

**Ethnic - Greek.** The Stevensville-Benton Harbor-Hagar Township area was a popular resort spot for Greeks that had immigrated to Chicago. Many Greek resorts were established there in the 1920s along with supporting businesses such as restaurants, hotels, sweet shops and ice cream parlors that were opened by Greeks to meet the needs of the Greek resort population. A Greek Orthodox Church was built in Benton Harbor (congregation has since moved to New Buffalo). Benton Harbor should work with the Greek community to build on and promote this heritage through events and festivals.

**Recreation/Entertainment - Theater.** At one time downtown Benton Harbor had four theaters. Three have been demolished (the City, Lake, and the Liberty) and only one remains, the State Theatre at 148 West Main Street, an Art-Moderne style theater built by the Detroit-based W. S. Butterfield theater chain in 1942. A regional marketing approach for the approximately ten historic theaters—including the State—within the project area could be undertaken. A Michigan film festival could be developed—films by Michigan artists, films based in Michigan, films about Michigan shot by the Works Progress Administration, travelogues from the 1950s—that could move up and down the West Coast throughout the summer playing at the historic theaters.

**Recreation/Entertainment - Theater.** The auditorium at Mary's City of David, which is currently being used as a museum, could be converted back to a live theater venue. The small, intimate space could be used for traditional or folk music functions. Exploring a partnership with an organization such as the Old Town Music School in Chicago might be a possibility.

**Recreation/Entertainment – Boxing.** Benton Harbor has a historic association with the sport of boxing. On July 6, 1920 Floyd Fitzsimmons, a sports promoter in Benton Harbor, promoted a fight between World Heavyweight Champion Jack Dempsey and a lesser known boxer named Bill Miske as "The Slaughter on Fair Avenue." It was Dempsey's first fight after winning the World Heavyweight Title in 1919. The Michigan Boxing Club now operates in the Bobo Brazil Community Center at 472 Cass. Coupled with Southwest Michigan's association with

heavyweight champion Muhammad Ali, who owns a farm in nearby Berrien Springs, Benton Harbor might consider using its boxing heritage as part of an economic development strategy and encourage the establishment of a boxing training center or school and the promotion of fights. (An example of a small town using a sport to reinvent itself is Lindsborg, Iowa, which encouraged the establishment of an international chess school and which sponsors annual chess tournaments.)

**Art** - Its close location to Chicago, its urban feel and outstanding architecture, proximity to outstanding natural features, and reasonable rents would seemingly make Benton Harbor an excellent candidate to attract young artists to the city. Benton Harbor should work to find incentives and promotions that would attract members of the creative class to the city. Options to explore might include providing connecting public transportation to the South Shore Interurban line in Michigan City, Indiana thus enabling easy access to the city and marketing targeted area of historic homes to Art Institute of Chicago students and graduates.

## Saint Joseph, Berrien County

Currently, the city of Saint Joseph is not taking full advantage of standard historic preservation programs. Only three resources are listed in the National Register of Historic Places and eight in the State Register of Historic Sites. Three Michigan Historical Markers have been erected within the city. Through this project the Heritage Museum and Cultural Center submitted a *Preserve America* Community application for the city of Saint Joseph, which would enable the city and non-profit organizations within the city to apply for *Preserve America* grant funds.

National Register of Historic Places, State Register of Historic Sites and Michigan Historical Marker Designations for Saint Joseph, Berrien County				
Resource	Address	National Register	State Register	Historical Marker
Blossomland Bridge	M-63 Saint Joseph River	1999		
William Burnett Trading Post	E of Miller Drive & Langley Ave		1962	1965
Congregational Church of Saint Joseph	601 Main St		1979	
William Dunbar House	814 State St		1980	
Edgewater Club Annex	375 N Ridgeway		1984	
Fort Miami Informational Designation	Lake Blvd & Ship St		1956	1956
Herring's 1st Flight	Silver Beach S of Broad St		1968	
Ninth District Lighthouse Depot	128 Pier St	1993		
Old Saint Joseph Historic District	State, Main & Lake Sts		1981	1984
Saint Joseph North Pier Inner and Outer Lights	Saint Joseph River Mouth	2005		
Saint Joseph Public Library	500 Main St		1982	

### Recommendations

- Designate the downtown commercial district as a National Register of Historic Places historic district to enable property owners to participate in the federal tax credit program for rehabilitations.
- Adopt a historic district ordinance and appoint a historic district commission, which would enable the city to apply for National Park Service Certified Local Government (CLG) status. Certification would enable the city and non-profit organizations within the city to apply for CLG grants for historic preservation projects for historic resource identification and registration, historic preservation planning, rehabilitation planning and rehabilitation work for qualified historic resources.
- The city of Saint Joseph should consider local historic district designation for the Old Saint Joseph National Register Historic District. This would enable property owners in the district to participate in the state historic preservation tax credit program.

Some of the significant cultural heritage themes for Saint Joseph are:

**Transportation - The West Michigan Pike.** The West Michigan Pike Association was a private organization that existed from 1911-1922 to promote the construction of the first continuous improved road to be built in West Michigan. The road ran from Chicago to Mackinaw City and served as the main artery for the new automobile tourism at the turn of the century. In the Saint Joseph area the West Michigan Pike followed the following route:



from Stevensville, east on Johnson Road, north on Holden Road, west on Glen Lord, north on Red Arrow Highway into Saint Joseph. From Saint Joseph, north on State Street, east on Ship Street, northeast on Main Street into Benton Harbor.

Historic resources along the route of the West Michigan Pike should be researched and their history incorporated into a region-wide tour of the Pike.

**Transportation - Red Arrow Highway.** The Saint Joseph area is unique in that it has an existing named highway with historic associations that already provides a strong sense of place. The Red Arrow Highway (Old U.S. 12) was named as a tribute to a group of Michigan and Wisconsin National Guardsmen that were incorporated into Company C, 126th Infantry, 32<sup>nd</sup> Division on July 18, 1917, during World War I. Sadly, over half the men in the battalion were killed or wounded. The division also served in the South Pacific during World War II. The 32<sup>nd</sup> Division adopted a red arrow as their symbol indicating their ability to pierce through enemy lines. On August 30, 1952, U.S. 12 was designated the Red Arrow Highway to commemorate the 6,150 members of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Division that were killed during the two world wars. When the highway was bypassed by Interstate 94 in 1960, counties were allowed to keep the Red Arrow Highway name, but only the section in Berrien County is still commonly called the Red Arrow Highway. The highway begins in Chikaming Township just north of Harbert and passes through Lake Township, Saint Joseph, Benton Harbor, and east through Benton Township. The Red Arrow Highway designation can serve as a regional focus for this section of the West Michigan Pike. Heading into Saint Joseph from the south, the Red Arrow Highway embodies the 1920s design principles established for Michigan's scenic highways and provides vistas of Lake Michigan. The Red Arrow Highway, coupled with other veteran's memorials throughout the project area (the Blue Star Highway, the Muskegon Memorial Causeway, and living memorials in parks) could be used to unite the region for Memorial and Veteran's Day celebrations that kick off and end the tourist season.

**Architecture - Roadside Architecture - Filling Stations.** The city of Saint Joseph is unique in that there are at least three historic filling station buildings within a mile of each other on the route of the West Michigan Pike (Red Arrow Highway). These filling stations are representative of filling station design from the late 1920s through the 1930s when there was an outcry against gaudy or un-kept filling stations especially near residential suburbs. Some of the first zoning laws were enacted to regulate filling station locations, and a grassroots movement developed to improve their aesthetics. In response, the oil companies developed standard designs for their stations that were based on popular residential architectural styles of the day including Tudor Revival, Classical Revival and Greek Revival. Pure Oil, one of the first oil companies to introduce a suburban service station design, created the easily recognizable small English Cottage of white painted brick with a blue roof. Standard Oil often used a Mediterranean design with a stucco finish and terra cotta roof. On the Red Arrow Highway just south of Saint Joseph's downtown are a former Pure Oil station, a Tudor Revival station, and a Classical Revival Station. These resources should be protected by local historic district designation. Rehabilitating the filling station buildings would greatly contribute to the visual interpretation of the proposed West Michigan Pike heritage route.

**Recreation/Entertainment - Resort Era.** Saint Joseph has a long history as a popular resort area. The Hotel Charles was constructed on the bluff overlooking Lake Michigan in 1866 and the adjacent Lake Bluff Park provided shaded strolling paths for visitors. In 1891 Logan Drake and Louis Wallace founded the Silver Beach Amusement and Realty Company and developed the Silver Beach Amusement Park, which attracted thousands of tourists a year. While early resorters came to Saint Joseph via passenger steamers, in 1913 a train depot was constructed by the Pere Marquette Railroad. Saint Joseph retains a number of significant resources from West Michigan's golden age of resorts (1900-1940). Rather than interpreting each site individually, the recommendation is to develop a more comprehensive approach that includes all the resources that fall under the broad scope of resort history. This will provide a stronger historic identity for the community and a critical mass of resources to support the interpretation of this important piece of

the city's history. A thematic survey of other resort-era resources in Saint Joseph should be conducted. Known resort era resources include:

- **Silver Beach Amusement Park Museum.** Though the amusement park itself was demolished in 1975, the Silver Beach Amusement Park Museum at 235 Broad Street interprets this local institution. The group is working to restore the park's carousel.
- **Whitcomb Hotel.** Once home to one of the state's premier mineral spas, the hotel started as the Saint Charles Hotel in 1866 and was renamed the Whitcomb Hotel in 1891. In 1905 a sulfur spring was discovered near the hotel and the Whitcomb created a mineral bath spa on the site and began marketing itself as a health resort. The Whitcomb's close proximity to Chicago helped it to acquire a large clientele. In 1927 a group of local businessmen raised one million dollars in six weeks to construct a new, modern hotel on the site, which opened on May 23, 1928. The firm of Pond, Pond, Martin and Lloyd of Chicago, were chosen as architects. The Whitcomb quickly became known as one of the finest hotels in southwest Michigan. The hotel closed in 1966 and became a retirement residence in 1973.
- **Lake Bluff Park.** This park has an ideal location along the top of a bluff that provides vistas of Lake Michigan. The historic Whitcomb Hotel and the Old Saint Joseph Historic District serve as backdrops for the park. The park contains a number of historic resources including the Maids of the Mist Fountain that was built for the Inter State Exhibition of the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago and was placed in Lake Bluff Park in 1892 and the Dahlgren cannon from the Civil War that was placed in the park in 1897. It would greatly benefit the aesthetics of the park if any future improvements were based on park designs from the turn of the twentieth century. Current features, such as tubular benches and a metal roof shelter, are modern intrusions that detract from the setting and feeling of a turn of the century resort town. By outfitting the park with features that compliment the historic architecture of the Whitcomb Hotel and the city's historic district, this park could become an outstanding feature for the city. The city should also carefully consider the scale of development that is allowed to occur on the flat land below the bluff. Blocking the lake vistas from the park would be detrimental for tourism.
- **Edgewater Club.** In the early 1900s Frank Graves, a developer and attorney in Saint Joseph, had a vision to turn the north side of Saint Joseph into a resort. He built a Prairie-style clubhouse on the beach called the Edgewater Club and an annex building with sleeping rooms and several cottages. The club opened in March. The existing building, located at 375 North Ridgeway, is the annex that was built in 1911, the main building burned in 1931.
- **Pere Marquette Railroad.** The Saint Joseph train depot was constructed in 1913 and brought many visitors to the city's resorts. A 1904 polygonal Warren Through Truss Swing railroad bridge still crosses the Saint Joseph River (a good view of this bridge with the Whitcomb Hotel in the background can be seen from Tiscornia Park.) Saint Joseph should be included in a regional tour of railroad resources. Railroad enthusiasts are a significant niche market and resources related to the Pere Marquette's *Resort Special* train would be of interest to them.

**Ethnic Heritage – Italian.** Just south of Saint Joseph, the Glenlord/Ridge Road area off the Red Arrow Highway was once a popular resort area with Chicago's Sicilian immigrants. In 1945 Joseph and Tina Capozio established the La Conca D'Oro Resort on Ridge Road in Berrien County. Other resorts soon followed including Clamar Court, Glenlord Vista, Pisa, Foreani and Carmaniagni Resorts of Berrien County. A few resources associated with the area's Italian heritage still exist including Capozio's Italian Restaurant and Tosi's Restaurant, on the Red Arrow Highway, and Santaniello's, 2262 W. Glenlord, Stevensville. More research should be done to document and promote the area's Italian heritage.

## South Haven, Van Buren County

To date, South Haven has not taken advantage of historic preservation programs. For example, the city has just three resources listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The chart below details South Haven's designated historic resources.

National Register of Historic Places, State Register of Historic Sites, and Michigan Historical Marker Designations for South Haven, Van Buren County				
Resource	Address	National Register	State Register	Historical Marker
Liberty Hyde Bailey Jr. House	403 Bailey	1983	1963	1964
Hartman School	355 Hubbard		1983	1985
Haven Peaches	802 St. Joseph		1966	1966
Marsland-Kenilworth Resort	56 North Shore Drive		1989	
Navigation Structures South Haven Harbor	Mouth of Black River	1995		
Scott Club	652 Phoenix		1980	1982
Steamship <i>Hennepin</i> Shipwreck Site	Lake Michigan 13 Miles WNW	2008		
Ward School	615 Indiana Ave		1984	1986

### Recommendations

- List the downtown commercial district in the National Register of Historic Places to enable property owners to utilize the 25 percent federal preservation tax credit
- Apply for National Park Service Certified Local Government (CLG) status. Certification would enable the city to apply for CLG grants for historic preservation projects for such as maintenance and rehabilitation work for historic buildings such as the South Haven Center for the Arts and for historic resource identification and registration, education and preservation planning activities. The city would need to adopt a historic district ordinance, appoint a historic district commission, and establish four-year preservation goals
- The city should apply to become a *Preserve America* Community so that it is eligible for *Preserve America* grant funding.
- Upgrade the Liberty Hyde Bailey Jr. National Register of Historic Places designation from state to national level of significance to make the resource eligible for Save America's Treasures grants
- Consider establishing local historic districts for qualifying residential neighborhoods, such as Monroe Park one of the first resort community's in the city, to protect the city's historic character and enable property owners to take advantage of state historic preservation tax credits.

The following are some of the significant cultural/heritage themes for South Haven that could be used for a cultural heritage tourism program.

**Transportation - The West Michigan Pike.** The West Michigan Pike Association was a private organization that existed from 1911-1922 to promote the construction of the first continuous improved road to be built in West Michigan. The road ran from Chicago to Mackinaw City and served as the main artery for the new automobile tourism that was developing at the turn of the century. In the South Haven area, from Benton Harbor the original route followed:

Paw Paw Lake Rd (M-140) through Covert and continued north into South Haven. Within the city limits the route went north on La Grange, northwest on Phillips, north on

Broadway, west on Dyckman, and north on North Shore Drive, east on Blue Star Highway through Glenn, east on 118<sup>th</sup>, north on 68<sup>th</sup> (Old 31) to Douglas.

Documenting the West Michigan Pike's historic route through South Haven and interpreting it through the extant historic buildings as part of the regional heritage tourism route would add dimension and context to the city's existing history and interpretation programs.

**Transportation - Blue Star Highway.** The idea of establishing a living memorial to honor the American men and women that had served in World War II was initiated by the Garden Club of New Jersey in 1945 and was adopted nationally in 1946. The Federated Garden Clubs of Michigan adopted the project in 1947. The Michigan legislature officially designated 379 miles of U.S. 31 from the Indiana-Michigan state line to Sault Ste. Marie as Michigan's Blue Star Memorial Highway in 1952. Today only a small portion of the original designation, the old section of U.S. 31 (A2) in Allegan and Van Buren counties, is still referred to as the Blue Star Highway. Creating the Blue Star Highway as its own tourist destination amid the larger heritage route will give these counties a unique identity. Memorial and Veteran's Day events could be increased to make the Blue Star Highway a destination site at the beginning and end of the tourism season. The highway could be part of a larger story about the region's contributions to World War II and the "Arsenal of Democracy." A highway beautification program based on the original planting guidelines could be reinstated to ensure that the Blue Star Highway retains the appropriate setting and feeling. In the project area bronze Markers once existed in South Haven, Saugatuck, Muskegon, and Hart and these should be replaced where needed. The Blue Star Highway offers a unique opportunity to create a regional brand for Allegan and Van Buren counties.

**Recreation/Entertainment - South Haven's Resort Industry and Jewish Resorts.** South Haven's resort history began in the 1880's when the Avery family first built cottages to rent to friends from Chicago. The industry boomed but in the late 1920's it took on a distinctive twist not found in other communities. At a time when a resort's clientele was often restricted by race or religion, resort ownership in South Haven began to shift to a new population. Tired of dealing with rejection and discrimination, Jewish entrepreneurs began buying resorts along North Shore Drive in order to create a safe haven for Jewish travelers. Jewish resorters must have felt welcomed by the community—by the 1940s there were over forty Jewish resorts in the area and North Shore Drive had gained the nickname "the Catskills of the Midwest." The 400 block of Phoenix Street in downtown South Haven held a concentration of Jewish-owned stores that catered to the traditions and food requirements of members of the Judaic faith. While many of the resorts have been demolished, a good number still remain. The city should interpret and promote this unique history. A tour book of Jewish resorts has been developed but it could be expanded. A thematic survey of historic buildings related to the Jewish resort industry in South Haven should be conducted and the qualifying resources should be listed in the National Register of Historic Places (such as the Victoria Inn, Sleepy Hollow, and the Last Resort), so that property owners may utilize preservation tax credits. Preservation easements or local historic district designation should be encouraged for resources that retain a high degree of integrity. As part of this project, a Michigan Historical Marker will be placed on North Shore Drive to commemorate this important piece of the city's history.

**Agriculture** – South Haven has a very rich agricultural history, and along with Benton Harbor, could serve as one of the main interpretation centers for a regional interpretation of southwest Michigan's Fruit Belt heritage. South Haven's agricultural history includes the following highlights:

- **Liberty Hyde Bailey Jr.** Born and raised in South Haven and a graduate of the Michigan Agricultural College, Bailey went on to become the director of agriculture at Cornell University, a national leader in the transformation of rural life in the early twentieth century. At a time when the nation's newly industrialized cities were siphoning young men off the farms to work high paying factory jobs, Bailey was appointed by President Theodore Roosevelt to head a national commission to investigate the problem. Bailey was charged with developing a strategy to improve the quality of life of America's farmers

so that rural life would appeal to the nation's best and brightest. Bailey established the popular publication *Country Life in America*, which resulted in a national trend of gentlemen farmers that developed exhibition farms to showcase scientific farming techniques and new plant varieties. The Bailey farmhouse and site should be protected by a local historic district designation. Upgrading the existing National Register nomination for the property to the national level of significance would enable application to the *Save America's Treasures* for restoration funds. Application by the city of South Haven to the *Preserve America* community program would enable the museum to apply for *Preserve America* grants. Increased interpretation of Liberty Hyde Bailey Jr. and his influence on rural life in America at this site is recommended. His work should be interpreted through gentlemen farms found along the proposed heritage route such as the Dorr Felt Estate in Saugatuck.

- **South Haven Experimental Station.** In 1870 South Haven was among the first communities in Michigan to establish a local Pomological Society to promote the scientific principles of fruit growing. Its members turned out to be among the state's most intelligent and forward thinking men. Their efforts led to the adoption of state legislation that established the Michigan Pomological Society in 1871. Thanks to the efforts of Liberty Hyde Bailey Jr. on the national front, states adopted the concept of agriculture extensions and funding was soon made available for the creation of regional experimental stations where new plant varieties and farming practices were tested. South Haven's Experimental Station was established in 1889 and became extremely important to the success of Southwest Michigan's fruit industry. Stanley Johnston, who served as agricultural agent for the South Haven Experimental Station was an innovator and leader who motivated the areas farmers to try new things.
- **Peaches.** Though Michigan's peach industry began in Berrien County it quickly spread to the South Haven area where it prospered. The South Haven Experimental Station was instrumental in developing Haven variety peaches, which quickly became the standard among the commercial peach crop of Michigan's Fruit Belt. The "South Haven" peach was first introduced by Arthur Spence in 1922.
- **Blueberries.** Stanley Johnston of the South Haven Agricultural Extension was one of the few people that believed that the soil and climate conditions in South Haven were ideal for blueberry cultivation. He was responsible for bringing the lucrative blueberry industry to South Haven.

Because it was an epicenter for Michigan's fruit industry, South Haven should increase its focus on Agri-tourism. The city should explore ways of strengthening its connections with farms and farm markets in the surrounding area. Finding creative ways to use the area's agricultural history to create a tourist destination based on local agricultural products should be explored. For example, restaurants that serve dishes using seasonal local produce should be encouraged. More education could be done to help buyers distinguish between the different varieties of peaches and blueberries. Today, buyers are sophisticated about grape and apple varieties but little is known about varieties of other fruits. Small farmers could grow flavorful historic varieties of peaches and blueberries that are not viable for commercial production because they don't travel well. One example, a historic variety could be reintroduced for sale in local South Haven markets, which could help to make South Haven a destination during peak growing seasons.

**Agriculture - Gladiolas.** South Haven was the birthplace of new varieties of gladiolas in the 1920s and 1930s including the popular "South Haven" gladiola developed by Mrs. Watson Nicholson in 1925. Encouraging the planting of the deep red "South Haven" gladiola and other locally originated flora in home gardens and city parks would create a distinctive look and give the city a unique character based on its own history. A local farmer might consider growing and marketing heritage bulbs for sale to the public. As a tourism promotional device, homeowners could be encouraged to grow the gladiolas and offer them for sale at rustic "serve yourself

stands.” These stands with their bunches of cut gladiolas, hand printed signs, and payment via coffee can on the honor system, were ubiquitous in southwest Michigan in the 1950s and 1960s and created an appealing rural charm.

**Architecture - Diners and Drive-Ins.** South Haven is home to Ma’s Coffee Pot a 1960’s era Double Deluxe Model Number 2449 Valentine Diner built by Valentine Lunch Systems of Wichita, Kansas. It is also home to a small concrete block post-World War II diner called Chuck’s. A regional driving tour of diners in Southwest Michigan should be developed to increase visibility of these beloved resources. Rosie’s Diner in Rockford (outside of Grand Rapids) is a complex of three diners that has been featured on the Food Network program *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives*. A regional approach, which links smaller diners such as Ma’s and Chuck’s with better known attractions like Rosie’s, would be beneficial. Diners appeal to a wide range of tourists from car enthusiasts to motorcyclists to preservationists to families. South Haven is also one of the few communities to retain an operating drive-in restaurant, the 50’s Drive-In on M-140, which is located on the original route of the West Michigan Pike. There are only a handful of drive-ins still operating in southwest Michigan and a regional approach to their promotion should be undertaken.

**Architecture - Bungalows.** Simple, Craftsman style bungalows characterize South Haven’s historic residential neighborhoods, more so than other southwest Michigan communities, and create the relaxed feeling of a summer resort town. South Haven could use its bungalows to brand itself in the minds of tourists. The origin of these neighborhoods should be researched and promoted to raise awareness of South Haven’s uniqueness and the historic importance of these humble resources. It would be interesting to know if any of the homes were kit houses (Sears, Aladdin) erected by individual property owners. If so, such resources should be promoted via a walking tour. It is recommended that a historic resource survey be undertaken of the residential neighborhoods south of Phoenix Street. Where appropriate, local historic district designation should be completed for neighborhoods with a concentration of historic resources. Adopting a historic district ordinance and enabling the study would allow the city council to utilize emergency powers should the area be threatened by development, even if a local historic district is not established. At the very least design guidelines should be developed so that infill houses will be of the same size and scale of the existing structures. An education program on the characteristics of the Craftsman style should be undertaken so that property owners will be able to make educated decisions about property improvements.

**Recreation/Entertainment - Golf.** The South Haven area has one of the state’s finest examples of an intact 1920s golf course, the Glenn Shores Golf Club on the Blue Star Highway. The practice of purchasing a farm to create a course and converting the farmhouse for the clubhouse was popular during the era. Glenn Shores retains a very high degree of historic integrity. The club should be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places to enable the property to take advantage of tax credits. Protection of this resource through a preservation easement or local historic district designation should be considered.

**Recreation/Entertainment - Resort Subdivisions.** Around 1927 Casco Township north of South Haven became the center of development for a new type of tourist property—the resort subdivision. Unlike the resort associations of the past, these resort subdivisions were planned communities that would offer services and infrastructure (paved streets, electric lights, indoor plumbing and heating) previously reserved for year-round communities. Subdivisions such as Miami Park and Glenn Shores had high hopes of becoming actual suburbs of Chicago—Miami Park was advertised as being only 30 minutes away from Chicago by air travel. The stock market crash and the Great Depression brought development of these subdivisions to a halt and the land remained virtually undeveloped for years. Today, they are falling victim to the “McMansion” syndrome as huge homes are built next to small cottages. The periodical *The Michigan Property Owner 1927 Resort Edition* (available at the Library of Michigan) includes pages of articles that showcase the bravado of developers during this barnstorming era when air travel was new and marketing stunts were outrageous. Local historic districts should be considered to protect the

subdivisions that have retained their historic character. An exhibit highlighting this time period would bring the public's attention to this charming period of the South Haven area's history.

**Al Capone** – The South Haven area is a source of stories about the Chicago crime boss, Al Capone. Capone reportedly played golf at the South Haven Country Club and stayed at the Sleepy Hollow Resort. His girlfriend, Floria, is reportedly buried in nearby McDowell Cemetery. Capone is a larger than life figure that interests many people on many levels. While it is almost impossible to substantiate the numerous stories about Capone's travels in Michigan, the South Haven and the Stevensville area seem to be the two Southwest Michigan communities most associated with Capone. (His accountant reportedly owned a home on Glenlord Road, an Italian resort area near Stevensville. Capone is said to have spent time at the home of John Flynn who owned the local theater in Stevensville.) A regional narrative about the Prohibition era, Chicago's gangster's and their association with Southwest Michigan could be developed (Grand Haven was the site of an FBI documented bank robbery conducted by Pretty Boy Floyd) and interpretation of real events should be undertaken. In addition to the serious narrative a creative, "tongue in cheek" approach to Capone's connection to South Haven could also be develop. A juried, Mark Twainesque tall tales festival where people make up whoppers about Capone in South Haven, a marching band in pin stripe suits and black and white spectator shoes that performs downtown on weekends, a film noir festival of gangster films are some examples of a light hearted approach toward the area's Capone legacy.



## Saugatuck-Douglas, Allegan County

Saugatuck-Douglas area has strong historic preservation organizations and historical societies that have documented in detail the history and architecture of the area. Both are designated *Preserve America* communities. Saugatuck has a local historic district ordinance and established a local historic district whose boundaries are roughly the Kalamazoo River, Mary Street, Saint Joseph Street, Mason Street, Allegan Road and the Blue Star Highway. This designation protects the resources lining much of the original route of the West Michigan Pike, which followed Butler Street through the center of downtown Saugatuck. Still, much more could be done to designate and protect historic resources and to utilize preservation incentive programs.

National Register of Historic Places, State Register of Historic Sites, and Michigan Historical Marker Designations for Saugatuck-Douglas Area, Allegan County						
Resource	Address	Community	National Historic Landmark	National Register	State Register	State Historical Marker
Douglas Union School	130 Center Ave	Douglas		1995	1990	1998
Dutcher Lodge	86 Center Ave	Douglas			1985	1997
Dr. Asa Goodrich House	112 Center Ave	Douglas			1986	1990
Sarah Kirby House	294 W Center Ave	Douglas			1990	1998
Lakeshore Chapel	Shorewood Rd at Campbell	Douglas		1997		
Harvey Judson Kingsley	628 W Main	Fennville			1992	
Ganges Fractional School District No. 1 School House	6292 124th Ave	Ganges Twp			1978	1987
John Butler Johnson	2207 75th St	Ganges Twp			1988	
Pier Cove Informational Designation	Lakeshore Dr	Ganges Twp			1989	1989
Castle Park Lodge	6700 Bryant Ave	Laketown Twp			1979	
Dorr E. Felt Estate	66th St	Laketown Twp		1996	2006	2006
Graafschap Christian Reformed Church	A621 48th	Laketown Twp			1976	1977
Laketown Township Hall	6280 142nd	Laketown Twp			1989	2000
All Saint's Episcopal Church	256 Saugatuck	Saugatuck			1981	1983
Allegan Road Commemorative Designation	River Bluff Park	Saugatuck			1994	1994
Clipson Brewery and Ice House-Twin Gables	900 Lake	Saugatuck			1987	2000
First Congregational Church	296 Hoffman	Saugatuck			1991	1992
Horace D. Moore House	888 Holland Street	Saugatuck			1984	
Navigation Structures Saugatuck Harbor	Riverside Drive	Saugatuck		2001		
Saugatuck Engine House & Council Room	102 Butler	Saugatuck			1990	1991
Schrivers Inn	River Road	Saugatuck			1979	
Singapore Informational Designation	Near U.S. 31 W	Saugatuck			1958	1958
Warren P. Sutton House	736 Pleasant St	Saugatuck		1992	1987	2000
Fred Thompson & William Springer House "Kemah"	633 Pleasant St	Saugatuck			1988	
Leindecker's Inn (Coral Gables)	220 Water Street	Saugatuck		2009		

## Recommendations:

- Saugatuck should become a Certified Local Government (CLG) in order to utilize CLG grants to enhance its historic preservation program.
- Saugatuck should expand its local historic district to include the complete route of the West Michigan Pike through town. This would result in including resources north of Mary Street on Butler and resources on Francis and Holland streets.
- Saugatuck should capitalize on its architectural history and its historically close connection to Chicago architects as a marketing tool to attract Chicago's creative class. Partnering with the Chicago Architecture Foundation to showcase Chicago architect's in West Michigan is one option.

Themes the Saugatuck/Douglas region can utilize to promote its cultural heritage tourism are:

**Transportation - The West Michigan Pike.** The West Michigan Pike Association was a private organization that existed between 1911 and 1922 to promote the construction of the first continuous improved road built in West Michigan. The road ran from Chicago to Mackinaw City and served as the main artery for the new automobile tourism that was developing at the turn of the century. In Saugatuck-Douglas the original route of the West Michigan Pike ran

east on 118<sup>th</sup>, north on 68<sup>th</sup> (Old U.S. 31) to Douglas, east on 138<sup>th</sup>, north on Center, north on Washington, Cross bridge to Saugatuck, northwest on Lake Street, west on Culver Street, north on Butler, east on Francis, northeast on Holland Street, north on 64<sup>th</sup> Street.

In 1917 the West Michigan Pike became part of the newly adopted state trunk line system and was renamed M-11; in 1926 it became part of the first federal numbered highway system and was renamed U.S. 31. One of the early realignments of the highway is now known as the Blue Star Highway. Though all of U.S. 31 was once designated the Blue Star Highway, only a small section in Allegan and Van Buren counties is still referred to by that name. This creates a defined area with a sense of identity that can be used to market this section of the road. The original idea of the Blue Star Highway could be revived here—using the landscape to create a living memorial for war veterans. This would create a unique visual character for this piece of the West Michigan Pike. The Federated Garden Clubs of Michigan had planting lists and plans for the highway, which could be utilized in a re-beautification program. Activities centered on veteran-related holidays could be increased along the Blue Star Highway, prolonging the tourist season in spring and fall.

**Recreation/Entertainment - Resorts, Inns, Motels and Tourist Courts.** The Saugatuck-Douglas area has a concentration of 1950s-era mom and pop hotels still in operation along the Blue Star Highway. The West Michigan Pike can serve as the driving force in developing a regional marketing strategy for the mom and pop motels not only on the Blue Star Highway but along the historic road. Mom and pop hotels should be encouraged to improve services to offer a boutique experience popular with today's travelers.

**Recreation/Entertainment - Resort Tourism.** The area contains a number of seemingly disparate historic resources that could be linked under a broader "history of resort/tourism" theme. Examples include the SS *Keewatin* steamer, which offers a glimpse into how tourists first came to the area at the turn of the century; the Saugatuck Dune Rides, a unique resource developed in the 1950s; the architecture styles used to create a uniform downtown to create a tourist destination; the Belvedere Bed and Breakfast and Dorr Felt Mansion which both represent the "country life" lifestyle popularized by Liberty Hyde Bailey Jr. of South Haven.

**Conservation/Reforestation** - The area has a number of unique resources that depict turn of the century conservation efforts that were undertaken to alleviate the problem of cut over land left by the lumber companies. The first is the summer home of Chicago-based landscape architect Ossian C. Simmonds and the arboretum he developed at Pier Cove. The story of O. C. Simmonds, his work, and early conservation will have timely appeal as the nation seeks ways to promote environmentally friendly practices. It is recommended that a preservation easement be established for the Simmonds summer home to protect it in perpetuity. Care should -be taken in promoting the arboretum to ensure its continued protection. The Simmonds family is working with nature conservancies to protect the arboretum and surrounding lands. The second conservation related resource is the Dorr Felt Estate in Laketown Township. Mr. Felt used his farm to experiment with conservation practices. He planted thousands of trees to preserve the sand dunes and is reported to have consulted with the city of Saugatuck on the preservation of the Mount Baldhead sand dune. His conservation work could be interpreted at the estate adding another layer to the history of this site. The original route of the West Michigan Pike through Saugatuck is lined with large, old growth maples, part of a highway beautification plan. Interpreting the twentieth century response to the lumber industries destruction is relevant to the current interest in the environment and green industries.

**Architecture** - Southwest Michigan has a number of resources designed by Chicago architects. For example, architects Thomas Eddy Tallmadge and George Maher both worked in the Saugatuck-Douglas area. A partnership with the Chicago Architectural Foundation to promote the work of Chicago architects in Southwest Michigan should be explored. Walking and driving tours could be developed that travelers could undertake on their own. One weekend in the early spring or late fall could be dedicated to providing more in depth tours of significant buildings and sites.

**Recreation/Entertainment – Saugatuck Dune Rides.** One of five dune rides left in America, the Saugatuck Dune rides are a unique resource. The owner's commitment to conservation should be highlighted in promotional pieces. A Michigan State Historical Marker should be placed at the site. The dune rides site contains a historic motel that should be rehabilitated and reused.

## Holland, Ottawa County

Holland utilizes most historic preservation programs. The city has a historic district ordinance and a historic district commission. Homeowners in the city's two designated local historic districts have participated in the state historic preservation tax credit program. Luis and Guadalupe Ortiz received the Governor's Award for Historic Preservation award in 2008 for their tax credit project, which was the rehabilitation of the commercial building at 168 West Thirteenth Street in the Washington Street Historic District. Holland has been a National Park Service Certified Local Government (CLG) since 1987. This qualifies them to apply for CLG grants for historic preservation projects, which they have used for structural work for both the Cappon House and the Van Raalte House.

National Register of Historic Places, State Register of Historic Sites, and Michigan Historical Markers for Holland, Ottawa County				
Resource	Address	National Register	State Register	Historical Marker
Black Lake Indian Village	Waukazoo Dr, Park Twp		1965	
Isaac Cappon House	228 W 9th St	1984	1983	1984
Central Ave Christian Reform Church	1 Grand Place		1990	1991
Central Park Chapel	550 Grove Dr		2002	2002
Coatsworth House	236 9th St		1982	
Congregation of Noordeloos Church	4075 112th		1990	1990
Dutch In Michigan Informational Designation	Centennial Park		1956	1957
First Church of Holland Settlers Informational Designation	E 16th		1956	
First United Methodist Church Informational Designation	57 W 10th		1986	1986
Gold, Eugene House "Marigold Lodge"	1116 Hazel	1984	1983	1985
Holland Christian Reform Church	6200 10th Avenue		1984	1985
Holland Old City Hall & Fire Station	106 8th St	1985	1977	1993
Holland Downtown Historic District	Holland	1990		
Holland Harbor South Pier Lighthouse	Holland State Park	1978	1976	1987
Holland Historic District (Residential)	W. 11th, 12, 13th St	1983		
Holland Reformed Protestant Church	57 10th St	1990	1958	1975
Hope Church	77 W 11th		1989	1991
Hope College Informational Designation	12th & College		1962	1962
Kremers House	8 E 12th		1978	1985
Thomas & Anna Morrissey House	190 9th St	1999	1982	
New Groningen Cemetery	106th Ave		2001	2001
Ottawa Beach Historic District	Ottawa Beach Road, Park Twp	1995		
Third Reform Church	100 W 12th	1971	1967	1967
United States Post Office	31 10th St		1997	1997
Benjamin Van Raalte House	1076 E 16th	1989	1990	1995
Van Vleck Hall Hope College			1976	1976
Waukazoo Woods Informational Designation	Waukazoo Dr, Park Twp		1985	1985
West Michigan Furniture Factory	195 W 8th		1991	1993
Western Theological Seminary	86 E 12th		1966	1966
Woman's Literary Club	235 Central Ave		1990	1991

## Recommendations

- It is recommended that Holland apply for *Preserve America* Community status, which would enable them to apply for grant funds for research and documentation, interpretation and education, planning, marketing, and training projects.

The following are some of the significant cultural/heritage themes for Holland that could be used for a cultural heritage tourism program.

**Recreation/Entertainment – Boating.** Holland was a leader in pleasure boat building after World War II. Craftsmen from the city's *Chris Craft* mahogany boat building plant decided to leave the company in order to work with less expensive, modern materials, such as plywood and fiberglass. The result was fishing and pleasure craft that the working man could afford. Their pioneering efforts led to an explosion of boating as a recreational pastime among America's middle class from the 1950s through the 1960s. Holland is also home to a historic site that is representative of the strong boat building tradition found in Holland, the Beacon Boat Works. The site retains a high degree of material integrity and should be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places and protected by a preservation easement or local historic district. We highly recommend using Holland's pleasure boat history to establish an identity for the community.

**Recreation/Entertainment - Resort History.** Holland has the distinction of being the first area in Southwest Michigan to establish a resort industry. After seeing the success of Bay View in the Petoskey area, Holland businessmen planned and opened Macatawa Park, the first resort community to be built south of Ludington. It was followed a year later by the construction of the Ottawa Beach resort established by the railroad on the north side of Lake Macatawa. The success of these resorts and the industry they pioneered along the West Michigan coast were an economic turnaround for the state, which was suffering after the demise of the lumber industry. In 1928 at the opening of Scenic Drive north of Muskegon, Michigan's Governor Green pointed out that while lumbering had brought \$70 million annually to the state, the new tourism effort was bringing in \$250 million annually. The resort history is a significant piece of the area's twentieth century history and should be interpreted and promoted.

**Recreation/Entertainment – Parks.** In the early 1920s Chicago businessman George Goetz's purchased land in Holland and created a summer home with a working farm which he called Lakewood Farm. Goetz began acquiring exotic animals and eventually opened a portion of his property to the public as a zoo. The zoo was a popular local attraction until it was destroyed by a storm in 1930s and Goetz was unable to rebuild it due to financial losses suffered during the Great Depression. (The animals were donated to the newly created Brookfield Zoo outside of Chicago) The Goetz home is still in existence and should be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. Goetz made a land swap with the Ottawa County to create a better entrance to his zoo. Ottawa County created Tunnel Park on the land they received from Goetz and named Lakewood Road after Goetz's farm. A Michigan Historical Marker commemorating the Goetz zoo and Tunnel Park should be placed at the park.

**Transportation – The West Michigan Pike** – The Ottawa County Road Commission was a leader in the construction of good roads in Michigan. William Connelly, head of the commission, was elected as a state senator on a good roads platform and spent over twenty years in the legislature where he worked to provide the State Highway Department with the authority and funding to build uniform, improved roads. The West Michigan Pike Association was a private organization that existed from 1911-1922 to promote the construction of the first continuous improved road to be built in West Michigan. The road ran from Chicago to Mackinaw City and served as the main artery for the new automobile tourism at the turn of the century. In Holland, the West Michigan Pike ran east around the southern shore of Lake Macatawa, directly through downtown Holland, then headed west toward the resort at Ottawa Beach before heading north. Documenting the Pike's historic route through the city and interpreting the era through the historic

buildings along the route would add dimension and context to interpretations of the downtown commercial core.

**Ethnic and Agricultural Heritage** – In addition to its unique Dutch heritage, Holland has one of the largest Hispanic populations in Southwest Michigan. This was a result of the recruiting efforts of the sugar beet industry in the 1930s to bring migrant workers to the area. Expansion of the interpretation and promotion of the art, heritage and culinary traditions of the Hispanic people that settled in Holland would add an interesting dimension to the city's ethnic history. Hispanic history in Holland is strongly tied to agriculture and could be a vehicle for interpreting the sugar beet industry, which was unique to the Holland area in West Michigan. Heinz has also been a major industry in the community since the turn of the twentieth century and the story of the pickle industry, cucumber farming, and the role of migrant farm workers is one that could be explored in more depth.

**Architecture** – There are a number of different themes related to architecture that Holland could develop as part of a regional architectural tourism initiative. Holland has a number of commercial buildings downtown, such as the Bell Telephone building, whose unique architecture is based on the Flemish style of the Netherlands. There is also a regional style of polychromatic brickwork popularized by a Dutch brick yard owner, Jan Veneklasen of Zeeland found in the Holland area. The technique was used most often in residences built between 1870 and 1910. The Holland fire, which occurred on the same day as the Chicago fire, is an interesting story that could be interpreted through the replacement buildings that were constructed downtown. The Albert Keppler log cabin should be included in an interpretation of the log construction found throughout the region. Holland is home to one of the state's best examples of Prairie-style architecture, the Marigold Lodge designed by Chicago-based architect Thomas Eddy Tallmadge. This home can be included in a number of regional architecture tours including a tour of gentlemen country estates. The country estate was a phenomenon popularized by Liberty Hyde Bailey through his magazine *Country Living in America* in the teens and 1920s.

**Furniture** – Holland was home to one of the nation's most well-respected Arts and Crafts furniture makers, Charles Limbert. Limbert, along with Gustave Stickley and the Roycroft Community, was considered a skilled maker of the handcrafted furniture. Limbert employed local craftsmen that had learned their art from their Dutch forefathers. Though the factory building has been demolished, Holland could do much to promote the Limbert heritage to Arts and Crafts collectors and historians. Ideas include: sponsor an annual Limbert furniture show and sale, which would bring collectors to the community; work to establish a Limbert furniture dealer downtown; and develop articles about Limbert furniture for Arts and Crafts collectors magazines.

**Conservation/Reforestation** – Holland State Park was one of nine state parks established between New Buffalo and Ludington before 1930. The high number of state parks in the region is an indicator of West Michigan's business and political leaders' commitment to tourism as an economic engine. State parks ensured that Lake Michigan's shore was open to everyone, not just the wealthy. The development of Holland State Park fits into a broader picture of twentieth century development in Michigan that includes automobile tourism, the development of the state highway system, the rise of landscape architecture as a profession, and the need to reforest Michigan after lumbering ended in 1890.

## Grand Haven, Ottawa County

Grand Haven currently utilizes historic conservation districts to protect its resources, which do not enable access to any historic preservation incentive programs or preservation-related grant funds. To date, Grand Haven has not been a participant in standard historic preservation programs, as seen from the chart below.

National Register of Historic Places, State Register of Historic Sites, and Michigan Historical Markers for Grand Haven Area, Ottawa County				
Resource	Address	National Register	State Register	State Marker
Gerrit Bottje House	420 Clinton		1990	
Central Schools Informational Site	106 S 6th St		1991	1991
Coast Guard Cutter Escanaba	Escanaba Park		1991	1991
Edward Ferry House	514 Lafayette	1982	1972	
Grand Haven Informational Designation	M-31, Rix Robinson Park		1968	1968
Grand Trunk Railroad Depot	1 Harbor Avenue		1980	1981
Henry Griffin Drug Store	525 Elliot		1989	
Highland Park Summer Resort Informational Designation	Highland Drive		1986	1986
Khardomah Lodge	1365 Lake Avenue		1990	2000
Thomas McCambridge House	214 North St		1989	
Pere Marquette Railway Locomotive #1223	Jackson Park	2000		
Piers and Revetments @ Grand Haven	Grand River	1995		
Nathaniel Robbins House	205 5th	2009	1990	
Arend Vander Veen House	508 Washington		1992	

### Recommendations

- Nominate the downtown commercial district to the National Register of Historic Places. Such a designation is purely honorary and places no restrictions on property owners. It would, however, enable property owners that want to participate in the federal historic preservation tax credit program qualify for the 20 percent tax credit on rehabilitation work. Overall, Grand Haven should make better use of the National Register of Historic Places program, which is a good marketing tool for historic resources. Designation elevates a resource's importance in the eyes of visitors. One example, nominating Fricano's Pizza to the National Register of Historic Places would enable the owner to utilize federal tax credits for maintenance work and bring prestige to a popular local icon.
- Apply to become a National Park Service Certified Local Government (CLG). To do so, the city must adopt a historic district ordinance, appoint a historic district commission, commit to an ongoing survey of its historic resources, and develop four-year preservation goals. (A community does not need to establish historic districts to become a CLG.) Becoming a CLG will enable access to CLG grant funds—one of the few funds available for actual rehabilitation work for qualified historic properties. In addition CLG funds can be used for identification, registration, education, and planning.
- Apply for *Preserve America* Community status. This would enable the city (or nonprofit organizations within the city) to apply for *Preserve America* grant funds for research and documentation, interpretation and education, planning, marketing, and training projects.

The following are some of the significant cultural/heritage themes for the Grand Haven area that could be used for a cultural heritage tourism program.

**Transportation - The West Michigan Pike.** Michigan was in economic trouble when lumbering ended in the late 1880s. To counteract the downturn, local leaders in West Michigan focused on developing a strong tourism industry along the Lake Michigan shore. When Henry Ford introduced the Model T and the automobile became affordable for the working class, West Michigan's leaders saw the need to capitalize on this new form of transportation if their resort tourism industry was to thrive. In 1911 Dr. William DeKleine and William Loutit of Grand Haven, spearheaded the establishment of the West Michigan Pike Association to construct the first continuous, improved road in West Michigan. The road, called the West Michigan Pike, was to run from Chicago to Mackinaw City. It was completed in 1922 and later became one of the first state trunk lines (M-11) and was among the first roads included in the newly established federal highway system (US-31). The West Michigan Pike served the southwest Michigan's rapidly growing tourist and fruit industries and was a driving force in the development of the region's twentieth century history. At the turn of the century, Ottawa County in particular was a leader in road construction practices due to William Connelly, a resident of Spring Lake and a twenty-year member of the county road commission. Connelly was elected to a four-year term as a state senator on a good roads platform where he was instrumental in establishing and funding Michigan's state highway department. Connelly owned a "Spanish" style home on Spring Lake for twenty years and was responsible for the development of residential summer homes "for the wealthy" on Spring Lake. A Michigan Historical Marker should be erected to commemorate his contribution to road development in Michigan. In the Grand Haven area the route of the West Michigan Pike was

168<sup>th</sup> Street then went west on Washington, north on Seventh, cross bridge, north on 174<sup>th</sup> Street through Ferrysburg then north on Grand Haven Road.

Documenting the West Michigan Pike's historic route through the city and interpreting the city's twentieth century history through the historic buildings found along the route would add dimension and context to interpretations of the architecture and history of the downtown commercial core.

**Transportation - Scenic Drives/Highway Beautification - Lake Shore Drive.** The idea of a scenic highway along Lake Michigan began in 1923 with an editorial in the *Grand Haven Daily Tribune*. The editorial suggested that an improved road should be built that would run along the shore between Holland and Grand Haven. The road would follow the existing sand road that had not been incorporated into the West Michigan Pike when that route was laid out in 1911. Locals had always "deplored the fact that the West Michigan Pike was not built along the old Lakeshore Road" which they thought was "much more interesting and picturesque." However, in October 1923 William Connelly of the Ottawa Road Commission indicated that the county's first priority was to build a paved way between Grand Rapids and Grand Haven to improve access to the Port Sheldon Beach Association. Connelly encouraged the community to keep the idea of a scenic Lakeshore Road as "a vision for the future."

In March 1928 as the first scenic drive in Michigan was completed connecting Muskegon State Park to White Lake, Muskegon County officials announced their support of a regional effort to create a "forty mile bi-county Scenic Highway . . . which would run along the shores of Lake Michigan about six miles south of Grand Haven to the Oceana County line on M-99 north of Montague." The proposed highway would "create in Muskegon and Ottawa counties a scenic drive comparable to those at Palm Beach, drives along the ocean in Florida and drives along the Gulf of Mexico at Gulfport and Biloxi."

Michigan was a leader in adopting and implementing highway beautification standards in the 1920s. The state recognized the close relationship between automobile tourism and beautiful roads and worked to adopt legislation and guidelines to encourage and support them. Planting trees as part of a road beautification project also met the state's need to reforest its land after it



had been denuded by lumbering. The scenic highway between Grand Haven and White Lake was the first of its kind constructed in the state. A history of the road should be developed along with a driving/biking tour map. Protective zoning and design guidelines should be developed that will ensure that the scenic integrity of the historic route is preserved.

**Transportation - Grand Haven State Park.** The park was donated to the state by the city of Grand Haven in 1920 and was among the first state parks established in Michigan. Grand Haven State Park is unique in that it served as the terminus for a major east-west state highway, the Grand River Road, which began in Detroit (M-16). There was a strong connection between state park development and state highway development in the early 1920s. State parks provided free camping areas for automobile tourists at a time when there weren't yet enough hotels to provide shelter for travelers. In 1925-26, the Department of Transportation improved the concrete oval in the park doubling the parking capacity and dubbing them "the Sunset Circles." In 1927 the state introduced a pilot program of winter sports in state parks to provide facilities for amateur sports such as skating, snowshoeing, and coasting. The five state parks selected for the initial experiment were Grand Haven, East Tawas, Grayling, and two of the Dodge Parks near Detroit. Depression-era federal relief projects greatly benefited this park. In 1937 an Art Moderne-style bathhouse was built with Public Works Administration (PWA) funds. The history of this park could be interpreted to incorporate a number of historic trends including the development of the state highway system, the development of the state park system, the role of the Depression relief programs in Michigan state park development, add the architecture of the Art Moderne buildings which is unique to this state park.

**Transportation - Railroad History.** The Detroit & Milwaukee Railroad was a land grant railroad formed under an 1856 federal act. The act stipulated that a rail line was to be built from Port Huron to Grand Haven. Two companies received contracts to build the railroad: The Detroit & Milwaukee were responsible for construction from Grand Haven to Owosso, and the Port Huron & Milwaukee received the contract to build the rail line from Owosso to Port Huron. The two rail lines later consolidated under the name of the Grand Trunk Railroad. With monetary assistance from the Canadian Great Western Railroad, a rail line from Detroit to Grand Haven was completed in November 1858. According to Willis Dunbar, the railroad built a large depot/hotel on the west side of the Grand River, which required that ferries carry passengers across the river into the downtown. In 1868 Grand Haven's citizens petitioned the railroad to move its terminal to the east side of the river and offered funding to redo the tracks. The railroad agreed and a new depot was constructed in 1870 on Washington Street. Docks were built nearby to accommodate a car ferry across Lake Michigan operated by another vendor. In 1903 the Grand Trunk Car Ferry Line was established between Grand Haven and Milwaukee. The Grand Trunk ferry was moved to Muskegon in 1933. Grand Haven has a stronger railroad history than most of the towns along Lake Michigan. It still retains a number of its railroad resources including a swing bridge, coal tower, depot, and locomotive that would be significant resources for a regional railroad heritage tour.

**Recreation/Entertainment - Resort History.** Mineral springs have long been thought to have curative powers. Hot Springs, Arkansas was named a national reserve in 1832 and by the turn of the century eleven bathhouses had been built in the city. In the 1850s Saratoga Springs in New York became a popular destination for its spa resorts and mineral baths, and in the 1860s Calistoga Springs in California was hailed as the western Saratoga Springs. The city of Mount Clemens on Michigan's east side is credited with being the earliest and best known of Michigan's mineral bath towns; the mineral springs there were discovered in the 1860s. Within the project area, the earliest mineral spring findings occurred in 1870 when the Spring Lake Salt Company hit a magnetic mineral spring while drilling for salt. The mineral spring resorts built in Grand Haven and Spring Lake were among the few that existed within the project area and provide a unique twist to the region's resort heritage. Grand Haven is also home to the Highland Park Resort Association established in 1886 a significant resource in the interpretation of the region's twentieth century resort history.

**Ethnic Heritage - Italian.** Michigan's west coast was home to a wide range of immigrants though few are acknowledged or interpreted. Grand Haven's Italian heritage is symbolized in resources such as Fortino's store and Fricano's Pizza. Fricanco's building, the old Ottawa Tavern, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. These resources could be included in a regional driving tour of Italian Heritage resources.

**Architecture** - Grand Haven has some of the best residential housing stock in Southwest Michigan. The quality of original construction is high and the material integrity is mainly intact. There is an array of architectural styles on display that would have great appeal to those interested in history and architecture. Residential neighborhood walking tours that discuss architectural details and the history of homes should be developed.

**Conservation/Reforestation** - William H. Loutit served as chair of Michigan's Conservation Commission in 1929. He was also one of the original supporters of the West Michigan Pike. His place in the state's reforestation/conservation and tourism efforts should be documented and commemorated with a Michigan Historical Marker.

**Conservation/Reforestation - Rosy Mound Recreation Area.** A unique sand formation called a perched dune, Rosy Mound is a smaller version of the dunes found at Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. Rosy Mound was mined for sand in the 1950s and 1960s, but is now part of a critical dune area under the Sand Dune Protection and Management Act. Rosy Mound would be a significant site in a region-wide interpretation of Michigan's conservation efforts in the twentieth century.

**Other** - West Michigan has the distinction of being associated with organized crime and gangsters running bootleg liquor during the Prohibition years. Al Capone and/or his associates are reported to have owned homes or stayed in hotels in dozens of communities up and down Michigan's west coast. Capone's girlfriend is reportedly buried near South Haven and his accountant reportedly owned a home in Stevensville. While it is very likely that Capone did frequent West Michigan, it would be difficult to document actual sites associated with him. Grand Haven, however, has the distinction of having a well-documented association with one of the most notorious gangsters of the Prohibition era, "Baby-Face" Nelson. Along with five other men, Nelson robbed the People's State Bank in Grand Haven at gunpoint on August 18, 1933. He made a machine gun fire-filled escape stealing and abandoning three cars before reaching the Indiana state line. The FBI killed Nelson in Kansas one year later. The 1920s gangster era has a continued appeal with both young and old and the creation of a Prohibition-era Gangster tour of the West Michigan coast could serve as a tourist draw. (The FBI records for the Grand Haven bank heist are available on the FBI website <http://foia.fbi.gov/nelson/nelson1.pdf>.)

## Muskegon, Muskegon County

The city of Muskegon has had a historic preservation program since the 1970s. The city has a local historic district ordinance, a historic district commission, and has designated seven local historic districts that protect over four hundred and twenty resources. The federal preservation tax credit rehabilitation project undertaken at the Muskegon Boiler Works received the Governor's Award for Historic Preservation in 2007.

National Register of Historic Places, State Register of Historic Sites and Michigan Historical Markers, Muskegon Area, Muskegon County							
County	Resource	Address	Community	National Historic Landmark	National Register	State Register	State Marker
Muskegon	Amazon Hosiery	530-550 Western Avenue	Muskegon		1982		
Muskegon	Bluffton Actor's Colony Commemorative Designation	Waterworks Street	Muskegon			1997	1997
Muskegon	Central Fire Station	75 Walton	Muskegon		1999		
Muskegon	Central Methodist Church	1011 Second St	Muskegon			1989	1990
Muskegon	Duquette Carlson Market	585 Clay St	Muskegon			1983	
Muskegon	Evergreen Cemetery	Grand, Wood, Pine & Irvin	Muskegon			1986	1999
Muskegon	Ferris Business College Informational Designation	141 Hartford	Muskegon			1988	1988
Muskegon	Hackley Public Library	316 W. Webster	Muskegon			1990	1990
Muskegon	Charles Hackley House	484 W. Webster	Muskegon		1970	1970	1988
Muskegon	Hackley-Holt House	523 W. Clay	Muskegon			1990	1993
Muskegon	Hartshorn Curtain Roller Factory	1150 W. Webster	Muskegon			1983	
Muskegon	Horatio N. Hovey	318 Houston	Muskegon		1983	1982	
Muskegon	Hume House	472 W. Webster	Muskegon		1972	1971	1988
Muskegon	Indian Cemetery	Morris between 1st & 2nd	Muskegon			1961	1964
Muskegon	Lakeside Informational Designation	520 Pine	Muskegon			2004	2004
Muskegon	Marsh Field	Corner of Peck & Laketon Avenue	Muskegon			2002	2003
Muskegon	Michigan Theater Building	407 Western	Muskegon			1978	
Muskegon	Muskegon YMCA	297 W. Clay	Muskegon		1982		
Muskegon	Muskegon Woman's Club	280 W. Webster	Muskegon			1998	2000
Muskegon	Pinchtown Informational Designation	Laketown & Lakeshore Dr	Muskegon			1991	1991
Muskegon	Scenic Drive/Muskegon State Park	Muskegon State Park	Muskegon			2009	2009
Muskegon	South Breakwater Light	Muskegon Lake Entry Channel SW	Muskegon		2006		
Muskegon	South Pierhead Light	Muskegon Lake Entry Channel SW	Muskegon		2006		
Muskegon	SS <i>Milwaukee Clipper</i>	Grand Trunk Car Ferry Dock	Muskegon	1989	1983		
Muskegon	Torrent House	315 W. Webster	Muskegon			1971	1980
Muskegon	Union Depot	610 W. Western Ave	Muskegon		2000	1978	2000
Muskegon	USS <i>Silversides</i>	Fulton & Bluff, Channel Muskegon Lake	Muskegon	1986	1972		
Muskegon	Jean Baptiste Recollect Trading Post	Ruddiman at Bear Lake Rd	North Muskegon			1979	1980
Muskegon	Muskegon Log Booming Company Informational Designation	Richards Park, Old U.S. 31	North Muskegon			1956	1958

## Recommendations

- Promote the state historic preservation tax credits within the established local historic districts. Since the state tax credit legislation was passed in 2000, only eight applications have been received from Muskegon.
- Nominate the commercial resources on Western Avenue to the National Register of Historic Places to enable property owners to utilize the federal preservation tax credits.
- Apply for National Park Service Certified Local Government (CLG) status. Certification would enable the city and nonprofit organizations within the city to apply for CLG grants for historic preservation projects for historic resource identification and registration, historic preservation planning, rehabilitation planning, and rehabilitation work for qualified historic resources.
- Apply for *Preserve America* Community status, which would enable the city and nonprofit organizations within the city to apply for *Preserve America* grant funds for research and documentation, interpretation and education, planning, marketing, and training projects.

The following are some of the significant themes for Muskegon that could be used in the development of a cultural heritage tourism program.

**Transportation - The West Michigan Pike.** The West Michigan Pike Association was a private organization that existed between 1911 and 1922 to promote the construction of the first continuous improved road built in West Michigan. The road ran from Chicago to Mackinaw City and served as the main artery for the new automobile tourism that was developing at the turn of the century. In the Muskegon area, from Grand Haven the West Michigan Pike followed Grand Haven Road north to Merriam Road then followed Peck Street to Third Street into downtown Muskegon and around Hackley Park going east on Western to Ottawa Street then ran across the Memorial Causeway where it stair-stepped through North Muskegon to Whitehall Road.

- The Muskegon area contains some remnants of the historic road that would interest automobile, highway and bridge enthusiasts, historians, and others. According to historic maps, Hidden Cove Park, near the intersection of Grand Haven Road and U.S. 31, was originally one of the early auto camps established to meet the needs of increased automobile tourism in the 1920s. The park still retains its historic feeling and a historic bridge from circa 1920 can still be seen in the park. In the early 1930s some of the earliest improvements to U.S. 31 were undertaken in Muskegon. The Ottawa Street Bridge is an artifact from this period. Richards Park is another and contains a number of remnants including historic bridges, stone walls, lagoons, and plantings that were associated with the beautification of the highway. The Memorial Causeway was also one of the first major improvements undertaken by the state in 1934 in an effort to beautify the connection between U.S. 31 and Scenic Drive and draw automobile tourists to Muskegon State Park. The story of the West Michigan Pike in Muskegon can be shown through a number of existing sites that give a visual impression of the historic road. A driving tour that interprets the history of the West Michigan Pike in Muskegon should be developed. Interpretive signs could be placed at key locations.
- Muskegon has a long tradition of initiating cutting edge planning practices. The story of the Muskegon Improvement Company's effort to attract new businesses to Muskegon after lumbering ended is an interesting one that met with great success. Peck Street in Muskegon Heights, the route of the West Michigan Pike into Muskegon, contains some of the factories brought in by the improvement company and is bordered by the subdivisions created to house their workers. The industrial feel and commercial architecture of this area should be preserved. This is an area where historic factory buildings could be rehabilitated for new uses for artists and start-up industries. Muskegon's National Register Historic District is an excellent example of the application of the principals of the City Beautiful movement, America's first national planning phenomenon that overtook the

country following the World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago in 1893. Hackley Park, with its public art and Richardsonian Romanesque civic buildings, is a classic example of a City Beautiful design. Marketing the park as a City Beautiful resource, along with other City Beautiful resources in the city (such as the school campus and McGraft Park) will attract a niche market of architects, planners, and preservationists. Even the choice to develop a mall downtown, the subsequent demolition of historic resources, and the rise of the new buildings could be interpreted within the history of Muskegon's planning tradition. The original route of the West Michigan Pike skirts Hackley Park and the site of the new construction.

**Transportation - Scenic Highway.** Because of its concentration on lumbering and manufacturing, Muskegon's resort industry did not develop as early as other communities in Southwest Michigan. In the 1920s, in a targeted effort to attract automobile tourists to the area, Muskegon County agreed to build an improved highway from North Muskegon to White Lake. The road was to follow an existing sand road that cut through Muskegon State Park (established in 1923) to connect the resorts at White Lake to the new state park. The concrete road was known as the Scenic Highway and was the first "purely scenic highway along the Lake Michigan coast" and "the first highway to wind through west Michigan's sand dunes" providing vistas of Lake Michigan and its beaches. Completed in 1927 Scenic Drive with its gentle curves and landscaping that blended with the natural environment, was considered a shining example of Michigan's new road beautification policy. The road was the first phase of State Highway Department Chief Murray Van Waggoner's larger vision of a scenic highway that would extend from the Indiana state line north to the resort districts of Harbor Springs. A Michigan Historical Marker will be erected to commemorate Scenic Drive and Muskegon State Park as part of this project. Pioneer Park, improved by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in the 1930s is located on Scenic Drive and still retains the feeling and setting of a Depression-era park. An early resort motel (the Rusted Lantern) on Scenic Drive should be researched to determine if it is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, which would enable the owner to utilize the federal preservation tax credit program. The road could be marketed to cyclists to minimize automobile traffic. Its historic character and landscaping should be protected.

**Recreation/Entertainment - Depression-era Resources.** Muskegon State Park was acquired in 1923 through a joint effort by the state, Muskegon County, and the cities of Muskegon, Muskegon Heights, and North Muskegon. The initial acquisition consisted of 844 acres of undeveloped Lake Michigan dune land that was inaccessible to automobile traffic until the state's first scenic highway was built through the park in 1927. The park was significant to the development of Muskegon as a resort area. Muskegon State Park can be interpreted as one of the earliest state parks developed in Michigan, for its part in the area's 1920s reforestation effort, and for its role in early highway development. The Civilian Conservation Corps extensively improved the park in the 1930s. Muskegon State Park was one of the first Michigan state parks to introduce winter sports. Snowboarding was developed in Muskegon and the park has one of few public luge runs in the country. This history should be used to attract new visitors to the park.

Muskegon is one of the first communities in Southwest Michigan to interpret the era of the Great Depression through the Scolnik House Museum. The museum could serve as the foundation for a broader interpretation program of Muskegon's Depression-era resources including Muskegon State Park, Pioneer Park, and the Mart Dock.

**Recreation/Entertainment – Resorts - Actors' Colony at Bluffton.** Muskegon did not rely as much on resort development for its economic base as other communities in Southwest Michigan in large part because its deep harbor enabled it to become a major lumbering and manufacturing center. However, one of Southwest Michigan's more interesting resort areas did develop here, the Actors' Colony at Bluffton. Vaudeville performers that performed at the nearby Lake Michigan Beach Theater started the colony. The most famous resident was comedian and silent film star Buster Keaton whose parents built a cottage in the colony and summered there. A state historical marker has been placed on the site and an annual Buster Keaton Film Festival is held. Both the

Actors' Colony history, the association with Buster Keaton, and the Buster Keaton Film Festival should be more widely promoted.

**Architecture - Roadside Architecture - Drive-ins & Diners.** Roadside architecture was a phenomenon between the 1920s and the 1960s. The term refers to buildings, features, signs, and sites that were related to the developing automobile tourism industry. Before national chains employed slick marketing practices, local owners of “mom and pop” motels, gas stations, and drive-ins used creativity in constructing one-of-a-kind buildings to attract customers. These are now viewed as architectural folk art. The exterior of the Cherokee Restaurant at 1971 W. Sherman built in the 1960s is a charming example—one of the few that remains in Southwest Michigan. An outstanding example like this should be protected through local historic district designation.

Drive-ins are part of early automobile culture. The first drive-in restaurant was established in Texas in 1920 while the first drive-in theater was built in New Jersey in 1928. Drive-ins peaked in popularity in the 1950s and by the 1970s most mom and pop drive-ins were closed up and torn down as national fast food chains like MacDonald's took over. The Muskegon area is lucky to have at least three operating drive-ins—two restaurants and a theater:

- **Dog n' Suds, 4421 Grand Haven Road.** The Dog n' Suds chain was established by two Illinois teachers in 1953. At its peak there were 600 franchises nationwide, today only twelve remain in operation. This Dog n' Suds was recently restored and is located on the original route of the West Michigan Pike. It should be listed on the National Register of Historic Places, which would enable the owner to qualify for preservation tax credits, and protected with a local historic district designation
- **Masar's Drive-In, 247 E. Main.** It is located on business U.S. 31.
- **Getty Theater 4 Drive-in Theater, 920 Summit, Muskegon Heights.** Built in 1949, the theater became part of the regional Jack Loeks theater chain in 1967 and still retains its neon sign and original screen. It should be listed on the National Register of Historic Places and protected with local historic district designation.

Muskegon also hosts a diner, the **U.S. 31 Barbeque** that provides distinctive local fare. Established in 1939, the restaurant moved to its current site in a modest mid-century modern style building in 1962. The building should be researched to determine if it qualifies for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. A restaurant like this could be promoted as an “Authentic Michigan” experience or in a manner similar to those highlighted on the Food Network's *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives* program.

Muskegon retains enough “roadside architecture” features (examples include neon signs like those at the Seaway and Bel-Aire Motels, the CIO sign downtown, and the Sherman Bowling Alley neon), to warrant a Roadside Architecture driving tour. Roadside architecture is popular with motorcyclists, historians, artists, car enthusiast, etc. It would be a way to promote Muskegon's post-World War II working class heritage to better advantage and to utilize the iconic symbols of some of the working classes' most popular past times in a cultural heritage tourism program. A survey of roadside architecture features throughout Muskegon should be undertaken and used to develop a driving tour.

**Recreation/Entertainment - Bowling.** In 1906 the Brunswick Company constructed a 100,000 square foot plant in Muskegon. Brunswick took the lead in popularizing bowling as a sport at the turn of the century and was an innovator in the development of bowling equipment. According to the Bowling Foundation, in 2007 there were over 2.5 million certified league bowlers in America and over 66 million people in the United States who bowled at least once last year. In 2006 bowling was listed as one of the top five growing sports in the country. These bowling enthusiasts could provide a strong niche market for Muskegon's bowling history. A museum that focuses on Brunswick's contribution to the sport would be appropriate since so much of the sports advancement was based on activities that occurred in Muskegon. At the very least, a Michigan

Historical Marker commemorating Brunswick's contribution to the sport should be erected. The eligibility of the Sherman Bowling Center for listing in the National Register of Historic Places should be determined (this would require an assessment of the interior and its significance in terms of testing new bowling equipment). It should be designated a local historic district to protect both the exterior of the building and its historic neon signs.

**Recreation/Entertainment - Theaters.** Paul Schlossman built the Michigan Theater (Frauenthal Center for the Performing Arts) at 425 West Western Avenue, in 1929. Michigan's well-known theater architect, C. Howard Crane, designed it in an Art Deco style. The theater, which cost \$690,000 to build, opened on September 17, 1930. It was restored in 1998. Currently listed on the State Register of Historic Sites, the theater should be listed in the National Register of Historic Places to call attention to its architectural importance and its Art Deco exterior should be protected by local historic district designation.

**Ethnic Heritage** - Along with the Union Pier area in Berrien County, Muskegon has one of the most diverse ethnic histories in Southwest Michigan. By 1888 over five thousand Dutch had settled in Muskegon, most in the area of Spring and Myrtle streets in West Muskegon. The city had a substantial Jewish population whose businessmen built local icons such as Grossman's Department Store that served Muskegon for over fifty years. Saint Michael's Catholic Church was established in 1912 to serve the Polish parish and the Muskegon Lodge of the Polish Falcons was established in 1911 and still operates a hall in the city. The Jackson Hill neighborhood was once known as Muskegon's "Little Italy" after a successful campaign by Muskegon's civic leaders attracted Italian immigrants to work in the city's foundries. Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church was formed in 1922 and catered to the city's Italian population. The city's Irish heritage is celebrated each year through the Muskegon Irish Music Festival. Muskegon's African American population rose sharply between 1940 and 1950 from 1,781 to 7,382 due to the wartime work available in the Muskegon foundries. More research should be done to locate the neighborhoods associated with the different ethnic groups and to identify the sites and cultural traditions associated with each group. This diversity adds to Muskegon's "big city" feel and sets it apart from other more rural communities on Michigan's west coast. The distinctions evidenced in ethnic neighborhoods, restaurants, and festivals in larger cities are a proven tourist draw and Muskegon should look for ways to better promote its ethnic heritage.

**Architecture** - Muskegon has wonderful architectural stock of which few people outside the city seem to be aware. (Most people tend to think only of the Queen Anne Charles Hackley House or the city's demolished historic downtown when they think of Muskegon architecture.) Muskegon should consider undertaking new architectural surveys using updated technology like GIS that would enable the development of specialized architectural tours.

The world class St. Frances de Sales Church at 2929 McCracken Street, designed by the internationally renowned modern architect Marcel Breuer, should be listed in the National Register of Historic Places and a Michigan Historical Marker should be placed at the site. The church has the potential to attract international visitors on its own merit and a regular tour schedule should be established. Other modern buildings in the city including Muskegon Community College, designed by Michigan architect Alden Dow; the mid-century modern Hall of Justice; the 1970's "brutalist" architecture of Muskegon's civic buildings; and the gold-certified Green building Michigan Alternative and Renewable Energy Center (MAREC) should be documented and developed into a driving tour to complement the Breuer church. These types of specialized tours would appeal to architectural savvy audiences such as weekend tourists from Chicago.

**Transportation - The Mart Dock.** Two brothers, Max and Mark McKee were instrumental in developing Muskegon into a major shipping port in the 1930s with the construction of the Mart Dock, which included a bulk warehouse, a cold storage facility for fruit, and an eight vessel wharf. It also included an auditorium and a sports area where ice hockey was first introduced to the city. The Mart Dock was built with \$564,000 in federal reconstruction finance funding and \$750,000 in

local funds. In 1932 a \$2.5 million federal project was used to deepen the entrance to the Muskegon Harbor and construct a modern breakwater and concrete revetments. On June 3, 1941, the *Milwaukee Clipper*, a newly remodeled 1904 passenger steamer, arrived in Muskegon and served as an automobile ferry between Milwaukee and Muskegon. The Mart Dock should be listed in the National Register of Historic Places and protected with local historic district designation.

**Maritime - Commercial Fishing.** Muskegon is home to a fulltime operating commercial fishery, Petersen Family Fisheries at 2038 Lakeshore Drive. The family can trace its fishing heritage to the 1600s and the Petersen's have been commercial fishing in Michigan since the family moved to Ludington from Norway in 1866. They moved from Ludington to Muskegon in 1927, and today four family members still participate in the commercial fishing business: Kenneth and Chris Petersen and their sons, Eric and Bill. The Petersen's build steel boats for their own use and maintain several historic net and gill tugs that are still in operation. The Peterson's have expressed interest in developing a heritage education program on commercial fishing. This is an underrepresented piece of Michigan's maritime heritage that would provide a unique cultural heritage tourism program for Muskegon.

**Maritime - Ships.** Muskegon is home to some of the most unique, if disparate, maritime resources on the Great Lakes including two National Historic Landmarks the USS *Silversides* (submarine) and the SS *Milwaukee Clipper* (passenger steamer) and the LST 393 (transport ship). Creating a regional destination by marketing all the major ships found along the Lake Michigan coast, such as the SS *Keewatin* in Saugatuck, the SS *Badger* in Ludington, docked in the project area under one umbrella, would provide a more comprehensive experience for travelers and a more substantive product for a national market.

**Arsenal of Democracy** - West Michigan had much to contribute to the war effort during World War II. The manufacture of war goods occurred in small spaces (over a store in Stevensville) as well as at major manufacturing facilities such as Chris Craft in Holland. Muskegon would be a significant resource in any interpretation of this era of Michigan's history. The city's landscape changed dramatically as hundreds of new workers found employment in foundries such as Cannon, Wynant, and Campbell. The city is also home to the submarine, the USS *Silversides*. Muskegon's Veteran's Memorial Causeway is a living memorial to veterans. Thoughtful programs, activities, and celebrations of the contributions and sacrifices of both the members of the military and ordinary citizens during the war years could be part of a regional initiative.

**Manufacturing - C. W. Marsh Leather Packings Company,** Located at 1385 Hudson, the C. W. Marsh factory makes leather goods using the same machinery and processes as when it was established in 1900. The factory should be listed in the National Register of Historic Places and a plan should be developed that will protect this resource should the company ever stop production. Opportunities for interpretation and/or tours should be explored. The founder of the factory, Charles Marsh, was an avid baseball fan and served as president of the Muskegon baseball club from 1912-14. In 1916 he built a professional league baseball field, Marsh Field, at the corner of Peck and Laketon (Peck is the route the West Michigan Pike followed through Muskegon).

**Agriculture - Celery Growing.** Michigan is ranked second in the nation, behind California, in celery production, and Southwest Michigan is the largest producer of celery in the state. Though the best-known celery fields are those in the Allegan/Kalamazoo area, Dutch immigrants who knew how to work the rich bottomland of the Muskegon River established Muskegon's celery fields at the turn of the century. By 1908 twenty-three men were listed as celery growers in the Muskegon city directory, most living in the Jackson Hill neighborhood. Celery growing is a unique aspect of Southwest Michigan's agricultural history that should be interpreted as part of a larger agri-tourism initiative.

**Conservation - Natural Features.** Muskegon should increase the promotion of the area's outstanding natural features and more strongly integrate them into the city's image. The area has



the potential to be an even greater launching point for quiet sport enthusiasts such as fishermen, canoeists, hikers, birdwatchers, and cyclists.

## White Lake Area (Montague, Whitehall)

The White Lake area’s utilization of historic preservation programs has been minimal, as seen from the chart below.

National Register of Historic Places, State Register of Historic Sites, and Michigan Historical Markers, White Lake Area, Muskegon County					
Resource	Address	Community	National Register	State Register	State Marker
Ferry Memorial Church	8637 Old Channel Trail	Montague		1987	
Lafayette Ripley House	8543 Old Channel Trail	Montague		1983	
Mouth Cemetery	6666 Sunset Lake	Montague		1988	1994
Navigation Structures of White Lake Harbor			2000		
Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church	1101 S Mears	Whitehall		1983	1985
Ruth Thompson	405 E Colby	Whitehall		1993	1994
White Lake Yacht Club	6748 S. Shore Dr	Whitehall		2006	2006

### Recommendations

- List the village of Montague’s downtown commercial district in the National Register of Historic Places. This would enable commercial property owners that want to participate in the federal preservation tax credit program qualify for the 20 percent tax credit on rehabilitation work. The National Register of Historic Places program is a good marketing tool for historic resources. Designation elevates a resource’s importance in the eyes of visitors.
- The village of Whitehall should further research its Scandinavian heritage and determine the boundaries for Swedentown, which should be listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Because Whitehall has a population of less than five thousand, listing in the National Register would qualify homeowners for participation in the 25 percent state historic preservation tax credit program.
- The village of Whitehall should adopt a historic district ordinance and appoint a historic district commission in order to apply to become a National Park Service Certified Local Government (CLG). This would enable application for CLG grant funds to undertake rehabilitation work on the Howmet Theater. In addition CLG funds can be used for identification, registration, education, and preservation planning.
- The village of Whitehall should undertake a historic resource survey of its residential neighborhoods to determine boundaries for potential historic districts. For example, the Swedentown area in Whitehall should be protected by a local historic district.
- The Dog ‘n Suds in Montague should be listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Listing would qualify the property owner to participate in the 25 percent federal preservation tax credit program. The Dog ‘n Suds should be protected by a preservation easement or a local historic district ordinance.
- Both villages of Whitehall and Montague should apply for *Preserve America* Community status. This would enable them to apply for *Preserve America* grant funds for research and documentation, interpretation and education, planning, marketing, and training projects.

The following are some of the significant cultural/heritage themes for the White Lake area that could be used for a cultural heritage tourism program:

**Ethnic Heritage - Scandanavian.** Whitehall should celebrate its Swedish heritage. Swedentown (bordered by Main, Johannah and Johnson Streets) should be listed in the National Register of Historic Places and protected by a local historic district.

**Transportation - The West Michigan Pike.** The West Michigan Pike Association was a private organization that existed between 1911 and 1922 to promote the construction of the first continuous improved road built in West Michigan. The road ran from Chicago to Mackinaw City and served as the main artery for the new automobile tourism that was developing at the turn of the century. In the White Lake area the West Michigan Pike ran

north from Muskegon on Whitehall Road, west on Riley Thompson Road, north on Lorenson Road, east on Lakewood, north on Durham Street, west on Colby in Whitehall, and across the bridge to Montague. From Montague the original route ran northwest on Dowling, north on Lamos, west on Post Road, north on Old 99, east on Meinert, north on Fifty-Sixth Street, east on Arthur, north on Sixty-Fourth Street and east on Hayes. (In 1922 the route north out of Montague was changed to Whitehall Road.)

**Transportation - Scenic Drive and North Shore Drive.** In the 1920s, in a targeted effort to attract automobile tourists to the area, Muskegon County agreed to build an improved highway from North Muskegon to White Lake. The road was to follow an existing sand road that cut through Muskegon State Park (established in 1923) to connect the resorts at White Lake to the new state park. The concrete road was known as the Scenic Highway and was the first “purely scenic highway along the Lake Michigan coast” and “the first highway to wind through west Michigan’s sand dunes” providing vistas of Lake Michigan and its beaches. Completed in 1927 Scenic Drive with its gentle curves and landscaping that blended with the natural environment, was considered a shining example of Michigan’s new road beautification policy. The road was the first phase of State Highway Department Chief Murray Van Waggoner’s larger vision of a scenic highway that would extend from the Indiana state line north to the resort districts of Harbor Springs. Scenic Drive and North Shore Drive retain much of the feel of the early twentieth century because of mature trees, little modern development, and the retention of historic resources such as the White Lake golf club, the White Lake yacht club,

**Recreation/Entertainment - Resorts.** Pigeon Hill Resort on Old Channel Trail is a good example of any early tourist court resort. It should be reviewed to determine if it is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Listing in the National Register would qualify the property owner for historic preservation rehabilitation tax credits.

**Recreation/Entertainment - Theater.** The Howmet Playhouse is a unique resource. Its history and association with the play write and songwriter Frank Adams should be showcased. The theater should be listed in the National Register of Historic Places in order to qualify it for historic preservation tax credits.

**Recreation/Entertainment - Golf.** More research should be done to determine the historic integrity of the Old Channel Trail—the Woods golf course and if it is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The golf course, along with the White Lake Golf Club course and should be included in a regional promotion of historic golf courses.

## Oceana County (New Era, Shelby, Hart, Pentwater)

Communities in the Oceana County region have not participated in historic preservation programs as seen from the chart below:

National Register of Historic Places, State Register of Historic Sites, and Michigan Historical Markers, Oceana County					
Resource	Address	Community	National Register	State Register	State Marker
Charles Mears Silver Lake Boarding House	Lighthouse at Silver Lake	Mears		1986	1990
Little Point Sable Lighthouse	Little Point Sable	Golden Twp	1984		
Veteran's Day Storm Informational Designation	Pentwater Memorial Marina	Pentwater		1985	1986
Old U.S. 31 Bridge	Pentwater River	Pentwater	1999		
John Gurney Park		Hart		2009	2009

### Recommendations

Veltman Hardware store building at 4736 First Street in New Era should be evaluated for National Register Eligibility of Historic Places and listed if eligible.

The village of Pentwater's commercial district should be listed in the National Register of Historic Places in order to qualify property owners for historic preservation tax credits.

Pentwater's residential neighborhood's should be surveyed and boundaries assessed for potential historic districts. Since the village's population is less than five thousand, listing in the National Register of Historic Places would qualify homeowners to use the state preservation tax credit

The Mears Barn should be protected with a historic preservation easement or local historic district designation.

A Michigan Historical Marker should be erected to honor one of the early leaders in West Michigan's conservation efforts, Edith Munger of Hart. She was the only woman to serve on a commission that select the first Director of Conservation for the state of Michigan. Munger was active in many fields from food conservation to women's rights, and was a strong supporter of the Michigan Audubon Society. She served as the first president of the Michigan Conservation Council and vice president of the Michigan Forestry Association. She actively worked to get a strip of Lake Michigan dune land north of Little Point Sable designated as a state park.

The following are some of the significant cultural/heritage themes for the communities in Oceana County that could be used for a cultural heritage tourism program:

**Agriculture & Transportation** - he Charles Schmeiding Roadside Fruit Stand and Gas Station on Oceana Drive north of Shelby is an outstanding example of the region's twentieth century history and should be protected by a local historic district ordinance or a historic preservation easement. It should be listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Ideally, this should be reopened as a fruit stand and an interpretative center for the West Michigan Pike. According to a March 12, 1927 article in the *Michigan Farmer*, this was the first roadside fruit stand established on the West Michigan Pike (M-11). It was established by Schmeiding in 1919 after receiving many requests from auto tourist to purchase fruit from his farm. The stone gas station was built in 1924 and the bungalow style building with "Kelly Stone gables on the second floor" was built in 1926.

**Architecture - Quonset Huts.** New Era has a number of vernacular buildings that add to its rural charm, including a number of early twentieth century rock face concrete block buildings. There are also Quonset huts and a barrel roof fire department building that represent new building techniques developed during World War II.

**Architecture - Local Brickworks and Quarries.** A survey of Pentwater brick buildings should be undertaken in order to establish a regional architectural identity for the area based on the distinctive golden color this local brick.

**Entertainment/Recreation - Motels and Tourist Cabins.** There are a number of “mom and pop” motels in Oceana County, such as the Hart Motel and Gateway Motel, that should be included in a region-wide initiative to promote these resources. The Pentwood Tourist Cabins at 5594 W. Monroe in Pentwater should be assessed for eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and should be protected with an historic preservation easement or as a local historic district. The log cabins at Smert’s Resort on Bass Lake should be evaluated for eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

**Entertainment/Recreation - Parks.** The historic park on business U.S. 31 should be protected. Work undertaken in the park should be done according to the Secretary of the Interior’s Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes.

**Transportation - Railroads.** Shelby and Hart have railroad depots that should be included in a regional tour of train related resources.

**Transportation - Roadside Park.** The Kibbie Creek roadside park should be included in the interpretation of the evolution of the West Michigan Pike. The park should be maintained and made available for public use.

## Ludington, Mason County

Currently, the city of Ludington does not have a very strong historic preservation program in place. Only two resources are listed in the National Register of Historic Places, while eight historical markers have been erected in the city. During this project the city did apply for and receive *Preserve America* Community status, which will enable them to apply for Preserve America grants for preservation planning, interpretation and marketing programs related to cultural heritage tourism. A historic district study committee was appointed to research the viability of establishing a local historic district for properties along Ludington Avenue.

National Register of Historic Places, State Register of Historic Sites, and Michigan Historical Markers for Ludington, Mason County					
Resource	Address	Community	National Register	State Register	State Marker
Armistice Day Storm	Stearns Park	Ludington		1970	1971
Big Sable Point Lighthouse	North Ludington State Park	Hamlin Twp	1983	1988	2000
Camp Arcadia	5990 Barnhart Road	Hamlin Twp		1981	
Emanuel Lutheran Evangelical Church	501 E. Danahar St.	Ludington		1999	1999
First Mason County Courthouse	South Lakeshore Dr	Pere Marquette Twp		1978	1986
Fish House	407 W Filer	Ludington		1979	
Ghost Town of Hamlin Informational Designation	M-116 Ludington State Park	Hamlin Twp		1956	1957
Daniel H. Goodenough House	706 E Ludington	Ludington		1984	
Fran N. Latimer and Fanny Allen House	701 Ludington Ave	Ludington		1996	
Ray Lessard House	110 N. Lavinia	Ludington		1974	
Ludington North Breakwater Light		Ludington	2005		
Marquette's Death Informational Designation	Pere Marquette Park	Pere Marquette Twp		1966	1966
Mason County Courthouse	300 E. Ludington	Ludington	1988	1975	1999
SS Badger	700 William St	Ludington	2009	1997	1997
SS Pere Marquette Informational Designation	Stearns Park	Ludington		1971	1976
Swedish Lutheran Church	501 E. Danahar St	Ludington		1999	1999

### Recommendations

- Designate Ludington Avenue and the downtown commercial district as a National Register of Historic Places historic district to enable property owners to participate in the federal tax credit program for rehabilitations.
- Adopt a historic district ordinance. This would enable the city to access protective powers for historic resources should the need arise. Adopting an ordinance and appointing a historic district commission would enable the city to apply for National Park Service Certified Local Government (CLG) status. Certification would enable the city and nonprofit organizations within the city to apply for CLG grants for historic preservation projects for historic resource identification and registration, historic preservation planning, rehabilitation planning and rehabilitation work for qualified historic resources.
- The city of Ludington has excellent historic residential housing stock. Neighborhoods should be designated local historic districts to enable property owners to participate in the 25 percent state historic preservation tax credit program.

The following are some of the significant themes for Ludington that could be used in the development of a cultural heritage tourism program.

**Transportation - The West Michigan Pike.** The West Michigan Pike Association was a private organization that existed between 1911 and 1922 to promote the construction of the first continuous improved road built in West Michigan. The road ran from Chicago to Mackinaw City and served as the main artery for the new automobile tourism that was developing at the turn of the twentieth century. In Mason County from Pentwater the Pike ran north on Pere Marquette Highway, west on Sixth into Ludington, north on Madison, west on Second Street, north on Washington, west on Dowland, north on James Street to Ludington Avenue (U.S. 10), then east to Scottville. The historic buildings along this route should be documented and included in the regional interpretation of the historic route.

**Recreation/Entertainment - Ludington State Park.** This park has an interesting history that should be interpreted. The first land for the park was donated to the state after a Memorial Day weekend visit by the Friends of Our Native Landscapes in 1921. Their host was a Dr. Lemon who owned a cottage on Hamlin Lake. Participants in the weekend included Jens Jensen, a renowned Chicago landscape architect that developed the Prairie style of landscape architecture, and landscape architect Genevieve Gillette, Jensen's former assistant, who was instrumental in establishing Michigan's state park system. Over the next few years, the state worked to acquire more land and received a large transfer of acreage from the federal government. In 1933 Ludington became the first state park in Michigan to be developed by the newly established Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). It was a "showcase" project no doubt meant to serve as a public relations tool for the Depression-era relief program. Raymond H. Wilcox, a nationally recognized landscape architect from Grand Rapids, was placed in charge of the project. Ludington State Park can serve as a key resource in a regional interpretation of the history of Michigan state parks and the history of CCC in Southwest Michigan. Ludington State Park's historic association with the Friends of Our Native Landscapes should also be developed since this group was responsible for the establishment of a number of state parks in Indiana, Illinois, and Wisconsin. The history of their work should be coupled with the efforts of modern conservation groups and the current interest in "green" technology and building techniques to create a story that will appeal to an environmentalist niche market.

**Recreation/Entertainment - Roadside Architecture.** Ludington retains a number of resources related to this theme that relate the importance of tourism to the community's twentieth century economy and history. These sites could be grouped under a Roadside Architecture theme and marketed to niche groups ranging from historians to car enthusiasts to bicyclists and bikers.

- **Post War "Mom and Pop" Motels.** Ludington has at least fifteen post-World War II "mom and pop" motels still in operation, the largest concentration within the project area. Many are located on Ludington Avenue, which gives the city a very distinctive landscape. These resources could be promoted as a group under the Roadside Architecture theme. They strongly relate to automobile tourism and the heritage route. A thematic National Register of Historic Places nomination for motels, hotels and resorts in Southwest Michigan should be developed and Ludington's resources included enabling property owners to qualify for federal rehabilitation tax credits. These resources should also be protected through a historic district ordinance and local historic district designation, so that they are not lost to new development or inappropriate alteration. A program should be developed to assist motel owners in adopting and implementing a "boutique" approach to services that would appeal to modern travelers.
- **Park Lane Bowl.** This is a classic 1940s bowling alley and bar at 1963 N. Lakeshore that retains a high degree of historic integrity.
- **Jaycees Mini Golf.** Miniature golf first became popular in the 1930s, and that popularity increased after World War II. The Jaycees course retains the flavor of a 1960s miniature

golf course and is one of a handful of this style of miniature golf courses remaining in the project area.

**Recreation/Entertainment - Resorts.** The Hamlin Lake area north of Ludington should be surveyed for its historic motels and resorts. These can be included under a thematic National Register of Historic Places nomination for motels.

**Recreation/Entertainment - Resorts.** Though smaller in scale, Epworth Heights is a historic resort community similar to Bay View in Petoskey. Providing the public with limited access to this unique resource, perhaps through a home tour offered every two or four years, should be considered.

**Recreation/Entertainment - Neon Signs.** First created in France in 1910, neon signs were introduced in America in 1923 by a Los Angeles Packard dealer and they have been associated with automobiles and automobile tourism ever since. Neon was popular throughout the 1930s and 1940s and reached a peak in popularity in the 1950s. Ludington retains a number of examples of neon signs including an outstanding example in the shape of a fish on Ludington Avenue. Historic neon signs appeal to a wide niche market. A regional driving tour of the neon signs found along the heritage route should be developed.

**Recreation/Entertainment - Carrom.** Since the late nineteenth century Ludington has been the home of the manufacturer of the Carrom Game Board, a game that is recognizable to generations of children across America. Carrom was an adaptation of a popular game played in Africa, Asia and Europe. Initiating an international tournament of this classic game could bring a niche of people to Ludington. A good example of a small town that used a game as an economic driver would be the town of Lindsborg, Kansas, which opened a chess school and holds an international chess tournament each year.

**Ethnic History - Scandinavians.** Ludington had a relatively large population of Scandinavians that arrived in the late nineteenth century and worked in the lumber and commercial fishing industries. Many settled in the Fourth Ward on Filer and Loomis Streets. A number of historic resources related to this group still exist including the Swedish Lutheran Church, built in 1901, and the Danish Hall. Further research should be done to identify resources related to the city's Scandinavian heritage. Developing and promoting information on the ethnic diversity of the community will add depth to the traveler's experience.

**Architecture and Ethnic History - Germans.** German immigrant Henry Neuman moved to Ludington in 1875 and established the German Worker's Society to provide aid to other German's interested in immigrating to Ludington. Two such immigrants, August Tiedeman and Charles Boerner, formed the firm of Tiedeman and Boerner in 1877. The firm was responsible for the construction of many prominent buildings in the community. A survey should be undertaken to identify the buildings associated with Tiedeman and Boerner and a walking/driving tour of these buildings developed. Promoting the work of these local builders will add to Ludington's unique sense of place.

**Maritime - Commercial Fishing.** Ludington was once one of the major commercial fishing sites on Lake Michigan. Bortell's Restaurant and the Fish Shack are two resources that reflect this heritage. Ludington should document other resources related to this unique industry.

**Maritime - Ships.** Ludington is home to the SS *Badger* Car Ferry. A regional approach to promoting the large ships found in West Michigan's coastal cities, such as two National Historic Landmarks the USS *Silversides* (submarine) and the SS *Milwaukee Clipper* (passenger steamer) and the LST 393 (transport ship) in Muskegon and the passenger ship the SS *Keewatin* in Saugatuck, would provide a more comprehensive experience for the traveler and a more substantive product for a national market.



**Living Memorials** - Perhaps because of its need to reforest the land and beautify it to attract tourists to its resort industry, West Michigan strongly responded to the national call for the planting of living memorials to honor the veterans and war dead from World Wars I and II. (Participation in the National Federation of Garden Clubs Blue Star Highway program is one outstanding example of this.) Each community responded in its own way. Ludington planted elms in Stearns Park. The park would be a key resource in a regional interpretation of the national phenomenon of living memorials. Interpreting the living memorials along the route of the West Michigan Pike and tying them in with Memorial and Veterans Day celebrations would create a unique regional approach to these holidays. Living memorials have also been associated historically with conservation and Arbor Day and could be included in a “green” themed tourism packaged marketed to environmentalists.

# Appendix A - Art Summary

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*Cheryl Chidester, a graduate student in the historic preservation program at Eastern Michigan University served as an intern on this project assisting in the development of the Art context narrative. Cheryl developed the following questionnaire for local artists. Their responses are summarized in this section.*

**Artist Name** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Medium/Media** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Contact Information (optional)** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Artist Questionnaire

1. How many years have you been a professional artist and how long have you been working in your primary medium?
2. What formal and/or informal training have you experienced?
3. How long have you been living in this area? Do you live in the area year around?
4. Do you think that there is enough affordable housing and/or studio space for area artists in southwest Michigan?
5. How do artists in the area communicate with each other (i.e. web list serve, newsletter)?
6. Do you live or work near other artists? If so, is there cooperation and sharing among the artists?
7. What are the local art organizations and centers that you are involved in? In what capacity? What State and/or National art organizations are you a member of?
8. Do any of these organizations communicate, co-operate and/or collaborate?
9. Are you involved in other forms of art (i.e. performing, written)? Is so, please describe.
10. Is West Michigan known for a particular style or type of artwork? Please elaborate.

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11. Have the area's traditional arts, crafts and/or folk art influenced your artwork?
12. How do you feel that the area's ethnic groups, culture and the natural environment influence your artwork's subjects, medium and style?
13. Do artists or art organizations of this area have any connection with Chicago? If so, please explain.
14. Where to you sell and/or exhibit your work?
15. How to you market your work?
16. Is your artwork your only source of income? If not, what other type(s) of work do you do?
17. Do you have any business training? If so, please elaborate.
18. What types of regional programs do you think would be most beneficial to artists in the area?
19. What would you like to see as an additional outcome(s) of this type of project?
20. What are the assets of this area for artists?
21. What is your favorite piece of public art in the area (name, location and any additional information that you would like to share)?
22. Please share any additional comments or concerns involving art in southwest Michigan.

# Appendix A - Art Summary

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## White Lake Area

Art can be seen in unlikely places in this rural area comprised of the villages of Montague and Whitehall and known as White Lake. For example, seventeen original oil paintings by artist Frederick Norman (1846-1928) are displayed at the National City Bank in Whitehall. Montague's small historical museum, which is housed in a former church, tells of the area's historical lumber industry and has several works of art in its collection including work by Norman.

Local churches support the work of local artists. Whitehall's Swedish Lebanon Evangelical Lutheran includes paintings, sculptures, stenciling, stained glass, carvings, and weavings and other fabric art—much of the art was created by parishioners. There is a church quilting group that meets weekly. The pastor stated that many of the church members are involved in music. A wide variety of instruments, including a bell choir and a large vocal choir, accompany their masses. Saint John the Baptist Church, a small parish of about thirty families in Claybanks Township, exhibits not only stained glass, but also a number of sculptures that were created in Chicago by the Daprato Company, known for its work with Chicago's Catholic churches. Rueben Llano, a master carver from Columbia, lives in the Montague area. Llano specializes in religious art and has worked extensively with the Catholic church. He has a close connection with the Catholic diocese in the Chicago area and has created art for a number of churches in the United States. His art can also be seen in Whitehall's Swedish Lebanon Evangelical Lutheran Church. Llano markets his work mostly by word-of-mouth and his growing reputation, especially in Catholic religious art.

At one time, the White Lake area supported three weathervane companies and several foundries. Products produced by the foundries included parts for ships. The world's largest weathervane was fabricated by the Whitehall Metal Studios, a company located in Montague, and was designed by one of its employees. Several artists are employed by the company and others do freelance work for them, including Ruben Llano.

The White Lake area is known for its pottery tradition with Peter Johnson considered as the father of the renewed tradition. The local soil, especially Claybanks Township, contains a large amount of clay which probably facilitated this craft's original prominence in the area.

Whitehall's Klinefelter's Gallery exhibited and sold the work of Muskegon born Wilfrid (Wilfred) Berg (1908-2002), from his estate. Berg was an active and popular artist in the area who worked on Works Progress Administration (WPA) art projects in Muskegon and created several murals in that city.

Among the artists surveyed there is a wide range of experience. Some of the artists are either long-time residents or natives of the community (including most of the more accomplished artists). However, there are a growing number of part-time artists that have recently relocated.

Although a few of the artists have websites, most rely on word-of-mouth as a marketing tool. Many area artists are involved in the artists co-operative the White River Gallery, which is adjacent to the Nuveen Community Center for the Arts and is affiliated with the Arts Council of White Lake (ACWL).

Although the community is relatively small and not especially affluent, the Arts Council of White Lake (ACWL) and Montague's mayor Henry Roesler are very supportive of visual and performing arts.

The White Lake area has a strong theatre tradition. By 1913, the White Lake Dramatic Club needed a new playhouse. Lumber baron J. J. Nufer was instrumental in raising funds for the project. Frank Adams, an Illinois native and creator of musical comedies for the stage, was commissioned to oversee the project. The Playhouse, designed by Muskegon architect Van

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Zalinger, is constructed with a plaster “Kappeldome” an acoustic-enhancing feature, named after a German theatre designer. The 535-seat theatre opened on September 21, 1916. During the 1930s, the theatre was sold and began to show films. In 1973 the building was purchased by the Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp, with the help of the Howmet Corporation, and was used for the camp’s theatre productions until they built a new facility in 2006. Now called the Howmet Playhouse, the theatre was donated to the City of Whitehall. With the hopes of a year-round facility, the City is in the midst of a fund-raising campaign. The Howmet Corporation has, again, acted as a major contributor.

## **Affordable Gallery, Studio and Housing Space**

Most of the full-time professional artists, including Ruben Llano and Pete Johnson, live in the out-lying rural area. These areas are affordable as is housing in the villages of Montague and Whitehall. A large majority of the newer residents and summer people reside in the resort areas and in newly constructed condominiums.

## **Area Assets**

The natural beauty of the area, the relative quiet and solitude, the small but supportive community, and the long tradition of arts in the area were all cited as assets of the community.

The Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp, located in the Manistee National Forest in Twin Lakes, is an under-recognized and under-utilized facility. The non-profit organization offers visual arts, drama, music and dance programs for all ages. The camp conducts many performances throughout the summer with several of them are free to the public. It has been recognized as one of Michigan’s great cultural resources by four governors.

## **Current and Possible Programs**

- Many of the area artists are connected with the Arts Council of White Lake (ACWL) and their affiliate, the Nuveen Community Center for the Arts and the White River Gallery. There are over fifteen artists involved in the cooperative White River Gallery. The Nuveen Center offers classes, workshops, lectures, exhibits, and events for all ages for both residents and visitors.
- A public art program that is sponsored by the community is Art Walk, which was created in 2005. The goal is to place twenty-six sculptures along the along the Hart-Montague and Montague-Berry Junction trail systems by 2010. Sculptures by local artists are chosen to be placed on the bike trail that wanders throughout the communities of Whitehall and Montague. Pieces reflect the natural surroundings, the area’s history, and present and past inhabitants including the Ojibwa Tribe. There are members of the community that are descendents of the tribe and own businesses in the area, including Happy Mohawk Canoe Livery which was originally a trading post.
- Although they are separate entities, the historical associations of Montague and Whitehall often collaborate on projects.
- Not only are the fine arts prized, but also the traditional arts, such as the fabric arts of needlework, the local theatre (the Howmet Playhouse), and music (local bands at the band shell). In late 2006 the White Lake Chamber Music Society officially became part of the Arts Council of White Lake. Its mission is to promote “the advancement, awareness, and appreciation of chamber music through local amateur and professional musicians.” The organization has plans to expand into the areas of theater, vocal music and orchestra development.

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- The community has Chicago connections. Some of the newly transplanted residents are originally from Chicago as are vacationers and yearly summer guests. The ACWL's education programs are sponsored by the Nuveen Benevolent Trust. The trust was established in 1935 by John Nuveen Sr. and Jr. of Chicago to fund activities of the Immanuel Baptist Church and has grown to broaden its support.
- The Everett Bray Charitable Trust, a Flint family who summered in the Sylvan Beach area of Whitehall and Baldwin, supports the ACWL summer concerts.
- Brochures for the White Lake area galleries/studios and a historic walking tour have been published.
- The Arts Council of White Lake collaborates with a variety of organizations in the immediate area. Through a grant, the ACWL has hopes of expanding its reach through collaborative efforts to outlying area, but has met with some resistance. Near-by communities tend to focus on their immediate area and wish to keep their autonomy.
- Encourage the new residents of the area, especially the senior citizens, to become involved in the Nuveen Community Center. Many of the area's new residents, most of who occupy the lakefront condos and the senior citizen complex (which is located next to the Center), are not involved in the community's art culture.
- Encourage rehabilitation of historic structures. Some of the area's foundries have been lost and the 1910 building relating to area's oldest business, the Eagle Ottawa Tanning Works (est. 1865) in Whitehall was demolished in 2007. The demolition, along with the number of new condominiums being built, has raised concerns about losing community identity. These concerns need to be addressed.

## White River Light Station Museum Summary

The limestone and brick light station museum which first operated in 1875, was the first light house to open to the public as a museum (1970), and holds a collection of maritime artifacts.

The majority of the guests are from the Midwest though. There is a \$2.00 fee for the self-guided museum tour.

### Current and Possible Programs

- The museum hosts a variety of programs, including the recent presentation "Meet the Ladies of the Lights" presented by the Friends of the White River Light Station. Weddings are also held on the grounds and school groups visit the facility.
- Formed in 2003, the Friends are vital to the financial needs of the Museum in terms of maintaining the station, preserving its artifacts, and providing continuing education of maritime heritage in Western Michigan.
- Develop programs that will lead to increased funding. The acquisition of maritime artifacts is time-consuming and costly. These types of artifacts are becoming rarer and quite popular among private collectors.
- Michigan should explore better way-finding for its lighthouse museums as they are often located in out-of-the-way locations. Karen McDonnell, curator of the Museum, feels that more road signage, especially on Michigan highways and roads near lighthouse locations would be beneficial. Currently, well-placed brochures are the major source of advertising.

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- Develop a tall ship tour of the Lake Michigan shoreline. A visiting tall ship would also bring visibility to the museum.
- A collaborative method of promoting Michigan's lighthouses that focuses media attention on Michigan's large collection of lighthouses would be beneficial. Lighthouses are often viewed in a romantic sense and this could be one tourism focus. A light house hop is another possibility.
- Combine the history and appeal of lighthouses with the arts. A few years ago, and for a couple of years, a group of Indiana plein aire painters met and created art at the lighthouse. Coffee, sandwiches and snacks were provided. Visitors were able to watch as the artwork was created and when it was completed they were able to purchase it. A small percentage of the profits went to the Friends. Expanding this type of event could be beneficial to the lighthouse, local artists, and the community. This project could involve the White Lake Area Arts Council and/or the Muskegon Museum of Art.
- Develop strategies to expand the tourist season into the fall shoulder season. Combining the fall harvests of the area with the arts has potential.

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## White Lake Area Art Sampler

### Religious Art



Much of the Montague/Whitehall public art is religious in nature and can be found in churches, cemeteries, and artists' studios. Whitehall's Swedish Lebanon Evangelical Lutheran Church exhibits traditional Swedish stenciling (top left), woodworking, sculptures (by Ruben Llano, right), stained glass, and various types of fabric art (lower left), can be seen in the church, much of it was created by parishioners. There is a church quilting group that meets weekly. The pastor relayed that many of the church members are involved in music. A wide variety of instruments, including a bell choir and a large vocal choir, accompany their masses.



Saint John the Baptist Church, built in 1886 and located in Claybanks Township, underwent a major restoration in 2003-2005. Included in the project were the church's 1917 stained glass windows (bottom left). Several of the parish's sculptures, including *St. Isidore the Farmer*, the patron saint of farmers and rural communities, were created by the Daprato Company which is known for its work with Chicago Catholic churches (bottom, far left). The rural community culture's influence can not only be seen in the art, but also church events such as wild game dinners and fishing retreats.



Ruben Llano, a master carver originally from Columbia, who lives in the Montague area (Claybanks), specializes in religious art and works extensively with the Catholic Church. He has a close connection with the Catholic Church in the Chicago area and has created art for a number of churches in the Unites States. His art can also be seen in Whitehall's Swedish Lebanon Evangelical Lutheran Church.



Photo: [www.artcouncilofwhitelake.org](http://www.artcouncilofwhitelake.org)



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## Art Council of White Lake & the Nuveen Community Center for the Arts



The Arts Council of White Lake (ACWL) is involved in many aspects of the area's art culture. The organization coordinates the Sculpture Walk program, awards scholarships to performing arts camps and programs, the Summer Concert Series, and other special events such as a visit from the Art Train. The affiliated Nuveen Community Center for the Arts offers workshops, lectures, exhibits, and events for all ages and levels of experience.

### Public Art



At one time, the area supported three weathervane companies and several foundries. Products produced by the foundries include parts for ships. The "world's largest weather vane" in Montague is dedicated to the *Ellenwood*, a lumber schooner that sank in 1901 as it was bound for Milwaukee (top left). The weathervane

was fabricated by the Whitehall Metal Studios; a company located in Montague, and was designed by one of its employees, Robert Wesley. Several artists are employed by the company and others do freelance

work for them, including Ruben Llano. ACWL began placing sculptures along the Hart-Montague and Montague-Berry Junction trail systems in October 2005 and is proposing to place twenty-five sculptures created by West Michigan artists by 2010 with an additional larger destination or capstone sculpture. The theme for the project is "An Artist's



View of White Lake Area." Pictured top right is *Lake Spirits* (2006) by David G. Anderson. Art can be seen in unlikely places. Seventeen original oil paintings by Fredrick Norman (1846-1928) are displayed at the National City Bank in Whitehall (middle left).



Montague's small historical museum, which is housed in a former church that has retained its stained glass, tells of the area's historical lumber industry and has several works of art in its collection including work by Norman (bottom left and right). The area's historical artists include the painter, John Nequist. Nequist was born in Sweden in 1844, moved to Whitehall in 1868.

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## White River Light Station



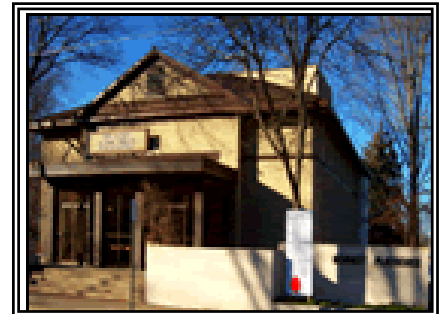
The White River Light Station serves as the Great Lakes Maritime Museum. The limestone and brick light station first operated in 1875, and was the first light house to open to the public as a museum in 1970. The museum hosts a variety of programs including the recent presentation of “Meet the Ladies of the Lights” presented by the Friends of the White River Light Station. Included in the exhibits is the art of knot-tying. Plein Aire events have been held on the grounds.

## Music & the Performing Arts



The area has a rich music and a theatre tradition. The 535-seat theater opened on September 21, 1916 (pictured right) is today known as the Howmet Playhouse. The seating exceeded the population of Whitehall. The theatre designed by Muskegon architect Van Zalingen, is constructed with a plaster “Kappeldome” an acoustic-enhancing feature named after a German theatre designer. Since then, it served

as a movie theatre and a venue for the Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp. Now named the Howmet Playhouse, the building is currently owned by the city of Whitehall and is undergoing restoration with the hopes of becoming a year-round community facility.



*Photo: [www.cityofwhitehall.org](http://www.cityofwhitehall.org)*

In late 2006 the White Lake Chamber Music Society officially became part of the Arts Council of White Lake (ACWL). Its mission is to promote “the advancement, awareness, and appreciation of chamber music through local amateur and professional musicians.” Among its many projects, the ACWL sponsors local musicians’ performances at Montague’s downtown band shell.

The Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp, located in the Manistee National Forest in Twin Lake is a non-profit organization which offers visual arts, drama, music and dance programs for all ages. Many performances are conducted throughout the summer with several of them free to the public. It has been recognized as one of Michigan’s great cultural resources by four governors.

## Artists, Studios & Galleries



*Photo: [www.claybankspotterystudio.com](http://www.claybankspotterystudio.com)*

The area is known for its pottery tradition with Peter Johnson (Terrestrial Forming Pottery Studio), being considered the father of the renewed tradition. The area’s soil, including Claybanks, contains a large amount of clay which probably facilitated this craft’s original prominence in the area. Pictured top left is Claybanks Pottery Studio owned by artist Steve and Laurie Pounder and located in New Era. Other area art studios and galleries include Sharon Sithem’s The Studio House, Reed Minty’s Pottery Shop, Kinefelter’s Gallery & Framing (which represented Wilfred Berg [1908-2002] a Muskegon and WPA artist), Tillers Art & Gifts, Llano Stone Wood Carvers, and the Omnibus Studio which specialized in custom stained glass

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for Churches. The cooperative White River Gallery, which is adjacent to the Nuveen Community Center for the Arts and also affiliated with the ACWL, features several local artists and exhibits a variety of work.

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## Pentwater

Frederick H. Immer, born in Germany in 1884, traveled throughout the United States painting stage scenery before settling in Pentwater. While vacationing in Pentwater, he met Pentwater resident Hazel Wagner and they were married in 1924. Immer established a studio in the E. F. Kent Building and became known as a landscape artist. A favorite subject of Immer's was the Frog Pond which was later filled in for the construction for the maintenance building for the newly created Charles Mears State Park around 1921. *The Frog Pond*, a painting by Immer, hangs in the Pentwater Historical Society Museum.

Hart hosts the annual Honoring our Elders Powwow on Labor Day Weekend and the Oceana County Folk Festival. The area is home to several Native American families. The Folk Festival, originally established to honor Native American and Hispanic cultures and traditions, has since broadened its focus. The traditional (folk) arts need further investigation of influences, history and trends.

Hart has a small theatre tradition which is continued by the Oceana Summer Youth Theatre. Established in 2000, students from Hart, Shelby, Walkerville and Oceana Intermediate Schools participate in the organization.

Pentwater, Hart, and the surrounding area are home to several churches that display stained glass windows. The buildings also often exhibit decorative brickwork and many were constructed with Pentwater bricks.

Only a handful of fine artists currently exhibiting in Pentwater have lived in the area for over fifteen years. Many of Pentwater artists vacationed in the area before retiring or changing career paths and relocating there. Bert and Cheri Petri, both well-known artists, are among the few long-time artist residents of the area (Burt since 1970).

Gallery 150 features young, contemporary artists from Southwest Michigan, many with formal training. Bert Petri received his art education in Germany, Cindy Callog in Chicago and Trudy Bergsted in Amsterdam; they, along with Judy Peters, are among the few that were trained early in life and have been professional artists for most of their life. Although many Pentwater area artists have practiced some sort of art or craft on a part-time basis most of their lives, a large majority of artists represented in Pentwater's art galleries are retired from another profession. Some of these artists have had formal training while others received training from workshops and other informal settings.

Pentwater has a strong Chicago connection. Some of the artists and shop owners have relocated from Chicago. Almost all of the artists featured in Gallery 150 also sell and/or exhibit their work in the Chicago area. Maxine MacLeod, whose work can be seen in Our Gallery in Pentwater and in Holland and Saugatuck, employs an art representative from Chicago to sell her work. Many of Pentwater's visitors are from the Chicago area. Other metropolitan areas that visitors are commonly from include Indianapolis, Cleveland, Saint Louis, Grand Rapids, and Kalamazoo.

Because the artists represented in Pentwater vary widely in art education, experience, and backgrounds, the art is very eclectic. Almost all feel that they have been influenced by their surroundings, especially the water. There appears to be an unusually high percentage of watercolorists and potters, perhaps this is also an influence of the environment. While the participants of Artisan Learning Center have the opportunity to work in a variety of media, the woodworking area is by far the largest at the center. Women almost equal the men in numbers working with this medium. Again, this may be an influence of the environment and of the area's lumbering history. Although there are several churches in the area, only Burt Petri's work among the fine artists shows a distinctive religious influence.

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Few Pentwater artists belong to a formal art organization. The artist co-op and the Artisan Center were the most frequently listed organizations but the Muskegon Museum of Art, the West Shore Art League, the Michigan Watercolor Society, the Southwest Michigan Watercolor Society, and the Ludington Area Arts Council were also mentioned. Most artists however, belonged to informal art organizations, such as the Pentwater Gourmet Welders, or just meet informally with other artists. Many of the artists do not have websites, and none of the informal artists groups possess one. Newsletters were not mentioned. Most information is exchanged during informal gatherings or impromptu meetings. *The Ludington Daily News* prints information involving local events. Although it is being discussed, Pentwater does not have an art organization in place as yet.

The West Shore Art League (WSAL) collaborates with other area organizations. The WSAL organizes events such as gallery walks in Pentwater and visits to the Artisan Center. Several artists are strongly affiliated with Ludington and its art organizations and programs. Several of Pentwater's artists live in the Ludington area due to its affordable housing.

There are only a few artists that are represented in Pentwater whose sole income is from selling their art. Most of the artists work at their craft on a part-time basis; many of those are retired from other careers and do not want to further pursue selling and/or marketing opportunities. However, the town would like to attract more artists and art galleries to the area to facilitate the idea of Pentwater being an art destination. The number of galleries in the town has grown; a total of seven galleries with a variety of focuses exist in the downtown area today.

In regards to the traditional (folk) artists, besides word-of-mouth sales, there is no retail outlet or marketing in place. Those contacted were employed elsewhere, had little or no formal training and varied in age. Most traditional artists are long-time residents of Oceana County. A few may take advantage of the Oceana Folk Country Festival held in Hart at the end of April and some participate in other local art and craft shows. Generally speaking, both fine and traditional artists lack a business background, marketing experience, and knowledge of grants or other opportunities.

Pentwater hosts several festivals that incorporate both the visual and performing arts including the Annual Spring Fest Arts & Craft Fair and the Annual One-Day Fine Arts Fair. These events, centered around the Village Green Park, feature local artists and musicians.

Music is important to the community. A Pentwater restaurant hosts a jazz night twice a week and *Pickin' in the Park* is held Tuesday evenings. Last year, the community raised funds so that the Pentwater High School Band had an opportunity to compete at a national competition at Carnegie Hall for which they received top honors. The Pentwater Civic Band was organized in 1947 by Jerome "Cook" Richmond, Arthur "Bug" Squire, Bud and Kenny Sims and Les Bailey. The members are from surrounding communities and those summering or vacationing in the area. The Band plays on Thursday evenings from late June to late August at the Village Green Park.

## **Affordable Gallery, Studio and Housing Space**

There is no affordable housing in Pentwater. Several shop owners, who asked to be anonymous, felt that retail space was over-priced, especially considering the seasonal aspect of the town. Although Gene and Barb Petri live above Our Gallery, they are not the norm. While there are other, more affordable, communities in the area, none are adjacent to Pentwater. Several artists who are active in Pentwater live in the Ludington area.

The artist co-op, Art on the Town Gallery, houses work from seventeen local artists and helps to defray the cost of exhibiting and selling artwork.

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## Area Assets

Most of the artists active in Pentwater participate in one or more of Pentwater's art fairs and events. A large number of the artists do not participate in other art fairs and feel that these events are essential to their efforts to sell their artwork in downtown Pentwater.

All those that I spoke with felt that the area, especially the water, was an asset and an inspiration and drew visitors to the area. Boating tourism is helped by the existence of the Pentwater Yacht Club.

Also, because of the small size of the art community, there is a sense of sharing and communication between artists.

Much of Pentwater's, and especially Hart's, historic downtown remain intact. The area's traditional artists appear to have a connection with Hart.

The Hart-Montague Trail is a sometimes over-looked asset. Silver Lake, the sand dunes, and the Little Sable Light Station are all draws to the area.

## Current and Possible Programs

- The Artisan Learning Center is an unusual organization. It is a non-profit center that operates on donations and membership fees. The center, which opened its doors in 2003, initially attempted to receive grant money. When that money wasn't realized, with support from individuals the center opened with Gene Davison as the director. It offers equipment (including heavy machinery), some supplies, classes, and mentorship in the arts of woodworking, metal works, stained and fused glass, weaving, potting, and sometimes basket weaving. The studio space is affordable, however, because of the center's 501(c)3 status, art created at the workshop cannot be sold by the artists. Because of this, the space is not practical for professional artists. (The center does sell the art as a fundraising component.) Also, the majority of members are retirees; others are school-age children, schoolteachers, full-time homemakers etc. Most of these members do not wish to pursue the arts as an income venture.
- There is a group in the process of rehabilitating an old school house with the intent that it will be used as an art center. Classes will be offered in a variety of media and eventually music and writing instruction will be offered. They hope not only to employ local artists but to draw instructors and students from other areas and hold performances at the end of each workshop. The plans include an outdoor theatre and indoor rehearsal area to be built on the four-acre site. Classes/workshops will also be offered in renewable energy (solar and wind). James Ege is the director of the school.
- Although Pentwater and the Hart/Silver Lake area often collaborate on events and fairs, the areas are viewed quite differently. Many residents of Pentwater view the Hart/Silver Lake area as louder, more recreational and camping and family oriented. Pentwater sees itself as an art/antique/shopping/dining destination that caters to women and couples. One long-time resident of Hart said that he lives on the "poor side of the track." It appears that outlying residents of Oceana County feel more of a connection to Hart than to Pentwater.
- Pentwater's number of galleries has very recently grown to seven with the hope that more will open. However, the downtown's hardware store is going out of business and recently the downtown pharmacy has done the same.

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- Some of the artists feel that no programs are necessary to help the development of the arts in the area. An opinion was stated that any program involving the arts should be a regional grass roots project.
- There is a need to develop affordable downtown housing/studio/retail space for artists. Concerns about the question of affordable housing, studio and retail space in the area were voiced. The Gustafson building, built by Charles Mears, circa 1887, has been for sale for several months. The town is concerned that it may be vacant soon with no use in sight. This ten thousand square-foot building constructed with Pentwater brick exhibits cast iron from Chicago, basement timbers cut by Mears himself, and decorative murals on the upper floor that was used as a Masonic Temple. The building was featured in an *American Heritage* publication. It was mentioned that perhaps using this space for artist studios would benefit both the artists and the community.
- Establish an art organization in Pentwater. This organization should collaborate with other area art organizations. I was told that the Art Council of White Lake has received a grant to be used for a regional art program or organization. However Pentwater is unsure if they should join forces with them, with Ludington and their West Shore Art League or remain autonomous. Pentwater has not yet formalized an art organization. Both artists and town officials believe that an art organization would be beneficial.
- Establish an art organization that encompasses the traditional artists. The traditional artists that I spoke with felt that an organization to help unite, promote, and assist them would be beneficial. There is no communication between the traditional artists whom are mostly located in outlying areas and the fine artists represented in Pentwater.
- Increase the scope of the Chain-saw Carving Competition. While several area festivals include arts and crafts (the National Asparagus Festival and the Silver Lake Sand Dunes Apple Fest), the Chain-saw Carving Competition's main focus is the arts. Held in Hart for the first time this year, it was a well-attended event that also included local fare and musicians. Residents of Hart feel that this competition has the potential to become bigger and better and to draw more visitors. This type of art and these competitions, which have their roots in logging, are becoming popular in the northern parts of the United States and in Canada. Although Hart's competition was relatively small, more established events draw huge crowds and international competitors whom earn six-figure incomes. Related wood craftsman, such as bowl turners, decoy carvers, etc. could be included in future events. The possibility of traditional music such as lumbering chanties and saw playing was mentioned. Also better promotion of the event in the surrounding communities and the region was discussed.
- Increase the amount of public art in the community. Several town officials believe that there is a need for public art in the community, but what that would entail has not yet been decided. A sculpture walk, murals, a focal point or two of art in the downtown are all ideas being considered. Also being considered is commissioning the Artisan Learning Center to create public artwork.
- Encourage the growth and promotion of Pentwater's Bed and Breakfasts. Pentwater officials are concerned that the lack of a convention and visitors bureau could hinder the development of Pentwater's tourism. While there are a number of Bed and Breakfasts in the area, the former Best Western on business U. S. 31, is the only hotel nearby. One problem is that a good percentage of visitors arrive in the area via their boats and yachts that have built-in accommodations.
- Create more opportunities for artists to exhibit art and to attend workshops and lectures.

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## Pentwater Art and Culture Sampler

### The Artisan Learning Center

The Artisan Learning Center is an unusual organization. It is a non-profit center that operates on donations and membership fees. The center, which opened its doors in 2003, was initially funded with support from individuals, largely from Gene and Barb Davison. With Gene Davison as the director, the Center offers equipment (including heavy machinery), some supplies, classes and mentorship in the arts of woodworking, metal works, stained and fused glass, weaving, pottering and basket weaving.



### Music & Festivals

Pentwater hosts several festivals that incorporate both the visual and performing arts including the Annual Spring Fest, the Arts & Craft Fair, and the Annual One-Day Fine Arts Fair. These events are held on the Village Green Park and feature local artists and musicians. A Pentwater restaurant hosts jazz night twice a week and *Pickin' in the Park* is held Tuesday evenings. Organized in 1947, the Pentwater Civic Band members are from surrounding communities as well as those summering or vacationing in the area. The Band plays on Thursday evenings from late June to late August at the Village Green Park.



Photo: [www.pentwatermichigan.com](http://www.pentwatermichigan.com).

### Art Galleries

Downtown Pentwater is home to several art galleries, including an artist co-op, which features local, regional and Chicago artists. Throughout the year, the galleries participate and host numerous events. The downtown area, which is both walkable and historic, is located on a channel and is just blocks from the beach and Lake Michigan.



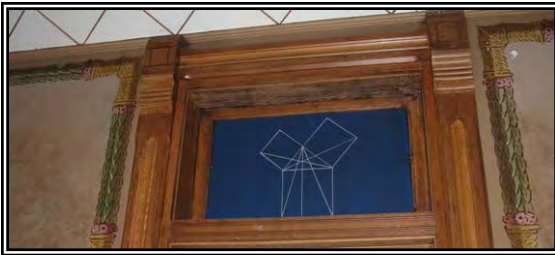
Photo: [www.pentwatermichigan.com](http://www.pentwatermichigan.com)



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## Art in Unlikely Places



The Gustafson building built in 1887 exhibits decorative murals on the upper floor that was once used as a Masonic Temple (top right). The building was featured in an *American Heritage* publication. Painter Frederick H. Immer, is an historical artist who lived in Pentwater. Born in

Germany in 1884, Immer traveled throughout the United States painting stage scenery before settling in Pentwater. He established a studio in the E. F. Kent Building and became known as a landscape artist. A favorite subject of Immer's was the no-longer-existing Frog Pond. One of his painting entitled *The Frog Pond* (bottom right), hangs in the Pentwater Historical Society Museum.



## The Art of Stained Glass in Local Churches



Pentwater, Hart, and the surrounding area are home to several churches that display vibrant stained glass windows. The buildings also often display decorative brickwork and many were constructed with Pentwater brick. Pictured are: Pentwater Baptist Church built in 1884 (left), Hart's Congregational United Church of Christ also built in 1884 (right), and the rose window of Hart's United Methodist Church (below).



## Hart's Festivals and Events



Several of the Hart area festivals such as the National Asparagus Festival, the Silver Lake Sand Dunes Apple Fest, the Take it to Hart Hometown Fest, and Hart Heritage Days include arts and crafts. The Chain-saw carving competition's main focus is the arts. Held in Hart for the first time this year, it was a well-attended event that also included local fare and musicians.

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## The Oceana County Folk Festival



Held at the county fairgrounds, crafts, music, history, farming, historical household chores, and utensils are all represented at this event. Several types of demonstrations by local artists including woodcarving, tooling leather, basket weaving, fly-tying, quilting, and throwing pottery can all be experienced along with live local entertainment and home-cooked food. A largely agricultural community, this area is known for its traditional folk art and culture.



## Hart's Public Art



The public art featured in the small town of Hart is the 1903 granite *U.S. Soldiers Monument* honoring those from the area that served in the Civil War (left). *Rounding Up the Stock*, the oil and tempera on canvas installation created by Ruth Grotenrath in 1940 (right) is located in the lobby of the Hart post office. The work was commissioned by the Section of Fine Arts, a Depression-era New Deal program.



## Cultural Diversity & the Arts

The Pentwater and Hart area is home to several ethnic groups including Hispanics and a significant Native American community. The annual "Honoring Our Elders" Pow-Wow at the Hart Fairgrounds is a traditional Native American Festival with traders, dancers, and food.

## The Center for Renewable Energy, the Arts, and Education

One of the innovative ideas of the area entails developing a creative and educational center. Classes and potential classes offered include art instruction in a variety of media and music and writing. The plans include an outdoor theatre and indoor rehearsal area to be built on the four-acre site. Classes/workshops will also be offered in renewable energy (solar and wind).



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## Theater

The area's theater history includes the Faulkner's Opera Hall, which was located on Fourth Street and destroyed by fire in the early 1880s. Among local theatre organizations is the Ocean Summer Youth Theater, a vital organization that engages youth throughout the county.

## Industrial Arts

Pentwater is known for its pale yellow bricks manufactured by the Middlesex Brick and Tile Company, which incorporated in 1883. The bricks were used in the construction of many area buildings, including the Village Hall, the Methodist Church, and Gustafson's (pictured right). Other companies that required skilled craftsmen were also located in Pentwater. Among them were the Halstead Table factory, established in 1887 and the Pentwater Furniture Factory which later became the Sands and Maxwell Lumber Company, and still later, the Pentwater Bedstead Company.



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## Ludington

Ottawa tribes that once lived in the area were known for their weaving skills in basketry and fabrics. As they were exposed to European goods, items such as glass beads were incorporated into their work.

Early in the settlement era, fabric arts were pursued. Although the products were utilitarian, they were recognized and praised for their beauty; these include quilted, crocheted, and embroidered items. Fabric arts are still prominent in the area. Ludington, Scottville, and even smaller communities possess a quilting supply store in their downtown area.

Because of the fruit industry and its demand for baskets, Ludington Basket Works was established in 1893. It later became the Phoenix Basket Works.

Nearby areas, including Victory Township, were home to a significant number of Swedish and Danish immigrants. House parties were a common form of entertainment that included concertina music, dance, card playing, taffy-pulling, skating, sledding and sleigh rides.

As with the entire region, art forms created with wood have a long tradition in both applied and fine arts. The Carron Company in Ludington has been manufacturing the popular carron game board since the turn of the twentieth century. The Lundy Boatbuilding Company once operated in the area and furniture-making was once prominent. Metal work is also somewhat prominent and the Great Lakes Casting Foundry is located in Ludington.

Musical performances have a long tradition in the community. Accordion and violins are mentioned in historical accounts. The Ludington Boys Band (active in 1916), was just one of several historical music organizations of the area. At one time, the Ludington Music Ensemble, which was affiliated with the United Methodist Church, was a visible and active organization.

At the end of the nineteenth century, Laura Freeman Stearns wrote a song called *Ludington-on-the-Lake*.

The heritage of arts in the area can not be discussed without the mention of the artist Dawson Manierre. Consider one of the most influential early American modernist painters, Manierre was born in Chicago in 1887. After working as an engineer at the Chicago architectural firm of Holabird & Roche and exhibiting work in the Armory Show of 1913, he moved to a farm on Deren Road in Ludington after he married to bring up a family and farm fruit. Exhibitions of Manierre's paintings have been held at the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) and the Art Institute of Chicago.

Robert Lyons Stearns, the creator of the character Oswald Crumb, is another historical artist of the area. Born in Connecticut in 1872, his father Justus became a prominent lumberman and politician in the Ludington area. Several originals are owned by his grandson, Robert Gable of Epworth Heights, and reproductions can be seen in the basement of the Jamesport Brewery.

More recent history of the arts in the area would include the Dunewood Academy of Fine Arts which was active in the 1980s and located at 501 E. Ludington.

Ludington's Waterfront Park, completed in 1999, includes at least seven sculptures, mostly in bronze.

Established in 2003, the Ludington Mural Society promotes the painting of murals depicting the city's history. Nine different artists have completed over eleven murals throughout the community.

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Water, the landscape, and the lighthouses were all cited as artistic influences. Like other communities in West Michigan, watercolor is a medium favored by many artists in the area.

There are two main art organizations in Ludington: the West Shore Art League established in 1965 and the newly formed Ludington Area Arts Council. The Arts Council is in the process of purchasing the United Methodist Church and rehabilitating the building to house studios, classrooms and a performance area.

Although several artists grew up in the area, many others have relocated in Ludington after retirement. Often they had spent their summers in this area. A good number of artists spend at least part of the winter in the south to take advantage of the southern art fairs held during the winter months and the tourists visiting that area of the country. Amanda St. Hilaire and Nathan Grubich, who chose Ludington because of a budding art culture and affordable housing, have been residents for around two years.

Among other current area artists is eighty-eight year-old artist, Donald Weir, who studied art in Toledo and Chicago, worked as a commercial artist in Chicago and Detroit, and has lived in Ludington since 1949. He has created pastel drawings in many locations including his service in Europe during World War II and on Ludington's car ferries where he served as an AB seaman. Weir is known for his many portraits of fellow seaman. He also painted the mural that is now located in the Mason County Public Library. (It was originally painted for the union hall in town.) Besides working in pastels, he has also created work in oils, casein and watercolors. He has also worked extensively in clay creating plaster and plastic castings. He is currently a member of the West Shore Art League (WASL). Although Weir received many awards for his artwork, he found it difficult to support himself solely with his work. As an AB seaman, he was able to do so. Weir feels that more commission work for artists would be beneficial. He also feels that both the beauty of the area and its people are assets for artists.

Fabric artist Julie Snyder has been a professional artist for over thirty-five years. She possesses a Masters in Education. Her art instruction has been less formal. Snyder attended workshops and received one-on-one tutoring in traditional weaving methods, including instruction at historic Williamsburg, Virginia. She has been associated with the history department at Columbus, Ohio's Center of Science and Industry. Much of her training was through federal grants. Snyder's family has owned property in Epworth Heights for about eighteen years. Before that time, they rented cottages for the summer. For the past seven-to-eight years, Snyder has wintered in North Carolina. There are other artists who live in Epworth Heights. The community each year holds a one-day art fair for its residents. Both children and adults participate. She is involved in art organizations in both states. In Michigan she has been a member of the Weaver's Guild and is active in the West Shore Art League. Julie feels that the art in the region is very eclectic with, perhaps, inspiration by the beauty of the surroundings being the only common element. Her artwork is also inspired by the environment and found objects are often incorporated in her art. Her main source of inspiration is her religion. Snyder stated that her artwork is "an expression of my faith." About half of her artwork is liturgical. She has received several commissions from churches and chapels for alter pieces. Artwork as a source of income is not a priority for her. However, she feels that North Carolina better promotes the arts than Michigan does. Not only have they developed a high quality promotion, they also encourage high quality products. They market the artwork, especially Sanford Pottery, as collectable. Snyder's view is that compared to Michigan residents, many of the residents in North Carolina better support the area arts. Educating the public in the value of the arts is a priority for her as is the need for marketing education for many artists. This sentiment has been voiced several times by artists in the region.

A play recently written about the area's history with a turn-of-the-century musical and melodrama format, *The Wake of the Schooner Westshore*, was performed at Ludington's Westshore Community College in 2006.

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Nearby Scottville was home to folk artist Steve Harley whose media included photography and detailed painted taxidermy. Scottville is also home to the nationally known Scottville Clown Band. Originally established in 1903, it was disbanded during World War II and reformed by Ray Schulte in 1947. (Ray passed away in April 2007.) The Band, which has members from all walks of life and several states, has close ties with Ludington. The Band is the subject of one of the downtown murals and they play each year at White Pines Village.

The Pamela Tripp Gallery, located in Baldwin, showcases local artists (some who live in the area), both fine and traditional. Pastels, pottery, blown and fused glass, wood carvings, furniture (some rustic traditional), and fabric arts are represented.

Several artists that were interviewed were involved in other art disciplines. Many of those who mainly worked in a three-dimensional medium, also drew and painted. Some who exhibit two-dimensional pieces in a specific medium, also created pieces in other media as well as three-dimensional pieces. A couple of artists were excited about the developing theatre arts in the area and had hopes of performing with them.

The Epworth Heights community has a large number of summer residents that are from the Chicago area. As with other communities in the region, the largest sector of summer tourists and residents are from the Chicago area. However, according to several gallery owners, the Holland/Grand Rapids area surpasses the Chicago area in the number of visitors to Ludington. The Detroit and the Toledo areas rank third and fourth.

Generally speaking, artists do not feel that their artwork is influenced by Chicago's art culture. Influences cited included such movements as impressionism and modern abstract art and artists such as Vincent Van Gogh. The natural environment was often cited as influencing the subject, medium, and palette. The built environment was also mentioned as an influence.

Communication between artists, because of the small size of the artist community, is often word-of-mouth. Informal meetings were also mentioned. The WSAL sends out a newsletter and the Ludington Area Arts Council is planning to start a newsletter soon.

Other organizations that Ludington-area artists are members of included the Glass Art Society (an international organization) and affiliation with Michigan State University's Traditional Arts Program.

Almost all of the artists in the area display their work at one of the local galleries and participate in art fairs. (The number of fairs varies greatly.) Almost all of the full-time artists have websites. A few artists have mailing lists (with email lists in beginning stages.) Because there are almost no winter tourists to the area, most of the full-time artists travel south to sell their work. Artists who retired from another profession often winter in the south, but their art activities in the winter months vary.

Like artists in other regions of the project area, years of experience and formal art education varied widely. Also varied were the need and/or commitment to have a viable income from their work. Full-time artists in the area, while surviving mainly from the sales of their artwork, often subsidized their income with jobs that varied from teaching (sometimes art), to working in restaurants.

### **Affordable Gallery, Studio and Housing Space**

Although the cost of downtown locations for galleries/studios is out-of-reach for many artists, housing, with the exception of the newly-constructed condominiums, remains very affordable. (A small house within blocks of the downtown area can be purchased for around \$80,000.) Clay

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artists Amanda St. Hilaire and Nathan Grubich, who both possess a Master of Fine Arts, decided to locate their residence, studio and gallery in Ludington. Nathan was originally from Michigan and wanted to move back to the area. The couple felt that both the Saugatuck and the Traverse City areas were saturated with artists and were unaffordable. They saw potential in developing a strong artist community in the Ludington area.

Jud Scott, who blows and fuses glass, was originally from the area. After living out-of-state for several years, he relocated to Ludington. Affordability and a good place to raise a family were given as reasons for his return.

## Area Assets

As with many communities in the region, music at the “band shell” was often mentioned as a cultural asset to the community.

Although the cost of downtown locations is out-of-reach for many artists, overall housing remains very affordable.

Ludington State Park was often cited as beneficial to the community. The natural environment was almost always mentioned as an asset and an artistic inspiration.

## Current and Possible Programs

Current cultural projects, programs, and organizations include:

- The West Shore Art League (WASL) collaborates with Pentwater’s artists and art galleries. They also offer classes, workshops and lectures. Perhaps the program that they are most proud of involves area school children for Mason, Lake and Oceana Counties. Scholarships are offered to children to attend the *Children’s Summer Art Exploration* program. Classes offered each year include a variety of two and three dimensional visual arts, performing arts, and movie making. (Last year over \$9000 in scholarships were awarded.) Those accepted in the program consider it an honor. WSAL is also involved in the *Empty Bowls* program. Among the organization’s other projects is the Memorial Medical Center Acquisition Program. Pat Carney has been the director for the last five years. In that time membership has grown and new programs and fundraising events (including a fire truck pull), have been established. Many artists have voiced the opinion that there is new life in the WSAL. The WSAL has established an archived artist directory at [www.ludingtonartscouncil.org/artdirectory.php](http://www.ludingtonartscouncil.org/artdirectory.php). Still, most members are artists who are retired or claim an additional family income and do not view the sales of their artwork as a necessary income.
- A Ludington Visitors Writing program and Poet Fests which include Michigan poets and poetry readings, workshops and other activities are aspects of the area’s art culture. Collaborators in the Poet Fest project include the Ludington Area Arts Council (LAAC), the Mason County District Library, the Downtown Ludington merchants; and the Mason and Manistee County schools.
- The newly created sculpture park in Waterfront Park exhibits artwork that has been purchased by donations. LAAC, who heads the project, plan to install new pieces each year.
- The Ludington Area Arts Council (LAAC) offers children’s classes during the Arts Festival. In 2006 and 2007 the group also organized the *Windows of Our Lives* project. This project’s objectives included artist visibility, a tourist draw, and a fund-raiser for

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LAAC. In 2006 Epworth Heights residents collaborated with Ludington Area Arts Council for an art show. The LAAC purchased the former United Methodist Church of Ludington building and converted it to an art center. The plan is to offer art, performing, music and writing classes and workshops as well as performances in the facility with the possibility of an artist-in-residence program. The LAAC also heads the acquisition of sculptures for the newly established sculpture park; however, a reoccurring observation by area artists is that none of the art pieces were created by local, or even regional, artists.

- A separate organization is the Ludington Mural Society. Board members are involved in donations and fundraising and the selection of the artist and its location. The murals are required to portray an historical aspect of the Ludington area. Annette Door is the director of the society. She created the organization after seeing this type of art in the town of her winter Florida residence. Area artists questioned the small percentage of mural commissions awarded to Michigan artists by the Mural Society.
- A “loosely organized” group of women is undertaking the establishment of a children’s museum. They are in the process of building displays and have secured 501(c) 3 non-profit status and a temporary location in downtown Ludington.
- The White Pine Village museum is a significant local resource. Its archives are owned and operated by the Ludington Historical Society. The society is in the process of purchasing Ludington’s decommissioned Coast Guard life saving station. They plan to house and display some of the artifacts that are now located in the museum’s displays. The White Pine Village archives possess an extensive amount of local history information. Events held at White Pine Village include Logging & Harvest Days and an old time baseball match. Hand-crafted wooden toys, tools, and furniture are among the displayed artifacts. Also in its collection are a number of fabric art pieces and paintings by local, and often untrained, artists.

Projects and programs suggested by artists, gallery owners, and others involved in the art culture include:

- Develop more options to expose the arts of the area was voiced by several artists. A collaborative traveling event with area art organizations and weekly Thursday art events were suggested. Another suggestion was creating a regional art show, similar to Muskegon’s, but on a smaller scale. Also commissioning local or regional artists for the sculptures, murals and other Ludington projects was an option that many thought should be pursued. (A few of the murals were created by local artists, but the majority were executed by out-of-state artists.)
- Establish a high-quality art and farmers market. The area is very “blue collar.” Although tourists do support the arts, many residents do not. Even among the tourists, because of the family orientation of the state park, there is less of an interest in purchasing collectable art than in other areas of the region. Perhaps a high quality (with certain criteria), farmers and artist market would be beneficial to community, the artists and other retailers. Traditional artists who normally do not have an outlet for their work, as well as artists in town, could sell their work. Area farmers would be represented.
- Expand classes and services offered by local artists. Todd and Brad Reed are successful photographers who own their own business in downtown Ludington. They also sell their work in a few selected art shows and have increasingly strong on-line sales. They also offer classes at the Cartier Mansion, a Ludington Bed and Breakfast, and at private homes.



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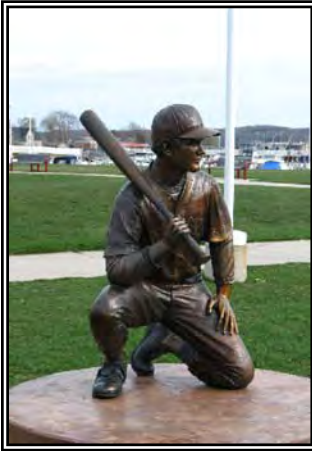
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- The restoration of an historical mural should be implemented. The nineteenth century fresco mural painted for the Landt Tavern is located in building that recently housed the Grandma Mary's Deli. The mural was undergoing restoration, however, the building is now for sale and the mural's future is in doubt.
- Establish more musical events. The high school music program, headed by Beck Sofa, is well-respected. There are a number of jazz musicians in the area. These, and other musical groups, could be better showcased.
- Re-establish street theatre in Ludington. It was performed last year and some thought it should become a re-occurring event.
- Encourage the development and recognition of the area's culinary arts. This would include fruit pies and country-style cooking. Area retailers have been told by visitors that, although the numbers have grown recently, Ludington lacks a variety of "good" restaurants. Perhaps one that specializes in well-presented local fare would be beneficial to the area.
- Develop an agricultural tourism program.
- Expand lumbering festivals to include an array of arts. The festivals could showcase performers singing traditional lumber chanties. Words to several of these songs can be found in the White Pine Village archives. Saw playing could also be performed with an accompanying fiddler.
- Establish an artist cooperative gallery. This would help ease the cost of a downtown location for artists. Vacant warehouses located in the city that appear to be structurally sound could be rehabilitated to house artist apartments, studio, and gallery space.
- Develop business and technical training workshops for artists.
- Educate the public on the value of the arts.

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## Ludington Art Sampler

### Sculptures and Memorials



Ludington exhibits an array of public art. A number of sculptures can be seen in Waterfront Park. The Ludington Area Arts Council, who heads up the project, has purchased the sculptures through donations and hopes to add one piece of art to the park each year. Among those that are currently on display are *Put Me in Coach* (top left), *Reflections* (right) *The Spirit of Ludington* (bottom left), *Follow the Leader* (bottom middle). There are also other artworks and memorials scattered throughout the area; one of the more well known memorials is the *Father Marquette Memorial* (lower right). Located on Lakeshore Drive, the memorial commemorates the place that Father Pere Marquette died.



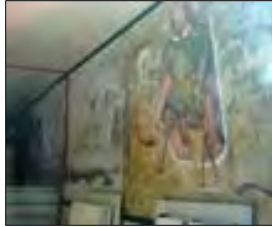
### Murals

Ludington probably has more murals than any West Michigan community. Most are concentrated in the downtown area. The Ludington Mural Society has sponsored the creation of a number of the murals. The Society requires the muralist to portray an aspect of Ludington's history. Examples include *Freedom Festival*, *Lumbering of Ludington 1879*, *First Snow*, *A Place for All Seasons*, *Ludington's Own*, *Saputo's Italian Market*, *Ludington's Fountain of Youth*, *Reverend John Christensen* and *Father Marquette* (detail right) are some of the historical murals. A map with information and descriptions is available, as are guided tours.



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The 1957 mural created by Donald Weir (born 1919) for the local union hall (it has been moved to the Mason County Library) depicts Ludington's historical industries (right). Weir is known for the pastel drawings from his European tour in World War II and the portraits of fellow seaman aboard Ludington carferries



A nineteenth century fresco mural painted for the Landt Tavern is located in the building that once housed Grandma Mary's Deli. It was undergoing restoration, however, the building is now for sale and the mural's future is questionable (pictured left).

## The Art of Stained Glass

There are several churches in the Ludington area that exhibit exceptional stained glass. Many of these structures, built between the middle of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, had ethnic ties to European immigrants and often held services in their native languages. French, Swedes, Irish, Danish, Finns, Germans, Scandinavians and Polish all had their own parishes. Pictured left is a window of the former First Methodist Episcopal Church that was constructed in 1895. Currently, the Ludington Area Arts Council (LAAC) is in the midst of purchasing the church. The plan is to offer art, music, writing classes and workshops, as well as performances in the facility, with the possibility of an artist-in-residence program.



## Art Galleries & Studios

Fine and traditional arts are both part of Ludington's art culture. The Ottawa Native American tribes that once lived in the area were known for their weaving skills in basketry and fabrics. As they were exposed to European goods, items such as glass beads were incorporated in their work. Early in the settlement era, fabric arts were pursued. Although the products were utilitarian, they were recognized and praised for their beauty. With the development of



the fruit crop industry, the art of basketry continued. These arts are still practiced in the area. Pictured left is work of local fabric artist Julie Snyder. Ludington's art galleries represent well-known local and regional artists' work in photography, clay pieces, watercolor, fabric, along with a variety of other media in an array of subject matter and styles. Classes, workshop, shows and special events are offered through the galleries, the West Shore Art League and the Ludington Area Arts Council.



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## Historic White Pine Village



Located just south of town on Lakeshore Drive, White Pine Village consists of twenty-five historic buildings that were moved to the site. Artifacts are on display throughout the structures including displays of handcrafted wooden toys, tools, and furniture, along with metal work in the blacksmith's shop. The research center and archives house numerous household fabric artworks and a large amount of local historical information. The village hosts several annual events.



## Art Organizations, Festivals & Events

Ludington's art organizations are both vital and vibrant. The West Shore Art League (WSAL), established in 1965, boasts membership of many area artists, including those living in Pentwater, and collaborates with Pentwater's artists and art galleries. WSAL offers classes, workshops, lectures, and children's scholarships to attend the *Children's Summer Art Exploration* program. The classes offered in this program include a variety of two and three dimensional visual arts, performing arts, and movie making. WSAL is also involved in the *Empty Bowls* program and the *Memorial Medical Center Acquisition Program*. The WSAL has established an archive and artist directory. Several art events, sponsored by WSAL, are held annually including the *Ludington Fine Arts & Craft Fair*, the *Children's Summer Art Exploration* program, the *Goldcoast Arts & Crafts Fair* and the *WSAL Membership Art Show*.

The Ludington Area Arts Council (LAAC), a newly established organization, has recently purchased the United Methodist Church, and is in the process of rehabilitating the building to house studios, classrooms and a performance area. They plan to host music, dance and theatre events and book discussions. The LAAC offers children's classes during the Arts Festival and organizes the *Windows of Our Lives* project. LAAC also heads the sculpture park project's acquisitions.

## Historic Artists



The heritage of arts in the area cannot be discussed without the mention of the artist Dawson Manierre. The early American modernist was born in Chicago in 1887. After working as an engineer at a Chicago architectural firm and exhibiting at the Smith Gallery, the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA), and the Chicago Institute of Arts, he married and moved to a fruit farm on Deren Road Ludington to raise his family. He is considered one of America's earliest abstract painters, a true art pioneer.

Manierre photo taken from the Illinois State Museum Website

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Robert Lyons Stearns is another historical artist of the area. Born in Connecticut in 1872, his father, Justus, became a prominent lumberman and politician in the Ludington area. Stearns created the whimsical character, Oswald Crumb. His grandson Robert Gable of Epworth Heights, owns several originals. Reproductions can be seen in the basement of Jamesport Brewery (pictured right).



## The Applied Arts in Industry



*Photo from Carrom.com*

Industries that involved applied arts have made their home in the Ludington area. Art forms created with wood have a long tradition in both fine and applied arts. Furniture-making and boat-building companies were prominent in the area, such as the Lundy Boat Building Company. The long-established Floorcraft and the Carrom Companies continue to manufacture products in Ludington. Metal work has also had a presence and the Great Lakes Casting Foundry has long been located in Ludington. Because of the fruit industry and its demand for baskets, Ludington Basket Works, which later became the Phoenix Basket Works, was established in 1893.

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## Harbor Country

Because Berrien County is Michigan's closest county to the city of Chicago, the region along the Lake Michigan shore known as Harbor Country (from the Indiana state line to Sawyer, Michigan) has historically had strong ties to the city. Many of the area's artists are represented in Chicago galleries and have created commissioned work for the Chicago area. Transplants, "second-homers," and visitors from Chicago have helped facilitate an art culture in the Harbor Country region. However, many feel that while the art culture is continually growing, the potential has yet to be realized or even adequately recognized.

Although a wide range of artists and mediums exist in the region, abstract and semi-representational art appears to be more prevalent in this area. Also, a greater number of artists who work on large-scale projects, such as murals and sculptures, live in the area. Both of these tendencies can be attributed to the proximity of Chicago. Harbor Country artists cited the natural environment as inspiration noting the region's clean air, serenity, big sky, beautiful lake, ability to see the stars at night, great people, and sense of community among artists. These artists received their training through a variety of venues including a formal art education, self-taught, a mentorship or a combination thereof and most have been professional artists for some time. Most of the artists participate, to varying degrees, in art shows. There are several artists that are well known and well respected outside of Michigan and the Midwest. Several are represented in galleries throughout the country. One example is the sculptor Fritz Olsen, who has direct ties to New York City and is represented overseas. Although a large number of the artists' income was supplemented by a related career or by a spouse, several sole incomes were from the sale of artwork. Many of the artist studios/galleries in the Harbor Country area are housed in historic structures such as schoolhouses, a former azalea greenhouse, a firehouse, barns, vernacular cottages and a former tool shop.

After World War II, Union Pier became a popular resort for Chicago's Lithuanian immigrants. A number of Lithuanian artists and their descendants still retain ties with both cities. Lithuanian artists create art in a variety of media including jewelry, pottery, paint mediums, mosaic beadwork, woodworking, and wood burning. A large Lithuanian event in Chicago, *JuAarte'*, includes an art show in which most of the Lithuanian artists participate. (There are also ties to a Lithuanian settlement near Custer in Mason County which includes a summer camp and a cemetery. I was told that religious icons are scattered throughout the camp.)

John Wilson played a vital role in the development of the art culture of Harbor Country. As founder and president of Chicago's Lakeside Group (established in 1979) and owner of the Lakeside Center for the Arts, which was once housed in the Lakeside Inn in Lakeside, he hosted many well-known artists who visited to enjoy the scenic area and to create artwork. Wilson printed many limited editions of these artists. Often, artists received scholarships to help defray costs. A variety of performance art events were held in the ballroom and gourmet dinners were often served. Because of his ties with Russia, Wilson was instrumental in establishing the first international art market in the Georgian capital of Tbilisi in 2004. The project is a continuing joint effort of the New Art Union of Georgia, Elegia (Armenia) and the Union of Artists of Azerbaijan. Wilson was also the organizer of the first Chicago International Art Exposition held in 1980. He is currently involved in Benton Harbor's art scene. He has recently purchased houses in the downtown area with the hope of hosting guest artists from Russia's Georgia area and from India.

Although less visible, traditional arts have a presence in the area. Native American traditional arts are practiced including Black Ash basketry and beadwork. Native American artist Floyd Gomph creates functional art furniture while Terry Hanover focuses on more traditional furniture.

Art organizations in the community include the New Buffalo Fine Arts Council and the Scarlet Macaw Community Arts Center (Sawyer). Galleries that assist or facilitate events or

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communication include Local Color (Union Pier), the Jill Underhill Gallery (Harbert), and John Searles Sculpture (Harbert).

Several artists in the area reside in warmer climates during the winter months. Some take advantage of the southern art fairs while others travel farther south to experience different cultures and to create art.

## **Affordable Gallery, Studio and Housing Space**

Housing prices in the area have increased in the last several years to over a million dollars for lakeshore property putting it out of the price range of most artists. However, housing in the outlying areas is still somewhat affordable. A majority of galleries and studios are located in structures that needed major rehabilitation work before they could function as a gallery and/or studio.

## **Assets**

New Buffalo is known as the southwest gateway into Michigan. As with the state's entire west coast, the natural environment is a draw for tourists and visitors. The relaxed atmosphere and slower pace is often viewed as a major asset, particularly for those from Chicago. The close proximity to major markets was often cited as a strong asset. Although compared to many areas in Michigan real estate prices and entertainment and recreation costs can be high, it is still less expensive than Chicago. The price of art is often viewed in the same way. Many artists appreciated having several artists living in the area. Tourism and second-homeowners make up a large share of customers and help support the area's arts.

## **Current and Possible Programs**

Current area projects, programs, and events include:

- The Harbor Country Art Attack held every year in April is the major art event in the area. Area businesses and artists are asked to be creative and display art that somehow relates to the business that is acting as host. Besides the arts, showcased are the area's natural beauty and "the degree of interaction between the artists and participants." More than thirty-five special events are planned during the weekend show. Demonstrations, tours, receptions and performances are included in the festivities.
- The Scarlet Macaw Community Arts Center, established in 1994 by Nifordora D. Krumrie and located in Sawyer, provides classes, workshops, programs and events including local artist exhibitions and a children's art camp. Although the facility and operating budget is small, it has a presence in the community. E-mails sent out by the founder were often cited as facilitating news and communication among area artists. Still, because most of the artists know each other, word-of-mouth was most often mentioned as the main source of communication and networking with social gathering being ranked second. Works of students, art educators, and professional artists often hang side-by-side in the gallery. Also housed in the building is a reading and reference library and the Gallery Shoppe where art materials and books can be purchased. The Scarlet Macaw is privately-owned and operated. Although it is not affiliated with any other art organization, it has received guidance from the Krasl Art Center in Saint Joseph.
- The New Buffalo Fine Arts Council, which is partially funded by an endowment, holds events at the New Buffalo Performing Arts Center and is performance-art focused. They hope to increase their support of the area's visual arts and are also collaborating with local schools.

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- Downtown Three Oaks, east of the project area, has long had a strong connection to Harbor County's small communities on the Lake Michigan coast providing groceries and dairy products to resorters. Today the village is a cultural center for the Harbor Country area. It is home to the Acorn, a live theatre; an art center; several galleries and a summer Music in the Park program. Several artists and gallery owners praised the progress of the development of the art culture in Three Oaks and its promotion of foreign films through the Vickers Theater, an acclaimed movie house.

Programs and projects suggested by artists, gallery owners, and others involved with area art organizations include:

- Establish a Harbor Country art fair. While artists and gallery owners view Art Attack as a successful event, a Harbor Country art fair with a unique image should be established.
- Educate the public—both children and adults—on the value and the appreciation of art. Artists and gallery owners see increased art education in public schools as a necessity in developing a creative and innovative society. Also cited were the need to educate local government and organizations on the community benefits, including the financial benefits, of supporting a local and/or regional art culture.
- Increase collaborative efforts. Many feel that cooperation between gallery owners and other businesses, such as bed and breakfasts and restaurants, is at times lacking and that increasing collaborative efforts would be beneficial to all.
- Encourage group marketing, different advertising price scales, or subsidized advertising to assist artists with their marketing needs. While several artists do advertise in local publications, others view it as cost-prohibitive.
- Develop an area art-related tour map. The need for tour maps that would include art studios and galleries and a short, inviting description was mentioned several times as a possible marketing tool.
- Extend the tourist season and increase traffic during the off-season. Information on strategies and projects to accomplish this is needed. Make visiting the area more affordable for younger people, the middle class, and other artists by offering off-season rates for food and accommodation.
- Develop business and technical training workshops for artists. Although some of the artists have taken business classes or receive business assistance from a family member, many feel that workshops on establishing a business and how to develop a market plan would be helpful. Several have websites but very few use e-marketing as a tool or sell on eBay. Some stated that there is a need for opportunities for networking and sharing helpful information. It is commonly viewed that many artists lack the technical training that would help them have a more viable income. For example, photographers would benefit from learning the latest photo enhancement programs and programs such as AutoCAD would help designers and those who create large pieces.
- Create a group health insurance plan for artists. A major challenge that many artists face, particularly those without a spouse who receive benefits, is health insurance. A program that would offer artists group rates is felt by many to be almost a necessity. One possibility would be for local chambers to establish an artist membership that would offer health insurance at group rates.
- Establish an umbrella art organization for the area. While the New Buffalo Arts Council and the Scarlet Macaw Community Arts Center both play roles in the area's art



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community, there is no umbrella organization that encompasses all the arts of the Harbor Country area. Most artists interviewed thought that such an organization would be beneficial in further developing the art culture in the region. Many felt that such an organization would have to be flexible and broad in its scope. Several artists are members of the local chamber of commerce, Krasl Art Center, and the West Michigan Tourist Association. Other organizations that were mentioned include New Territorial Artist Association (Benton Harbor), the Midwest Clay Guild, Ohio Designer Crafts, the American Craft Council, and the American Ceramic Society.

- Increase the area's public art. Although several artists who often create public work for the city of Chicago and other communities throughout the Midwest reside in the area, there is a lack of public art in Harbor Country itself. Increasing public art would not only increase exposure for local artists, the art would enhance the image of the areas' art culture and would be art that all could enjoy. The availability of grants for artists and grants for businesses to buy art were suggested not only as a way to help artists but to increase public art in the area. A "Percentage for Arts" program was mentioned as a tool to facilitate public art and as benefit to local artists. This type of program is often based on a city ordinance that ensures a certain percentage of the entire cost of a large development would be applied to a piece of public art. A similar program called "Art in Public Places" requires public art to be integrated in building projects. Many would like to see corporate tax incentives for purchasing art and/or tax-free art zones and others think that the state of Michigan should purchase more public art.
- Establish an on-line resource for artists. Although only a few artists were aware of Michigan's *ArtServe* organization, others had heard of similar organizations in other states, such as the New York Foundation for the Arts, and felt that an on-line site that would connect these types of organizations would be helpful.
- Encourage artists and gallery owners to promote through the *Pure Michigan* website. A majority of the artists and gallery owners have not taken advantage of the *Pure Michigan* website and its offer of a free listing.
- Establish tax incentives towards improvements on historic properties in art districts and workshops to help guide artists through the process. The Box Factory in Saint Joseph was brought up as an example of how an organization can assist artists in having downtown presence.
- Increase the number, and variety, of area restaurants. The lack of restaurants near galleries and studios is thought to be an issue that should be addressed. There should be more integration between art and agri-tourism overall.
- Lessen the anxiety and, sometimes tension, of the long-time local residents in regard to the growing art culture. One aspect of this is the rising cost of housing and the fear that this will drive out the local population. There is also concern that the area's farmland is disappearing and the small family farm is all but gone.

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## Harbor Country Art Sampler

### Art Galleries & Studios

Harbor Country is home to many artists. Some have studios or galleries in the downtown areas; others are located along the Red Arrow Highway while still others are tucked in out-of-the-way locations. Chicago-born Steve Rubinkam creates and shows his work at his studio in downtown New Buffalo where the Roger Harvey Art Gallery, the WOW Gallery, the Amethyst



Gallery, the Courtyard Gallery and the artist co-op, the Crowley Fine Art Gallery are also located. Sawyer's galleries include those of multi media artist Joe Hindley who is known for his murals (top right, mural study for Three Oaks' Acorn Theatre), and Chandra's Flynn Gallery. Among the working galleries along or near the Red Arrow Highway are Local Color, the Acorn Gallery, the Plum Tree, the Burnison, the Judith Ratch Galleries, the Jill Underhill Gallery and John Searles Sculpture (left), the Craig Smith, the Fritz Olsen Galleries, the Native Frame and the Center of the World Woodshop Studio & Showroom

### Built Environment of Art Galleries & Studios



Many of the working galleries are housed in rehabilitated historic structures that formerly served as schoolhouses, private mansions and factories (right, Jill Underhill Gallery). Sawyer's Flynn Theatre (left) is now used by artist Joe Hindley while the old Sawyer fire station is now home to Catherine Doll Clothing.



### Festivals & Events



Every April, Harbor Country begins a new summer "season" with Art Attack. Eight communities exhibit a wide variety of media and subjects related to area businesses. Art demonstrations, lectures, food and "make it and take it" classes are all part of the festivities. Other area festivals include Lakeside's Art and Crafts Festival, the New Buffalo Art and Craft Show and the Berrien Town & Country Quilters Show. Three Oaks hosts several events that include art and/or the performing arts.

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## Public Art



Much of the area's art that is in public view is actually located on private property. An exception is *A Union of Balance* by Diane Carr, located at the current Michigan Department of Transportation Welcome Center off I-94 (top left). Several sculptures are displayed at Lakeside Studios and at the Jill Underhill Gallery (right, *Reach for the Stars* by John Searles). Other works exhibited on the grounds include work by Kate Remington, John Lambert, Dave Vande Vusse, Floyd Gompf and additional pieces by Searles. The mural *Don't Tell the Kids...* (below) by New Buffalo artist Roger Harvey covers exterior walls at Patty's Pics in Union Pier. In

Sawyer, several of Fritz Olsen's sculptures are exhibited outside his studio on West Holloway Drive and paintings by Joe Hindley can be seen on the exterior of his gallery. Saint Mary's of the Lake Catholic Church in New Buffalo is home to sculptures including a bronze entitled *Christ of the Deep*.



Photo: [www.harborcountry.org](http://www.harborcountry.org)

## The Art of Stained Glass



Several churches in the area exhibit an array of stained glass styles. Saint Mary's of the Lake Catholic Church in New Buffalo displays a traditional style of stained glass (right) while Saint Agnes Catholic Church in Sawyer contains stained glass windows that show a more modern approach (left).



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## Art Organizations



The New Buffalo Fine Arts Council holds events at the New Buffalo Performing Arts Center and is performance-art focused. However, they hope to increase their support of the area's visual arts. They have had collaborative efforts with local schools. The Scarlet Macaw Gallery & Community Art Center, located in Sawyer, is "committed to enhancing the growth of the local culture by providing a community-based art forum. . ." Housed in the oldest building in downtown Sawyer, the Center includes a gallery, reading and reference library, art store and permanent collection of artwork. Classes, workshops, events, and a children's art camp are sponsored by the Center.

## Ethnic "Flavor" of Art



The variety of ethnic stores and restaurants in Harbor Country enhances the cultural experience. Milda's Corner Market in Union Pier (left) features Lithuanian, European and Asian specialties, exhibits Lithuanian art and hosts events. The Swedish Bakery in Harbert (established in the early 1900s), David's Delicatessen & Catering in New Buffalo, the Turkish Café Gulistan in Harbert, and the Tex-Mex El Rancho Grande in New Buffalo, display related art artifacts that add to the diversified art flavor of Harbor Country.



## More Art Influences & Cultural Ties

John Wilson played a vital role in the development of the art culture of Harbor Country. As founder and president of Chicago's Lakeside Group (established in 1979) and owner of the Lakeside Center for the Arts, he hosted many well-known artists who visited to enjoy the environment and to create artwork. Wilson also printed many limited editions of these artists work. He also hosted Russian artists during the time of the Cold War. Often, artists received scholarships to help defray costs. A variety of performance art events were held in the ballroom and gourmet dinners were often served.

Because of his ties with Russia, and the Georgia region in particular, Wilson was instrumental in establishing Tbilisi's first international art market in 2004. The project is a continuing joint effort of the New Art Union of Georgia, Elegia (Armenia) and the Union of Artists of Azerbaijan. Wilson was also the organizer of the first Chicago International Art Exposition held in 1980. He is currently involved in Benton Harbor's art scene. He recently purchased houses in the downtown area with the hope of hosting guest artists from Russia's Georgia area and from India.

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## Resort Landmarks



There are several landmarks in the area that have significance. The arch that marks the entrance to the village Grand Beach, incorporated in 1934 (left), is among them. New Buffalo's public beach is home to a replica lighthouse that once was part of a miniature golf course and the Michigan Department of

Transportation's I-94 Welcome Center displays a replica lighthouse (right) that commemorates the over 100 lighthouses that can be found on Michigan's shorelines.



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## Saint Joseph-Benton Harbor

The art styles and cultural traditions found in Michigan's southwestern corner are very eclectic. There is a mixture of the fine arts, some of which is Chicago-based, and a long tradition of applied art including wood-working, stained glass, and traditional folk arts such as quilt-making and rug-hooking. Most of the fine artists have had formal training in the arts or a related field. Native American arts include black ash basketry, woven beading, ribbon-work and carving. The area's diverse ethnic history (African-American, Eastern European, German, Greek, Hispanic and Lithuanian) and its influence are visible and vital. Traditional maritime arts, such as knot tying, are taught and practiced in the area. Other strong influences include the region's fruit farming traditions, the use of the natural environment for both subject and medium, and the strong presence of a variety of religions. Various combinations of these traditions and influences and the interplay of art disciplines can be found in the local art scene.

All of the artists interviewed for this survey who are active in the Saint Joseph art scene have a long history with the area and a majority has been artists for twenty or more years. Some artists have lived in Saint Joseph all their lives; others were raised in the area, developed careers elsewhere, and then returned. Several artists active in Benton Harbor have lived in the greater area for sometime, although none were originally from the city proper.

As with many Southwest Michigan communities, Chicago has influenced the development of art in the region. Chicago artists have summered in the area, attended summer art classes, created art that represented the beauty of the natural environment, participated in art fairs and shows and exhibited in local galleries. However, world-class artists that have relocated from Chicago to Saint Joseph/Benton Harbor have often experienced difficulties in pursuing profitable and self-supportive art careers. One example is Eileen Cropley, a ten-year veteran of the Paul Taylor Dance Company, who founded the Citadel Dance Center in Benton Harbor. Another example is the internationally renowned sculptor, Richard Hunt, who has been attempting to convince Chicago artists to relocate to Benton Harbor, for over ten years. His one success is the artist Jesus Lopez who moved to the area but lives and works in a large studio that was meant for several resident artists.

The Saint Joseph-Benton Harbor area artists often have ties to more than one regional art organization. An overwhelming number of artists are affiliated with the Krasl Art Center in Saint Joseph through membership, exhibitions and/or by teaching classes. Several of the artists have studios in Saint Joseph's Box Factory which houses over a dozen artists studios. Others are affiliated with the Oxbow School of the Arts in Saugatuck. The Chartreuse is a seventeen-member artists co-op located in downtown Saint Joseph. Some artists are also members of New Territory Art Association, an organization that focuses on the art district in the historical area of downtown Benton Harbor. The Southwest Michigan Black Artist Group has a strong base in the Benton Harbor area. I spoke with several quilters, all of who are members of the Berrien County Quilters Guild. Although these organizations do, at times, collaborate, there are also issues that put them at odds. One example, the Box Factory obtained a grant that allows them to offer free art classes while the Krasl Art Center's students pay a fee. Some artists feel that there could be more cooperation between the city of Saint Joseph and the artist community. One example that was cited—a gallery had wished to have a potter's wheel on the sidewalk during business hours to arouse interest; however, the city would not grant them permission to do so.

Community members, when talking about the arts in the area, are quick to mention the prominent role that music plays. They take pride in the Southwest Michigan Symphony Orchestra and the community's support of the organization. The orchestra boasts a large membership base and offers a wide range of programs. A long-time resident of Saint Joseph stated, "You don't mess with the water, the trees, or the orchestra around here." The area has a history of producing jazz and Rhythm & Blues musicians. Jazz pianist Gene Harris was born in Benton Harbor in 1963 and

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the city's Nikki Harris Festival is named for his daughter, a noted jazz musician in her own right. The Livery in Benton Harbor is one of the establishments that provides a venue for live music.

Art on the Bluff held in Saint Joseph is a nationally rated art fair that incorporates art with music and poetry. Many artists sell their work at this show and participate in other shows to varying degrees. The Chartreuse co-op, the Krasl Art Center, and the Box Factory all offer opportunities for artists to sell and/or exhibit their work. However, most artists lack business knowledge and experience in the field of marketing and many admit that they need help and guidance. While a handful of artists send out letters or flyers to appropriate businesses and potential clients and some have websites, many rely solely on word-of-mouth advertising. Very few are aware of *ArtServe's* artist registry. Only a handful of the artists interviewed rely exclusively on their artwork as an income. Many teach either at one of the local art centers or at a school. Others are employed in unrelated positions. Still others are retired and have returned to art in recent years. Although many would like to commit to art full-time, and some are attempting to as much as possible, realistically it is nearly impossible. Photographers have been especially hard hit in the wake of digital imagery. Small operations cannot afford the thousands of dollars for equipment and re-training that would help them be competitive in the field.

Traditional arts are sometimes showcased at the Heritage Museum and Cultural Center in Saint Joseph. For example, the Center commissioned Yellow Dog, an Upper Peninsula company, to build a 16-foot "Quebec" style birch bark canoe, the type used by both Native Americans and French traders in the seventeenth century.

## **Affordable Gallery, Studio and Housing Space**

Saint Joseph's multi-faceted and energized art scene was often sighted as an imperfect asset. Although the city is home to several art organizations, the art culture has increased the community's desirability leading to higher housing and gallery costs. Though Saint Joseph's housing and studio space are not seen as affordable by artists, much of the surrounding area is viewed as such. One way that artists are overcoming the cost of Saint Joseph's downtown retail space is through an artist co-op, Chartreuse.

The city of Benton Harbor offers artists both affordable housing and studio space. One example is 210 Water Street, which houses the Citadel Dance studio. It offers housing to artists and Becky Wehmer, an instructor and exhibitor at Water Street Glassworks, lives there. Other artists live in near-by renovated warehouses. Still the potential for artist working and living space, including Richard Hunt's studio warehouse at 258 Territorial Road, has not been realized.

## **Area Assets**

The Saint Joseph-Benton Harbor area has a large amount of public art. Much of Saint Joseph's sculptures are concentrated on the beach and bluff or downtown. The amount of public art located in Saint Joseph is remarkable, especially considering the size of the community. Most of the work was acquired through the commitment and effort of the Krasl Art Center and the City of Saint Joseph. Among the public art documented during this project was Richard Hunt's prominent sculpture *And You, Seas*. Benton Harbor's public art, both sculptures and murals, can be found in its downtown area. Both cities' churches exhibit a large amount of stained glass. Public art is also located at Lake Michigan College, Lakeland Hospital, and the Lakeland Center.

The Krasl Art Center was often mentioned as a facility that is unmatched for a small community. Art on the Bluff, the nationally ranked art fair held in Saint Joseph, is viewed by virtually all artists in the area as a benefit to them and to the community. The natural beauty of the area was also often mentioned.

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The historic character and intact architecture found in Benton Harbor and the city's affordability were cited as under-appreciated assets.

There are several galleries located in Saint Joseph, including the cooperative Chartreuse Gallery, Gallery on the Alley, the Pottery Shop, the Pewter Shop, B. J. Goetz Art Studio, Waterfront Framing & Fine Art and the Box Factory for the Arts and its Art Shop.

## Current and Possible Programs

Current cultural programs, projects, and organizations include:

- The Krasl Art Center, built in 1979 and operated by the Saint Joseph Art Association, had its beginning in 1962 when a small group of local artists organized a summer art fair now known nationally as the *Krasl Art Fair on the Bluff*. The Center has a wide range of classes for all ages and skill levels, several fund raising events a year, and a large membership. Four galleries, as well as the Krasl grounds, exhibit traditional fine arts, contemporary works, folk arts and crafts, and the work of local artists. Traveling exhibits come from the Smithsonian Institution, the Detroit Institute of Arts, and other major museums as well as from private collections. Krasl's permanent collection focuses on outdoor sculpture, which is exhibited in the Center's grounds and throughout the city of Saint Joseph.
- The Box Factory is home to more than twenty artist studios while the Art Shop showcases and sells Berrien Artist Guild members' work. The Box Factory hosts the Second Saturday Live in Concert Series, which is sponsored by the Riversong Music Society, a Song Share and an Open Mic Night. Art and writing classes are offered in a variety of mediums and in different levels of experience.
- The Heritage Society produced a study guide for students titled *Preserve the Fruit Belt*. The guide not only tells the history of how the area developed into the Fruit Belt, but it also explains to students how to gather information from documents, artifacts, photographs, buildings and oral histories. The Heritage Society is also involved in a collaborative effort with the fourth grade students from Buchanan schools to help them learn more about the Fruit Belt region. The project, entitled *Creative Collaborations: Teachers and Artists in the Classroom*, utilizes artists from the Krasl Art Center to give the students a multi-disciplinary look at this topic. Another of the Society's projects used Western Michigan University's public history students to produce conceptual plans for the preservation of lighthouses including accessibility, restoration, and adaptive reuse and landscaping plans. The Heritage Society's exhibit, *Shared Waters: Natives & French Newcomers on the Great Lakes*, is a traveling exhibition.
- Saint Joseph and Benton Harbor were chosen to participate in the *Maritime Heritage Destination Marketing Plan*. One of the results of the plan, which involves the Michigan Historical Center, the Southwest Michigan Tourist Council, the Berrien County Historical Association, the Morton House Museum and the Fort Miami Heritage Society, was a page for the Travel Michigan website.
- The Citadel Dance Center and Glassworks offer scholarships to area students. The owners and staff realize that there is little or no art offered in the Benton Harbor School district and try to help fill that void. The scholarships are funded through fundraising events. The New Territory Arts Association, of which both the Citadel and Glassworks are members, sponsor the Benton Harbor Children's Art Fair and other area arts-related programs. However, even when scholarships are offered to residents of Benton Harbor, it is difficult for the Dance Center to generate interest and support. Most of the students are from outlying areas.



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- Benton Harbor's Art Hop & Shop, held one Friday each month, exposes artists and local businesses to a larger audience. Attendance has been growing and those involved deem it successful. The Tabor Hill Winery is also involved in the event which gives artists an opportunity to speak with potential clients. Many artists feel that when buying a piece of art, the customer likes to have a personal connection with the artist and to know the story behind the work.
- A film project is underway that will feature Benton Harbor. Julie Katz is the creator of the project. The story of the rise and fall of Benton Harbor, the obstacles that must be overcome and the elements needed to help the city rise again will be told.
- Several of Benton Harbor's art community members are optimistic about the future of Benton Harbor. They have seen changes for the better and entrepreneurs, such as Richard Vance, are taking steps such as the purchasing and rehabilitating buildings for art use. Most admit to a racial divide in the city. There are, however, some people who are involved and are trying to make a difference in their community. There are artists who believe that the less organizations and government control there is in the arts; the better it is for the artists.

Possible cultural project and programs suggested by artists, gallery owners, and others involved in the art culture include:

- A grant-writing service for artists and art-related organizations is needed. The establishment of a percentage of building costs for all government buildings going to the art commissions and a greater degree of emphasis of art in public places were often mentioned. One artist stated that he felt that instead of having artists, who are often not particularly savvy in business matters, apply for grants there should be a grant program where businesses can apply for grants to employ artists.
- Increase collaborative efforts and communication between all the arts and art organizations. Although most of these organizations have their own website, there isn't one that encompasses all of the arts or one through which artists from various organizations and disciplines can communicate with each other. Increasing the awareness of the ArtServe artist registry was also suggested. Personal emails and word-of-mouth were often mentioned as the most often used means of communication.
- Re-vamp the Artist in Residence Program in Michigan. Simpler applications and contracts were sighted along with screening and website support by the state. Oklahoma's program was used as an example of a type of program that artists would like to see in place. This program also helps teachers find appropriate resident artists to visit their schools and provides added income for the artists.
- Develop tax-free art zones as a possible tool to encourage art sales and the development of art districts.
- Tie the arts, wineries, fruit farms, golfing, boating, the beaches and the natural environment together for a tourist strategy. Stated examples included while one member of a family takes art classes another can golf or enjoy the beach, and together they can participate in the wine tours. One artist is considering turning his Victorian home into a combination Bed and Breakfast and instruction art studio. Many feel that the entire west coast of Lake Michigan should be tied together similar to the Gold Coast of California with the arts, wine, etc.
- Increase art education not only in the public schools but for the general public as a whole. Many artists feel that people do not realize artists are part of the working class; they have

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bills to pay and do not create art “just for the fun of it.” The opinion of many artists is that people are hesitant to pay what the artist feels and art piece is worth—the time, talent and materials that go into each piece is undervalued. Many artists feel, too, that out-of-state visitors, especially from Chicago are more inclined to pay the actual value of the piece than are locals.

- Encourage artists to relocate in the Benton Harbor/Saint Joseph area. Examples would include the efforts of Richard Hunt to persuade Chicago artists to live and work in his studio warehouse, and the efforts of John Wilson in assisting artists from Russia and India to work and study in the area.

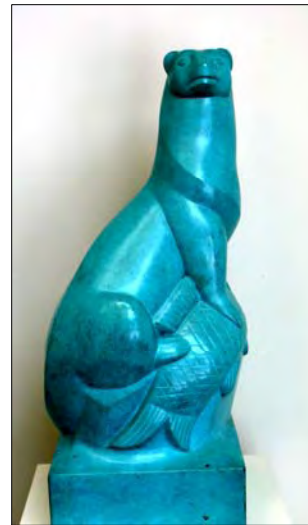
There are other significant issues that should be addressed. Although there is a tradition of philanthropy in the area, the opinion of several artists is that some of the wealthy residents support the arts only in a “showcase” manner that does not truly benefit the arts.

Particular to this region, there is an issue of the “Twin Cities” of Benton Harbor and Saint Joseph being divided on several levels: race, economics, socially and the arts. While some would like to pursue more interaction between the communities, others do not. Several artists felt a major project or program that would address this issue would greatly benefit both communities and the surrounding area.

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## Benton Harbor-Saint Joseph Area Art Sampler



### Public Art of Saint Joseph

There are numerous pieces of public art, particularly sculptures, displayed in Saint Joseph that represent a wide array of styles, subject matter, and media from different eras of its history. Several are owned by the city, many others by the Krasl Art Center, and still others are privately owned. Sculpture, memorials, and fountains can be seen in parks, on the beach, downtown, and in outlying areas, as well as in cemeteries and churches. Pictured clockwise are just a few of the many sculptures displayed in Saint Joseph. From the top left is a 1989 bronze and granite figurative work entitled *Sand Castles: What Dreams are Made of. . .* by Charles Cropper Park; the top middle is the bronze *Gulwave* (1983), by Kirk Newman located on the Krasl Art Center grounds; *The Otter* (1938) on the upper right is a bronze by Marshall Fredericks is displayed in Krasl's entrance; below left is James Thomas Russell's 1983 stainless steel *Nimbus Flight* located on Pleasant and State Streets; and bottom center is Richard Hunt's forty foot stainless steel work *And You, Seas* created in 2002 located along the Saint Joseph Channel. One of several monuments and memorials is the 1898 bronze and granite *Fireman's Monument* by Liance W. Cottrell (below right), which was dedicated to the firemen who lost their lives in Benton Harbor's 1896 fire.

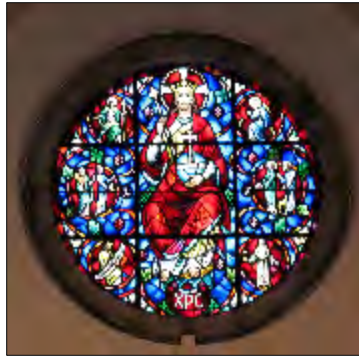


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## Religious Art

Benton Harbor and Saint Joseph are home to many churches that exhibit exceptional stained glass work including Saint Joseph's Catholic Church (right) and the First Congregational Church of Christ (middle). Saint Paul's Episcopal Church is also known for Alfeo Faggi's bronze *Saint Francis of Assisi* created in the 1960s (far right).



## The Krasl Art Center

The Krasl Art Center, built in 1979 and operated by the Saint Joseph Art Association had its beginning in 1962 when a small group of local artists organized a summer art fair now known nationally as the *Krasl Art Fair on the Bluff*. The Krasl has grown in size and scope as well as in presence. The center serves the Berrien County area and boasts of a wide range of classes for all ages and skill levels. Four galleries, as well as the Krasl grounds, exhibit traditional fine arts, contemporary works, folk arts & crafts, and the work of local artists. Traveling exhibits come from the Smithsonian Institution, the Detroit Institute of Arts, and other major museums as well as from private collections. Krasl's permanent collection focus is on outdoor sculpture, which is exhibited in the center's grounds and throughout the city of Saint Joseph.



## The Heritage Museum & Cultural Center

The Heritage Museum & Cultural Center brings to light the area's maritime heritage and related traditions, such as knot tying, which have influenced the arts. The museum has displayed objects that showcase the traditional art of basket making including the Native American tradition of black ash basketry, the fruit industry and the area's shipping industry. By the late 1800s, the fruit industry was well established in the area. At one time, the Saint Joseph/Benton Harbor area manufactured 95 percent of the fruit baskets of the world and had the world's largest growers-to-sellers market with over one thousand family farms participating. The museum displays these baskets and explores the history involved. Recently, the affiliated Fort Miami Heritage Society commissioned Yellow Dog, an Upper Peninsula company, to build a 16-foot "Quebec" style birch bark canoe. This type of canoe was used by both the Native Americans and French traders. The boat was created using birch bark, spruce roots and gum, and cedar.



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## Festivals & Events

The area is home to many festivals and events including a Band Organ Festival, the Sailing Festival and Craft Show, the Krasl Biennial Sculpture Invitational, the Venetian Festival, the Magical Ice Carving Festival, a poetry competition, and the jazz-focused Nikki Harris Festival. The most well known are the Blossomtime Festival (est. 1902) and the nationally ranked Krasl Art on the Bluff Festival. The Blossomtime Festival, Michigan's largest and oldest multi-community festival, celebrates the agricultural heritage of the area. The festival is known for its float competition and throughout the years, float design awards have been prized. Many of these floats were, and are, designed by artists and are essentially a work of art. At one time, the House of David, and Mary's City of David were major competitors and often won the "Grand Prize." Ron Taylor, a photographer and artist associated with Mary's City of David, has collected photographs from past festivals and continues to photograph the festival. His collection and work is currently on display at the Livery in Benton Harbor. The festival and the Grand Floral Blossom Parade and queen contest (both established in 1923) were an outgrowth of orchard tours provided to Chicago visitors.



The Krasl Art Fair on the Bluff is a two-day juried show that features over two hundred artists from all areas of the country and offers a wide variety of high quality art and fine crafts. The fair, which had its beginnings in the early 1960s as a "clothes-line" art fair, now attracts over seventy thousand visitors. *Sunshine Artist Magazine* consistently ranks the Krasl Art Fair one of the top two hundred fine art and design shows nationally and the show is included in the top one hundred and eighty art fairs on the *Harris List* of fine art/fine craft fairs.

Photo: Krasl Art Center website

## The Performing Arts

Music has a long tradition and prominent role in the area. The Southwest Michigan Symphony Orchestra is the premier organization, and performs both classical and pops concerts in the Mendel Center at Lake Michigan College in Benton Township. The area is home to several other significant music and theatre groups including the Saint Joseph Municipal Band, Twin City Players, and Kids on Stage. Among other performing art venues are the Box Factory for the Arts, the Brown Bag Concerts, Chocolate Cafe and Museum, Czar's 505, and Friday Night Jazz which is sponsored by the Tabor Hill Winery and Restaurant. The Livery is among the establishments in Benton Harbor that have live music—often the musicians are from Chicago. The Livery also features poetry nights. The area has a history of producing jazz musicians such as Gene Harris. Benton Harbor's Nikki Harris Festival honors and helps to continue this tradition.

## Art Galleries & Studios



There are several galleries located in Saint Joseph, including the cooperative Chartreuse Gallery, Gallery on the Alley, the Pottery Shop, the Pewter Shop, B. J. Goetz Art Studio, Waterfront Framing & Fine Art and the Box Factory for the Arts and its Art Shop. The Box Factory is home to more than twenty artist studios while the Art Shop

Photo: Box Factory website

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showcases and sells Berrien Artist Guild members' work. The Box Factory hosts the Second Saturday Live in Concert Series, which is sponsored by the Riversong Music Society, a Song Share, and an Open Mic Night. Art and writing classes are offered in a variety of media and in different levels of experience.

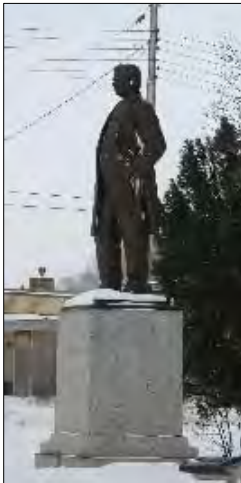
Benton Harbor is home to several art galleries and studios including the Majestic Art Gallery, the New Moon Gallery at the Citadel, the Vesuvius Gallery and its affiliated Water Street Glassworks, 80 West Main, the Galleria Del Corazo, the Studios at 210 Water Street, and Richard Hunt's Studio and private museum. Benton Harbor's Art Hop & Shop, held one Friday each month, exposes artists and local businesses to a larger audience.

## The Art of Invention

Innovative inventions and industrial techniques have been a part of the Saint Joseph/Benton Harbor area's history. Benton Harbor's fruit market had its beginning in the mid 1800s and it was an economic engine for the entire region. Other companies, such as the Morrison Tub and Pail Factory, which was located along the Saint Joseph River canal, fabricated the basket-making machinery. The era from 1930 to 1960 is sometimes referred to as the "Golden Age" of the fruit belt.

Turn-of-the-century innovations include the retractable wheels on planes, a champagne bottling machine and the Whirlpool Company's products. Originally named the Upton Machine Company, Whirlpool was founded in 1911 by Louis Frederic and Emory Upton to produce electric washing machines. Other industrial companies that at one time thrived in the area include Cooper-Wells, which produced "Iron Clad" hosiery and a pearl button industry. The decorative buttons were created from harvested clamshells from the Saint Joseph River. The shipping industry facilitated the founding of prominent ship building companies in the area such as the Dachel-Carter Company and Robinson Marine Construction Company. Many of these companies were involved with the WWII war effort.

## Public Art of Benton Harbor



Benton Harbor is home to a variety of sculptures and murals which can be seen in downtown parks and adorning building exteriors. The work varies in style, subject matter, media, and eras. Shown here are just a few works: top right, an abstract sculpture by local artist Brad Bigford; the 1922 bronze, *Theodore Roosevelt*, by Sidney Bedore (left); the Eagle that embellishes the cornice of the former Kitchen Mart building (lower right); and two murals: one depicting local African American heritage (below center) the other historic Benton Harbor Industries (lower left).



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## Mary's City of David

Mary's City of David, reorganized under Mary Purnell in 1930, was a self-sufficient community that raised and canned its own crops, used its own water supply, produced electricity and printed material, owned and operated its own sawmill, built its structures and, for a time, had its own medical facility. Mary's City of David also encouraged and promoted the arts. The traditional art of



woodworking was practiced by the community as was landscape gardening. Louie Dalhstrom was innovative in woodworking and Louis Manthey, a master gardener from Queensland, Australia was instrumental in creating the Blossomtime Festival floats that the City of David sponsored. Also well known was the sculptor Frank Rosetta who designed and created pieces with his secret pearl-like finish until the 1960s (right). He also

designed many award winning floats (left). Stringed instruments were also created by members of the community most notably by George Whiffen and Joseph Hannaford.



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## South Haven

Much of South Haven's art culture is tied to its maritime heritage. This influence can be seen in boat-building, model and toy boats, leatherwork, carvings (figureheads and scrimshaw in particular), dancing, and the fabric arts (knot-tying, sails, nets, and weaving). Lake Michigan and maritime subjects are the subject of numerous paintings and drawings. In more abstract terms, the light and water of the area as well as the lines and materials of boats are thought to have influenced the art created in the area. In other words, there is a distinctive "art of place" resulting from Lake Michigan and its maritime history.

South Haven's maritime heritage is also found in the area's musical heritage. Tom Kastle, captain of the Michigan Maritime Museum's tall ship *Friendship Goodwill*, and his wife Chris, are documenting chanties and other maritime music traditions. Chanties are work songs sung on ships, most often a capella. Different types of work called for different rhythms and so different types of songs. Some chanties were exclusive to an industry such as iron ore or lumber. Certain songs were particular to African American crews. Songs were often ad-libbed or modified to fit the situation. Amusement and disaster songs were also part of the seaman's repertoire.

There is an active local chapter of the Traditional Small Craft Association (TSCA), which is affiliated with the Michigan Maritime Museum (MMM). They recently, with the help of a grant, completed a replica of an Au Sable River Boat. This type of flat-bottom boat was poled and used for accommodating fishing tourists. Dave Ludwig of TSCA was involved in the project and can often be seen working in the Padnos Boat Shed on the museum's property. There is also a local chapter of the Wooden Canoe Heritage Association Ltd.

Mike Kiefer is a local boat builder. He has been in the business of creating traditional small craft wooden boats for over twenty years. These included rowboats, sailboats, powerboats, canoes and kayaks. His signature boat is a fourteen-foot Whitehall dingy. Keifer's boats are often purchased for display in maritime museums. He was even involved in the creation of boats for use in the *Pirates of the Caribbean* movies. Mike also handcrafts wooden signs for business and cottage owners and paints and draws as a hobby.

The fine art culture has a unique history that involves the establishment of the art group, the Space Corporation which was founded by several Chicago artists around 1960 and existed until about 1974. One of the founding members, painter, printmaker and sculptor Ted Dickerson (inventor of the Dickerson Combination Press) was originally from South Haven. Dickerson was a well known artist who exhibited at the Smithsonian Institute, the Art Institute of Chicago and many other prominent museums. He convinced several artists, and even those of other professions such as medicine and sociology, to purchase cottages on Sandmar Beach in South Haven. Most of the artists were schooled and/or taught at the Art Institute of Chicago, Oxbow School of the Arts, and/or the University of Wisconsin. Their main philosophy was to "knock art off its pedestal" and to make art a part of everyday life. There was a similarity between South Haven's Space Corporation and Europe's Fluxus, a group of European and Asian artists that popularized "happenings" and performance and participatory art in the early 1960s. Both groups created interdisciplinary work that incorporated several types of art forms, fine and traditional, plastic, performing and written art. Both wanted to be "free from the entanglements of the art establishment." The Space Corporation artists were supportive of each other and often ate meals together. They held art and musical events throughout the area. Their way of life, however, did not always agree with the area's conservative population. Besides Dickerson, members of the group included:



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Dorris Akers, craftsman in leather and fabric, co-founder of the Michigan Maritime Museum  
Vikto Andersson, musician and organist  
Heiko Boer, potter  
Ed Corey, graphic designer  
J. C. Heartsfield, musician and founder of the Heartsfield Band  
Barb Houlberg, draftsman, printmaker, and founder of the newly established Paul Dickerson Art Studio Museum Research Center  
Kindt Houlberg, painter, printmaker, sculptor, craftsman, retired Director of the College of Art and Design and the University of Illinois and has a studio in the South Haven area  
Hap Kneeland, graphic designer  
Suzi Lattner, painter and owner of Lattner Studio  
Philip Morton, computer graphic artist, former instructor at the Art Institute of Chicago  
Ben Newton, architect specializing in geodesic domes, windmills and materials such as bricks created from shredded paper.  
Helen O'Rourke, fabric artist and weaver and a retiree from the Art Institute of Chicago  
Dave Paul, media pioneer and current member of the South Haven City Council  
Corbi Sucher, fabric artist and weaver  
Rowlie Sylvester, poet, philosopher and co-founder of the Michigan Maritime Museum  
Bernie Van Maarn, photographer,  
Jerome Walker, graphic designer

The South Haven Center for the Arts (SHCA) recently held an exhibition honoring the Space Corporation artists. Film and recorded music of the group was donated to the SHCA.

The South Haven Art League was founded in 1951. For their first art show, paintings were hung on a clothesline strung between trees. Under the guidance of prominent local artist Steve French, a permanent collection of the work of local and regional artists was founded. In 1980 the Art League was renamed the South Haven Art Association. Since 1990 the Association's home has been the South Haven Center for the Arts (SHCA), located in a former Carnegie library building built in 1905 in the Neoclassical Revival style.

Generally, artists live and work in the rural areas outside of South Haven and are somewhat disconnected from the city itself. Only a handful of artists are native to South Haven, though most are well established in the region having vacationed in the area as children. The formal and informal training of the artists varies greatly. The artwork is quite eclectic in both subject matter and medium. Most cite the area's beauty as an inspiration and the Chicago art scene as an influence.

As with other artists in the region, word-of-mouth is a main marketing tool and some felt that they have a large, loyal following. Many have websites and some advertise in local publications. Several belong to organizations such as the West Michigan Tourist Association and the South Haven Chamber of Commerce and advertise through their websites. Brochures of a number of artists can be found at the South Haven Visitor's Bureau. Only a few artists and gallery owners are aware of, and take advantage of, the free advertising offered on the *Pure Michigan Travel* website. Most artists participate in art shows to varying degrees. Several are represented in galleries outside of Michigan. One artist that was interviewed sells her work at farmer's markets. Her traditional work is created through the wool and felt made from the sheep she raises and dyed from the flowers, berries and vegetables she grows. Her fabrics are woven on hand-made looms. Several artists teach classes and many have an additional source of income.

Included in the traditional arts practiced in the area is basket weaving. Work by local weaver, Nanette Anderson, with the Association of Michigan Basketmakers (AMB) is currently on display at Michigan State University in conjunction with the Heritage Basket Project.

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About half of the artists interviewed belong to an art or business organization. The SHCA, Krasl Art Center in Saint Joseph and the local chamber were most often mentioned.

Some public art exists in South Haven, including sculpture, two murals and good examples of stained glass located in churches and at the Scott Club. Although the club is private, it hosts lectures that are open to the public and after dark its stained glass windows are spotlighted. The Scott Club was founded in 1883 and has been housed in the same building since 1893. The structure also exhibits woodworking, tiled fireplaces and several pieces of original art.

South Haven has a tradition of theatre and music that still thrives today. The West Shore Chorus of Sweet Adelines, the Blue Star Music Camp, the Legend Theatre, and Our Town Players were recently joined by a new theatre organization that is taking over the former Eagle Street Theatre. Named the Foundry Hall, the group hopes to host a variety of events including folk music concerts, belly dancing shows and local plays, and to rent out the space for community and private events. Director Andru Berris would like to showcase some of the folk artists from Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo and Holland.

## Affordable Gallery, Studio and Housing Space

Interviewees agree that any home on or near the water is unaffordable. For most artists, housing in the surrounding rural area is still within reach. However in recent years, the cost of housing has risen in the entire region. There is only one gallery downtown and its main source of income is custom framing. The cost of a downtown gallery/studio is cost-prohibitive for most artists.

## Assets

South Haven's recreational harbor, its beaches, the Kal-Haven Trail and Van Buren State Park were all mentioned several times as assets. Long-time residents identify themselves with the maritime history and culture of the area and view it as not only an asset but a source of pride. This includes the tall ship *Friends Goodwill*, which is a sloop affiliated with the Michigan Maritime Museum.

The agriculture of the area, especially orchards and wineries, were cited as assets as was the rural atmosphere and the ability to grow products that are incorporated into the artistic creative process.

Several artists and shop owners also mentioned tourism, second homeowners, and the resort atmosphere as assets.

## Current and Possible Projects

- South Haven's visitor's bureau and the chamber of commerce have published a flyer, "South Haven's Harvest Moon Gatherings" which lists such area events as plays, golf outings, wine tasting, fairs and haunted houses in hopes of increasing tourism in the fall season. Together with local merchants, the organizations hosted a Harvest Hop, which included beer, wine tastings, food, sales, gifts and prizes.
- The South Haven Center for the Arts (SHCA) hosts exhibitions, musical and dance events and classes for adults and children. The SHCA sponsors the South Haven Summer Art Fair and the Mistletoe Market. Because the building is not easily accessible from the main downtown area (a busy street separates the two), and because parking is very limited, SHCA has established satellite

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programs. Although the Center is visually based, there are hopes to incorporate performing arts under its umbrella. Under relatively new leadership, the SHCA is increasing collaborative efforts and memberships. Focuses include art education, to increase local artists' exposure, to act as a resource center, and to increase the amount of quality public art in South Haven. The former Carnegie library that now houses the SHCA is in need of maintenance. The building is owned by the city and rented by SHCA for a nominal fee. Although this arrangement is largely beneficial to both organizations, the financial responsibility of repairs, some of which would be substantial, is in question. The costs and responsibility of increasing building accessibility is also unresolved. These issues need to be addressed.

- There is a proposal to establish a Cool Cities Initiative Black River Cultural Center. The plan includes the rehabilitation of an industrial building with the hope that the structure can be used for art classes, performances and community events that would benefit both residents and visitors and be environmentally sensitive. Included in the proposal is the encouragement of collaboration among community organizations and developing artist entrepreneurial programs. The current center would then be more of a gallery showcase for local and regional artists. The Creating Entrepreneurial Communities Art & Culture Sub Committee has several goals that would enhance, broaden, and strengthen the art culture of the area.
- Increase communication and collaboration among artists. Several artists voiced the need to create a broad network that incorporates the traditional crafts, the local farm culture, fine artists and gallery owners.
- Combine the arts and agri-tourism as a tourist strategy.
- Encourage the establishment of downtown galleries and studios. At the time of this report, downtown South Haven had only one art gallery (which is also a custom framing shop). Some are hopeful that with new leadership in both the Chamber of Commerce and the Visitors Bureau, artists will be encouraged to establish downtown galleries. Most felt that further collaboration among local organizations and among local merchants and artists would be beneficial. Current shop owners have inquired through the SHCA about representing local artists. Perhaps an artists' co-op would encourage artists to have a downtown presence. Besides the fine arts, the area's traditional arts could be showcased, especially those tied to maritime history and agriculture. The art of its diversified population, including Native Americans and African-Americans should be included as should the community's Jewish heritage. South Haven was a popular resort town for Jewish travelers from 1920 to 1970.
- Establish programs that encourage and support small businesses, such as tax free zones. Many think that programs to extend the spring and fall tourist seasons and more exposure for the region's art and unique culture are needed.
- Teaching the techniques of the traditional arts could be expanded through the Traditional Small Craft Association (TSCA) and the Michigan Maritime Museum. The TSCA offers classes on boat building, often for a traditional Old Towne wooden canoe. Classes could also be offered in carving, knot-tying, net-making, etc.

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- Establish an artist mentorship program. Younger artists said they would appreciate the establishment of some sort of mentorship or camaraderie with older, seasoned artists and feel that it would be a benefit to all.
- Establish a true maritime festival. Although South Haven hosts the annual *Harbor Fest*, many felt it did not do enough to promote the city's maritime tradition or history. A gathering of tall ships would be a draw, along with traditional music and dance (polkas and waltzes), and demonstrations in knot-tying, net-making, leatherwork, boatbuilding, model making (including wind-up toys), caning and carving. Also demonstrating tools that have been used for hundreds of years, such as a marline spike, and displaying iconic boats of the area, such as *The Mackinaw*, would be appropriate. Hosting a small regatta is also a possibility.

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## South Haven Art Sampler

### Michigan Maritime Museum & the Great Lakes Research Library



Much of South Haven's art culture is tied to its maritime heritage. This influence can be seen in boat-building, model boats (some of which are wind-up toys), leatherwork, carvings (figureheads and scrimshaw in particular), the fabric arts (knot-tying, sails, nets, weaving), and the subject of paintings and drawings. All of these types of art are displayed in the Michigan Maritime Museum and its Great Lakes Research Center. Most artifacts were created by local residents. Chanties (shanties) or seaman's work songs, instrumental music and dance are also part of this culture. Tom Kastle, captain of the *Friendship Goodwill*, the Museum's Great Lakes historic replica sloop, and his wife Chris, are experts of chanties and other maritime music traditions.



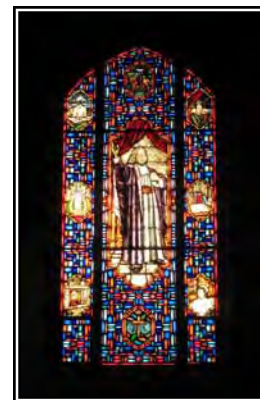
There is an active local chapter of the Traditional Small Craft Association (TSCA) which is affiliated with the Michigan Maritime Museum (MMM). They recently completed a replica of an Au Sable River Boa, a flat-bottom boat used for accommodating fishing tourists. The group is involved in boatbuilding and related maritime skills workshops. The *Evelyn S.*, an original fishing tug is also located on the museum Campus. The Museum is in the

process of acquiring the South Haven South Pier Light.

### Public Art



A wide range of styles and subjects can be seen in the area's public art. Memorials such as the 1920 bronze *The Spirit of the American Doughboy* by E.M. Viquesney displayed in Stanley Johnston Memorial Park (top left). Abstracts that can be seen include *Seagulls* by Saugatuck artist, Cynthia McKeon (bottom left). Religious art also has a presence in the area. The First United Methodist Church has stained glass windows (below right) and Saint Basil Catholic Church is home to the *Assumption Grotto* (top right). Two colorful murals are located downtown: a beach scene and a mural that celebrates South Haven's agricultural heritage such as its blueberry industry (detail below).



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## Scott Club



The Scott Club, founded around 1887, is home to stained glass windows—one dedicated to Sr. Walter Scott (left), the other to Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (right)—several pieces of art, handcrafted woodworking and two decorative tiled fireplaces. Though the club is a private organization, it does host lectures that are open to the general public and the stained glass window are spot-lighted at night.



## The South Haven Center for the Arts (SHCA)



The South Haven Art League was founded in 1951 and was renamed the South Haven Art Association in 1980. Since 1990 the Association's home is the South Haven Center for the Arts (SHCA) located in a 1905 Neoclassical Revival building that was once a Carnegie Library. For their first art show, paintings were hung on a clothesline strung between trees. Under the guidance of Steve French a prominent local artist, a permanent art collection of work of local and regional artists was started. The Center hosts exhibitions and events and is involved in both visual and performing arts. Workshops and classes are offered at the facility and in several collaborative outreach programs.

## Artists & Studios



The area is home to a number of artists; some are involved in the fine arts, others in traditional arts, and still others work in several media and in both fine and traditional applications. Among the later is Mike Kiefer (left). He has been in the business of creating traditional small craft



Photo: Donna Allgeier-Lamberto

wooden boats for over twenty years with his signature boat being a fourteen foot Whitehall (dingy). His boats can be seen in maritime museums and are used in Hollywood films (including the *Pirates of the Caribbean* movies). Other prominent artists in the area include painters Steve French, Catherine Maize, and Mary Hammer, printmaker Barb Houlberg, sculptors Patrick McKearnan and Cynthia McKean, photographers Karen Murphy (right), and John Davidson and basket weaver Nanette Anderson.

## The Space Corporation

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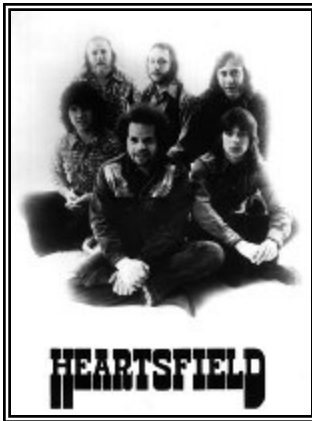


Photo: [www.disconnection.com](http://www.disconnection.com)

The fine art culture of the area has a unique history that involves the Space Corporation. The Space Corporation, founded by several Chicago artists, existed from the early 1960 until 1974. One of the founding members painter, printmaker and sculptor Ted Dickerson (inventor of the Dickerson combinations Press) who exhibited at the Smithsonian Institute, the Art Institute of Chicago and may other prominent museums), was originally from South Haven. He convinced several artists, and those of other professions such as medicine and sociology, to purchase cottages on and around the Lake Michigan shoreline. Most of the artists were schooled and/or taught at the Art Institute of Chicago, Oxbow and the University of Wisconsin. Their main philosophy was to “knock art off its pedestal” and to have art as part of everyday living. The group incorporated several types of art forms: fine and traditional, plastic, performing and written art. Many created interdisciplinary work. Both groups wanted to be “free from the entanglements of the art establishment.”

### Paul Dickerson Art Studio Museum & Research Center



Photo: Paul Dickerson as Art, 2007.

The Paul Dickerson Art Studio Museum Research Center (PSAM), a non-profit organization, is located on the outskirts of South Haven. The center’s namesake was a Chicago-native artist who resided in New York City. Dickerson artist worked in a variety of media and conducted extensive research in the art field. The collection includes over 4000 drawings, 300 books, a large amount of on-line research and notes and theories written by Dickerson. The PDSAM’s mission includes the “preservation, study and interpretation of the visual arts” and the facilitation of the “study of art from conception to execution.” Pictured is Dickerson’s 1994 work *Outlet*.

### Performing Arts



Photo: Courtesy of Michigan Maritime Museum Archives.

South Haven is home to several families who originated from Germany and were involved in the commercial fishing industry of South Haven. Most of the family members played musical instruments. The instruments would go out to sea with them. To the left is a historic photograph of South Haven’s German band in front of their docked schooners at Beaver Island.

South Haven as a tradition of theatre and music that still thrives today. The Riverfront Concert Series is part of this

tradition, as is the West Shore Chorus of Sweet Adelines, the Blue Star Music Camp, the Legend Theatre, and Our Town Players (a community theatre group), were recently joined by a new theatre venue, the Foundry Hall. The group hosts a variety of events including folk music concerts, belly dancing shows, local plays and rent out the space for community and private events.

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## Art Fairs & Events

South Haven hosts a number of popular art fairs, and fairs that incorporate the arts, including the Summer Art Fair, the Annual All Crafts Fair, the Harbor Fest, the Blueberry Festival, and the Heritage Boat Show (many of these crafts are a work of art). The annual Walking In A Good Way Pow Wow celebrates the living traditions of the Native American art culture. The Blue Coast Artists and the South Haven Council for Arts both hold events and open houses. Perhaps one of the festivals or events held in South Haven could pay tribute to the area's first clothesline art show.

## Art Finds

Many of South Haven's downtown shops carry art and craft items created by local artists including jewelry, home décor items, and photographs. Pictured is the Perfect Setting, a business that offers unique handcrafted jewelry.





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## Fennville

Allegan County, where the village of Fennville is located, is the home of three Native American tribes: the Pottawatomi, Odawa (Ottawa) and Ojibwa (Chippewa). The county is known for its Native American black ash basketry. Several Ottawa and Chippewa residents have received Michigan Traditional Arts Awards and Apprenticeships through Michigan State University in

Agriculture was, and is, a prominent aspect of the area. As part of the fruit belt, the area farms grew peaches, apples, blueberries and strawberries. Delicacies from nature included morels, maple syrup, asparagus, leeks and fiddleheads. Present in the current landscape is Crane Orchards (est. 1916) and its pie pantry and restaurant. Crane Orchards grows cherries, peaches and apples and offers a "U-Pick" option. In the 1920s, Fennville was a railroad shipping center for fruit and mint crops. The Fenn Valley Winery (est. 1973) is a highly visible feature of Allegan's agriculture community. The area is only one of three recognized Appalachian wine regions in Michigan (a distinction that the soil, climate and geography are conducive for growing grapes for wine), with the other two being the Leelanau and Old Mission Peninsulas.

## Art Culture

Blue Coast Artists is an association of artists located in the Fennville area. Their working studios are located south of Saugatuck and north of South Haven. The artists have common hours on weekends during the summer months and host a fall studio tour and a holiday open house. They communicate by email, by phone, and by personal contact. The association publishes a collective guide to "promote this region's art and cultural diversity through a defined cultural tour." The tour includes art studios, agri-tourism farms, wineries, art galleries, and restaurants. There is a fee to join the group as well as a required commitment to work in some aspect for the association. The idea is to collaborate and take advantage of each others talents and skills.

Blue Coast Artists and Fennville artists in general feel that Fennville's location between the two destination cities of South Haven and Saugatuck, combined with the rural landscape, the historic structures, and the agriculture tradition of the area, offers an unique art and cultural experience. Generally artists in the area feel that since the establishment of the Oxbow School of the Arts in Saugatuck in 1910 by a group of artists from the Art Institute of Chicago, the region has been an art destination. Several of the artists interviewed have either taught at Oxbow and/or taken classes there. From the 1960s to the early 1980s, the area has attracted artists from across the Midwest. The Space Corporation, a loosely organized group founded in South Haven in the early 1960s, was a catalyst for the development of the growth of the region's art culture. Although the overall opinion is that for the past several years South Haven's art culture has been declining, there is hope that, with renewed interest and good leadership, it can rebound.

Six Blue Coast Artists were interviewed as well as their four art partners (an associate-type designation). Most of the artists, including those that are not members of Blue Coast, belong to Saugatuck Area Business Association (SABA). Many are involved in the Allegan Area Arts Council (AAAC). Most of the artists that were interviewed did not live solely on the sale of their art work but had an additional income; often supplied by a spouse or partner.

- Theresa Gray, an art partner, specializes in delicate small-scale drawings and paintings. She recently closed the doors of her Saugatuck gallery. Rising prices and the lack of an art community were cited as reasons for the decision.
- Jessica Bohus of the Blue Roan Studio was originally from Chicago and had vacationed in the area. She is a long-time member of Blue Coast Artists and has been in the area for over nine years. Her glass and metal work is created in the studio and living space of a two-room schoolhouse that is slowly undergoing rehabilitation. Bohus is only vaguely aware of the possible tax credits that are available for a rehabilitation project of an

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- historic structure. She feels that artists should be encouraged and helped to live and work in such buildings and that more should be done to make the artist community aware of tax incentives that would encourage more artists to rehabilitate historic buildings. Bohus also feels that the arts of the area are greatly influenced by the natural environment and have a Midwest flavor and that this should be promoted.
- Lee McKee of Lake Effect Pottery has been working as an artist in this area for over seventeen years. Originally from the Battle Creek area and a former University of Michigan student, she was living on the coast of the state of Washington before moving to the Fennville area. McKee specializes in translucent porcelain designs. Her customers are mostly from the Midwest region. She does not participate in art shows but does teach “throwing” classes and lets others use her space in a restored turkey barn. Recent health issues have hindered her art production. She holds two part-time accounting positions. Other local artists are featured in her studio. She feels that better and farther-reaching promotion of the art culture is needed.
  - Dawn Soltysiak of Khnemu Studio LLC is a ceramic artist who specializes in unique firings and is an instrumental member of the Blue Coast Artists. She encouraged them to keep common studio hours and to print the tour brochure. She has recently applied for grants for the association to work more closely with the Allegan Area Arts Council (AAAC). She carries the work of several other artists in her studio and has visiting artists conduct workshops. Soltysiak also teaches classes and workshops in her 1890s rehabilitated barn. Visitors are from Chicago, Indianapolis and other areas of Indiana, Michigan (including Big Rapids and Grand Rapids), and the local area. She does not participate in shows. Like previous artists interviewed, she feels that it is important to recognize and encourage an art culture that is linked to history and preservation and feels that there is a need to better promote the arts culture of the area to a wider audience. She also feels that the artwork of the area is strongly influenced by the environment and has a Midwest feel.
  - Along with various types of advertising venues, she feels that her e-newsletter is well-received and is vital in promoting her artwork and the art of the area. However, Soltysiak believes that gas prices have discouraged visitors to rural studios.
  - Ronda Hall, the manager of Stantall Studio which represents Kathy Stanton (painter and photographer), strongly feels that agri-tourism and the arts should be combined to promote tourism in the area. One possible program is to establish juried farmers’ markets that would sell local produce and locally produced crafts and arts. Stantall Studio is a member of several local organizations including the Glenn Area Business Association, the Allegan County Visitors Bureau, the Michigan Retail Association, and the Blue Coast Artists. During their fall studio tour and holiday open house, the studio offers Earl’s Farm Market gift baskets and hosts the local Santa’s Gift Shop. Demonstrations such as weaving are presented. Hall and Stanton also own and operate a Christmas tree farm. Hall believes that educating the local community and officials on what area artists have to offer and “get them excited about it” would help in the promotion of the area’s culture. She feels that the recognition of the area’s culture should start at the grass roots level. The rising cost of gas prices was also cited by Hall as an issue in reducing visitors that will tour the area. Emails, websites, press releases, brochures, direct mailings, and the development of a newsletter as well as the special events, are all used by Stantall Studio as marketing tools.
  - Bruce Joel Cutean, who formerly owned and operated a Saugatuck gallery, has recently opened a gallery in downtown Fennville. Besides the issue of affordability, Cutean feels that there is a greater sense of community in Fennville. He appreciates the area’s ethnic and economic diversity. Grocery stores, a post office and a hardware store that are located downtown are seen as assets by Cutean. The gallery has been well-received by the local community. He thinks that too often art galleries are intimidating and feels that his gallery is welcoming, playful, and non-threatening. “Fine & Funky” art work, art marketing consulting, and website design are offered. One of the artists that the gallery represents has received mural commissions and a local business that is expanding has purchased several pieces. Cutean plans to offer music venues. Because there is no local

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art organization (except for Allegan Area Arts Council), he hopes that his gallery will act as an umbrella for the arts, to offer classes, workshops and demonstrations and to encourage collaboration of the arts in the area. Artists that are represented in the gallery are from Holland, Kalamazoo, Grand Rapids, and Saint Joseph as well as from the immediate area.

- Artist Mark Williams of Blue Star Pottery has lived and worked in the area for thirty-four years. He appreciates the local artist community and mentioned that from the 1960s until sometime in the 1980s South Haven was attracting artists from the Midwest region. Williams is a member of the Michigan Guild of Artists and the South Haven Center for the Arts. He participates in six to eight Midwest shows a year and is represented in several galleries, also in the Midwest. He supports himself solely on his artwork. Between creating pieces and traveling for shows, there is little time to market his work. He feels that assistance in marketing arts and artists in the area would not only help the artists but also the community as well.
- Suzi Lattner of Lattner Studio has been selling paintings for over twenty-four years and has been in this studio for six or seven years. She is originally from Saint Louis and was educated at the Art Institute of Chicago. The Great Lakes Pastel Association is among the organizations of which she is a member. Lattner also mentioned the demise of South Haven's art culture and the down-turn of art sales, especially in the last three to four years. Throughout the years she has participated in art fairs, but less and less frequently.
- Kathy Catonia of Vesuvius Gallery (North) was also interviewed. She and her husband, Jerry Catonia who teaches at the Oxbow Summer School of Art in Saugatuck, also owns Benton Harbor's Vesuvius Gallery. They have been members of the Blue Coast Artists association since its establishment fourteen years ago. Catonia believes that art education in the schools, community art appreciation, art community development in both rural and urban settings, and a far-reaching promotion of the art culture are vital. She feels that Cool Cities grants have assisted in this. She would like to see the state create a panel that includes artists, art teachers, art associations, and gallery owners to discuss ways that the arts are pivotal and essential for a vital economy and to be involved in the decision-making process.
- After working in stained glass for over twenty years and with wood for over fifteen years, Barb Horvath decided in 2003 to retire as a veterinarian and direct her energies fulltime to her arts. She is a member of the Glenn Business Association. Most of her customers are from the Midwest area. "Small-ticket items" are her biggest sellers. Horvath's advertising venues include Michigan Live, her website, and her visible location. She participates in a few local art shows a year.
- Anke Richert Koriath lives with her husband in Chicago and, for the past seventeen years, spends each summer weekend in the Fennville area. They have owned their house for ten years and it has also served as a studio/gallery for the past five. She is originally from Germany and attended design school there. Koriath's works are collages consisting of painting and photographs with some being representational and others abstract. She feels that more networking is needed among local artists. She believes an artist salon, similar to those hosted by the Chicago Artists Coalition, of which she is a member, would help artists become more familiar with each other and their art.

Other area artists interviewed included:

- Dawn Stafford, artist and owner of the Peach Belt Studio Gallery (located on the corner of Sixty-Third Street and M-89. Her studio/gallery is in a brick one-room schoolhouse. She works in acrylics and sells not only her own work but the work of other artists in the region. Like many of the artists in the area, her studio is in a historic structure that is in a continual rehabilitation process.
- Custom Quilts Unlimited is not a member of the Blue Coast Artists but may possibly join. The store/studio opened its doors in April 2007. An informal quilting group founded about two years ago, the Fennville Flying Geese & Ganders, meets at the store on Fridays.

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These quilters are both male and female (although most are female) and vary in age and quilting experience. Although some learned quilting from a relative, more became familiar with it through a book, a class, or a friend. Most of the group sells quilts at the shop, creates quilts on commission and gives their work as gifts. A few enter craft and art shows. The owner, Mary Smallegan, at one time sold at seventeen quilt shows but now only participates in eight shows in the region. The downhill trend of the profitability of Michigan's art fairs and the responsibilities of the store were cited as reasons she enters less shows. The store and her work are her only source of income; however, her husband has other employment.

## **Affordable Gallery, Studio and Housing Space**

Generally, this area offers affordability for artist space.

## **Area Assets**

Affordability was often mentioned as a major draw for artists as was the availability of historic buildings. The natural environment was seen as an asset as well being an artistic influence. The sense of community and co-operation was also mentioned, along with its ties to the agricultural community.

## **Current and Possible Projects**

Current area cultural projects and programs include:

- The Fenn Valley Winery hosts a Father's Day open house which includes music, "Blues in the Vineyard" in July, and "Sunday Afternoon Performing Arts in the Vineyard" in August. Although involvement in visual arts is minimal, some of the wine chillers are created by a local artist. The wines are served at the "Blue Coast Artists Annual Fall Tour and Holiday Open House" and at Saugatuck's film festival. The winery is promoted through its website and brochures, but word-of-mouth is a major source of advertising.
- The Allegan County Children's Museum is located in downtown Fennville. Until a year ago, the museum was a traveling one. Now, instead of traveling, the museum hosts field trips to its facility and summer outdoor programs. The museum has been very well-received by the local community.
- The Michigan Fiber Arts Festival is held yearly at the Allegan County Fair Grounds.
- The City of Fennville hosts "Tuesday in the Park," a free community concert series.

Cultural projects and programs suggested by artists, gallery owners, and others involved in the art culture of the area include:

- Better and expanded promotion of the art culture of the region. Target the type of visitor that will venture off the beaten path to find art.
- Retain and promote the area's uniqueness and bring in new businesses that would enhance the region.
- Encourage artists to promote other local artists. Several of the artists in the area sell not only their artwork but also the work of others. This practice should be encouraged. Those that sell the work of others have stated that the sales of their own work have not suffered.

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- Extend the tourist season. Although the “Fall Studio Tour and the Holiday Open House” have helped, they would like to further extend their May-October season.
- Further the art culture of the area through collaborative efforts on projects between local organizations and promotion by area chambers. Pooling resources would be beneficial to all. Networking would be beneficial for a sense of community and to promote each other and the art culture of the area.
- Encourage artists to work and live in historic structures and provide information on historic preservation tax incentives and workshops on how-to rehabilitate historic buildings.
- Develop tax incentives and tax-free art zones that would benefit the artists and the art patron.
- Establish government committees that include artists, gallery owners, art educators, and those involved with non-profit art organizations that would have input in developing policy. Artists and gallery owners would like to be involved in discussions and the decision-making process of including art culture as an economic engine.
- Combine the arts, agriculture, and history as a tourism strategy. Recently a grant from the Michigan Department of Agriculture was awarded to assist in developing a farm market trail. (The project is headed by Julie Cowe, an area resident who has been involved with several projects.) A Heritage Trail Tour and booklet have been developed for Allegan County by the Allegan County Community Foundation and the Allegan County Tourist Council. The self-guided tour focuses on history, the built environment and, to a lesser degree, the natural environment. Because many area artists live and/or work in historic structures and because the area has an art tradition, incorporating the arts in this type of project, as well as more of the region’s agricultural history, would be a natural extension.

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## Fennville Art Sampler

### The Blue Coast Artists



Blue Coast Artists is an association of artists located in the Fennville area. Their working studios are located south of Saugatuck and north of South Haven. The artists have common hours on weekends during the summer months and host a fall studio tour and a holiday open house. The association publishes a collective guide to “promote this region’s art and cultural diversity through a defined cultural tour.” The tour includes art studios, agri-tourism farms, wineries, art galleries, and restaurants. Many of the studios are housed in historic structures.



Members include Jessica Bohus of the Blue Roan Studio who creates glass and metal work in her two-room schoolhouse;

Dawn Soltysiak of Khnemu Studio LLC, a ceramic artist who holds workshops and sells other local artists’ work in her barn; and Lee McKee of Lake Effect Pottery who specializes in translucent porcelain designs and whose studio is in a former turkey coop. Photographer and painter Kathy Stanton of Stantall Studio, potter Mark Williams of Blue Star



Pottery, glass artist Kathy Catonia of Vesuvius Gallery (North), painter Suzi Lattner of Lattner Studio, collage artist Anke Richert Koriath, and Barb Horvath who creates glass and wood pieces, are also members. Theresa Gray, an art partner, specializes in delicate small-scale drawings and paintings.

Other artists in the area that are not associated with the Blue Coast Artists include Dawn Stafford, artist and owner of the Peach Belt Studio Gallery which is housed in a brick one-room schoolhouse(right); quilter Mary Smallegan, owner of Custom Quilts Unlimited and member of the quilting group the Fennville Flying Geese & Ganders; and Bruce Joel Cutean, owner of Thirdstone gallery in downtown Fennville.



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## Saugatuck-Douglas

The first artists or craftsmen in the area were Native Americans of the Potawatomi tribe who were known for their quill work and, later, beadwork.

Saugatuck has long been known as an art community in both the plastic and performing arts. Since the Oxbow Summer School of Painting was established in 1914 it has drawn artists interested in *plein aire* painting. Oxbow's on-going affiliation with the Art Institute of Chicago has given authenticity to Saugatuck's reputation as an artist colony.

Saugatuck was home to Burr Tillstrom (1917-1985) the creative talent behind the early and highly successful television puppet show, *Kukla, Fran and Ollie*.

Today, Saugatuck, and to a lesser extent, Douglas, are known and promoted as art destinations. Local, regional, and national artists are represented in the galleries. Some galleries represent one particular artist; the Bruce Baughman Studio is one example. Others, such as the Discover Art Center, represent a group of artists, while others, like the Water Street Gallery, focus on Michigan and regional artists. Still others, such as the Button and Petter Galleries, opt to feature well-known national artists.

### Affordable Gallery, Studio and Housing Space

According to everyone that was interviewed, Saugatuck is very unaffordable and Douglas is nearly so. Many artists live in or near Holland, Fennville, or even Grand Rapids.

### Area Assets

The environment, especially the calming effect of the water, was often mentioned as an asset. The water, the woods, and the seasons were cited as art influences. The tourist trade, although many feel is not as vibrant as it was a few years ago, was mentioned as an asset to artists and gallery owners. Close proximity to Chicago is seen as a benefit. Many feel that the laid-back attitude and the acceptance of alternative life styles are benefits both economically and personally.

Although most feel that it is not promoted enough and that it should be promoted T a broader, more national level, the image of Saugatuck as an art destination is viewed as an asset.

The long history of theatre and music performances in the area is seen as a benefit. Historically and currently, music plays a vital role in the culture of the Saugatuck area. On Wednesday nights live music is played at Riverside Park. Fenn Valley Winery offers music at their events. The Chamber Music Society is a vital and well-respected organization. There are several jazz musicians that regularly perform in the area.

The sculptures of Art 'Round Town are seen by many residents as a community benefit that re-enforces the image of Saugatuck as an art destination.

The resort and cottage architecture of the area is seen as an asset.

Unlike other areas of the region, Saugatuck and Douglas boast an array of restaurants in different price ranges, which is considered an asset.

### Current and Possible Programs

Current programs, projects, and organizations include:

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- The area hosts several festivals and art fairs that are well-attended including the Saugatuck Art & Craft Fair, the Art 'Round Town Annual Exhibit, the Waterfront Invitational Art Fair, the Village Square Art & Fine Craft Fair, the Heritage Festival (which celebrates the architecture and agriculture of the area), the Waterfront Film Festival, and the Halloween Harvest Festival.
- The Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society Museum, although small, has high quality exhibits. The exhibit at the time of this survey was *Walls Talking, Stories Houses Tell*, featuring artifacts from the Kleinheksel farmhouse. The family was the first to settle in the Dutch community of Overisel in 1848. Also featured were items and photographs of the artist John W. Norton's Prairie-inspired family cottage. Norton is best known as a muralist who promoted his views on the importance of public art. His work and techniques influenced the Works Progress Administration (WPA) mural movement. The Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society Museum is involved in local school programs. One such project involved elementary children creating artwork interpreting significant local historical events. The artwork is currently on display at the museum.
- The Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society has purchased the Douglas Union School and is in the process of rehabilitating it as a museum extension. It will include an interactive space for children and will incorporate the large grounds.
- The Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society has played a vital role in the preservation of several historic buildings in the area including the Dutcher Lodge (at one time a Mason's lodge and now the City Hall). However, while there is a local historic district in Saugatuck, there is no established historic district or historic district commission in Douglas. Development and increased taxation are two major local issues that the village is facing.
- The Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society annually presents Heritage Preservation Awards in Heritage Preservation Leadership, the Blue Star Corridor, New Construction, the Preservation of the Historic Landscape, and the Preservation of the Historic Built Environment.
- The Saugatuck-Douglas Art Club, which is at least 50 years-old and is comprised mostly of older, long-time residents, is very philanthropic. Each year they give art scholarships ranging from \$14,000 to \$17,000 to local students. The group hosts three shows a year, one of which is the "Clothesline Art Show" in Douglas. Peggy Boyce chairs this organization and has donated gallery space for the club's co-op. The club has an alliance with the Red Barn Playhouse located just outside of Saugatuck. The playhouse hosts local artists' shows and exhibits artwork during its performance season.
- The Saugatuck Center for the Arts (SCA) is currently in its fifth season. The organization hopes to be seen as serving all of Allegan County in the arts and as an engine for economic development; however, it is not an umbrella organization. The SCA offers a variety of classes for adults and children and owns the adjacent Mason Street Theatre. The center was also one of the venues of this year's film festival. The Green Market, a farmer's market, is supported by the SCA. The SCA also hosts exhibitions. (At the time of this project, the paintings of Carl Hoerman (1885-1955), a German immigrant who studied architecture in Chicago and who designed several buildings in the Saugatuck area, are on display.) The SCA has no current plans to show the work of local artists.
- The Art 'Round Town project is a juried show in which sculptors, many with Michigan ties, can display and sell large pieces. Over the years, several have been purchased by private individuals and by organizations such as the city of Saugatuck, the village of Douglas, and the Friends of the Library. The artists not only appreciate the exposure and the chance to sell their art, but also the networking the project facilitates and the chance



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to connect with fellow artists, which in this area, is often lacking. The local community appears to appreciate the public art. The program is headed by Gayle and Richard Lipsig.

- Oxbow School of the Arts is located just outside of Saugatuck. Local artist and historian, Judy Anthrop, is writing a book about the history of the forty building site. The school's twenty or so fellowship students help run the school by cooking, cleaning, taking care of the grounds, etc. There are five main studios: ceramics, metal, printmaking, glass, painting, and papermaking. When the School was first established, students spent the entire summer there. Currently, except for the fellowship students, most stay one to two weeks—the length of a class. At one time the student body was younger and more “bohemian.” Currently, professional artists and other professionals who dabble in the arts are among the students. Ox Bow is affiliated with the Art Institute of Chicago and a majority of the students are from the Chicago area, though the School does host a few international students. The time artists spend working in the studios is extensive and intense and the studios are always open. The faculty consists of local professional artists and out-of-state artists. The school is not affiliated with any local gallery or art organization and some wish there was more interaction between the school and venues in the local communities. The School did initiate a “Friday Night” program in which local residents could visit the grounds, talk with the artists and instructors, and view and purchase art that was created at the school. Also this year, the School is offering a lecture on the history of Oxbow as part of a lecture series which is open to the public. The School's focus, however, is on its students and providing the best learning experience possible.
- The Chamber Music Society holds concerts in the summer months at the Women's Club. The group has a close connection with the Grand Rapids Symphony and the Holland Symphony Orchestra. The group also offers two to three summer internships for young musicians.
- Jazzman Productions (Lakeshore Jazz Connections) have held performances at the Women's Club as well. They have also used the Saugatuck Center for the Arts theatre facility.
- The Manson Street Warehouse Players, a summer stock theatre group, rents the SCA's theatre space for the majority of the summer and creates several productions each summer. Auditions are held in Saugatuck, Kalamazoo, Grand Rapids, Chicago, and New York.

Possible projects and programs suggested by artists, gallery owners, and others involved in the area's art culture include:

- Create more exhibit space in local, public facilities. The Saugatuck Art Council was cited several times as a possibility. However, the SCA is apprehensive about venturing into that area.
- Create and promote art districts in Michigan. Many felt that this would be beneficial not only to artists and gallery owners, but the community as a whole.
- Develop a regional cultural tourism trail.
- More active promotion of the area's arts and culture to a wider audience in order to increase tourism, and the type of tourist that will spend money on cultural venues, and extend the tourist season. This would help the entire local economy.

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- Increase awareness of the culinary arts of the area. The culinary arts were cited as an asset that has not been promoted sufficiently.
- Encourage local chamber of commerce to become more involved in promoting and encouraging the area's art culture.
- Develop grant-writing, collaboration, and marketing workshops for artists. Many artists have had little business experience. Those that are successful often have a business partner.
- Educate the general public in the appreciation of the arts.
- Create more opportunities for exhibiting and selling artwork.
- Develop and promote Mt. Baldy sand dune, an icon of Saugatuck, as a tourist attraction and as an artist inspiration. The Saugatuck-Douglas area has over thirty miles of hiking trails that appear to be under-utilized and under-promoted as a community and tourist asset.
- Establish a viable, local art league or guild. The Art Club, while active and very philanthropic (they also have an artist co-op located on Water Street), is viewed as an organization of older, established artists who do not need to make a significant income from their arts. Many artists feel that the competition for tourist dollars is so great that there is little desire to cooperate or collaborate with fellow artists and as a result the quality of the art culture suffers. Many artists that were interviewed said one of the reasons they relocated to the area was to experience a sense of an artist community only to find out that it does not exist.
- Establish a gallery association. The owner of a newly established studio and gallery has been opened for several months with no one from any art organization or gallery paying her a visit. Most of the galleries do participate in the twice-a-year gallery walks. Although some owners tried to establish "Friday Gallery Talks," there was little interest from most shop owners. A majority of the artists and gallery owners are member of the Saugatuck Area Business Association (SABA).
- Increase collaboration and coordination between cultural groups. Because there is little collaboration among groups, each has their own calendar and schedule. There is very little attempt to include other organizations in events and/or to coordinate and consult with each other when scheduling events. Resources could be more efficiently utilized and the customer base would broaden.
- The creation and promotion of a statewide Michigan Art Association to provide assistance to and communication between artists, cultural organizations, gallery owners, etc. (Currently *ArtServe* somewhat serves that capacity but few artists in the Saugatuck-Douglas area knew of it.)

There are other issues that many in the art community feel should be addressed. These include:

- Many artists and gallery owners are of the opinion that today's tourists spend less time and less money on art than they did ten or so years ago. They also felt that fewer tourists appreciate the arts. (The lack of art appreciation has been cited as an issue throughout this region. Many feel that it is the result of a near absence of art education.)
- Although tourist dollars have lessened, rent for gallery, studio and living space has drastically increased forcing some galleries to close their doors or move to near by

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Douglas or Fennville. Most downtown Saugatuck shop owners do not rely solely on that business; they either have a working spouse, another occupation or are retired from another position. There are exceptions. Well-established and well-known artists such as Jim Brandess and Bruce Baughman are doing well. They have international followings and have extensively marketed their work. Both have a rather large staff. The C. Petter Gallery and the adjacent Button Gallery, are well-known, well-established and well-staffed, and appear to be prospering. (The Button Gallery has been in the area for forty-one years and the owner is on Oxbow's Board of Directors.) While both carry some Michigan artists, the majority of the artists are out-of-staters. Joyce Petters, the former owner of the gallery, has passed on ownership to her daughter-in-law, Constance. Joyce is a supporter of local organizations and has offered her gallery as the site for various fundraising activities including those for the Chamber Music Festival. Because of Joyce's support, the gallery was often mentioned on the local NPR station.

- Those involved in museums, cultural organizations, along with artists and gallery owners, believe that digital art and the internet have harmed cultural tourism. Images of art and artifacts are readily available and have seemed to lessen the need to visit a museum or experience a place or a piece of art first-hand. The need to sell "authenticity" and developing an interactive experience may be necessary to encourage cultural heritage tourism. Although the public will pay to experience a concert or a movie, this is not being translated to the visual arts and museums.
- Of major concern is the fate of the Dennison property, a parcel of land on the Kalamzoo River that includes the site of the town of Singapore, which has been purchased by an out-of-state developer with plans for extensive development. The National Trust for Historic Preservation named the site to its Eleven Most Endangered Places list in 2010. Local groups are joining together to protect the history, landscape and eco-system from the proposed development.
- There are several "ghost towns" located in Allegan County including Breese, Plummesville, Wallinville and Shriver's Landing. Developing tours of ghost towns was mentioned as a possibility to draw more visitors to the area.

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## Saugatuck-Douglas Art Sampler

### Public Art



Public art is plentiful in the area and can be seen not only in the downtowns but also at schools, restaurants, golf courses, parks, libraries, and private residences. (top right: *Not Sevens*, by Zack Wallerius, 2003, located at Saugatuck High School).

The Art 'Round Town project is a juried show in which sculptors, many who have Michigan ties, can display and sell large pieces. The pieces are exhibited in Saugatuck's and Douglas' downtown area, so much of the public art is temporarily on display. Included in the 2007 show was the bronze *Anna* by Norma Penchansky Glasser (top left). However, over the years several sculptures have been purchased by private individuals and by organizations such as the city of Saugatuck, the village of Douglas and the Friends of the Library (bottom right, *Stones to Steel*, by Terry Westra, dedicated in 2003). The sculptures vary in size, media, subject matter and style. There are a number of abstracts and numerous representational and semi-representational figurative pieces such as *Family of Man IV* by Cynthia McKean (lower left).



Both Saugatuck and Douglas are also home to impressionistic murals located on park buildings along the waterfront whose subject is people enjoying the area's beauty



### Studios & Galleries

The downtowns are known for their art galleries, studios, restaurants and shops. Among the many galleries in Saugatuck are Amazwi Contemporary Art, Bruce Baughman Studio & Gallery, James Brandess Studio & Gallery Inc., Good Goods, Marcia Perry's Ark Gallery & Sculpture Studio, Janice Miles Gallery, the Timel Collection & Garden Center for the Arts, DeGraaf Forstythe Gallery, and the Tuscan Pot Studio & Gallery. Other downtown shops include Indian Summer, the Gallery of International Home, and Koorey Creations while the Copper Garden Studio is located on the outskirts of town. The Discovery Art



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Center, a cooperative of Saugatuck artists, is affiliated with the Saugatuck-Douglas Art Club. Douglas features the Thirteen Hawks Studio, the Thistle Gallery, Luoma Art Gallery, Bentley's Fine Art & Antiques, Elizabeth Ellen Gallery, and You'nique International Gallery. The Button Gallery and the Adjacent Constance Petter Gallery are housed in building designed by architect and artist, Carl Hoerman (upper right) The Saugatuck Center for the Arts is home to a gallery that often hosts special exhibits (right, showing Carl Hoerman paintings.)

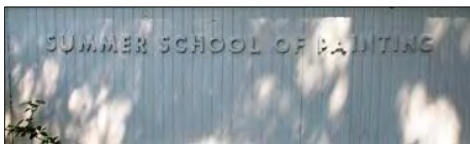


## Artists & Art Organizations



The Saugatuck area has long been a summer destination for outdoor painting (*plein aire*) has an extensive tradition in the area. The first artists camped in the area in 1891. Since that time, the area's beauty has drawn a host of artists. At the rung of twentieth century, a student at the Art Institute of Chicago (AIC), whose parents owned a resort in Saugatuck invited classmates to stay with her and paint the countryside. Her guests, who all became working artists, included Albert H. Krehbiel, John Warner Norton, Walter Enright, Galin Joseph Perrett and Horace Brown. Among the early artists to visit the area were Carl Maunch, John C. Johansen, a Danish-born

instructor at the AIC, Frederick Fursman, and Walter Marshall Clute. By 1913, the "Summer School of Painting in Saugatuck" was advertised. Soon prominent art instructors such as Elsa Ulbricht and Thomas Eddy Tallmadge were involved with the school. In 1914, the school moved its operations to the Riverside Hotel which was renamed the Ox-Bow Inn, and the school became known as the Oxbow School of Painting, and then later, the Oxbow School of the Arts. Aaron Bohrad, who was among the eight artists chosen to participate in "Michigan on Canvas," a 1940s project sponsored by the J. L. Hudson Company, chose to



depict Saugatuck. Carl Hoerman, originally an architect from Chicago, became one of the best known landscape painters of the area. He also designed several structures in the area, including the present-day C. Petters Gallery building. The doors of the building were hand-carved by Hoerman. Other well-known artists with Oxbow ties include Claes Oldenburg (1929- ) who is known for his Pop Art and illustrator LeRoy Neiman (1927- ) whose work has been seen in numerous publications such as *Playboy* and *Sports Illustrated*. Since 1994 the Oxbow School of the Arts has been affiliated with the Art Institute of Chicago.

The Saugatuck Center for the Arts (SCA) is currently in its fifth season. The SCA offers a variety of classes for adults and children and owns the Mason Street Warehouse Theatre. The SCA was also one of the venues of this year's film festival and hosts art exhibitions. A wide variety of music, comedy, and dance performances are held at the SCA. The Green Market, a farmer's market, is supported by the SCA.

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## Art Fairs & Festivals

The area hosts several well-attended festivals and art fairs including the Saugatuck Art & Craft Fair, the Art 'Round Town Annual Exhibit, the Waterfront Invitational Art Fair, the Village Square Art & Fine Craft Fair, the Heritage Festival (which celebrates architecture and agriculture of the area), the Waterfront Film Festival, and the Halloween Harvest Festival.



Photo: [www.waterfrontfilm.org](http://www.waterfrontfilm.org)

## Culinary Arts

Unlike many other areas of the region, Saugatuck and Douglas boast an array of restaurants in different price ranges. The Wicker Inn is well-known for its proprietor, Julie Rosso, author of the *Silver Palette* cookbook. Other establishments that are home to accomplished chefs include the Kirby House, the Belvedere Inn & Restaurant, the Butler Restaurant, the Blue Moon Bar & Grille, The Dining Room at Clearbrook and Everyday People.

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## Holland

Generally, Holland and its art are considered to be conservative in nature—abstracts and nudes are few—reflecting its strong Dutch Reform roots. Like its neighbor Grand Rapids, with which it shares many similarities, churches often host art exhibits. Many times the artist(s) are church members. Holland has a number of art galleries including:

The Moynihan Art Gallery & Framing has been in business for fourteen years. The gallery carries local and regional artists. Local artists that are represented include Eleanor Burns who is known for her reminiscent local scenes and watercolorist and mixed media artist Kate Moynihan. The gallery owner noted that sales of original artwork have been dropping in the last several years and now accounts for about 20 percent of all sales. Many original artwork sales are to corporations. The galleries clientele includes local customers, especially for custom framing, and regional visitors with Chicago well represented. The gallery participates in the town's gallery walks, which are held three times a year and collaborates on projects with Hope College and the local high schools. The Moynihan Art Gallery promotional venues include local advertising and a website.

The Castle Park Gallery manager, best known for its glassware, was interviewed. He stated that local business has decreased and is currently less than 25 percent. Michigan customers account for about 50 percent of sales and out-of-staters, the majority from Chicago, represent the rest of the sales. He believes a significant percentage of customers are traveling from locations such as southern Indiana and Saint Louis, Missouri, and they account for a sizable percentage of the customer base. He feels that the encouragement of establishing a film industry, which has financial support from local foundations, will help the art culture of Holland. He also thinks that while Hope College and the Holland Area Arts Council (HAAC) have had a visible influence on Holland's art culture there could be more collaboration.

The Shaker Messenger & Folk Art Gallery is well-known and well-established. The gallery carries no imported items. Most of the artists that are represented are regional. The gallery's customers are local, regional (including Chicago), and national. The gallery's advertising includes radio and television spots, newspaper ads, and direct mailings as well as craft and art demonstrations and music entertainment.

Reflections Fine Art Gallery Inc. carries a large percentage of Michigan artists, but sales of original artwork account for only 5 percent of the total sales.

### **Affordable Studio, Gallery and Housing Space**

Although galleries cited high rental costs, there are several located in the downtown area. Housing costs widely vary and are dependent on location. A new art district is being established on Columbia Street between Sixteenth and Twentieth Streets. A Corridor Improvement Authority is proposed for this area.

### **Area Assets**

Holland's downtown is vibrant and walkable. Holland has a long and well-established music tradition. The area's beach is a draw; there are three resort communities in the near vicinity: Macatawa Park, Ottawa Beach, and Waukazoo. The city is unique in that it strongly promotes its ethnic heritage by showcasing Dutch traditions. Holland has one of the largest Hispanic populations in West Michigan.

The Holland Museum (a city-owned museum), tells the unique story of the area from its maritime history, its manufacturing, lumbering and farming heritage, its Dutch heritage, its automobile-

# Appendix A - Art Summary

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related industries, its wartime contributions and the area's entrepreneurial history. The museum was founded in 1937 as the Dutch Pioneer Museum. The name was changed in 1940 to the Netherlands Museum and received several artifacts from the Netherlands' exhibition at the 1939-1940 New York World's Fair and from the 1939-1940 San Francisco Exhibition. The area is well recognized by the "Motherland" and has been visited by several Queens of the Netherlands. Settlers to the area often sent money back home, particularly during World War II, and in return were given gifts of art, furniture and decorative items. The museum is now known simply as the Holland Museum. The museum has several exceptional Dutch paintings in its collection. The museum recently created a permanent showcase for dozens of nineteenth century paintings, hand-carved furniture, Delftware and other decorative items.

The Settler's House museum is a hall and parlor house—a rare example of a structure that is one step up from a log cabin. The nineteenth century Cappon House is a vernacular Italianate that was built for Isaac Capron and his family. The Museum offers a wide variety of programs including Family Wednesday at the museums. Although the museum staff would like to collaborate with facilities and organizations from a wider region, like most historical and cultural establishments, the lack of funding and staff makes this difficult. While patrons are generous in regards to acquisitions and special projects, such as restoration, little funding is allocated to operating expenses.

## Current and Possible Programs

Current cultural programs, projects, organizations, and events include:

- The Tulip Time Festival. A tradition established in the 1920s, not only features the Tulip Time Flower Show but also showcases Klompen Dancers, three parades, the Valksparad (street sweeping), the Kinderparade (seven thousand school children), and the Meijer Muziekparade (big band and helium balloons). The Town Crier Competition, fireworks, an art show, and concerts are also part of the festivities. It is the third largest festival in the United States with an art show incorporated in the festival.
- Other festivals. These include Art in the Park, the Holland Area High School Art Exhibit, Tulipanes Latino Art & Film Festival, the Harvest Fest, and the Dutch Winterfest. The Holland Downtown Development Authority and the Holland Area Arts Council collaborate on the *Re Mastered* project. The project invites local artists to select recognizable work of art and "remaster" them slightly to reflect a Holland theme.
- Cultural organizations. The Holland Symphony Orchestra is well respected and valued by the community. The organization collaborates with the Grand Rapids Symphony on projects. Other organizations in the area include the Southwest Michigan Council of Camera Clubs (SWMCCC), the Holland Community Chorale Inc., the Evergreen Chorale (a senior singing group), and the Pillar Church, which hosts organ concerts. The Knickerbocker Theatre, owned and operated by Hope College, hosts a variety of college-sponsored events. There are several groups involved in local theatre including the Holland Civic Theatre, Hope College, HAAC, the Avalon Theatre, the Holland Summer Repertoire Theatre, and various dinner theatre and church groups. Several of those interviewed felt that these groups could be better promoted and perhaps collaborate on bigger projects.
- Downtown entertainment. During the summer months, Holland's downtown businesses host street entertainers on Thursday evenings. This seems to draw both locals and tourists to the downtown area. There is also a Friday Night Summer Concert Series.
- The Holland Area Arts Council (HAAC). The Holland Area Arts Council plays a role in the region's cultural scene. The HAAC offers a variety of classes in visual and performing



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arts, exhibits local, regional and student art, and showcases classical music talent. It currently has a sales gallery of local artists; however it is questionable if this will continue.

- The Farmer's Market enjoys a newly renovated space and demonstrations are occasionally offered. The HAAC is partnering with the Farmers Market and offers activities for children on Wednesdays and a Saturday chef series.
- The Michigan Guild of Handweavers is active in the area and has collaborated with Michigan State University in the research and documentation of the art. The organization has held conferences and workshops at Holland's Hope College.
- The Dutch Village, which features Klompen Dancers, music and woodcarvers; the DeKlomp Wooden Shoe Factory; and Windmill Island with its imported historic windmill, all promote the iconic images of Dutch culture.

Possible cultural programs and projects suggested by artists, gallery owners, and others involved in the area's art culture include:

- Develop and promote a tour of regional house museums. Holland's Cappon and Settler's house museums and others in the area, including the Hackley and Hume houses in Muskegon and the Voigt and Meyer May houses in Grand Rapids, would tell the story of the progression of styles and structures in the area.
- Create a brochure with information about the local history and the uniqueness of art galleries and restaurants and of local artists and craftsmen. Inclusion in the brochure would be juried.
- Promote local theatre groups. While many residents believe local theatre culture is growing, they feel it is under-promoted.
- A traveling ship with an orchestra on board. In 1976 a ship traveled up and down the Michigan coastline with an orchestra, which played for towns. A project of this sort would draw both local and out-of-staters to the area and would draw attention to the music heritage of the region.
- Variation in the style and subject matter of Holland's public art. A number of artists feel that Holland is becoming more receptive to a variety of arts and that, perhaps, it is ready for an abstract piece of sculpture.
- Re-schedule the Living History Festival. Holland has, in recent years, held its living history festival as part of the Tulip Time Festival. Many of those involved in these types of living history festivals feel that it is not a good match in the type of venue or the type of visitors that attend the events.

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## Holland Art Sampler



## Holland Museum

The Holland Museum, founded by citizens in 1937 as the Dutch Pioneer Museum, tells the unique story of the area from its maritime history, its manufacturing, lumbering and farming heritage, its Dutch and other ethnic heritages, its automobile-related industries, its wartime contributions, and the area's entrepreneurial history. The Museum has several exceptional Dutch paintings in its collection, which are showcased on the Museum's second floor in the *New Dutch Galleries* (right and middle above), and are shown along side historical artifacts that are similar to the objects seen in the paintings.



## The Cappon House & Settlers House Museums



The Cappon House and Settlers House museums, owned and operated by the Holland Museum, are located within blocks of the museum and the downtown area. The Italianate-style Cappon House was designed by Dutch immigrant architect Jan R. Kleyn for Holland's first mayor and tannery owner, Isaac Cappon, and his large family. Owned by the Cappons from 1873 until 1980, one of the country's largest collections of early Grand Rapids furniture in its original setting can be seen in the recently restored house (right). The Settlers House, built in 1867 by Thomas Morrissey, an Irish Canadian immigrant and ship carpenter, survived the Holland Fire of 1871 that destroyed much of the downtown and surrounding area. The recently restored house is an excellent example of the area settlement period of 1845 to 1880. Simple, traditional craft objects are among the artifacts on display.

## Historical Artists

Cornelius C. Zwaan (born in 1882) was a portrait painter who emigrated from the Netherlands to the United States in the 1920s. He lived in several locations, including Detroit, and is probably best known for his portrait of Queen Juliana. Joseph Warner is another historical artist with ties to the area. Warner was born circa 1830 in London, immigrated with his family to New York in the 1930s, and eventually settled in Chicago to become a portrait artist. When photography replaced portrait painting and his business declined, Warner moved to



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Holland. He is known for his bird's eye views of communities, including those for the villages of Hamilton (pictured, 1905), Zeeland, and Saugatuck. Warner also painted hundreds of local scenes. In addition, Warner painted landscapes on luncheon plates that were sold as souvenirs. Two of his paintings are in the Holland Museum's collection and are awaiting restoration.

## Downtown Public Art



Holland's downtown area is very walkable; heated sidewalks keep the snow and ice off during the winter months and public art, particularly figurative bronzes, enhance the downtown experience. Some of the bronze sculptures that grace Holland's downtown are: *The Valentine*, *Pledge of Allegiance*, *Joy of Music*, *Ben Franklin*, and *Secret Garden* (pictured left). Centennial Park includes the *Van Raalte Statue*, a historic fountain (top right), and memorials. Hope College, Kollen Park, the Herrick District Library, and the Holland Area Arts Council are just a few places that display public art. Stuart Padnos' quirky sculptures can be found along Pine Avenue (bottom right).



## Downtown Events & Entertainment



Holland's downtown offers many art galleries, unique shops, and restaurants located in the downtown area. Local and regional arts and crafts, home furnishings and accents, and an array of apparel can all be found. Festivals and events that feature arts and music and gallery walks are held throughout the year. In the summer months, visitors and locals alike enjoy the street musicians and entertainers that line Holland's downtown streets. Holland has a long tradition of music and is home to the well-respected Holland Symphony Orchestra. Local crafts and food can be found at Holland's Farmer's Market on Wednesdays and Saturdays located on Eighth Street between Pine and

Maple Avenues from early spring through late fall.

## Dutch Art & Culture

The Dutch Village features klompen dancers, music, delft blue pottery, Dutch food and beverages, wooden shoes and woodcarvers. At the DeKlomp Wooden Shoe Factory, visitors can see artists create delftware and wooden shoes. Included in the attractions, is Windmill Island, the imported historic Dutch windmill named DeZwaan, which still makes flour, klompen dancers, a drawbridge, and a miniature Netherlands Village. The Tulip Time Festival, a tradition established in the 1920s and the third largest festival in the United States, not only features the Tulip Time Flower Show but also showcases klompen dancers, three parades, the Valksparad (street sweeping), the Kinderparade (7,000 school children), and the Meijer Muziekparade (big band and helium balloons). The Town Crier Competition, fireworks, and concerts are also part of the festivities.

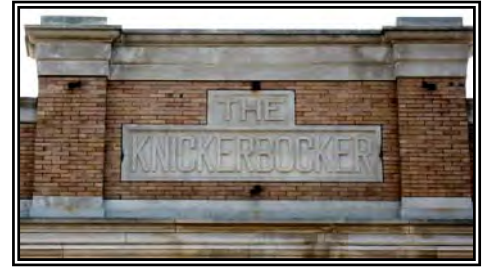


# Appendix B – Art Summary

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## The Performing Arts

Holland boasts several theatres and theatre groups. Holland's first theatre, the Knickerbocker, built in 1910 by Tierman (Tim) Slaagh, is today owned by Hope College and is used for poetry readings, concerts and other live performances, and showings of art and foreign films. There are several groups involved in local theatre including the Holland Civic Theatre, Hope College, the Holland Area Arts Council (HAAC), the Avalon Theatre, the Holland Summer Repertoire Theatre, various dinner theatres, and church groups. Several of those interviewed felt that these groups could be better promoted and perhaps collaborate on bigger projects.



The music tradition is well-established. Among the early musical organizations were the Gee's Brass Band, founded in 1979, and the Colonial Orchestra, founded in 1923, the Central Avenue Orchestra, the Citizen Band of Holland (pictured left), and the Holland American Legion Band.



*Photo: Courtesy of Holland Museum Archives*

Today, the Holland Symphony Orchestra is well-respected and valued by the community. Other organizations in the area include the Southwest Michigan Council of Camera Clubs (SWMCCC), The Holland Community Chorale Inc., The Evergreen Chorale (a senior singing group), the Holland Summer Repertoire Theatre, and the Pillar Church which hosts organ concerts.

During the summer months, Holland's downtown businesses host street entertainers on Thursday evenings. The entertainment draws both locals and tourists to the downtown area. Holland also hosts a Friday Night Summer Concert Series.

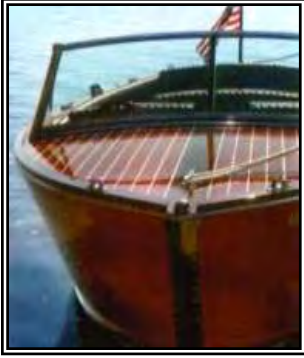
## The Traditional Arts

The traditional arts are a strong part of Holland's art culture. The art of furniture making was, and is, prevalent in this area. Several furniture companies operated in the Holland area, including Baker Furniture, founded by Lloyd VanDoormik and the Charles P. Limbert Company, which relocated to Holland from Grand Rapids in 1905. The Limbert Company is recognized as one of the nation's premier Arts and Crafts handcrafted furniture makers in the tradition of Gustav Stickley and Roycroft. Cabinetmaking and furniture making is still practiced in Holland through large scale operations such as the Trendway Corporation, the Worden Company, G. W. Haworth, and Charter House Innovations (CHI) and in small scale operations—Chris Otto is one such artist and is known for his custom woodwork and Windsor chairs.



## Appendix B – Art Summary

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Boat building became a significant industry in Holland when Chris Craft began manufacturing high-quality mahogany boats in 1922. After World War II, Holland's boat craftsmen experimented with the construction of affordable fiberglass pleasure boats and were leaders in establishing this industry which made boating affordable for the working class. Today, Grand-Craft, a boat-building company that was founded in 1979, manufactures custom made water craft.

*Photos: Courtesy of Grand Craft*

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## Tri-Cities Summary (Grand Haven, Ferrysburg, and Spring Lake)

### Grand Haven

#### Art Culture

The Tri-Cities Historical Museum houses handcrafted artifacts and the mural *History of the Tri-Cities* by Larry Blovits, an area artist. The Train Depot Museum displays several model ships and small boats that were constructed locally.

Approximately five years ago, the Tri-Cities Museum put together a show entitled *Collections of a Community*. The show encompassed artists who had historical connections to the area. Featured artists included Stanley Worthing who was known for his paintings of likenesses of famous people; cartoonist Winsor McCay who was born in Spring Lake in 1871 and who created the animated films of *Little Nemo* and *Gertie the Dinosaur* and who created the animation technique that was later used by Walt Disney; and Steward Edward White, the author of *River Man*, the story of the area's logjam of 1883. Also featured were Edgar Lee Masters, the author of the poem *Spoon River Anthology* who spent the summer of 1914 at a Spring Lake resort; Nathan Brown who was one of the earliest aerial photographers (He used a box kite with two strings: one for the kite the other for the camera.), and Lewis Cross, the well-known painter and fruit farmer. Claude Hopkins was famous for his advertising slogans and for creating "scientific advertising" and the use of coupons. Also represented was the actress Norma Shearer, who in 1929, made a film entitled *Their Own Desire*, which was based on a Lake Michigan resort town. Shearer, who summered in the area, was nominated for an Academy Award for her role in the movie. Shearer corresponded regularly with the Hatton Family. Julian Hatton Older possesses letters and other memorabilia. William Scagel created handcrafted hunting knives in the early 1900s that today are prized collectables. His knives are in the Smithsonian Institution collection. Felix Pytlinski of Grand Haven Township has an extensive collection of the knives. A book about Scagel and his work was written by Harry Evoy.

A common florist tool called a frog (flower holders) was patented around 1908 by local resident Edward Grant Garnsey. His wife, Mary Vesta Doan, opened a Gift Shop and Tea Room on the southwest corner of First and Washington streets around 1920 and sold the frogs and a line of "japana" china that Garnsey also copyrighted.

The Tri-Cities Historical Museum also held an *American Pastimes* exhibition that featured traditional arts that were originally part of everyday living such as quilting, tinsmithing, gunsmithing, basket weaving, and chair caning.

The Coast Guard Festival, a major event for the city, began as a picnic held in 1924 for coast guard men and their families from the surrounding stations. It was held at different stations every year. By 1934, a parade was part of the festivities. When the station ship, the *Escanaba Sun*, sank in 1943 near Grand Haven, it was decided to hold the event every year in Grand Haven. The festival includes a memorial service for any one in active duty that has passed away during the previous year.

The observation of several artists is that watercolors and landscapes are prominent in the area. Reasons cited were that watercolor lends itself to the area's natural environment and, along with landscapes (including water, beaches, dunes and lighthouses), is what tourists like to purchase.

Because of the area's Dutch heritage, the art tends to be conservative in nature. Because of the inspiring natural environment, there is a sense of romanticism in much of the art. Textile art is prominent in the area as is woodworking and furniture-making. This may also be the result of the influence of the cultural heritage of the area.

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Visitors are often from the immediate region (Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo) or from the Midwest (Indiana, Illinois and Wisconsin). The opinion of some is that there are increasing visitors from Tennessee, Virginia, Kentucky and North Carolina.

## Affordable Gallery, Studio and Housing Space

There are no art districts in the area. The downtown has a couple of galleries, the Uptown Gallery is a well-established co-op and the Carlyn Gallery's is a space behind a main street shop. The Imagine 360 Arthouse involves several local artists but is located some distance from the main street. Although there is affordable housing in the out-lying area, much of the downtown and waterfront in the Tri-Cities are not affordable. Because of this the art community seems scattered and many studios are not easily found by visitors.

I was told that, until a few years ago, there were several antiques stores in the downtown area. Today there are none. Opinions of why include the lack of dollars spent by tourists and the loss of jobs that were often held by the shop owners' spouses.

## Assets

- The town's built environment was cited as an asset. The GHAAC's presence was also often cited. The natural surroundings were mentioned as an asset and an inspiration for artists. The bicycle paths, the lighthouses, the boardwalk and the area's farmers market were also mentioned.
- Grand Haven has a unique experience in its Musical Water Fountain which was founded in 1964. The fountain draws locals and visitors with its show of coordinated lights, color, movement and music.
- The Grand Haven Community Foundation (GHCF) has been supportive of several cultural projects. The GHCF sponsored the Arttrain's stop in Grand Haven which featured an exhibit on Native American culture. The foundation was instrumental in the Grand Haven Area Art Council's (GHAAC) acquisition of their facility. Although the Art Council rents the space, they are beginning a capital campaign for funding to purchase the building. The GHCF held a meeting last year with local historical groups, the museum, and the Art Council to discuss cultural issues, to encourage common goals and to help gain trust. This type of discussion could be more inclusive to include local artists and gallery owners.
- The GHAAC is involved in numerous cultural events. The GHAAC organizes "Big Band Wednesday Nights" at the Waterfront Stadium and "Tuesdays in the Park." They hold a variety of art classes for all ages, gallery events and host other organizations' events such as Garden Club events, poetry readings, craft shows, and talent shows. All duties, except for one office person, are performed by volunteers. Much of their funding is from local organizations, businesses and residents. Many feel that the organization would be more effective if they had funding for a paid staff member. According to the GHAAC spokesperson, Grand Haven has more artists per capita than Saugatuck and numbers are growing.
- The GHAAC and Lakeland Artists publish both on-line and paper newsletters and have direct mailing and emailing lists. (However, a majority of the artists and gallery owners have not developed an email list.) The GHAAC has created an artists' registry at: [www.ghaac.org/GHAAC-Registry%20App.pdf](http://www.ghaac.org/GHAAC-Registry%20App.pdf).
- The area schools collaborate with the West Shore Symphony Orchestra (WSSO) in conjunction with the Carnegie LinkUP! program that offers recorders to fourth grade students and a chance to play with the orchestra.

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- Quilting appears to be a prominent traditional art of the area. The Lighthouse Quilt Guild hosts the Festival of Quilts during the Coast Guard Festival. The event includes a quilt challenge, demonstrations, vendors, and bed-turning—telling the stories of old quilts.
- The Feast of the Strawberry Moon, a living history event which showcases the recreation, arts and entertainment of eighteenth century life, involves several members of the community who travel around the Midwest for these events. The fabric arts, such as weaving, spinning, lace-making and rug-hooking are part of the events. Although every culture has a weaving tradition, there is a type of rug-hooking that has its roots in Scandinavia and is popular in the area. The Green Dragonfly studio offers classes and, at no charge, offers demonstrations to schools.
- The Artisan Cooking School and Catering Company of Grand Haven is located at 1223 Washington Street.

## Potential Programs

Projects and programs suggested by artists, gallery owners, and others involved in the art culture include:

- Establish a dedicated downtown performance venue. Performing arts are part of the area's culture and a dedicated downtown performance venue would encourage promotion and expansion of the performing arts in the area. The Central Park Players were established in 1958 and still exist today. They performed in recent years at the Community Center. However, because an expansion of performing space was not part of a recent renovation, they held their last performance in the GHAAC building. There is currently no dedicated theatre space in town. Often used for area performances are the performing arts theaters at Muskegon Community College and Hope College in Holland. Those interviewed felt strongly that Grand Haven's long and strong historical tradition of the theater should be recognized.
- Expand collaborative efforts. Although Grand Haven's non-profit organizations do collaborate, it is mostly restricted to a very local level. Artists and gallery owners would like more opportunities to collaborate with other artists/art organizations. However, besides the lack of opportunities, the lack of time and the feeling of being over-extended with limited resources and staff, were cited as obstacles for collaborative efforts
- The restoration of a historical painting should be conducted. One of Lewis Cross's paintings originally hung at the local gun club; however, after it was accidentally damaged by a gunshot, the painting was donated to the museum. The restoration and display of the painting would bring new life into one of the area's stories. There is some question, because of the painting's size, if the space needed for proper display is available.
- The historic fountain that stands in the center of Central Park should be inspected and a condition assessment done by a historic preservation professional. The work would call attention to the history and significance of the resource and would result in its protection.
- Promote the arts in combination with agri-tourism and history. As with other communities in the region, agriculture plays a major role. Various berries, cherries and apples are prominent crops. Cheeses are also made in the area.
- Expand outreach programs that facilitate the loan/sale of the co-ops artists' work to local hospitals, banks, etc. to include younger artists' work.



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- Expand the kind of artwork offered in downtown galleries and shops that would include younger artists and give these artists an opportunity to become more involved in the development of the area's art culture. The owner of the Grand Seafood and Oyster Bar (with the Grand Theatre Façade), encourages its staff—many of them young artists—to hang their work in the establishment.
- Develop programs to assist art houses also serving as non-profit art schools. This was cited as particularly important for those students whose school does not offer art classes and for at-risk children. This sort of project would benefit the art culture and the community overall. Grant-writing and assistance with the 501(c)3 legal fees were the type of guidance thought to be appropriate for this type of program.
- Establish marketing and collaboration workshops for artists. These were cited as needed programs as were tax incentives and a different way of handling advertising so that small businesses or individuals wouldn't be charged the same rate as larger corporations.
- Develop community Artists-in-Residence. This type of program would be a financial help to artists and the schools and would encourage the growth of the area's art culture.
- Establish affordable artist studio/warehouse space in the downtown area. The Box Factory in Saint Joseph was mentioned several times as a good example.
- Develop programs that facilitate increased visibility and recognition for artists at both the local and state levels.
- Encourage reciprocal memberships and salon-type shows.
- Educate business leaders, chambers of commerce, state leaders, and the community of the importance of art and preserving the character and art communities of small towns. Generally, area artists feel that the Downtown Development Authority (DDA), the chamber and other city officials do not understand that the area's economy would benefit from the promotion of the arts and the area as an art destination. Also cited was a need for greater community pride and appreciation of local arts. This would also help artists to establish a viable and livable income. Very few artists in the area, even if quite prolific, support themselves solely on their art. Most artists feel that art is good business. It attracts tourists and other businesses to the downtown area; but it needs to be properly organized, recognized and promoted. Many feel recognition of area artists and the work of the GHAAC by local government is needed.
- Extend the trolley route. The GHAAC and artists and galleries not located on Washington Avenue would like to see the trolley extend its route.
- Re-establish the water-skiing shows and surfing competitions. Although there are insurance issues, other towns host these types of events. A kite boarding school is located in the area as are schooner charters. All of these water-related businesses could have a relationship with the further development of the art culture. The collaborative efforts could facilitate the growth of those businesses as well.

## Ferrysburg

### Affordable Gallery, Studio and Housing Space

There is no real downtown area to Ferrysburg. Homes on the water are expensive and often owned by summer people. There is little affordable housing available for artists

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## Assets

Ferrysburg is known for its sand dunes and parks that offer hiking, sledding and cross-country skiing. Although there have been some tear-downs of small cottages which have been replaced by large scale “big-foot” homes, a large percentage of the early summer resort architecture still exists, even if the structures have been modified and expanded.

No art galleries or public art could be found.

## Spring Lake

### Art Culture

There are three galleries located in Spring Lake: the Coffee Gallery carries only a small percentage of local/regional artists; the Art Gallery, which was not open during the two consecutive days of this site visit and its future was in question; and Dreese Fine Art & Framing. The Dreese gallery represents several local artists and the owner’s work. However, a majority of the profits are from the framing aspect of the business.

The Spring Lake Historical Commission hosts a wooden boat show that features antique boats as part of the Spring Lake Heritage Festival. Children’s activities offered during the festival, such as creating wooden model boats, tie the applied arts to the area’s maritime culture.

Many of the traditional artists of the area work in fibers or wood. Watercolor is a prominent media used by fine artists.

The Grand Haven Area Arts Council (GHAAC) hosts “Thursday at the Point” musical performances at Mill Point Park.

### Affordable Gallery, Studio and Housing Space

The artists that were interviewed considered downtown space to be cost prohibitive. As a result, none of the artists lived in Spring Lake. However, most felt that outlying areas were affordable.

## Assets

There is an established downtown area. Because Spring Lake is on a peninsula, it offers extensive waterfront property and boating opportunities.

### Potential Projects

Establish a viable downtown living/working space for artists. This might increase the potential to attract artists and art-related businesses. None of the galleries are located in the downtown proper and instead are in different areas of the village. All three galleries were somewhat difficult to find.

Increase the amount of public artwork in the area. There is little public art in Spring Lake. The owner of Eye Care One displays a metal and glass sculpture by a Florida artist of a man with glasses reading. The *Mid-Winters Horn*, an abstract sculpture, is exhibited on the grounds of the Christ Community Church. There are public spaces, such as Mill Point Launch, that would be ideal for sculpture. Presently, a large clock tower is located downtown, but that is the only added downtown focus.

Interpret and develop a tour of area religious art. The religious sculptures and stained glass of Spring Lake’s churches make up the majority of their public art and could be interpreted and a tour developed.

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## Tri-Cities Art Sampler

### Public Art



The Tri-Cities area is home to several pieces of sculpture and a number of fountains and memorials, much of which are centered in downtown Grand Haven. Pictured here are *Seagull Fountain* by Marshall Fredrick located at the Loutit District Library (left) and the waterfront *Starboard Tack* by Terry Westra (right). Historic pieces such as the *Bronze River* and sundial, the Central Park fountain, and the World War I Memorial, are displayed as are the more recent sculptures, the *MacKenzie Boy Scout*, *Birds*, *Fish & Waves* and *Duchess* (at the fire station). Spring Lake is home to a replica of Michelangelo's *Pieta*.



### Tri-Cities Historical and Train Depot Museums



The Tri-Cities Historical Museum houses hand-crafted artifacts and the mural, *History of the Tri-Cities* by Larry Blovits (left), which depicts prominent local citizens, businesses, and historical items such as a "side-wheeler," a fish wagon, and a trolley car. The museum recently held an exhibit that encompassed historical artists who had connections to the area. The museum also held an *American Pastimes* exhibition that featured traditional arts such as

quilting, tinsmithing, gunsmithing, basket weaving and chair caning. The Train Depot Museum displays several model ships (right) and small boats that were locally constructed.



### Stained Glass



Throughout Ferrysburg, Grand Haven, and Spring Lake churches display beautiful examples of stained glass artistry. Pictured here are windows of the First Reformed Church of Grand Haven. Grand Haven's Seventh Day Adventist, the First Presbyterian and Saint John's Episcopal churches, and the Christ Community, Saint Mary's and the United Methodist churches of Spring Lake are among the many churches in the area that boast stained glass windows.

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## Festivals and Events

The area hosts several events that include art and/or music, the most well known being the annual Coast Guard Festival which runs for ten days in the summer. Other events include Art on the Riverfront, the Grand Haven Art Festival, the Annual Sand Sculpture Contest, Chilly Blues, the Festival of Quilts, Tuesdays in the Park (right) and the Feast of the Strawberry Moon which features a living history event that showcases the recreation, arts and entertainment of 18<sup>th</sup> century life. Spring Lake is home to “Thursdays at the Point” and the Spring Lake Heritage Festival.



## Art Galleries, Studios and the Grand Haven Area Arts Council

The 360 Arthouse Gallery and Studio which features local, regional and nationally known artists; the artist co-op named the Uptown Gallery; and Carlyn’s which features over thirty-five artists are among Grand Haven’s downtown galleries. Located in Spring Lake are the Coffee Gallery that represents nationally known artists and Dreese Fine Art & Framing which features local artists. The Grand Haven Area Arts Council (GHAAC), located on Columbus Avenue, is dedicated to “art in its many forms.” Alliances include the Central Park Players, the Spotlight Dance Academy, the West Michigan Academy of Art and Academics, and the Lakeland Artists. In addition to art shows, events held at the facility include arts and crafts classes, yoga classes, chess tournaments and garden club events.



Photo: Travel Michigan

## Art that Educates and Entertains



The *Musical Fountain*, a twenty-minute synchronized water and light show draws both locals and visitors. The *Bronze River* and its sundial (right) are located at William M. Ferry Landing. Cast in three hundred and sixty-eight separate sections of brass imbedded in pebbles and concrete, the *Bronze River* maps out the geographic placement of the Grand River and its tributaries.



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## Applied Arts in Industry

The Tri-Cities Area was, and is, home to a variety of industries related to the arts. The Story & Clark Piano Company (of Chicago), was established in Grand Haven in 1900. The company was sold in 1961 and closed its doors in 1984. Eagle Ottawa Leather had a presence in the area from the 1890s until it closed its doors in October 2006. Early in their history they specialized in making red, orange and russet skirting for saddles. The company's leather upholstery could be found in President Calvin Coolidge's Cadillac and Charles Lindbergh's Franklin. The Plate Glass Company was located in Grand Haven as was the Grand Haven Basket Company. Both were established in 1897. The basket company products were used for shipment of fruit and smoked fish, to major industries of the area. The Evans Plywood Company in Grand Haven worked with Charles Eames on the development of his molded plywood chairs for the Herman Miller Furniture Company in 1947.

## Historical Artist: Lewis Cross

Spring Lake was the home of the painter Lewis Luman Cross (1864-1951). Born in Tuscola County, Cross moved to Spring Lake in 1872 and became an orchardist. Cross is probably best known for his paintings of passenger pigeons which once flourished in Michigan but were hunted to extinction at the end of the nineteenth century. The Muskegon County Museum exhibits one of these large oil paintings (right). Cross' home still exists. At one time, clay pigeons that Cross created using Grand River clay were placed along the rooftop.



## Traditional Arts

The community is home not only to a number of fine artists, but to traditional artists as well. Woodworking, furniture making and, particularly, the fiber artists are well-represented. Their studios are scattered throughout the area; demonstrations and workshops are offered. (Pictured left is Chris Hornby of Green Dragonfly Studios.) The Lighthouse Quilt Guild hosts the Festival of Quilts during the Coast Guard Festival. The event includes a quilt challenge, demonstrations, vendors, and bed-turning. (Bed-turning is telling the stories of old quilts.) The arts of rug-hooking, lace-making, cross-stitch, weaving, and spinning are created in the area. Several of these artists can be seen at Grand Haven's Strawberry Festival.



Photo: Green Dragonfly Studios

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## Muskegon

The Ottawa (Odawa), the predominate Native American tribe of this region are known for their black ash basket weaving tradition. Copper beads and dyed porcupine quills were elements of wrapping, sewing, plaiting and weaving. Animal bone and teeth were used in jewelry. After contact with Europeans, glass beads and a variety of fabrics were used in decorative arts silver was used to create jewelry.

The Hackley Art Gallery (now the Muskegon Museum of Art) was founded in 1905. Over the years the museum has showcased fabric art by Muskegon's ethnically diverse settlers including Scandinavian hand-woven coverlets, Hungarian embroidery, Norwegian textiles, Danish tonder lace and hedebo embroidery, and Mexican decorative arts. In 1922 the gallery exhibited paintings and drawings created by African Americans and held lectures about the artists, styles and influences. African Americans of the area practiced traditional fabric arts including embroidery and quilting. The traditions, to a lesser degree, are practiced today. Rita Chapman's Heritage Quilt hangs in the Muskegon County Museum of African American History. Details of types of quilts and patterns that were prevalent to the community have not been researched. The Hackley Art Gallery also collaborated with the performing arts and a 1939 presentation at the gallery included Michigan composers such as Robert Henders.

There is a tradition of glass art in the Muskegon area. The Muskegon Museum of Art is known for its glass collection which began with the Robert and Corky Tuttle collection. The museum celebrates glass month with special shows and guest speakers. Stained glass can not only be seen in area churches, the art is an integral aspect of public buildings and private residences. The Hackley Public Library and the Hackley House include excellent examples of stained glass art. The stained glass of the Central United Methodist Church of Muskegon built in 1930 is of the several church's whose stained glass has been documented. Like many churches, not all their windows were installed at the same time. The oldest windows were created by Gianini & Hilgart of Chicago (1929-1930) for \$8,600. (At the time, the price of a Model A Ford was four hundred dollars.) The windows, among the last American Neo-Gothic windows, were restored by Kevin Hershey in 2003-2004. The church also contains a carved wood central panel, with a theme of the Vine of Life with Symbols of the Twelve Disciples, and the Transept's carved wood relief featuring Jesus as the Good Shepard, created by Alois Lang, an historical artist who was originally from Oberammergau, Germany. He also provided carvings for at least one other church in Grand Rapids.

Muskegon also has a metal art tradition and there are still several foundries operating in the area. According to a publication by the Muskegon Museum of Art, the art of metalsmithing is rapidly growing in Michigan. In addition to artists working on their own in metals, numerous colleges and universities offer courses in metal work and jewelry, including Grand Valley State University, Kendall College of Art and Design, and Western Michigan University.

The maritime tradition of model boat-building can be seen in the Hackley Library's collection. The models originally belonged to George and Thomas (Tim) Hume.

As with the larger West Michigan region, the Muskegon area has a tradition of creating furniture and musical instruments. The Chase-Hackly Piano Company is one of these historic companies. Beebe Violins is a current company that follows this tradition.

Like other communities in the area, religion is often tied into the arts. Muskegon hosts the yearly United Christian Music Festival.

During the 1930s, Muskegon was home to the Hackley Manual Training School where many of the artists were enrolled. The active art culture of the area not only attracted artists from outside the region it also encouraged locals to pursue the arts. The Muskegon community was supportive

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of the artists and Charles Hackley, a philanthropist and patron of the arts, offered commissions to artists. One example is the artist E. A. Turner, who was asked to paint a portrait of Mrs. Hackley and to paint a rendering of the presentation of the Hackley Public Library to the city of Muskegon. Both paintings are displayed at the Hackley Library. Muskegon's Lumberman's Bank commissioned the painter Victor Casenelli (1867-1961) to create seventeen paintings (now at the Muskegon County Museum) depicting events in Muskegon's history. The bank had prints of the paintings made and gave a folder of the prints to its "premier" customers, a promotion that was well-received by the community. Casenelli, in turn, worked with students in the Muskegon area.

Other artists that worked in the Muskegon area include:

- Lewis Lumen Cross (1864-1951) known for his paintings of the now-extinct passenger pigeon.
- J. D. Westerveld an early photographer who moved to Muskegon in 1875 and kept a studio above the post office. His photographs were used to make the steel engravings for county histories that were published in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
- Fran Snyder, a decorative painter for the Chicago and West Michigan Railroad.
- Tunis Ponsen (1891-1968) a respected landscape painter who was born in the Netherland and migrated to the United States in 1913. He arrived in Muskegon in 1914 and resided there until moving to Chicago in 1924 to study at the Art Institute of Chicago. His work was exhibited at major art venues around the country throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Ponsen's estate is managed by Saper Galleries of East Lansing, Michigan.
- Wilfrid Berg (1908-2002) was a very popular and prolific Muskegon artist who, in 1929 took classes at the Hackley Art Gallery. Through a Works Progress Administration (WPA) project, he created dioramas with artist William Hartman for the Muskegon County Museum. For another WPA project Berg created a mural at the Hackley Library. Local patrons supplied the funds for the completion of a second mural by Berg at the Hackley Library after WPA funds were cut. The community also commissioned Wilfrid Berg to create murals for the Muskegon County Museum showcasing the history of the town in 1888 and 1990.
- Harry D. Thompson, a science teacher became well-known for his paintings of studies of Michigan's sand dunes created in the 1940s.

The Muskegon County Museum's holdings include several dolls created by WPA-sponsored artists.

Theatre was an early and prominent art form in the Muskegon area. As early as 1856 Muskegon had an opera house. In 1898 a large theater was built at Lake Michigan Park (now Pere Marquette Park), to attract the vaudeville circuit to Muskegon. In 1902 an act called "The Three Keatons" performed at the theater. The Keaton's loved the area and with other investors purchased property with on Muskegon Lake and built cottages. The area, known as the Actors' Colony, was formally organized in 1908 with Joe Keaton as president. Around two hundred theatre people lived there in the era leading up to World War I. The Keatons' son, Buster, went on to become one of the leading comedic film stars of the 1920s. Muskegon celebrates its theatre heritage every year with the Buster Keaton Film Festival. Several structures of the former Actors' Colony in Bluffton still exist including the Theatrical Colony Yacht Club at 1621 Edgewater (now a private residence). At one time there were three separate theatre troops in Muskegon: the Muskegon Civic Opera Association, the Muskegon Youth Theater and the Port City Playhouse. The three groups joined together in 1985 to become Muskegon Civic Theater and perform in the Beardsley Theater, which is part of the Frauenthal Theater complex.

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The West Shore Symphony Orchestra (WSSO), established sixty-seven years ago, is a respected organization located in Muskegon. Mr. A. M. Courtright, a Muskegon Heights school teacher, and Mr. Palmer Quackenbush were instrumental in establishing the symphony. Today, the WSSO's current Music Director, Scot Speck, also serves as music Director of the Mobile Symphony and the Washington Ballet. This year, WSSO offered eight performance pairs five classical, and three pop concerts given at the Frauenthal.

Most present-day artists in Muskegon are either originally from Muskegon or have lived in the area for quite some time. Although varied in type and years, most artists have had extensive training in the arts.

The artists and gallery owners, who keep regular hours, advertise and have stipulations concerning exclusivity, generally are those with business experience. Few rely solely on their art/gallery for income. Most participate in art shows and sell their work at other galleries, mostly located in the Midwest, and many teach art. Some rely on the income of a spouse. Advertising is typically done in local publications, through websites, direct mail, and word-of-mouth. Some artist/gallery owners admit that they rely on near by galleries' advertising to help with their visibility. Very few use email as a marketing tool—some artists feel that their clients enjoy receiving a postcard more than seeing an image on a screen. Many gallery visitors are local, regional, or from the Midwest. Some galleries are seeing more tourists from Indiana, Kentucky, and Tennessee. North Muskegon's tourists are often campers from nearby Muskegon State Park.

Edith Nelson (associated with the Muskegon County Museum of African American History), is a graphic designer who works with local businesses and is an artist who works primarily in pastels. Like many area artists, Nelson promotes her work primarily through word-of-mouth. She has been a long-time resident of the area but belongs to no formal art organization.

There are several artists located in the Lakeside area of Muskegon. The Lake Express dock, the ferry that travels between Milwaukee and Muskegon, is located in this area. Artists were hopeful that when the service began three years ago visitor traffic would greatly improve, but its effect has been minimal. Most of the artists/gallery owners do not keep regular business hours and do not advertise. Although they know each other and appear friendly towards each other, there are no collaborative efforts. Besides a deli that is opened during lunch hours, there is no restaurant to encourage visitors to stay longer in the area. Several of the artist's studios are housed in a warehouse. Their rent is nominal—the warehouse generates more revenue from the storage of festival and air show equipment than from artists' rent. The warehouse owners and their son, Tom McEwen who is an artist and manages the building, would like to increase the number of studios from the current eight to at least twelve. In the future, they would like the facility to accommodate even larger numbers of artists but they have not looked into grants or researched such facilities as the Box Factory.

## **Affordable Gallery, Studio and Housing Space**

The newly rehabilitated Muskegon Boiler Works, now named the Artworks, was intended to be used as affordable housing/studio space for local artists. At the time of this study, there is only one resident who could be classified as an artist and he worked part-time as a wedding photographer. The common space, intended to be used as a resident gallery, was offered to local artists, however, the space is not secure.

There are other warehouse-type buildings near the downtown area and near the Artworks that possibly could serve as studios, housing, or a combination of both. Several artists feel that there is a need for this. Some wondered how it could be advertised to artists to encourage its use by artists.



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There is affordable housing in downtown Muskegon and much of the surrounding area. The waterfront property in Northern Muskegon is more exclusive. The artist residences are scattered throughout the larger community.

## Area Assets

Muskegon has a long tradition of community support of visual and performing arts with a large amount of public art, a vibrant theatre organization, a well-respected symphony orchestra, and an art museum whose collections rival those of major cities. The museum's Open Salon events and the annual Regional Show were often mentioned as assets for artists and the community as a whole.

Muskegon is one of Michigan's more affordable lakefront communities and, like the other more expensive communities of the region, it offers beaches, parks, a river, and Lake Michigan. The Buster Keaton Film Festival and Muskegon's ethnic and racial diversity were also cited as assets.

Downtown Muskegon is known for its Richardsonian Romanesque public architecture constructed with Lake Superior sandstone, a favorite of philanthropist Charles Hackley who provided funding for the construction of most of the buildings. He also admired stained glass and exceptional stained glass work was included in many of them such as the Hackley Library. Stained glass is also found in a large number of churches and private homes. Public art in the form of sculpture, often commemorative statues, has a strong presence in Muskegon. Several sculptures are displayed in Hackley Park and its surrounding areas.

Several community members feel that Muskegon has seen its downturn and is heading upward. Muskegon is in the midst of a downtown revival and a renewed interest in the arts. Most feel that Muskegon has the foundation to be an art destination.

## Current and Possible Programs

Current programs and projects of the area include:

- The Muskegon area communities host a number of art festivals including Muskegon Art Fair, the North Muskegon Art Fair, the Muskegon Area Arts & Humanities Festival and several events and exhibitions held at the Muskegon Museum of Art. Among festivals that include the arts are the Muskegon Heights Festival, the Muskegon County Fair, and the Muskegon Shoreline Big Fat Greek Festival. Among newer art traditions in Muskegon is the Automobile Association of America's (AAA) Michigan Sand Sculpture Contest.
- The Muskegon Museum of Art is one of the significant art museums in the Midwest. The Museum sponsors and collaborates on several programs. Recent collaborative efforts include the restoration the city's LST 393, a former U.S. World War II transport ship, one of only two in existence. *The West Michigan Eight* is a highly selective juried show which includes a wide range of subjects, techniques, and mediums of artists who live in Western Michigan. Among the artists selected for this year's show (the seventy-ninth show), is Collin Fry, a Muskegon native who studied art in Chicago. He works with oils and pastels and not only conducts demonstrations and workshops, but has written articles for several national art publications. A relatively new program that has been implemented is an Open Salon (gallery) night in which artists can hang their work and converse with each other and with patrons. Museum members are allowed pre-show entry and the chance to purchase art at lower prices. The *Annual Muskegon County Student Art Exhibit* is held at the museum as are film events. Various series of tours and workshops are also offered through the museum. A recent exhibit titled *Memories of World War II* has spurred a volunteer project to conduct oral histories of those World War

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II veterans that visit the exhibit and who feel the need to express themselves and recall the events of which they were a part.

- The West Shore Symphony Orchestra (WSSO) is one of ten orchestras nationwide selected by Carnegie Hall to participate in the Weill Music Institute (WMI) Communities LinkUP! Program. The program allows the WSSO to expand educational programs with West Michigan schools.
- The Muskegon Community Concert Association sponsors concert series of “internationally acclaimed entertainment at family affordable prices.”
- There is a proposal for a film documentary of the history and culture of the “Bottoms,” the neighborhood historically inhabited by African-Americans near Muskegon Heights. The area burgeoned during the period of the Great Migration and World War II, which caused many Southern black families to move to the north to take advantage of the work available in Muskegon foundries. This project is spear-headed by Rodney Schaub.
- “Art in the Garden” was a collaborative effort of the Michigan State University (MSU) extension programs and Muskegon County outreach programs. The event was held in one of several community gardens and was open to all. The event coordinators would like to incorporate more of an art aspect to many of their programs and to reach out-lying communities including farming communities.
- There are plans for Baker College to locate their culinary arts program in downtown Muskegon.

Projects and programs suggested by artists, gallery owners, and others involved in area art organizations include:

- Educate the community and community leaders to be more knowledgeable and able to recognize and appreciate the arts and art culture.
- Educate the artists themselves on the value of their art. (Artists who do not need to make an income off their art often drastically under-price their work and under-cut those who’s main source of income is their art.) Many artists voiced the opinion that in recent years Muskegon’s art festivals have become more “crafty.” They feel this has lessened the prestige of the shows and the quality of the work sold. A greater separation between the fine arts and crafts is needed.
- Create more opportunities for artists’ exposure. Displays in local businesses, local and state promotions, and art districts were thought of as possibilities.
- Develop workshops for artists, particularly in marketing and collaboration.
- Establish a local art organization. There is no art guild, council or league in Muskegon. (At one time there was a Muskegon Fine Arts Guild.) Many artists belong to the Grand Haven Area Arts Council and/or the Lakeside Artists. Although artists believe that the Muskegon Museum of Art is an asset to the community, admire the Regional Show, and speak highly of the Open Salons held there, they also feel that the museum can sometimes hinder the grass-roots growth and organization of art in Muskegon. The artists and galleries scattered throughout the community often feel they have little voice in issues that concern them because they are not organized. Several feel that until this is resolved, the art culture cannot progress as well as it could. A local business owner recently offered secured public space for local artists to display their work, but there is no one to organize such an effort.

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- Establish a flexible, inclusive, informative, and proactive regional art organization.
- Increase public art in outlying area. Areas such as Muskegon Heights, Muskegon Township and North Muskegon, feel that there is a lack of arts in their area and would like to bring more of the art culture and public art to these areas. When and if there is an acquisition of public art, either in Muskegon or the out-lying communities, most had the strong opinion that it should be created and constructed by local artists.
- Increase collaboration between art-related organizations. There was an art hop that involved several of the scattered galleries. The reviews of its success are varied. Still, most feel that greater collaboration among the galleries is needed. The need for a downtown art/shopping district was often mentioned.
- Develop programs and projects to promote a comfort level with the arts. Some feel that the types of people who visit Muskegon are sometimes intimidated by the arts. Art galleries and studios should make an effort to be more inviting. Often a “draw” is needed. Interesting architecture, wine-tasting, and demonstrations were mentioned as possibilities. At issue is how to interest younger visitors in the arts and have them understand and appreciate its value. A story behind a piece seems to help sell it. Romanticizing the arts was also thought to help. How to market fine art for the masses is an unanswered question.
- Tap into Muskegon’s diversity, in both art and ethnicity.
- Coordinate the use of Muskegon’s Lakeshore Trail with art programs. Suggestions include having the Muskegon Museum of Art host an art show (and possibly a separate competition of children’s artwork), and setting up artwork along the bike trail near Heritage Landing. Artists, including children, could sell their work on selected weekends along the trail. This would also be a prime area for public art. A garden for the sight-impaired with a focus on touch, smell, and sound was also suggested. Perhaps the garden could incorporate sculptures that are created for several senses.
- Tie the arts to other regional assets to promote the arts.
- Increase effective promotion of Muskegon’s beaches, coastline and river. These are attractions that would appeal to visitors and increase tourist traffic.
- Expand the Buster Keaton Film Festival. The festival is a well-received event, however, the area’s rich vaudeville history could be more broadly promoted with events such as a pinochle tournament, a regatta, and a vaudeville show.
- Encourage viable downtown businesses.
- Search for missing artwork. Information found indicates that a mural by Allen Thomas (1902-1974), a WPA and Section of Fine Arts artist who was born in Jackson, Michigan, was created for the Hackley Hospital. Recent correspondence with a hospital employee who currently handles the archives indicates that although much of the hospital’s archives have been lost, no record could be found concerning the mural. Also missing is *Columbia Cascade*, a sculpture/fountain by J. W. Crochran created for the Lumberman’s Bank in 1977. It was removed to expand the parking lot for Muskegon’s downtown First National Bank.

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## Muskegon Art Sampler

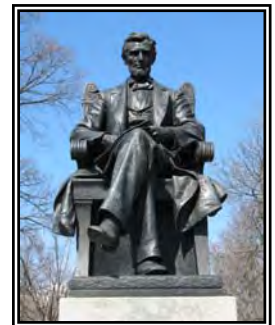
### The Muskegon Museum of Art



At the entrance of the renowned and respected Muskegon Museum of Art, the sculpture *Aurora*, produced by Russell Jacques in 1999, greets visitors in the downtown area. The museum features respected nineteenth century American artists such as Ralph Albert Blakelock, Winslow Homer, Edward Hopper and James McNeill Whistler. The glasswork collection and the European art collection are significant. The museum hosts several exhibits and shows each year, including the Regional Exhibition (since 1928), the prestigious *The West Michigan Eight* show, unique salon shows and the Annual Muskegon County Student Art Exhibition. Lectures, workshops and the popular *Symphony, Art & Cinema Movies* series, that features the West Shore Orchestra, are some of the community outreach programs offered by the museum.

### Hackley Park

In the late nineteenth century, lumber baron Charles Hackley donated land for the creation of a central park in Muskegon. He also commissioned noted sculptors to create artwork for the park. The *Lincoln Monument* is one of several bronze sculptures found in Hackley Park. The work, which conveys the strength and stoicism of President Abraham Lincoln, was created by Charles Henry Niehaus (1835-1935) in 1901. Among the other monuments located in the park are the *Grant Monument*, the *Farragut Monument*, the *William McKinley Monument*, the *Soldiers and Sailors Monument* and the monument honoring General William Tecumseh Sherman. Many of these sculptures, including the *Lincoln Monument*, have been recently restored.



### Muskegon County Historical Museum

Art is everywhere in Muskegon, including the Muskegon County Historical Museum. *The Muskegon Series*, consists of fifteen large paintings produced by Victor Casenelli (1867-1961) in 1929, several murals painted by Wilfred Berg (1908-2002), and the famous painting of the extinct, *Passenger Pigeons* by Lewis Cross (1864-1951) all are in the Museum's collection. Pictured here is one of several Works Progress Administration (WPA) sponsored dioramas created by Wilfred Berg and William Hartman depicting the history of Muskegon.



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## Stained Glass



The Central United Methodist Church of Muskegon's oldest stained glass windows (pictured left) were created by Gianini & Hilgart of Chicago (1929-1930) for \$8,600. (At the time, the price of a Model A Ford was \$400.) The windows were restored by Kevin Hershey in 2003-2004. Stained glass is not only found in area churches, the art is an integral aspect of Muskegon's public buildings and private residences. The Hackley Public Library (pictured right), and the Hackley House have excellent examples of the art.



## Hackley Public Library

Hackley Public Library designed by Chicago-architect Normand S. Patton, is an excellent example of the Richardsonian Romanesque style. Built in 1890, it was a gift to the city from lumber baron Charles Hackley. The library not only features exceptional stained glass, the children's room has painted murals by artist Wilfred Berg and several oil paintings (left) by E. A. Turner are found throughout the building. The building's fireplace surrounds and mantle pieces were created in wood, tile, terracotta, and stone (right).



## Architecture & Art

The Muskegon Community College, located at 221 South Quarterline Road, was designed by Michigan architect Alden B. Dow and dedicated in 1967. The college is known for its performing arts center and its various art programs. Works by faculty and students grace both the interior and exterior courtyards of the center. Martha Ruschkamp created this untitled acrylic on wood painting pictured (right).

The St. Francis de Sales Parish Church, designed by the internationally acclaimed modern architect, Marcel Bruer and constructed in 1967, is considered to be one of his best religious structures.



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## Public Art in the Muskegon Area



Public art can be found throughout the city of Muskegon and the surrounding area. Examples include a community mural at the Muskegon African American Museum in Muskegon Heights (below) and an iconic piece entitled *The Definition of Peace* (circa 1973) by Steven J. Urry (1939-1993) (left). Other abstract sculptures can be found at unlikely places such as Muskegon County Training Center where a number of pieces are located including the *Great American Landscape* (1988) by Edward Lee Collet (right). Fountains, figurative monuments and memorials including the *Korean and Vietnam War Memorial* found in North Muskegon (lower right) all grace Muskegon's landscape.



## The Frauenthal Center for the Performing Arts

Constructed in 1930 as the Michigan Theatre, it was designed by the Detroit-based theatre architect, C. Howard Crane, in the Art Deco style with Spanish Renaissance features. The pride of the theatre is the restored Barton Organ. The organ is featured in several film festivals including the *International Buster Keaton Society Film Festival* held each year in October.



## Performing Arts, Past and Present

Theatre was an early and prominent art form in the Muskegon area. In 1898 a large theater was built at Lake Michigan Park (now Pere Marquette Park), to attract the vaudeville circuit to Muskegon. Among the "headliners" were "The Three Keatons," an act that featured Joe, Myra, and their son, the Buster. The resort community called the Actors' Colony brought over two hundred actors and theatre people resided in Muskegon's Bluffton and Edgewater neighborhoods just before World War I. When motion pictures began to replace vaudeville, many vaudeville actors, forced into retirement, became full time residents of Bluffton. Muskegon celebrates its theatre heritage every year with its Buster Keaton Film Festival, the Muskegon Film Festival, and the West Michigan Thriller Chiller Film Festival.



Muskegon's Lake Michigan Park Theatre.  
Photo from the Actors' Colony website

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There are several other historical elements, which played roles in Muskegon's performing arts heritage. As early as 1856, Muskegon had an opera house. At one time there were three separate theatre troops in Muskegon: the Muskegon Civic Opera Association, the Muskegon Youth Theater and the Port City Playhouse. The three groups joined together in 1985 to become Muskegon Civic Theater. The West Shore Symphony Orchestra (WSSO), established sixty-seven years ago, is a respected organization located in Muskegon. This year, WSSO offered eight performance pairs, five classical, and three pop concerts at the

Frauenthal Theater (pictured left). Alden Dow designed Muskegon Community College's performing art center. African Americans that settled in Muskegon brought with them the tradition of the Blues. After World War II Muskegon Heights was a popular stop for African American musicians who brought jazz, Rhythm and Blues, and Motown music to small venues like the Sepia Club. Muskegon has a varied ethnic history and many of the groups brought their music traditions when then immigrated to Muskegon. Muskegon's music traditions of today include the Michigan Irish Music Festival and the United Christian Music Festival.

## Artists, Art Galleries & Studios



Artists, galleries, and studios are scattered throughout the Muskegon area. Among the downtown businesses are Missing Piece Designs Clay Studio, which features the work of Tony Rund and Clay Avenue Station/Cellars (pictured). There are several artists and galleries located in the Lakeside area including the Arts Cats Gallery and a rehabilitated warehouse where several artists' studios are located. The Muskegon Boiler Works was rehabilitated for artist living and studio space. North Muskegon is home to small galleries such as Wishes and Watercolors while Dancin' Gallery & Gifts can be found in Muskegon Township. Lesae Art Studios LLC is located in Roosevelt Park.

## Art Festivals & Events

The Muskegon area communities host a number of art festivals including Muskegon Art Fair, the North Muskegon Art Fair, the Muskegon Area Arts & Humanities Festival, and several events and exhibitions held at the Muskegon Museum of Art. Among festivals that include the arts are the Muskegon Heights Festival, the Muskegon County Fair, and the Muskegon Shoreline Big Fat Greek Festival. The AAA Michigan Sand Sculpture Contest is one of the Muskegon's newer art traditions.

# Appendix A - Art Summary

## Historic Art Traditions & Artists

The active art culture and community support of the arts attracted artists to the area and encouraged locals to pursue the arts. The work of two local artists, Victor Casenelli and Lewis Cross, can be seen at the Muskegon County Museum. The Lumberman's Bank, which commissioned Casenelli to create seventeen paintings for a promotion that included an image of the Pigeon Hill sand dune (pictured right) which no longer exists. Casenelli, in turn, worked with students in the Muskegon area. Harry D. Thompson, a science teacher, became well known for his paintings of Michigan's sand dunes created in the 1940s. J. D. Westerveld was one of the leading photographers of the state; his photographs were used for steel engravings for Michigan county histories. He moved to Muskegon in 1875 and kept a studio above the post office. Fran Snyder was a decorative painter for the Chicago and West Michigan Railroad Repair Works. The landscape painter Tunis Ponsen (1891-1968) was born in the Netherlands. He migrated to the United States in 1913 and to Muskegon in 1914 where he resided until left to attend the Art Institute of Chicago in 1924. Wilfrid Berg (1908-2002) was a very popular and prolific Muskegon artist. His murals (below left) can be seen at the Muskegon County Museum. Berg participated in a number of Works Progress Administration (WPA) projects during the Great Depression including painting murals at the Hackley Public Library and working with the artist William Hartman to create dioramas for the Muskegon County



Museum. During the Depression, Hackley participated in art classes offered at the Hackley Art Gallery. Lumber baron Charles H. Hackley was a true patron of the arts and offered commissions to artists and the Muskegon Museum of Art, originally named the Hackley Art Gallery and opened in

1912, owes its existence to his generosity. The art gallery's first director, Raymond Wyer, was a man of vision and foresight and was instrumental in acquiring art objects that today are the strong foundation for the museum's outstanding collection.

## Traditional & Industrial Arts

Arts in the area, particularly traditional arts, have been influenced by an array of ethnic cultures.

This includes the fabric arts, which have a long tradition in the Muskegon area. Native Americans of this area were, and are, known for their black ash basket weaving tradition (Muskegon County Museum display is pictured right). Copper beads and dyed porcupine quills were elements of wrapping, sewing, plaiting and weaving. Animal bone and teeth were used in jewelry. Muskegon's Native Americans were involved in the silver trade and created jewelry using silver. Reeds were often used in weaving. After contact with Europeans, glass beads and a variety of fabrics were used in decorative arts.

Many early settlers in the area created fabric art and their creations were prized not only by the family but by the art community. Early exhibitions at the Hackley Art Gallery (now the Muskegon Museum of Art) showcased items such as hand-woven coverlets of Scandinavian needlework, Hungarian





## Appendix A - Art Summary

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embroidery, Norwegian textiles, Danish tonder lace and hedebo embroidery, and Mexican decorative arts. Pictured left is a piece by Pennsylvania artist, Georgiana Brown Harbeson, which was exhibited in a 1936 show. The Gallery also exhibited paintings, drawings, and fabric art created by African Americans (a 1922 exhibit was dedicated to this). The traditions are still practiced today. Rita Chapman's "Heritage Quilt" hangs in the Muskegon County Museum of African American History. A number of local organizations such as *Patchers at the Lakeshore*, continue the fabric tradition.

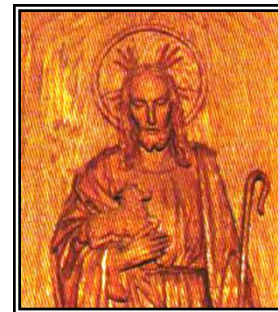
A 1942 Muskegon newspaper article offers the opinion that the rise of Swedish arts and the establishment of the national Swedish Society of Arts and Crafts in 1845 facilitated the rise of the Arts and Craft movement in the United States. This included not only the textile traditions, but also art glass and the appreciation of tile, pottery, woods and metals.

Muskegon was home to several industrial arts companies, inventions, and innovative manufacturing techniques. Muskegon also has a metal art tradition and there are still several operating foundries located in the Muskegon area. According to a publication by the Muskegon Museum of Art, the art of metalsmithing is rapidly growing in Michigan. In addition to artists working on their own in metals, numerous colleges and universities offer courses in metal work and jewelry, including Grand Valley State University, Kendall College of Art and Design and Western Michigan University. Muskegon's art glass tradition, seen in art collections and in community stained glass, is being carried on by a number of artists including Tom McEwen of Lake Side Dune Glass.



*Tempest Aberation* by Amanda Stark.  
Photo Credit: Artist, *Shaped in Metal*,  
brochure, 2006.

The Muskegon area has a tradition of woodworking, creating furniture, and musical instruments. The Chase-Hackly Piano Company is one of these historic companies. Beebe Violins is a current company that follows this tradition. The maritime tradition of model boatbuilding can be seen in the Hackley Library's collection. The models originally belonged to George and Thomas (Tim) Hume. Churches not only display the art of stained glass but other traditional arts as well. The Central United Methodist Church's carved wood alter central panel, with a theme of the Vine of Life with Symbols of the Twelve Disciples, and the Transept's carved wood relief featuring Jesus as the Good Shepard (detailed pictured) were created by Alois Lang who was originally from Oberammergau, Germany. He also provided carvings for a church in Grand Rapids.



# Appendix B - Tours

Michigan Beachtowns  
presents

## Roadside Attractions:

### Roadfood of the West Michigan Pike DRAFT 8/09



**Casey's Pub & Grill,**  
136 N. Whittaker  
New Buffalo

Established 1937, a classic tavern interior with wood paneling and decorative bar.



**Redamak's**  
626 E. Buffalo  
New Buffalo

The Redamak family opened a small roadside diner in 1940. Though its continued popularity has caused this hamburger joint to grow over the years, its roadhouse ambiance is still in tact. The current owners purchased it from the Redamaks in 1976.



**Milda's Corner Store**  
9901 Townline Road  
Union Pier

Chicago's Eastern European immigrant population flocked to Union Pier in the summer from 1920 to 1970. Milda's continues to honor that tradition by serving Lithuanian pastries and displaying historic photographs.



**Capozio's Italian Restaurant**  
13892 Red Arrow Highway  
Harbert

Chicago's Italian immigrants. Capozio's, established in 1949, is one of a number of restaurants that reflect the region's Italian heritage. Other's include Tosi's at 4337 Ridge Road est. 1948, D'Agostino's at 8970 Red Arrow Highway est. 1959 and still owned by the same family, and Sanataniellos on Glenlord Road est. 1967.



**Get-Away-Saloon**  
9489 Red Arrow Highway,  
Bridgman

Built c. 1950, this classic diner displays architectural characteristics, such as a picture window and hearth that

are representative of "colonial" style diners popular after World War II



**Mikey's Drive-In**  
9096 Red Arrow Highway,  
Bridgman

Drive-in restaurants first came on the scene in the 1920s and peaked in popularity in the

1950s. "Mom and pop" restaurants owned by local families were common before chains like MacDonald's dominated the market in the 1960s.



**Henry's Hamburgers**  
1832 M-139  
Benton Harbor

The Henry's Hamburger chain was established by the Bressler Ice Cream Company

c. 1950. There were once over 200 stores nationally. The Benton Harbor store was built in 1959. Though the original building was demolished in 1999, the historic sign and classic hamburgers are still the same.



**Roxy's Drive-In**  
2629 Cleveland  
Saint Joseph

This local drive-in still gets rave reviews for its hamburgers and 1950s charm.



**What Not Inn**  
2405 Blue Star Highway  
Fennville



**Ma's Coffee Pot**  
13967 M-140  
South Haven

Manufactured in the 1960s by the Valentine Diner Company of Wichita, Kansas, this diner

retains its original look.



**Back to the 50's Drive-In**  
8510 M-140, South Haven



**Chuck's Cafe**  
1063 Chambers Street, South Haven

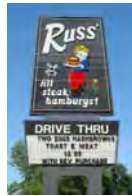
This small concrete block diner, visible from the Blue Star Highway, retains its classic diner interior.

# Appendix B - Tours



**Sea Wolf Restaurant**  
176 Blue Star Highway,  
South Haven

This acclaimed “casual fine dining” restaurant was once the dining hall of one of South Haven’s most popular Jewish Resorts, Weinstein’s, which opened in the 1920s and moved to this location in the 1960s.



**Russ’ Restaurants**  
2750 28<sup>th</sup> Street SE, Holland

The original Russ’ was founded in Holland in 1934. After World War II this local chain expanded to Muskegon and Grand Rapids.



**Fricano’s Pizza Tavern**  
1400 Fulton, Grand Haven

Established in 1949 by an Italian immigrant that once worked in the Muskegon celery fields. The building was constructed in 1910 and originally housed the Ottawa Tavern. Fricanco’s thin crust pizza and simply decorated dining room offer an authentic 1950’s dining experience.



**Pronto Pup**  
313 S. Washington, Grand Haven

Established in 1947 this hotdog stand uses a Tex Mex corn

dog coating created by Alex Sulmonetti of Texas.



**Cherokee Restaurant**  
1971 W. Sherman,  
Muskegon

A popular breakfast place, the teepee entrance on this 1960s restaurant is a classic example of roadside architecture.



**U.S. 31 BBQ**  
151 W. Muskegon

This 1960s diner is a tame version of the “Googie” architectural style popularized in Los Angeles after World War II. It retains its authentic ambiance and food.



**Masar’s Drive-In**  
3690 Airline Drive,  
Muskegon

Formerly an A & W Drive-In, the Masar family who have operated a restaurant in Muskegon since the 1940s, purchased this building a few years ago.



**Bear Lake Inn**  
360 Ruddiman Road, North Muskegon

Established in 1929 on the road that connects the West Michigan Pike to Scenic Drive and Muskegon State Park, the Bear Lake Inn is popular with locals and boaters.



**Dog ‘n Suds**  
4454 Dowling, Montague  
4421 Grand Haven Road  
Muskegon

The Dog ‘n Suds drive-in chain was created in 1953. By the 1970s there were 600 Dog ‘n Suds restaurants in 38 states. Today, only sixteen remain—two are located in Southwest Michigan and are owned by the same family. The Montague Dog n’ Suds was purchased by the current owner in 1966.



**Old Hamlin Restaurant**  
122 W. Ludington  
Ludington

This family owned business was established at this downtown location in 1942. The restaurant was first opened at Hamlin Lake by a Greek immigrant that arrived in Chicago in 1915.



**Bortell’s Fisheries**  
5528 S. Lakeshore Drive  
Ludington

The Bortell family established a fishery in 1898 that is still in operation. Bortell’s was named one of the top 10 seafood shacks in America on *Roadfood.com* by noted roadfood culinary experts and authors Jane and Michael Stern.

Support for this project came from: Preserve America, Michigan Council for the Arts and Cultural Affairs, Holland/Zeeland Area Community Foundation, Frey Foundation, Upton Foundation, Muskegon County Community Foundation, Grand Haven Area Community Foundation, Mason County Community Foundation, Tri-Cities Museum

This project is based upon work assisted by a grant from the Department of Interior, National Park Service but does not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of the Interior.

This program receives Federal financial assistance for identification and protection of historic properties. The Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, or disability or age in its federally assisted programs.

Office for Equal Opportunity  
National Park Service  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

[www.beachtowns.org](http://www.beachtowns.org)

# Appendix B - Tours

## Michigan Beachtowns presents

### Roadside Attractions: Draft 8/09 Historic Parks of the West Michigan Pike



*Hidden Cove Park was once an auto camp on the West Michigan Pike (U.S. 31) in Muskegon*

[www.beachtowns.org](http://www.beachtowns.org)



**Lake Bluff Park**  
Lake Boulevard, Saint Joseph

This linear park high on a bluff above Lake Michigan once greeted visitors arriving by passenger steamers. At the turn of the century, an incline carried them to the resort hotels at the top of the bluff. The Maid of the Mist Fountain, originally located in Chicago's Grant Park, was moved here in 1892 by the owner of the Whitcomb Hotel, visible from the park and once one of the most prestigious resorts in West Michigan. Over the years a number of monuments and statues have been added to the park including the Doughboy Monument in 1930. The park overlooks the former site of Silver Beach Amusement Park. The park's old trees and curving path evoke the feeling of a nineteenth century resort town.



**Roadside Parks**  
Blue Star Highway, Hagar Township, Berrien County  
Blue Star Highway, Saugatuck, Allegan County  
Pere Marquette Highway  
Kibbe Creek, Mason County

Michigan's Department of Highways pioneered the establishment of roadside parks to provide rest areas for automobile travelers in the 1920s. The goal was a roadside park within a one-hour drive from any point on a state trunk line. The federal relief programs of the Great Depression, enabled expansion of the program. Michigan took great care to landscape its roadside parks in a manner attractive to travelers. Log shelters, such as those found at Hagar Township and Saugatuck, were typical features in roadside parks. By 1953 Michigan had seventy-five roadside parks and over 2,600 small picnic areas along its highways—only a handful exist today. The Hagar Township roadside park provides beach access to Lake Michigan.

**Monroe Park (Kid's Korner),**  
Monroe Street, South Haven

While new playground equipment gives this park a contemporary feel, it has a long history as a children's park. In August 1925, the South Haven city council approved the purchase of a block of land bounded by St. Joseph, Monroe, and South Haven Streets and J. H. Monroe Boulevard for the creation of a children's park. The original playground was a project of the or the Kiwanis Club.



**Tunnel Park**  
Lakeshore Drive, Holland

Created in 1930, Tunnel Park was the first county park constructed in Ottawa County. Land for the park was acquired from George Getz, a Chicago businessman who operated a popular zoo on his summer estate, Lakewood Farms, north of Holland. An old sand road was improved and renamed Lakewood Drive to provide auto tourists direct access to the Getz Zoo and Tunnel Park from the West Michigan Pike. The Holland Chamber of Commerce donated \$1,500 for construction of the concrete tunnel that provides beach access through a sand dune from the picnic grounds. The Ottawa Road Commission constructed the sixty-foot tunnel, which is eight-foot wide, so that a horse team could enter and grade the floor bed. When Ottawa County supervisors toured the finished park, they were treated to a ride on an elephant at the adjacent Getz Zoo. The park retains its 1930s design and feel with buildings and activities centered on a single oval loop drive.



**Centennial Park**  
250 Central Avenue, Holland

When President Rutherford B. Hayes planted a centennial tree in the White House garden in 1876 to celebrate America's one hundredth birthday, it started a national trend. The city of Holland established its Centennial Park in 1876 on a bare strip of land that was the site of an open-air market. Maple trees were planted in the new park and on school grounds throughout the city to commemorate the nation's centennial. The twenty-foot tufa-stone (coral) fountain and other amenities were donated by local citizens shortly after the park's opening. Centennial Park is located in the downtown Holland historic district.



**Public Square**  
Butler Street, Saugatuck

The Colonial Revival style Christian Science Society building that borders the square was built in 1925 as part of Saugatuck's master plan to make itself an attractive tourist town. Influenced by Chicago architect Thomas Eddy Tallmadge who owned a summer home in the area, many city buildings were redone in the 1920s to create a consistent style. The public square also contains "living memorials," maple trees planted in 1919 to honor Saugatuck's World War I veterans.



**Oval Beach**  
Perryman Road, Saugatuck

In the late 1920s Michigan's State Highway Department announced a plan to create a scenic road system around the perimeter of the state that would provide automobile tourists with access to scenic dune and beach areas. Little was done until federal relief programs enacted

# Appendix B - Tours

during the Great Depression provided funding for road projects. Michigan's beach access roads often ended in a large oval that provided both parking for visitors and a loop road exit. On the state's west side these parking ovals were called "Sunset Ovals." Peryman Road and Oval Beach in Saugatuck were built in 1936. The first Sunset Oval constructed on Michigan's west coast was the oval at Grand Haven State Park built in 1925 as the terminus of a new cross state highway, M-16. An oval was also constructed in Muskegon in 1927 between Beach Street and the Coast Guard Station at what was then known as Pere Marquette Park. The Muskegon ovals were expanded when a connector road to Sherman Boulevard was completed in 1937.



**Central Park**  
415 Washington, Grand Haven

Central Park is built on the site of the original city cemetery which was disinterred and moved to Lake Forest Cemetery in 1883. Spearheaded by the Grand Haven Women's Club, the park was dedicated in 1900. The large trees that adorn the park today were first planted on Arbor Day in 1901. The fountain is from the courtyard of W.C. Sheldon's Magnetic Springs Sanitarium, a popular resort that operated nearby; it was moved to the park in 1908 when the resort closed. In 1913 the Grand Haven Bird Club erected a cement bird feeder in the park.



**Richards Park and Veteran's Memorial Park, Muskegon**  
Ottawa Street at U.S. 31

In 1924, Louis Lunsford, chair of the Muskegon Chamber of Commerce, wanted to create a park to honor Muskegon's World War I veterans. Lunsford envisioned turning fifty-five acres of marshland between Muskegon and North Muskegon, an eyesore filled with lumbering debris, into a park with

lagoons and curving paths. At first dismissed as folly, the idea gained legitimacy when the Michigan State Highway Department agreed to build a causeway over the marsh to connect the West Michigan Pike (U.S. 31) to Scenic Drive. Construction of the northbound bridge began in 1928; the southbound bridge was completed in 1931. Work continued throughout the Depression as funding became available through the New Deal. The project also included the widening of Ottawa Street (the original route of the West Michigan Pike) and the construction of the Ottawa Street Bridge in 1934. Landscape architect Willard S. Gebhart of Washington, D.C. was hired to oversee the park's development. Decorative stonework and bridges, which are still visible, were built and hundreds of trees planted along the newly constructed lagoons. Veteran's Memorial Park was built between the two bridges of the causeway. It was dedicated on Armistice Day, November 11, 1934. The design of the memorial was approved by the American Legion and consists of a fountain and mirror pool encircled by stonewalls. Limestone pillars displayed bronze plaques, which list the names of Muskegon's one hundred and four World War I veterans. Over two hundred Fleur-de-Lis bulbs, a gift from the French government, were planted among the myrtle at the base of the columns.



**Hackley Park**  
Webster & Clay, Muskegon  
**McGraft Park**  
Wickman & Glenn, Muskegon

The City Beautiful movement, America's first national planning phenomenon, started with the World Columbian Exposition held in Chicago in 1893. The beauty and symmetry of the "White City" that architect Charles Burnham designed for the fair was an inspiration to communities across the country. At the turn of the century, "beautification" showed that a town had transitioned from pioneering to prosperity. With its public art and surrounding Richardsonian Romanesque civic buildings, Hackley Park embodies

the principles of City Beautiful design. Muskegon's McGraft Park, is also a City Beautiful park. Donated to the city in 1894 by former Mayor Newcomb McGraft, the forty-five acres of the park's terrain bordering Ruddiman Creek still retain the naturalistic landscape style associated with the City Beautiful Movement.



**Pioneer Park**  
Scenic Drive, Muskegon

At the turn of the century this was a popular site for annual picnics for many of Muskegon's civic societies. During the Great Depression, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) established a camp at this site as they worked to improve the grounds. The log building that is now a community building once served as the mess hall for WPA workers. The concrete bandstands on either side of the hall were also built by the WPA.



**Park**  
Business U.S. 31, Pentwater

This small park, probably improved through New Deal programs during the Great Depression, retains the typical layout, features, landscaping and historic character of a 1930s park.



**John Gurney Park**  
300 Griswold St, Hart

When Henry Ford released the Model T automobile in 1908, auto touring became an affordable past time for the newly evolving working class. Automobile ownership increased by the thousands in just a few short years as more and more people enjoyed the new freedom of travel. There were few places for them to stay on their trips and they often ended up camping in a farm field. As the sheer number of campers became a nuisance,

property owners complained to their state representatives. To alleviate the problem, Michigan established a state park system in 1919. In addition, the Michigan Tourist and Resort Association worked with local communities to establish free campgrounds for auto tourists along Michigan's new state highways. John Gurney Park in Hart is an excellent example of an early auto camp—and it is still in operation. Established in 1912, the village of Hart began making improvements to the park, building a pavilion and providing access to the village water system in 1921, so it could serve as an auto camp.



**Stearns Park**  
Lakeshore Drive, Ludington  
The trees in Stearns park were planted in as a living memorial to World War I Veterans.

Support for this project came from: Preserve America, Michigan Council for the Arts and Cultural Affairs, Holland/Zeeland Area Community Foundation, Frey Foundation, Upton Foundation, Muskegon County Community Foundation, Grand Haven Area Community Foundation, Mason County Community Foundation, Tri-Cities Museum

This project is based upon work assisted by a grant from the Department of Interior, National Park Service but does not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of the Interior. The Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, or disability or age in its federally assisted programs.

Office for Equal Opportunity  
National Park Service  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

# Appendix C – Famous People

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## Famous People Associated with Southwest Michigan

*The following is a list of individuals uncovered during the project that have achieved national or international fame and are known to have been associated with Southwest Michigan.*

**Frank Ramsay Adams, lyricist, play write, and short story writer, White Lake.** Adams, a graduate of the University of Chicago, managed the Sylvan Beach Resort Company on White Lake from 1916 to 1932. He also and managed the Playhouse Theater (Howmet Theater) in Whitehall. Adams gained national fame through his popular song lyrics--one of his most well known was "I Wonder Who's Kissing Her Now" written in 1909. His papers are in the University of Oregon Television Archives.

**Jane Addams, sociologist and reformer, Lakeside.** Addams, founder of Chicago's Hull House, vacationed at Lakeside in Berrien County at the turn of the century where she eventually purchased a cottage. Addams' Hull House colleagues Edith and Grace Abbott and Sophonisba Breckenridge, also rented cottages in the community. Addams was the first member of the Chikaming Country Club established in 1912. Jane Addams was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1931 and served as the International President of the International League for Peace and Freedom.

**Muhammad Ali, boxer, Berrien Springs.** The three time World Heavyweight champion owns a farm outside Berrien Springs that reportedly belonged to Chicago gangster Al Capone.

**Arthur Aylesworth, actor and showman, Lakeside.** Aylesworth was a showman in the Buffalo Bill Wild West show and a character actor in dozens of films in the 1920s and 1930s. In 1901 he purchased a resort inn in Lakeside, Berrien County for his parents. Aylesworth took over management of the inn after his father's death in 1917 and added a small zoo. Aylesworth was married to Grace Garrett, a stage and silent film actress, and their niece, Clara Kimball Young, a popular silent film star, stayed often at the Inn. Lakeside Inn has been restored and operates as an Inn.

**Liberty Hyde Bailey, horticulturist and educator, South Haven.** Bailey was born and raised in South Haven. He later attended the Michigan Agricultural College and Harvard University. He became the Director of Cornell University's Department of Agriculture in 1903. In 1908 he was appointed by President Theodore Roosevelt to head the Country Life Commission whose mission was to find ways to keep young men and women on America's farms in spite of the draw of the country's new industrialized cities. Bailey advocated for the expansion of agriculture extensions and published a magazine entitled *Country Life in America* which led to a movement of "gentleman farmers" that practiced scientific farming methods.

**L. Frank Baum, author, Macatawa Park, Holland.** Baum began summering at Macatawa Park, Holland in 1899 after his book of children's prose, *Father Goose, His Book*, became the top seller of the year. In 1900 Baum published the book *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* that became a children's classic. With his new found wealth he built a summer cottage in Macatawa Park in 1902 called "At the Sign of the Goose," in honor of his first book. The earliest Oz sequels were written during his years at Macatawa including *The Marvelous Land of Oz* (1904), *Ozma of Oz* (1907) and *Dorothy and the Wizard of Oz* (1908). Baum even served as an officer of the Macatawa Association (a homeowners association), in 1906. He wrote a short novel based on his experiences with small town politics called *Tamawaca Folks: A Summer Comedy*. Baum sold the cottage in 1909 after moving to Palm Springs, CA. It burned in 1927.

**Rick Bayless, chef, Berrien County.** Bayless is the owner of the Frontera Grill in Chicago and host of the PBS show *Mexico: One Plate at a Time*. He also owns Topolobampo, a Mexican restaurant in downtown Chicago that gained fame as President Barak Obama's favorite place to

## Appendix C – Famous People

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dine. Bayless purchases all the fruit and produce for his restaurants from a farm in Berrien County.

**Bobo Brazil, boxer and professional wrestler, Benton Harbor.** Brazil was the first African American to integrate professional wrestling in the 1950s. He was also the first African American to win the World Heavyweight title in 1962.

**Melvin R. Bissell, businessman, Ottawa Beach.** Bissell was the owner of the Bissell Carpet Sweeper Company of Grand Rapids. He built the cottage at 2427 Terrace in Ottawa Beach near Holland in the 1890s.

**Thomas Bendelow, golf course architect, Palisades Park.** Along with Donald Ross, Bendelow was one of the most respected golf course architects from the Golden Age of Golf in the 1920s. Bendelow was noted for creating public golf courses and bringing the game to the masses. He designed a golf course for the Palisades Park resort community in Van Buren County was given a lot in the resort. Bendelow built a summer home, which remains in the family to this day (the golf course no longer exists). His son worked as a golf pro at White Lake.

**Al Capone, Chicago organized crime boss.** Capone reportedly spent time much time in southwest Michigan. Capone reportedly had ties with theater owner John Flynn in Sawyer. Both Capone's bodyguard and accountant had homes in Stevensville. There are reports that Capone stayed at the Sleepy Hollow motel in South Haven, the Whitcomb Hotel in Saint Joseph, stopped at Prusa's gas station in Union Pier and played golf at the South Haven Golf Course. His girlfriend, Floria, is reportedly buried in a McDonnell Cemetery in Casco Township.

**Dave Carlock, sound engineer, Saint Joseph.** Grammy award winning sound engineer has worked with pop musicians such as the Eagles, like Blink 182, the Transplants, Eric Clapton, Rodney Crowell, Rancid, and Dolly Parton and Pink.

**Joan Cusak, actress, Berrien County.** The Chicago-based actress, who is know for comedic films such as *Runaway Bride* and *School of Rock*, owns a summer home in the Lakeside area of Berrien County.

**Richard Daley Sr. and Richard Daley Jr., Chicago mayors, Grand Beach.** Richard Daley Sr. was the undisputed head of Chicago's Democratic political machine and served as the city's mayor from 1955 until his death in 1975. Richard Daley Jr. was first elected as mayor of Chicago in 1989. The Daley family has owned summer homes in Grand Beach since the 1920s.

**Clarence Darrow, lawyer, Macatawa Park, Holland.** Darrow, an American Civil Liberties Union lawyer, gained fame in 1924 when he served as the defense lawyer for the infamous Loeb and Leopold murder trial. Following the trial he spent time in Macatawa Park at the home of Dr. Hall called "The Pines" located on Crescent Walk. In 1925 Darrow defended John Scopes during what became know as the Scopes Trial, a landmark case on evolution.

**Jack Dempsey, boxer.** Often trained in the Benton Harbor area. Participated in a fit with Bill Miske in Benton Harbor in 1920. Dempsey reportedly stayed with George Goetz at Lakewood Farms in Holland.

**Amelia Earhart, aviator, Saugatuck.** Earhart spent the summer of 1917 at Camp Gray in Saugatuck.

**Roger Ebert, film critic, Harbert.** A has owned a summer home in the area since 1980.

**John Glenn, astronaut and senator, Muskegon.** Glenn served on the board of directors for Muskegon Piston Ring Company.

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**Gene Harris, jazz pianist, Benton Harbor.** Harris was born in Benton Harbor in 1933. He was a member of the Three Sounds throughout the 1950s and 1960s and they recorded for the legendary labels Blue Note and Verve. His daughter, Nikki Harris, also a jazz musician was born in Benton Harbor in 1963.

**Paul Gray Hoffman, chairman of the board for Studebaker-Packard Company, Union Pier.** Hoffman owned a summer home in Union Pier, Berrien County for over thirty years from 1920 to 1950. Hoffman served as the administrator of the Marshall Plan to reconstruct Europe after World War II. Reportedly Dwight D. Eisenhower was brought to the Hoffman home when he was asked to run as the Republican presidential candidate in 1952. Many celebrities visited Hoffman at his Union Pier home including Bob Hope and Bing Crosby. The home was converted to Gintara's Resort in the 1950s and is still in operation.

**Claude C. Hopkins, advertising, Grand Haven.** Hopkins is considered to be one the greatest pioneers in the field of advertising. He worked for both Swift Packing Company and the Bissell Carpet Company. After coining the slogan "The beer that made Milwaukee famous" for the Schlitz Brewing Company, he was hired by the prestigious Chicago-based advertising firm of Lord and Thomas of which he became president and general manager. His book *Scientific Advertising* was published in 1923.

**Richard Hunt, sculptor, Benton Harbor.** Hunt has created more public art than any living American artist and served on the boards of the Smithsonian Institute and the National Endowment of the Arts under President Lyndon Johnson. He still lives in Benton Harbor.

**Iggy Pop, musician, Muskegon.** James Newell Osterberg Jr. was born in Muskegon in April 21, 1947, and raised in Ypsilanti. He attended the University of Michigan but dropped out to move to Chicago for its music scene. His musical influence was so great in the 1970s that he is often called the godfather of punk rock.

**Buster Keaton, actor/comedian, Muskegon.** At the turn of the century, C. S. "Pop" Ford operated a resort that became popular with entertainers performing at the nearby Lake Michigan Beach amusement park. One of the performers on the vaudeville circuit, Joe Keaton, liked the area so much that in 1908 he joined with two other vaudeville performers, Paul Lucier and William Rawls, to establish what became known as "the Actor's Colony's." They first built a clubhouse on a strip of land between Lake Michigan and Muskegon Lake and soon a number of vaudeville performers began building cottages in the area. By 1911 the club was thriving with over 200 performers in residence. A clubhouse was constructed and an annual vaudeville show was established in 1917. Joe Keaton's son, Buster, who spent his summers in Bluffton during his youth, was part of the family vaudeville act known as "The Three Keatons."

**Pearl Lang, dancer/choreographer, South Haven.** In the 1930s Pearl Lang served as a counselor for Kamp Kinderland for Jewish children established by the Workmen's Circle near South Haven. Lang became a member of the innovative modern dance troupe created by the choreographer, Martha Graham in New York. Lang later became a choreographer in her own write and choreographed the pop singer Madonna's tours.

**David Leestma, astronaut, Muskegon.** Leestma, who was born in Muskegon, served on flights aboard the space shuttles Challenger, Columbia, and Atlantis.

**Mark Lenard, actor, South Haven.** Lenard, whose real name is Leonard Rosenson, grew up in South Haven where his parents' owned the Lake Park Resort, a well-regarded Jewish resort. Lenard is known for playing Spock's father in the *Star Trek* series and films.

**Winsor McCay, illustrator, Spring Lake.** Raised in the Grand Haven area, McCay became a cartoonist for the New York Herald newspaper in 1904 where he developed numerous comic strips. His most popular was *Little Nemo in Slumberland*. In 1914 McCay released an animated



## Appendix C – Famous People

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cartoon film called *Gertie the Dinosaur*. This pioneering effort was cited by Walt Disney as an inspiration.

**George Maher, architect, Douglas.** Maher was a Prairie School architect from Chicago that once worked with Frank Lloyd Wright and Louis Sullivan. Maher's family summered in Saugatuck at the turn of the century. They first stayed in tent camps and later stayed at the Fernwood Resort operated by George Weed, son of the founder of the village of Douglas. The Maher family purchased a forty-six acre working fruit farm in Douglas just north of the Weed property and built a family compound they called "*Hillaire*." Maher designed two Prairie Style cottages (2582 and 2578 Lakeshore) that were used by the family. An existing stucco farmhouse was used for farm workers. Maher and his wife, the painter Elizabeth Brooks, helped to organize the Ox Bow School of Painting in Saugatuck

**Dawson Mainerre, painter, Ludington.** The work Mainerre produced between 1910 and 1914 sealed his reputation as one of America's earliest and best Modernist painters. A Chicago native Mainerre moved to Ludington around 1914 and became a full fruit farmer continuing to paint in his off hours.

**Rocky Marciano, boxer, Holland.** Stayed at the home of Holland Furnace Company president, Ted Cheff, during the summer of 1953 as he trained for a World Heavyweight match with Jersey Joe Wolcott.

**Edgar Lee Masters, author, Spring Lake.** Author of the poem *Spoon River Anthology* spent the summer of 1914 at a Spring Lake resort.

**C. S. Morrison, composer, Grand Haven.** Morrison moved to Grand Haven in 1924 and lived at 1301 Penoyer. He wrote over two hundred compositions for the piano, orchestras and marching bands. Two of his most well known pieces were "Meditation for the Piano" and "Consolation." He died in September 1933.

**Hugh O'Brien, actor, Grand Haven.** O'Brien was the son of Hugh Krampe who summered at Grand Haven for many years. O'Brien is known for his role as Wyatt Earp on the television series of the same name that ran from 1955 to 1961.

**Jesse Owens, athlete, Union Pier.** Owens, an African American, gained fame when he participated in the 1936 Olympics in Berlin becoming the first American to win four gold medals in track and field. He purchased a summer home in Union Pier in the 1970s.

**Elliot Roosevelt, author, White Lake.** Roosevelt, a pilot in the United States Air Force, was the son of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and served as his father's military attaché for the Teheran Conferences during World War II. Elliot Roosevelt vacationed at White Lake in 1937 when he was married to Ruth Googins.

**Martha Raye, comedian, South Haven.** Raye, a popular comedic actress, and her husband big band conductor David Rose were among the first guests to stay at a cottage in the Sleepy Hollow Resort in South Haven in the 1930s.

**Isaac Rosenfeld, author, Benton Harbor.** Rosenfeld was a Chicago-born Jewish author who wrote *Passage from Home*. He was a contemporary and friend of the author Saul Bellow and both were part of the Division Street Movement of Jewish writers from Chicago. Rosenfeld spent summers in Southwest Michigan, at a farm resort near Benton Harbor

**Louis Rueckheim, businessman, Lakeside.** Rueckheim was a Chicago businessman that along with his brother, created the popular caramel corn and peanut treat Cracker Jack, which was first popularized at Chicago's World Columbian Exposition in 1893. Rueckheim owned a summer home in Lakeside and there is still a road in the community called Cracker Jack Lane.

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**Carl Sandburg, poet and author, Harbert.** In 1927 the American poet Carl Sandburg purchased two lots in Birchwood, a summer resort in Harbert, Berrien County and built a summer home. In 1932 the Sandburgs moved to Harbert to live in the home year round. They purchased adjacent land and began raising prize-winning goats on what they called “The Chikaming Goat Farm.” Considered to be one of America’s finest writers, Sandburg wrote two Pulitzer Prize winning works: a volume of poetry *The People*, Yes in 1936 and *Abraham Lincoln: The War Years*, while residing in Birchwood. The Sandburgs moved to Flat Rock, North Carolina in 1945.

**Lew Sarett, poet, Benton Harbor.** The Sarett family immigrated to America from Eastern Europe and were living in Marquette, Michigan in 1895. They moved to Benton Harbor in 1902. Sarett attended the University of Michigan in 1907 and became a professor at the University of Illinois where he began a career as a nature poet in the 1920s. In 1925 he began teaching at Northwestern University in Wisconsin where he could devote more time to his poetry. The Lew Sarett Nature Center in Berrien County is named in his honor.

**Norma Shearer, actress, Grand Haven.** Shearer was an international film star popular between 1920 and 1950. She was nominated for six Academy Awards winning the Oscar in 1930 for her role in *The Divorcee*. Shearer often summered at the home of her uncle, Edwin Percival, at the Highland Park resort in Grand Haven. Her first Academy Award nomination was for her role in the 1929 film entitled *Their Own Desire*, which is set in a Lake Michigan resort town.

**Ossian C. Simmonds, landscape architect, Pier Cove.** One of America’s premier landscape architects of the twentieth century, he was a founder of the Prairie-style of landscape architecture, which utilized native grasses and plants. Simmonds served as the manager of Graceland Cemetery in Chicago. He was recruited to establish a landscape architecture program at the University of Michigan and while there designed Nichols Arboretum in Ann Arbor. At the turn of the twentieth century Simmonds purchased a farmhouse and cutover land in Pier Cove in Allegan County. There he established an arboretum to assist in the reforestation of Michigan. The home is still in the Simmonds family. Simmonds ashes are scattered under a large tree in the Pier Cove arboretum.

**Harold Swift, businessman, Lakeside.** The brother of Louis Swift who started the Swift Packing Company, a meat packing firm based in Chicago. Harold served as the company’s vice president and owned a summer home in Lakeside.

**Thomas Eddy Tallmadge, architect, Saugatuck.** Tallmadge was a part of the Chicago School of Architecture and was known for his Prairie-style architectural designs. In the 1920s, Tallmadge served as a consultant with architectural historian Fiske Kimball on the J.D. Rockefeller funded restoration of Colonial Williamsburg. Tallmadge also served as the architect of the “Colonial Village” for the Chicago “Century of Progress” World’s Fair in 1933. As a result, he was a proponent of the Colonial Revival architectural style that became nationally popular after World War I. Tallmadge spent summers in Saugatuck from 1915 until 1940 when he was killed in a railroad accident. He was one of the founders of the Ox-Bow School of Painting in Saugatuck.

**Stanley Tigerman and Margaret McCurry, architects, Lakeside.** Tigerman is a contemporary architect that graduated from Yale University and served as the Director of the University of Illinois School of Architecture for eight years. Margaret McCurry is an award winning architect. They own a summer home in Lakeside and some of McCurry’s designs can be found in Berrien County.

**Burr Tillstrom, artist and puppeteer, Saugatuck.** Creator of the popular television show *Kukla, Fran and Ollie* which ran for over ten years in the 1950s. Tillstrom was inducted into the Television Hall of Fame in 1986.

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**Sinbad (David Adkins), comedian, Benton Harbor.** A popular comedian and actor in the 1990s, he was born in Benton Harbor in 1956.

**Leo Sowerby, composer. Palisades Park.** Sowerby won the Pulitzer Prize in 1946 for his composition “Canticle of the Sun.” A native of Grand Rapids, Sowerby often worked with the Chicago Symphony. He produced over five hundred and fifty concertos and symphonies. Sowerby owned a home in Palisades Park in Van Buren County for over fifty years and often credited Lake Michigan as an inspiration for his music.

**Studs Terkel, author, historian, broadcaster and activist, South Haven.** Terkel won the Pulitzer Prize for General Non-Fiction in 1985 for *The Good War*, an oral history of World War II. He participated in the Works Progress Administration Writers Project. He is known for championing the cause of Chicago’s blue-collar workers. As a child in the 1920s Terkel spent his summers in South Haven due to his delicate health. He returned to the South Haven throughout his adult life and is known to have stayed at the Sleepy Hollow resort, which is still in operation, while writing some of his books.

# Appendix D – Tourism Model

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## A Cultural Heritage Tourism Model The Preserve America Southwest Michigan RoadMap

*The following is a description of the activities undertaken in the execution of the Preserve America Southwest Michigan RoadMap project. It is provided to assist other communities in the implementation of a cultural tourism initiative.*

### Background

Tourism is one of Michigan's top three industries, providing over 350,000 jobs and bringing in more than \$12 billion in revenue to the state each year. The economic downturn experienced by the state's top industry, automobile manufacturing, caused state agencies to look for ways to diversify Michigan's economy. To that end, the Department of History, Arts and Libraries (since dissolved) created a Cultural Economic Development Strategy that included utilizing Michigan's historic and cultural resources to develop new tourism destinations in order to increase tourism revenue for the state.

In recent years technological improvements, security issues, and increased gas prices have changed how people view travel. Today, more people take frequent day or weekend trips and fewer week long vacations. They are more interested in traveling to places that offer something different from what they can experience at home; they look for regional flavor, local products, and one-of-a kind experiences that can only be found in communities with a strong sense of place. According to a 2009 report commissioned by the U.S. Cultural & Heritage Tourism Marketing Council, 78 percent of all travelers in the United States are cultural heritage tourism travelers. These travelers are college educated "Baby Boomers" who make an average of \$75,000 annually. They stay longer and spend more money in a place than the average tourist—\$994 compared to \$611. They research their travel experiences on-line or rely on word of mouth opinions from friends, relatives and co-workers. About 65 percent of cultural tourism travelers book their trips themselves using the internet.

Niche markets that specialize in heritage, cultural, rural or eco-tourism are on the rise. The state of Michigan is a perfect candidate for cultivating these new markets. Long valued as a tourist destination for its lakes and natural beauty, in the past the state has invested most of its promotional dollars in marketing Michigan's natural resources. But Michigan also has a variety of cultural and historic resources that appeal to diverse populations that should be incorporated into a comprehensive tourism strategy based on authenticity and quality.

### Southwest Michigan RoadMap Project

In May 2006, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) received a grant from *Preserve America* to develop a cultural heritage tourism initiative for Southwest Michigan. The SHPO partnered with *Beachtowns, Inc.*, a consortium of convention and visitors bureaus from nine Southwest Michigan lakeshore communities located between New Buffalo and Ludington. A goal of the project was to develop a historic context narrative for the region that highlighted the significant people, trends, and time periods that led to the physical and cultural development of Southwest Michigan. The data was to be used in the creation of a Michigan Heritage Route through the Michigan Department of Transportation.

Initially we planned to research themes that were known to be significant to the region's history including art, architecture, agriculture, exploration/settlement, ethnic history, maritime, recreation/entertainment, and transportation and to find the theme that provided the strongest connection for the towns located along a 170-mile corridor on Lake Michigan. An important focus of the project was to uncover forgotten or underutilized pieces of the region's history—we did not want to concentrate on lumbering, for example, since its importance to the area is already well known and well documented. By concentrating on lesser-known themes we hoped to bring

# Appendix D – Tourism Model

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excitement to the project and raise awareness of undervalued resources. The SHPO served as the research consultant for the project. One staff person was assigned to serve as the project manager and to work half time for one year on the historic research and survey work. (A paid consultant or a highly dedicated volunteer could fill this role.) Though there were a number of strong, unifying regional themes discovered throughout the research, one that stood out and related best to the goal of creating a heritage route was the importance of the construction of the first continuous, improved highway in West Michigan called the West Michigan Pike. Begun in 1911 and completed in 1922, the West Michigan Pike was built as a tourist highway to connect Chicago with Mackinaw City. The West Michigan Pike is significant on a number of levels because it:

- Showcases the transition from rail and water travel to automobile travel at the time automobile manufacturing was rapidly becoming Michigan's most significant industry.
- Enabled the establishment of a resort industry in Southwest Michigan that filled the economic void left when the lumber industry ended in the late nineteenth century. The Pike became one of the state's first trunk lines and led to the construction of access roads to West Michigan's most spectacular sand dunes and beaches. This in turn led to the establishment of seven state parks in the study area between 1921 and 1930.
- Played a significant role in a major statewide conservation effort. The clear cutting of the state's natural forests in the nineteenth century left millions of acres of abandoned and denuded land, much of which was later found to be unsuitable for farming. The planting of trees along the highway as part of a tourism beautification effort contributed to the reforestation of Michigan.
- Celebrates Michigan's twentieth century resources. To date, Michigan has defined itself by its nineteenth century history—settlement, maritime and lumbering—and its twentieth century history has received much less attention.

## Step One: Gain Public Buy-in

The project started with a kick-off meeting in a centrally located community within the 170-mile project area. Invitations were sent to municipal leaders, planners, historical societies, museum officials, economic development personnel and the press. A presentation was given that explained the goals and themes of the project. Following the presentation attendees were broken into groups by region and asked to provide information such as local history contacts, known historic resources, the location of local history collections, and potentially interesting stories to be pursued.

## Step Two: Conduct General Research

The SHPO hired three student interns at the beginning of the project. Because of the size of the project area, it was debated whether to assign a student to a specific theme, which they would then research for the entire project area, or to break the area into three geographic regions and assign a student to each region. It was decided it would be more efficient to break the area into regions. The interns were then asked to collect information related to the seven pre-identified themes as well as general tourism information for their region. The students used the following resources:

- **State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).** The interns began their research in the SHPO. They created an Excel database that included sites listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the State Register of Historic Sites, Michigan Historical Markers, local historic districts and centennial farms. They also reviewed historic resource survey reports and the SHPO working files for information on potential sites.
- **Travel Michigan.** A printout of the sites listed on the Travel Michigan website for each county within the project area was obtained.

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- **County and Local Histories.** The interns were then asked to review general information resources about their region, beginning with county histories, to ascertain important events, locations, and people. They then looked at local histories of individual communities or resources. The Michigan Documents section in the Library of Michigan has a good selection of local material. The interns also reviewed the library's vertical clippings files, historic map collection, and period steamer and railroad vacation pamphlets in the library's Rare Book room. An important resource for this project was the *West Michigan Vacation Directory* published by the West Michigan Tourist Association in the 1920s (re-titled *Carefree Days in West Michigan* in 1936). City Directories were also reviewed to determine resources related to specific themes such as ethnic churches, hotels and motels, gas stations, etc.
- **Local Historical Societies and Museums.** Once they had a good understanding of their region's history, the interns contacted local historical societies and museums and set up appointments to view their collections and talk with local experts. They also participated in historic walking tours, attended lectures, and visited museum exhibits related to the designated themes.
- **The Michigan Electronic Library Catalog (MEL).** MEL enables Michigan's citizens to browse the collections of libraries across the state, order resources electronically, and have them delivered to their local library. It is an invaluable service.

At the beginning of the project the interns and the project manager met weekly to exchange information and cross reference their findings.

### Step Three: Historic Resource Survey

With the background information collected, the interns went into the field for a week to meet with local historians and to begin the historic resource survey work. (Information on how to conduct a survey can be found in the *Manual for Historic and Architectural Surveys in Michigan* on the SHPO website at [www.michigan.gov/shpo](http://www.michigan.gov/shpo).) The survey proved to be problematic. We did not want to spend time documenting known historic sites and, due to the size of the project area and lack of a clear definition as to which resources were going to be surveyed, it was difficult to follow conventional survey methods. Some progress was made by focusing on resources related to a specific theme but at this point it became apparent that we needed to regroup and narrow our focus. To gain inspiration, the project manager began reviewing microfilm of the newspapers from a sampling of the major cities in the project area to gain a sense of the significant activities that were occurring at the time. At first, the sampling was random by decade just to get a feel for what was going. The project manager also began reviewing information found in city directories. This led to more targeted newspaper research. For example, if there was an increase in the number of hotels or gas stations listed in a city directory in a certain year it was viewed as an indication that some event had occurred in that community which related to tourism. That year was then researched in the newspaper. Since we were looking at themes related to recreation and entertainment in beach communities, newspaper research was concentrated on summer months (usually, looking at the front page of the newspaper is sufficient for tracking major local events). It was through the newspaper research that the significance of the development of the resort industry in West Michigan came to the forefront. This was soon followed by the discovery of the construction of the West Michigan Pike and its relationship to the new resort industry. When a West Michigan Pike brochure was located in the Rare Book Room of the Library of Michigan it confirmed that the highway was a unifying factor for the district and would be the key for developing a linear heritage route along the Lake Michigan Shore. Once this was settled, the survey process became much easier.

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- **Mapping the West Michigan Pike**

To determine the original route of the West Michigan Pike, researchers referred to the 1920 version of *The Automobile Green Book* published by the Scarborough Motor Guide Company. Early motor guides like these use local landmarks to define a route. For example, they might say “turn left at post office, continue 3.2 miles, turn right, school on south corner.” West Michigan Pike tour guides and maps from the period were also used. Other excellent resources are the trade publications *Michigan Roads and Forests* and *Michigan Roads and Construction* (available at the Library of Michigan and possibly at your local university library). These included updates on road construction in the state by county and frequently contained general information articles about construction of the state’s highways, statewide tourism initiatives, the development of Michigan’s state parks, and the construction of the West Michigan Pike. The website *Michigan Highways* at <http://www.michiganhighways.org> is a reliable source that provides detailed information about changes to Michigan’s state trunk lines and federal highways (the West Michigan Pike became M-11 and later U.S. 31)

To map the route of the West Michigan Pike, copies were made of the current plat maps for townships located along the proposed heritage route within the project area. These proved to be very useful. Since plat maps include street names, property line boundaries, and property owner’s names we were able to not only track the historic route of the Pike and the changes that occurred to the route over time, but to pinpoint the location of historic sites along the route as well. All the copied township plat maps were placed in a notebook, in the order they would appear when traveling the Pike from south to north, separated by county. City maps for the communities along the Pike were also included. The historic 1922 route of the West Michigan Pike was highlighted on the maps in one color. Significant changes to the route over time were highlighted in different colors by time period. A verbal description of the historic route was then developed from these maps. Township plat maps books and can be purchased or found at university libraries or the Library of Michigan.

- **Photo-documentation of Resources**

Once the route of the West Michigan Pike was known, work began on photographing the existing historic resources along it. (See *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* for help in defining a historic resource.) Our goal was to photograph every historic resource along the route that related to one of our themes. While photographing resources in rural areas was simple, it was more difficult to decide what resources to photograph in dense urban areas. Rather than photograph every house along the route of the West Michigan Pike through a city like Muskegon, we photographed a few representative examples of common house styles, all architectural significant buildings, and all buildings that related directly to our themes. Since our goal was to identify previously undocumented resources, we did not spend time photographing already designated historic districts along the route. In rural areas and small towns that had had little historic resource survey work to date or few designated historic districts, every historic resource was photographed. We occasionally photographed significant historic resources that related to our themes that were not located on the West Michigan Pike itself. For example, the Danish Hall and Swedish churches in the city of Ludington, though not on the route of the West Michigan Pike, related to our ethnic heritage theme.

Photographs were in color and a digital camera was used. At a minimum, one oblique shot that showed two sides of a resource was taken. More photos were taken if needed to show significant features.

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- **Inventory Form and Resource Database**

A simple inventory form (at the end of this document) was developed to collect data about the individual sites. Its simplicity was an asset. The form included the following fields: resource name, address, Geographic Positioning Systems (GPS) coordinates, and a comments field to enable recordation of a few identifying features that would help in matching the sites to the photographs at a later date. It was helpful to have two people doing the survey work. One to drive and photograph the resources and one to take the GPS coordinates and write down the information on the form, though it is possible for one person to do the work alone. Upon returning to the office, the Internet proved to be an invaluable tool for finding out more information about the photographed sites. An address could be typed into a program like *Yahoo Yellow Pages* and the business name obtained or a business name typed in and an address identified. Finding the website associated with a particular resource often led to information about its history. An excellent website for obtaining GPS coordinates is *GPS Visualizer* at [www.gpsvisualizer.com/geocode](http://www.gpsvisualizer.com/geocode). Simply type in the address, city, and state and the coordinates appear. (Use the precision address at the bottom of the information box.) GPS coordinates are useful for creating maps for the internet or for developing geocaching tours.

The inventory forms served as the basis for the creation of an EXCEL database. The database included the fields noted above as well as the photograph name and disk directory location.

- **Survey Workshops**

As part of the grant we held three workshops for the general public, which provided an overview of the procedures and methods of historic resource survey set forth in the *Manual for Historic and Architectural Surveys in Michigan*. The goal was to enable local people to conduct their own surveys and add more information to the field of knowledge about West Michigan Pike resources. Feedback from attendees suggested that our survey workshops would have been more successful if we had targeted a specific group, like the local historical society, asked them to complete a specific survey assignment, and then trained them in survey procedure. Providing general information about survey to the public at large was too vague an approach to achieve any measurable results.

## **Step Four: Refining the Themes and Designation Resources**

We started the project with the expectation that we would research the following themes: art and architecture, agriculture, entertainment/recreation, ethnic heritage, exploration/settlement, lumbering, maritime, and transportation. While all are significant to Southwest Michigan, it became evident that documenting that many themes with a limited staff was overambitious. We decided to focus on the themes that related directly to the West Michigan Pike and that could be best used in promoting a heritage route. The most relevant themes were determined to be agriculture, art, architecture, conservation, entertainment/recreation, ethnic heritage, and transportation. The history of the West Michigan Pike is the history of early twentieth century Michigan. By then water and rail travel were being replaced by automobile travel. Lumbering had virtually ended in Lower Michigan in the 1890s; efforts at the turn of the century were focused on counteracting the affects of lumbering by investing in reforestation and resource conservation both of which were directly connected to highway beautification and the West Michigan Pike. Agriculture was significant because roadside fruit stands were established along the new highway and many inexperienced, ethnic farmers decided to turn their unproductive farms into tourist resorts, which provided them with more money and a lifestyle they enjoyed. For the entertainment/recreation theme it was immediately evident that the construction of resorts, campgrounds, state parks, tourist cabins and motels was directly related to the development of the West Michigan Pike. A number of historic golf courses are also located in the project area. Research on bowling was undertaken because the headquarters of the Brunswick Company, an



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originator of bowling as a sport, was located within the project area in Muskegon. Ethnic heritage became significant when it was understood that Michigan's southern most resorts typically catered to a specific immigrant group from Chicago resulting in whole regions or communities becoming known for their association with a specific ethnic culture. For example, Italian resorts were common in the Glenlord Road area in Berrien County while Jewish Resorts dominated the South Haven area.

As part of the project SHPO agreed to write five Michigan State Historical Marker texts and two National Register of Historic Places nominations. While there were many worthwhile resources throughout the region that could have been designated, we felt it was important to concentrate on resources that related directly to the West Michigan Pike heritage route. Doing so would enable us to create a central public relations message and a "buzz" about the heritage route. Therefore we chose the following topics for the state markers: The West Michigan Pike, Scenic Drive and Muskegon State Park, Jewish Resorts in South Haven, and John Gurney Park and Auto Camps. A fifth marker for animation pioneer Winsor McCay of Spring Lake was done at the request of the community. For the National Register nominations we chose two historic inns related to the resort theme, Lakeside Inn in Lakeside and Liendecker's Inn (Coral Gables) in Saugatuck. A third nomination was completed for the Ludington Life Saving Station at the request of the community. The nominations will qualify the property owners to utilize historic preservation tax credits for rehabilitation and maintenance work on the properties.

Over the course of the project we held three workshops that provided an overview of SHPO programs in communities within the project area. Local civic, government, and economic leaders and the general public were invited to attend.

### **Step Five: Stakeholders Group**

When the idea for this project was conceived, we intended to develop an advisory board of stakeholders from across the 170-mile area in order to foster regional cooperation in the creation of the heritage route. Initially, we planned to include local officials, planners, heritage society members, land conservancy organizations, tourism boards, etc. However, in Southwest Michigan there was already an established consortium of convention and visitors bureaus, *Beachtowns, Inc.* that had worked together on a maritime heritage initiative so it was decided to utilize this existing group. There were decided pros for using this group— an existing history of cooperation; knowledge of tourism issues; and the unique, creative perspective they brought to the project. A con was that the focus was narrowed to a small group of tourism stakeholders and did not facilitate the development of relationships with a broader range of stakeholders. One of the most creative aspects of the project resulted from the partnership with *Beachtowns*, who wanted to generate strong publicity for the project in order to garner local support. To that end a freelance photographer of with a national reputation, Vince Musi, was hired to spend two weeks traveling the West Michigan Pike and photographing his experiences. Musi was discovered through an internet search. He had photographed the Route 66 heritage route and has a long association with *National Geographic* magazine. A grant was obtained from the Michigan Humanities Council to create a traveling exhibit of Musi's West Michigan Pike photographs. He returned to Michigan to give four presentations of his photographs in the project area. The exhibit then traveled to cultural institutions along the West Michigan Pike over the next two years. Musi's work brought the desired effect; many news articles were generated about the project due to his contribution.

The project manager and other SHPO staff attended *Beachtowns'* established monthly meetings on an as needed basis throughout the course of the project. Three speakers were brought in to provide *Beachtowns* members with information about different aspects of cultural heritage tourism. Speakers included the coordinator of MDOT's heritage route program, the coordinator of an operating Michigan Heritage Route (U.S. 12), and a design service provider that critiqued existing signage and community entry aesthetics along the proposed heritage route.

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## **Step Six: Publicity**

It is important to keep the project in the public eye so that members of the community experience a sense of growth and achievement as the project moves forward. The work of the National Geographic photographer, Vince Musi, provided an excellent forum for promoting the project not only during the two weeks of his visit, but afterward when he returned to speak to the communities and when the traveling exhibit arrived in a specific community. Press releases were submitted to local area news media before each workshop related the project was held. We were fortunate that some feature editors took up the cause of architectural tourism and promoted supporting the project in editorials as a means of diversifying Michigan's economy. *Beachtowns* devoted a section of its web page to the West Michigan Pike—even hiring a local musician to develop a theme song.

## **Step Seven: The Final Report**

The historic context narrative and the historic resource survey data collected were compiled into a final report. The narrative contained an overview, methodology, and the historic context narratives by theme and a bibliography for each theme.

The themes were followed in the report by community historic resource assessments. Each assessment included a list of a community's existing designated historic districts and state historical markers, recommendations for the designation of future historic districts and markers, and the most appropriate themes and their associated resources in that community that could be used in the development of a cultural tourism initiative.

The historic resource survey data was presented by county. For each resource surveyed the report includes a 3" x 3" photograph, the address, the current and historic name, and a short paragraph about the history of the resource, whenever possible. An EXCEL database with the information noted above, the GPS coordinates and the location of the photographs on disk was also included.

The report was distributed to each of the community representatives in *Beachtowns, Inc.* and a copy was placed in the Library of Michigan. Copies are also on file in the State Historic Preservation Office.

