

Helping Hands

As you consider the possibilities for using Depew's history as a source of revenue, economic development and civic pride, questions are bound to arise. Below is a list of individuals, organizations and government agencies with experience in historic preservation and its role in economic development and tourism. They should be able to answer most of the questions that are likely to pop up as you proceed.

“Been there, done that” advice

The following communities have been successful in turning historic buildings into engines of economic development through a variety of approaches. The numbers provided are for members of each community who are ready, willing and able to answer any questions Depew officials might have about using historic properties to attract tourism and commerce.

Galena, Illinois — Galena has dozens of properties that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Some have been converted to bed-and-breakfast inns, while others are open to the public for tours. Museums, cobblestone streets and state historic sites make this little mining town a popular tourist attraction. For more information, call Mark Elder of the historic district advisory board at (815) 777-1050.

Makanda, Illinois — Makanda, an old railroad town nestled at the foot of a bluff in the Shawnee National Forest, features a blocklong historic wooden boardwalk that takes travelers past a row of stone buildings that house everything from local artisans to a coffee and ice-cream shop popular with tourists, college students and Makanda's resident hippies. A metalworker creates handcrafted jewelry and hair barrettes in a building with an elaborate, multi-level garden in the back yard; next door, a woman makes scented candles, while artists of all stripes display their work at a gallery down the block. A health-food store opened recently in a building that formerly housed a weaver's workshop. Bill Abney, owner of Makanda Country Store, has watched the community grow for the past 20 years or so. Bill can be reached at (618) 529-1783.

Manchester, Missouri — City officials are so enthusiastic about historic preservation in Manchester that they rebuffed a developer's attempt to tear down a century-old hotel and replace it with a replica to house a carpet store a couple of years ago. Historic buildings are cherished and promoted as tourist attractions; many have found new lives as antique shops, gift shops, restaurants and other tourist-friendly businesses. Even modern structures such as lighting and bridges have been designed to maintain the city's historic flavor. For more information, call Jan Hinkebein of the Old Trails Historical Society at (314) 821-1562.

Tahlequah, Oklahoma — In addition to its Cherokee connection, Tahlequah has a charming downtown full of historic buildings that have been recycled into everything from boutiques to bars to art galleries. One building houses an organic foods store run by Catholic nuns as a fundraiser for the monastery that produces the pasta, dried beans, trail mix and other goodies sold by the bag; another building is home to a store selling nothing but Christmas ornaments of every imaginable shape, size and type. For more information, call Beth Herrington of the Tahlequah Historic Preservation Committee at (918) 456-3554.

Guthrie, Oklahoma — Guthrie's pride in its history is immense. Lovingly restored buildings fill its vibrant downtown, which is full of fascinating shops and restaurants. The community hosts a variety of events throughout the year to showcase its historic properties and draw tourists from around the state and across the country. For more information, call Alba Weaver, economic development director, at (405) 282-0493 or Melody Kellogg, library director and former historic preservation commission member, at (405) 282-0050.

Mulhall, Oklahoma — Although most of Mulhall's history blew away in a tornado a few years ago, one notable survivor remains. Lucille's Restaurant and Bar, based in a red stone bank building that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is thriving. The business revels in its history: Old photographs hang all over the walls, and waitresses are quick to share information about the building and its days as a bank. Lucille's is open 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Thursday through Sunday; call (405) 649-2100 for more information.

Route 66 Organizations

The Oklahoma Route 66 Association stands ready to provide information, technical assistance, volunteer labor, help promoting events and locations, and other services to every community on Route 66 in Oklahoma. E-mail Emily Priddy, eastern vice president, at sundayjohn66@mac.com or call her at (918) 445-7495 (home) or (918) 230-9656 (cell) any time you need assistance or support.

Oklahoma Route 66 Association, Inc.

PO Box 446
Chandler, OK 74834
405.258.0008
okrt66association@sbcglobal.net
<http://www.oklahomaroute66.com>

The California Route 66 Preservation Foundation provides advice, support, technical assistance and more to locations all along Route 66 — not just in California. Executive Director Jim Conkle was involved with Hampton Inns' Save-A-Landmark caravan in 2003 and recently brought Hampton back to Oklahoma to help refurbish the Admiral Twin Drive-In in Tulsa. Jim is well-connected, resourceful and madly in love with Route 66.

California Route 66 Preservation Foundation

Jim Conkle, executive director
P.O. Box 290066
Phelan, CA 92329-0066
Phone: (760) 868-3320
<http://www.cart66pf.org/>

The National Historic Route 66 Federation offers technical and sometimes financial assistance to Route 66 communities and organizations that are seeking to preserve their history. The Federation is always willing to help publicize events and activities along the road, and its popular newsletter, a glossy magazine called The Federation News, reports on historic places and efforts to preserve them. It also serves as a clearinghouse for information on grants and preservation programs.

National Historic Route 66 Federation

David Knudson, executive director
P.O. Box 1848, Dept. WS
Lake Arrowhead, CA 92352-1848
Phone: (909) 336-6131
FAX: (909) 336-1039

Other helpful organizations

The National Center for Small Communities offers assistance in developing economic plans and revitalizing small towns through historic preservation, tourism and promotion of cultural resources.

National Center for Small Communities

444 N. Capitol Street, NW, Suite 397
Washington, DC 20001-1202
Phone: (202) 624-3550
Fax: (202) 624-3554
<http://www.smallcommunities.org/>

The Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office offers technical assistance, grant information and help nominating properties to the National Register of Historic Places. Melvena Heisch, deputy state historic preservation officer, can be reached by e-mail at mheisch@ok-history.mus.ok.us or by phone at (405) 522-4484. Jim Gabbert, architectural historian and National Register and survey coordinator for SHPO, can be reached by e-mail at jgabbert@ok-history.mus.ok.us or by phone at (405) 522-4478.

Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office
2704 Villa Prom, Shepherd Mall
Oklahoma City, OK 73107
(405) 521-6249
FAX (405) 947-2918
<http://www.ok-history.mus.ok.us/shpo/shpom.htm>

The Oklahoma Main Street Program, administered through the Department of Commerce, can help small communities promote tourism and trade in downtown areas.

Oklahoma Main Street Program
Department of Commerce
P.O. Box 26980
Oklahoma City, OK 73126-0980
Phone: (405) 815-5171
Fax: (405) 815-5234
<http://www.odoc.state.ok.us/mainstreet/>

Preservation Oklahoma, Inc. is a statewide nonprofit historic preservation organization that offers a variety of programs to help with advocacy, education and other aspects of historic preservation.

Preservation Oklahoma
120 N. Robinson, Suite 1408
Oklahoma City, OK 73102
(405) 232-5747

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is a nationwide nonprofit organization that offers a wide variety of services to help entities with historic preservation projects. The National Trust is a good starting point for finding grants, technical assistance, help with National Register applications or other support.

National Trust for Historic Preservation
1785 Massachusetts Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20036-2117
(800) 944-6847
<http://www.nationaltrust.org/>

The Oklahoma Film and Music Office can help put picturesque areas of the state in touch with filmmakers who are looking for locations to shoot scenes for movies. A collection of photos of other film locations — including two with direct ties to Route 66 — can be found online at:
<http://oklahomafilm.org/DesktopModules/ViewAlbumPhotos.aspx?AlbumID=8&mid=53>

Oklahoma Film and Music Office
Toll Free: (800) 766-FILM
In State: (405) 522-6760
Fax: (405) 522-0656

Information about grants, tax incentives and other assistance

The Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department and the Oklahoma Arts Council offer grants for projects to boost tourism in Oklahoma communities. Visit <http://beta.travelok.com/industry/grant.asp> for a list of links to guidelines, requirements and application information.

The Oklahoma Museums Association has a list of links to possible grant sources on its Web site; visit http://www.okmuseums.org/reso_gran.html for more information.

The Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program, administered through the National Park Service, offers cost-share grants, advice and technical assistance to individuals, communities and organizations that are interested in preserving historic structures on Route 66. The next grant cycle opens in January. Visit <http://www.cr.nps.gov/rt66/grnts/index.htm> for details, guidelines and application information. (Dawn Welch, owner of the Rock Café in Stroud, received a cost-share grant to refurbish her building a few years ago. If you would like to ask her questions about her experiences with the program, she can be reached at (918) 968-3990.)

Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program

National Trails System Office — Santa Fe
Michael Romero Taylor, program manager
National Park Service
P.O. Box 728
Santa Fe, New Mexico
87504-0728
IM_Rt66@nps.gov
(505) 988-6701

The Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office has a program called Certified Local Governments that could benefit Depew. Under the program, local governments that enforce historic preservation zoning ordinances can get federal matching funds to develop a local preservation program. For detailed information, contact Glen Vaughn-Roberson at gvaughn-roberson@ok-history.mus.ok.us or by phone at (405) 521-6387.