



For Immediate Release
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Piatt County Museum Receives National Recognition
Collections Outreach Project Cited for Heritage Advocate Award

The Piatt County Museum has been awarded an Honorable Mention in the Heritage Advocate Award competition sponsored by Heritage Preservation and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). One of six organizations to receive this distinction, Piatt County Museum was selected based on an outstanding project that educated the public about the risks faced in the museum artifacts and collections and the importance of appropriate care to protect these treasures.

The Path to this recognition began in June, 2010, when Peg Bargon, Director of Development for the Museum, and Amanda Gleason attended a Raising the Bar Workshop in Davenport, Iowa, sponsored by Heritage Preservation and IMLS. The Museum used tips from the Workshop to develop a ***Clothesline of Barn Quilt Art***.

For the past 12 years, the Museum, has used its Annual Barn Tour as a major fundraiser and awareness booster. However, after attending the Raising the Bar Workshop, staff were inspired to use the 2010 Tour as a platform to highlight collections care issues surrounding its quilt and coverlet collection. By introducing large, painted quilt square designs to be mounted on barn exteriors as barn art, viewable by the public, paired with descriptive information in guide books and a display of the textile collection, the Museum was able to utilize this event to promote collections care for both museum and personal collections.

Area community groups, high school students, businesses and individuals created the designs and mounted the art. Quilts from personal family collections were on display throughout the Tour route. Information on the care of family quilts and artifacts was provided, as well.

Using Workshop discussions on social media and garnering publicity as a model, the Museum combined its news coverage with its fundraising initiative. Promoting the event through Facebook and touting the new community art feature in several local and regional pre- and post-event news articles resulted in a large response from the community. The Museum hopes to increase the number of sites with quilt art on display and is currently working to incorporate it with area tourism efforts.

“The two award winners and six honorable mentions came from both large cities and small towns,” said Lawrence Reger, President of Heritage Preservation. “In every case, their commitment to their collections and enthusiasm for involving their communities will serve as an inspiration to other museums and libraries across the nation.”

“The Clothesline of Barn Quilt Art was not only a great fundraising supplement to our annual Barn Tour but it gave us the opportunity to educate the public about the importance of providing the best care to protect and preserve their family treasures and our Museum artifacts,” said Bargon. **“Receiving national recognition through this award reinforces we are on the right track with our efforts.”**

The Heritage Advocate Awards are part of *Connecting to Collections: A Call to Action*, a multi-faceted national initiative of the IMLS. Museums, libraries and archives in the Mid-Atlantic and in the Midwest were invited to attend workshops at which experts worked with participants on ideas for media relations, public outreach and fund-raising on behalf of collections care. Public fascination with conservation can be an untapped resource; the goal of the workshops was to demonstrate how to use conservation issues to broaden funding and public appeal. In order to encourage participants to put what they learned into action, all were encouraged to conduct a project at their home institution, with the most successful receiving this award. First place was awarded to the Missouri State Museum in Jefferson City, Missouri, and the Muscoot Farm in Katonah, New York.

About Heritage Preservation Heritage Preservation is a national non-profit organization dedicated to preserving the cultural, historic, and scientific heritage of the United States. By identifying risks, developing innovative programs, and providing broad public access to expert advice, Heritage Preservation assists the museums, libraries, archives, organizations, and individuals that care for our endangered heritage. To learn more, please visit www.heritagepreservation.org.

About the Institute of Museum and Library Services The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's 123,000 libraries and 17,500 museums. The Institute's mission is to create strong libraries and museums that connect people to information and ideas. The Institute works at the national level and in coordination with state and local organizations to sustain heritage, culture, and knowledge; enhance learning and innovation; and support professional development. To learn more about the Institute, please visit www.ims.gov.

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