



*NEWS From*  
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Page 1 of 5

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PANEL PRESENTATION ON LOCAL HERITAGE PRESERVATION  
STARTS SAUGATUCK-DOUGLAS HERITAGE FESTIVAL HOME TOUR

SAUGATUCK (MI), SEPT. 1, 2006 -- "Building The Future While Reflecting The Past" -- the theme of this year's Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society Heritage Festival & Home Tour -- also headlines a pre-tour Panel Presentation designed to enrich the tour experience with the rationale for and behind-the-scenes insights about the process of heritage preservation.

The presentation, intended to help tourgoers better understand and enjoy the homes they'll see on the tour starting immediately after, will take place in the Saugatuck High School auditorium from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. on Saturday, September 16. Auditorium entry and free parking are located at the School's south side, off Main and Elizabeth Streets. Easy access from Blue Star Highway via Allegan Road to Elizabeth, following high school signs, will help attendees avoid the traffic and congestion expected in town during the Baldhead Challenge run scheduled for that morning.

Designed and coordinated by DeeDee Hanson, local realtor, this non-commercial program will feature four area builders showing examples of and sharing their experiences with keeping new-home construction and old-home renovation compatible with the architectural traditions of our community. Moderating the discussion along with DeeDee Hanson will be Jim Hanson, Chair of the Saugatuck Township Planning Commission. The Panel will include: Damien and Randy

Jarzemowski of Jarzemowski Builders, Inc.; Roger Marcy of Roger Marcy Builders LLC; Mark Schrock of Darpel & Associates Builders, Inc.; and Jeff Spangler of Lake Home Builders.

The discussion also will look at the importance of keeping revitalization of existing commercial areas aligned with the residential community. Jim Hanson notes "towns like Saugatuck and Douglas are great models, having embraced such concepts as the adaptive reuse of old buildings, the infill of appropriately styled and scaled new buildings into the streetscape, and the replacement of old buildings with new ones that share the same characteristics as the ones that are being replaced." He points out that our Joint Comprehensive Plan of 2005 (covering both cities and Saugatuck Township) speaks of "retaining and enhancing the quiet, scenic and small town/rural character" of our area. To meet that goal, it encourages land uses and densities consistent with a character, architectural and site design that complements rather than detracts from existing development, and urges the preservation and restoration of historic structures.

Citing Douglas as an example, he says "we've long had successful businesses catering to local and tourist traffic along Center Street, but in the last decade it was the infill of empty lots along the south side (notably the mirror-image buildings and the expansion of Douglas Dinette into today's Everyday People restaurant) that brought the central block between Spring and Main the kind of density that creates the feel of a real downtown. Our panel presentation will talk about how this happened, and how the infill buildings reflect existing cornices, window lines and scale to create a seamless, integrated whole. Although these buildings were new, they restored a true small-town streetscape."

Hanson quotes contemporary writer about town development, Peter Calthorpe, who in his book The Next American Metropolis writes "The center of the traditional town integrated commercial, recreational and civic life. It was what made a town a town. Main Street was a strollable connector between these pieces. That same integration is possible today, but not

common". Reflecting on Calthorpe's view, Hanson adds "we are extremely fortunate to have real downtowns in both of our communities that provide this kind of integration. As a result, we have little of the usual 'edge city' retail that has weakened many older downtowns. It's what makes our downtowns both viable as centers for local activity -- with stores, libraries, post office and recreational areas -- and highly attractive as destinations for tourists."

Residentially, DeeDee Hanson observes, "we're blessed with a mix of residential buildings that dates back to the mid-1800s. People here naturally want their houses to be nice and to provide the functionality they need, but in recent years, they also have become more aware that what they build and remodel needs to fit into our traditional built environment. Their willingness to spend the money necessary to preserve historic values in their houses is something fairly new in America...and we're on the leading edge of that trend."

Eight homes included in this years Festival Homes Tour include charmingly reconstructed cottages, contemporary adaptations of the "Arts & Crafts" and Colonial Revival styles characterizing the early 1900s, plus historic barns converted for modern living...all done with respect for this area's traditions of style, scale, materials and compatibility with their surroundings. With locations ranging from a secluded, unpaved country lane north of Saugatuck to South Union Street in Douglas, the tour is structured for self-driven / start-anywhere / enjoy-at-your-own-pace visits, with free parking, docents and information sheets at each home.

The tour includes a free refreshment stop at Woodland Realty, 2987 Blue Star Hwy at the southern edge of Douglas, featuring an outdoor display of a rare 26-ft. metal-hulled Francis Lifeboat, ca. 1860. The boat was abandoned at Saugatuck Lighthouse in the 1930s, but its remains were kept in storage for decades until Historical Society volunteers recently restored it as one of only two remaining along the Great Lakes.

Tour admission price is \$20 for adults, \$10 for ages 4-16, with proceeds benefiting the Society's all-volunteer operation and programs. Pre-tour Panel Presentation admission is included with the Homes Tour ticket, or \$5 for presentation only. Tour tickets are available in advance at The French Cottage, 33 Center Street, Douglas, and in Saugatuck at Uncommon Grounds coffee shop, 127 Hoffman Street and the Historical Society Museum, 735 Park Street (at Mt. Baldhead Park). On tour day tickets also will be offered at the Introductory Panel Presentation, all tour home sites, and Woodland Realty.

An all-new exhibition at the Historical Society's award-winning Museum will extend the visitor's understanding and appreciation of the area's architectural heritage. "Raising The Roof: The Second Story" portrays the 175-year evolution of styles characterizing this area's built environment. Having escaped the devastating fires that leveled many Lake Michigan area frontier towns including Chicago in the mid-to-late 1880s, Saugatuck and Douglas provide a rare opportunity to observe both pre- and post-Civil War architecture, much of which still remains in residential or commercial service. A 178-page commemorative book, titled to match the exhibit and expanding upon its presentation, chronicles the founding and development of Saugatuck and Douglas -- along with their predecessor lumber-mill town of Singapore, now lost beneath sand dunes near the mouth of the Kalamazoo River -- richly illustrated with archive photographs, drawings and maps.

The Museum's location across the river from downtown Saugatuck features a picturesque outdoor garden overlooking the Saugatuck harbor, shops and residential background, with directional views enhanced by informative plaques. Museum admission and parking are free, with exhibit and shop open from 11 a.m to 5 p.m. on Festival day and Noon to 4 p.m. both Friday before and Sunday after.

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PHOTO FOLLOWS

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Jim Hanson and DeeDee Hanson review photos planned for their Heritage Festival Panel Presentation.