



NEWS From
Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society
P.O. Box 617, Douglas, Michigan 49406-0617

Information Contacts:

Page 1 of 3

Kristin Gebben
(269) 857-5751
kgebben@yahoo.com

Judy Anthrop
(269) 857-1183
anthropjt@wmol.com

HISTORICAL SOCIETY FUNDRAISING PROGRESS SIGN
MOUNTED IN FRONT OF "OLD SCHOOL HOUSE" IN DOUGLAS

SAUGATUCK, MAY 30, 2006 -- An eight-foot tall "thermometer" sign has been mounted on the front lawn of the Douglas-Union School (a.k.a. "The Old School House") to display the progress of a fundraising campaign by the Saugatuck Douglas Historical Society to buy, preserve and rededicate the building as a unique new Discovery Center, in a cooperative effort with the area's District Library and Public Schools known as "The Old School House Project". The sign also serves as a prominent reminder of the urgent need for community support of this important project.

Targeting a purchase option agreement to be exercised in September of this year, the Society already has received a matching grant for \$425,000 and raised \$150,000 in donations toward matching it. The Society projects a total fundraising goal of \$1,110,000 to provide for renovation and on-going operation in addition to purchase, and urges area businesses and residents to contribute toward the preservation of this distinctive community asset.

Plans envision a community resource where children and adults alike can explore the area's history, culture, ecology and architecture through recreational activities, educational programs, special events and access to a unique archive of objects, photos and records.

The Discovery Center also is expected to enhance the area's destination appeal in the growing heritage tourism industry. The Old School House, a prominent historic landmark standing since 1866, served as a public school until 1957 and has many alumni among current area residents.

Listed on both the Michigan and National Register, it is one of the oldest multi-classroom school buildings in Michigan and considered one of the finest examples of 19th century school architecture in America.

The sign was created by Saugatuck High School junior student Will Gibbons in an art class competition guided by teacher Christa Wise.

A series of fun events promoting broader public support is planned for coming months, including a June 5 party at the Blue Moon restaurant in Douglas, a mid-June "Show & Tell" at the Old Schoolhouse to walk the site and view Discovery Center plans, plus a public Town Meeting on July 12 (7:00pm, Saugatuck High School auditorium theater) to provide more background and details. "Once In A Blue Moon" tickets, \$50/person, can be purchased at Blue Moon, Saugatuck-Douglas Library, Saugatuck-Douglas Schools Superintendent's Office or by contacting 857-2904. For more information about the Old School House Project, call Kristin Gebben, S/DHS Development Director, at (269) 857-5751.

###

PHOTO AND CAPTION FOLLOW

(This image is for review only -- a jpeg version is attached for print reproduction.)



Saugatuck/Douglas Historical Society volunteers (l to r) Al Lyon, John Peters and Tom Anthrop relax after installing the fundraising progress sign on the Old School House lawn.

###