

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PRESERVATION OF THE STANDISH HISTORICAL DEPOT
Researched and compiled by Brenda Matt

February 19, 1991—The Michigan Central Railroad Standish Depot was placed on the national Registry of Historic Places .

2002—The Economic Development Committee had been actively seeking a developer for the property on the corner of 61 and 23, which contained the depot and the old Fletcher Gas Station.

2002—A group of concerned citizens interested in preserving the depot began to meet and make plans to save the depot. The developer who had been working with the EDC had been extending agreements and stalling for some time. His plans did not include preserving the depot. The EDC became aware of the newly formed group and ended their involvement with the developer at their October meeting. The EDC then began working with the Depot Preservation Committee.

2002—The Depot Preservation Committee was invited to join the Arenac County Historical Society. A group that had formed previously to build a community center dissolved and they had some funds they needed to pass on to another non-profit. This money was donated to the ACHS for the Depot Preservation. Brenda Matt was the chairman of the Depot Committee and became the representative from the depot to join the ACHS and represent the depot committee.

December 10th, 2002—The Depot Committee held a presentation at the Arts Council to present their plans to the community. The presentation “LIGHT HOUSES ALONG THE RIVERS OF STEEL—REFLECTIONS OF MICHIGAN TRAIN DEPOTS” was presented by preservation architects Ron Campbell and Jackie Hoist.

2003—Several articles are written and appear in the Arenac County Independent and the Bay City Times which publicized the preservation efforts.

2003—Promotional brochure was produced and in Nov. the first “Diamond & Denim depot dinner was held at the VFW Hall in Standish. The profit for this dinner was over \$ 11,000.00 In addition a matching grant from the Lutheran Thrivent organization was awarded for \$ 800.00. The use of the hall was donated by the VFW.

The caboose was donated by Charles Pinkerton III of the Straits Corporation, through the efforts of Mark Winslow, employee of Straits and member of the preservation committee.

Linda Barnes of the EDC continued working on an MDOT Enhancement Grant for the preservation of the building and site.

2004—By January of 2004 the committee had raised a total of \$ 16,328.00.

January 6, 2004. A letter was written to the Dow Foundation (Thanks to Fr. Edward and Jackie Bennett and their connections to Herbert Doan, the president of the foundation) requesting \$ 200,000.00 from them. On April 16, 2004 we received a letter announcing the grant award of \$ 200,000.00.

May 2004—The Hobo Dinner was held at the VFW who donated the use of their facility. Our profit was \$ 2,109.00. Highlight of the evening was when Debbie Morgan on behalf of the Standish Area Chamber of Commerce presented a donation for \$ 5,000.00

EDC begins working on the Authority agreement which all government entities in Arenac County would be invited to join. The Authority would own and govern the operation of the depot.

2004—The Arenac County Board of Commissioners acquired the Fletcher Oil property through tax reversion. The cost paid by Arenac County was \$ 100,000.00. This was then owned by Arenac County and given to the Authority after it was formed.

August, 2004—The Standish Downtown Development Authority donated \$ 5,000.00 to this project. The Disabled Veterans of America sold their building and through the leadership of Carl Stodolak donated \$ 50,000.00 in memory of the soldiers who departed from Arenac County to serve their country from this railroad station.

The second annual Diamonds and Denim Dinner was held and profited slightly over \$ 11,000.00

2005--Austin and Nancy Buttrick of Forward Corporation donate \$ 5,000.00 to help with the cleanup of the Fletcher property.

An auction was held at the Fletcher property before demolition and proceeds were over \$ 3,000.00

The depot committee met with architect John Meyer to finalize plans before submitting its grant to MDOT. The appraisal, environmental assessment, final survey, City and MDOT requirements are prerequisites for submitting the grant application. Linda Barnes of the EDC will submit the grant application.

Several community groups have generously donated to the Depot Preservation throughout its organization. These include the Arenac County Fund, The Standish Lions Club, and The Standish Kiwanis Club. The citizens of Arenac County have been very generous in supporting fundraising efforts at the depot. The bandstand project alone raised over \$ 38,000.00 which built the bandstand using volunteer labor. Many businesses have also contributed. The government entities in Arenac County which belong to the Authority pay .50 per capita per year to support the ongoing operations of the depot.

February 2006-- The organizational meeting for the Arenac Heritage Route Authority was held at the depot. Forming the authority was necessary step in the finalization of our MDOT Enhancement Grant for \$ 756,000.00

March, 2006—The Arenac County Heritage Route Authority was formed which was a necessary step in the finalization of our MDOT Enhancement Grant for \$ 756,000.

The depot was then purchased, the Fletcher site given to the Authority by the Board of Commissioners, the MDOT Grant was awarded and construction and renovations began in the fall of 2006.