

The Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln and *Springfield Business Journal* present
2021 SPRINGFIELD PRESERVATION AWARDS

By Catherine O'Connor

JOIN US FOR THIS EVENT AT BICENTENNIAL PLAZA

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

5 P.M.

COCKTAILS AND HORS D'OEUVRES

6 P.M.

AWARDS CEREMONY

Admission:

Guests are asked to make a donation to
 Historic Preservation Fund, CFLL.

RSVP to 217-679-7806 or
info@springfieldbusinessjournal.com

The reception will benefit the Historic Preservation Fund of the Community Foundation, which will announce the recipient of the group's 2021 grant. The CFLL Historic Preservation Fund has grown steadily since it began in 2008, and as the available fund balance grows, it allows for larger grants to local organizations. A total of \$53,000 has been awarded to various organizations since 2012.

Recent recipients include:

- 2012** – Downtown Springfield, Inc. received \$4,000 for a way-finding system to link historic sites.
- 2013** – The Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce Foundation received \$4,000 for planning the Jackson Street Corridor project.
- 2014** – Springfield Art Association received \$4,000 for

reproduction of 1850s wallpaper at Edwards Place.

- 2015** – Elijah Iles House Foundation received \$6,000 to restore the porch of the Strawbridge-Shepherd House.
- 2016** – Enos Park Development received \$7,000 to help with the renovation of 711 Enos, a mixed-use turn of the century building in danger of demolition.
- 2017** – Vachel Lindsay Foundation received \$7,500 for exterior painting and repair of the historic Vachel Lindsay Home to ensure the longevity of the historic structure.
- 2018** – Central 3 Community First Project, Inc. received \$6,500 to replace and stabilize portions of the First Black Firehouse's first floor, located at 1310 E. Adams St. In addition, Kidzeum received \$1,000 to restore the museum's interior historic wall back to its original look.
- 2019** – Oak Ridge Cemetery Foundation received

- \$5,500 to reinstall Oak Ridge Cemetery's 1900s-era iron archway sign, originally located at the cemetery entrance on First Street, to in front of the existing bell tower and east of the Lincoln Receiving Vault. The James Project was awarded \$2,000 to restore a wooden door and entryway to a 100-plus year old home in Hawthorne Place.
- 2020** – Central 3 Community First Project, Inc. received \$2,500 for the Shine a Light project, which offers organized tours and informational materials for three historic African American sites on Springfield's near east side. Also, the Springfield and Central Illinois African American History Museum was awarded \$2,500 to support the museum's general operations, as well as programs and projects on African American history.

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Educational Efforts That Advance the Preservation and Understanding of Our Historic Heritage

Anthony Rubano, state deputy historic preservation officer

Anthony Rubano was selected based on more than two decades of work with the state's Historic Preservation Agency and for leading Pied Piper historic downtown architectural tours for many years. Pursuing a lifelong interest, Rubano earned a master of architecture degree from University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign with a specialization in history and preservation.

In the Chicago area, Rubano has been involved in noteworthy projects like the transformation of the elaborate Chicago Athletic Association on Michigan Avenue into a hotel using federal historic tax credits and assisting Neighborhood Housing Services of Chicago with a National Register of Historic Places designation for its historic Greystone rowhouses. In Springfield, Rubano is credited for his leadership in the restoration of Union Station on Madison Avenue, a project that restored a significant element of the city skyline with a faithful reconstruction of the huge clock tower that had been removed in the 1940s.

According to Rubano, each of us writes ourselves into history by how we improve, change, experience – and yes, even destroy – our communities.

“Each of our communities is a continually evolving collage,



Anthony Rubano leads an architectural walking tour with a stop at Temple B'Rith Shalom.

shaped over many decades by people with diverse experiences and contributions that shape the sense of place in its buildings, neighborhoods and heritage,” he said. “In my opinion, connecting to our built environment, understanding, enhancing and sustaining that sense of place, are the ultimate goals of historic preservation.”

Special thanks to the Springfield Historic Sites Commission for serving as this year's awards jury.

Preservation Effort Involving a Nonprofit Organization

Inner City Mission

The transitional housing provider is being recognized for the renovation of a Lincoln-era house located at 726 N. Seventh St., which now houses its operations and finance offices. ICM purchased the property in 1991 and initially used it as a clothing distribution center before recently converting it to office space, following an extensive renovation. Caleb Payne, director of community engagement at ICM, said 20 different churches, businesses and scores of construction professionals and other volunteers donated labor and materials to reduce the project costs from the initial estimate of \$130,000 down to \$70,000.

Using the one-story house as a satellite office has freed up residential living space and reduced programming disruptions at ICM's main site, which provides housing in former convent buildings, now converted to apartments, that date back to the 1960s.



Inner City Mission completed an extensive renovation of one of the few remaining Lincoln-era houses in Springfield and now utilizes it as administrative offices.

726 N. Seventh St. was originally built as a shotgun house, a popular design following the Civil War that featured two rooms, one in front of other, usually 15-18 feet wide. In the early 1900s, four rooms and a bathroom were added to the house.

Neighborhood Preservation Efforts

Springfield NAACP Floyd Mansberger, Fever River Research

Archaeologist Floyd Mansberger is in the final stages of a survey of historic properties throughout Springfield's east side that has resulted the nomination of 37 significant African American heritage sites to the city's Landmarks list.

The Springfield NAACP collaborated in the efforts to declare the 1908 Springfield Race Riot site, which has been excavated and documented, as the 30th addition to the African American Civil Rights Network. In addition, preservation and display of artifacts from the race riot and work to declare the site a national historic memorial and incorporate it into the National Park Service is underway. An exhibit, which will be a part of the new Springfield-Sangamon County Transportation center, is planned as well.



View of excavations of House C nearing completion, with an interpretive sign in the foreground. PHOTO COURTESY OF FEVER RIVER RESEARCH

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Private Effort for the Preservation of an Historic Structure or Structures in Residential Use

**Brick City Apartments, LLC
Seth and Ivy Molen**

Seth and Ivy Molen, previous recipients of this award, have been selected this time for their property located downtown at 627 E. Adams. According to Ivy Molen, the portion of the three-story building dedicated to the apartments is nearly 4,000 square feet, comprising four apartment units on the second and third floors, which are already leased. In addition, there is retail and storage space on the ground floor, which is now occupied by Piper + Arrows Boutique.

“We have done similar remodels on older buildings as our winter project for the last 10 years,” Ivy Molen said. In that time, they have brought more 40 living units onto the market. “Turning vacant, uninhabitable buildings into modern, clean apartments is one of our specialties.”

In terms of challenges the Molens have encountered, they find that the first step in renovating an older building with years of deferred maintenance is making the building weathertight and structurally sound. After that, it can be difficult to make safe, modern and functional ingress/egress into existing buildings. Finally, fitting all the



After completely gutting and renovating 627 E. Adams, the commercial space on the lower level is now leased to Piper + Arrows Boutique.

modern conveniences tenants expect into smaller, older spaces can be a challenge.

They recommend that owners work on projects incrementally and use their own money. “Being strapped with debt prohibits freedom and creativity. Potential developers should really start on smaller projects they can afford to fail at, to make sure they are even interested in pursuing a larger project,” Molen said.

Private Effort for the Preservation of an Historic Structure for Commercial Use

**Route History
Dr. Gina Lathan, Dr. Stacy Grundy and Kenneth Lockhart**

Route History, 737 E. Cook St., opened in February 2019 with the goal of serving as a space to experience and learn about the tragedy, resilience and excellence of Black people along Historic Route 66 and in the city of Springfield. The project entails efforts to research and display the historical significance of the Black American experience with artifacts and images that reveal the untold story of four black historic figures who played a significant role in Springfield history.

Through research at the Smithsonian Institution, Gundy and Lathan, who are community health professionals, learned about places in Springfield that had been included in *The Green Book*, a Jim Crow-era directory that alerted travelers to Black-friendly establishments. In partnership with advocacy group Landmarks Illinois, Route History will play a role in the 100-year anniversary of Route 66 in 2026.

The Route History Four Heroes signage display honors four

Black entrepreneurs and businessmen, Thomas Jefferson Houston, Jameson Jenkins, William Donnegan and Scott Burton, whose lives were lost in the 1908 Race Riot. According to Lathan, “We are working to bring awareness to the impact of the riot that halted livelihood opportunities and the ability to pass on generational wealth for many of our families.”

After months of closure due to COVID, Route History reopened its facility in July, a former 1930s Texaco station, offering educational tours where visitors learn about often overlooked community history. “People are really shocked about how much history they were unaware of, and the magnitude of the impact that Black people have made,” Lathan said.



Korbun King, an artist and Springfield native, painted a mural on the east side of the building as part of renovations that took place before Route History reopened in July.

PHOTO BY: NORMA ZUNIGA

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Preservation Effort Involving a Public Facility

State of Illinois, multiple projects: Old State Capitol, 315 S. Sixth St., Illinois State Armory, Marine Bank building

The Historic Sites Commission recognizes the state of Illinois for its efforts to undertake rehabilitation of the Illinois State Armory, structural repair and restoration of the Old State Capitol dome, renovation and adaptive reuse of the former Journal-Register newspaper office and the historic Chase/Marine Bank building.

Justin Blandford, Illinois Department of Natural Resources superintendent of state historic sites in Springfield, has nearly two decades of experience in historic preservation. Leading the recent efforts to restore both the historic interior and exterior of the Old State Capitol dome presented significant challenges and opportunities for programmatic innovations, according to Blandford.

"It's been very exciting. Until the massive scaffold was erected and experts including architect Bruce Ferry, general contractor R.D. Lawrence and IDNR leadership were able to visually inspect the dome at close range, which no one has been able to do for decades, we couldn't know what we'd be dealing with in terms of repair," explained Blandford. In addition, the safety aspects of working at considerable heights, compounded by the pandemic health concerns for staff, construction workers and future visitors, required innovation.

Facing more than a year of interruption in its public historic site operations provided Blandford's team an opportunity to create powerful new ways to communicate history through alternate activities such as the new Walk, Hike and Bike History program that promotes themed community engagement activities, as well as a newly designed OSC artifact gallery and visitor education video.

The project cost is estimated at \$1.65 million, with completion by late fall.

Michael Pittman, deputy director at the Illinois Central Management Services Bureau of Property Management, has been in charge of the renovation of the former State Journal-Register office building, which has been owned by the state since the 1990s. The project involved both exterior and interior upgrades that will add 8,300 square feet to the nearly 40,000 square feet of current office space that houses 80 CMS administrative staff.

Architect Matt Wolfe of CMS noted that the project includes minor repairs to the historic exterior terra cotta parapets and interior refurbishing of areas including windows, woodwork and transoms. Springfield-based Allied Design Consultants worked with Peoria-based general contractor P.J. Hoerr Construction on the \$2.3 million project, scheduled for completion in December 2021.

In addition to Pittman and Wolfe, Andrea Aggertt, architect of



Restoration of both the interior and exterior of the Old State Capitol dome is projected to be complete by late fall.

the Capitol, has been involved in planning for redevelopment of the historic State Armory, a 1930s Works Progress Administration civic auditorium that was used for many years by the Illinois State Police until the agency moved to the vacated Franklin Life building in 2010. Currently in the early design phase, the \$122 million renovation is projected to be completed in 2024, funded through the state's ReBuild Illinois program.

Sharon Garchitorena, office of the Illinois Treasurer, has been involved in the adaptive reuse of the former Chase Bank building, which once housed the historic Marine Bank, at 1 E. Old State Capitol Plaza. The original Springfield Marine Bank on that site was chartered in 1851 as Springfield Marine & Fire Insurance Co., according to the Sangamon County Historical Society, and Abraham Lincoln banked there. A record of his account remains on display in the lobby of Chase's new location across the street, and Chase donated its previous Springfield headquarters to the state of Illinois.

Pittman noted that the state has taken a proactive approach in managing its real estate portfolio, improving its buildings downtown to meet the needs of the 21st century, both to benefit taxpayers and to be a good neighbor in Springfield.