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Kings Valley Barn on Endangered Places List



May 24, 2011

By Heather Turner

KINGS VALLEY, Ore. -- The Historical Preservation League of Oregon (HPLO) recently listed the state's ten most-endangered places.

That list includes a few buildings in Western Oregon, including a baseball stadium, a theater and two barns. One of which has been standing for more than a century.

The Watson-Price Barn in Kings Valley is truly unique. It was built in 1848.

Back then, we didn't have power tools like we do now, so all of the original woodwork was hand-built, or as it's properly called, hand-hewn.

Surprisingly, that barn is still standing after 163 years of wear and tear.

"Not a lot of people realize that we have agricultural history still standing, still in use from 1848," said Brandon Spencer-Hartle, HPLO field programs manager.

It's battled the elements longer than almost any other Oregon property and today faces structural issues.

But instead of tearing it down, Michael Moore wants to restore the barn that's been in his family since the turn of the 20th century.

"I think Oregon, they take pride in being a pioneer state whatnot, this is a pioneer homestead and probably one of the few that's pretty much in tact the way it was back then," said Michael Moore, Watson-Price Barn owner.

Besides its age, what sets the barn apart from others you might see in rural areas is how it was built.

"When you look inside the barn, what you see is wooden trunnels which translates to tree nails that are hand crafted and used to support this structure," said Spencer-Hartle.

"This Watson-Price Barn is an 1848 barn with the largest hand-hewn member in the Willamette Valley and is a critical piece of the pioneer land history in Oregon," said Gina Drew, preservation advocate.

In farm country, barns are often dismissed as tumble-down relics and easily forgotten. But not here.

Now that the historic barn is on the endangered places list, the HPLO will help the owner find the tools he needs to restore it so it can continue to live on for another 160 years.

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Other buildings on the list include:
Baker City Middle School, Baker City
Josiah Burnett House, Eagle Creek
Civic Stadium, Eugene
Dr. Pierce's Barn, Cottage Grove
Egyptian Theater, Coos Bay
Ermatinger House, Oregon City
Tillamook Bay Lifesaving Station, Rockaway Beach
Petersen Rock Garden, Redmond
Kirk White Farmstead, Redmond

Photo courtesy of www.historicpreservationleague.org

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