



A well maintained farmstead in Trempealeau County

*Dedicated to preserving and enhancing the scenic character of Wisconsin's communities and countryside*



**CITIZENS FOR A  
SCENIC WISCONSIN, INC**  
**Charles Weeth, Exec. Dir.**  
122 17th St S

Scenic Wisconsin La Crosse, WI 54601-4208

NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
MILWAUKEE, WI  
PERMIT NO. 104

## SCENIC POP QUIZ

### Which US President said:

Billboards “detract from both  
the beauty and the safety of  
the routes they line”

*(Answer on Page 4)*

## NEW DIGITAL LED BILLBOARD BY NEIGHBORHOOD

The City of Greenfield has one of the more progressive sign ordinances in Wisconsin. It prohibits any new billboards or expressway signs and has limits for on premises signs in order to reduce sign clutter.

We were not only very surprised to learn that a new billboard was erected in November 2009, but that it was a 75' tall, double faced 14' x 48' digital LED billboard *and was across from a residential neighborhood!*

The neighbors, of course, were not pleased and made inquiries about how this monstrosity was erected. They believed no new billboards could be erected in their community and soon learned the awful truth: the billboard



How would you like to have this 75' tall digital LED billboard on 24/7 out your back window? It was erected on municipal land in November 2009 with no notice to the neighbors!

(Continued on page 2)



Two of the three billboards relocated at the Marquette Interchange in Milwaukee. WisDOT paid \$1.1 million just to *move* these three billboards due to the reconstruction! Billboards can delay or block highway projects, or add a significant amount to the cost. *And isn't it just lovely!*

I think that I shall never see  
a billboard lovely as a tree.  
Perhaps, unless the billboards  
fall, I'll never see a tree at  
all. - **Ogden Nash**



Two billboards that were removed for highway construction by US Hwy 41 and State Hwy 21 outside of Oshkosh. Usually a static 14' x 48' billboard will cost \$30-70,000 to remove but it can be higher depending on the age, height, location, etc. The compensation for these two signs is being litigated, which can cost as much or more in administrative and legal costs!

## Executive Director's Report

By *Charley Weeth, Executive Director*

Every few weeks a CSW Member calls or emails about a billboard. It is most often about a new billboard that was just erected; or an existing billboard was improved; or an old sign that is falling apart; or one that has an obsolete message or has had no message for quite some time.

We make inquiries of the State and local officials and usually find out the same things every time:

- The laws allows it
- They didn't know about it
- They know about it and have taken action, it just takes time to correct
- The issue is in litigation

Unfortunately these answers are frustrating for all who believe in the importance of our scenic Wisconsin. We all would like the billboard blight stopped and reduced, but it won't happen just because we wish it to be.

Fighting the billboard bullies is a marathon not a sprint. We can and will only be successful if the majority who feel as we do join us and speak up to the Legislators and other elected officials, over and over again.

### SCENIC PRESENTATION

Our presentation "Why are you in Wisconsin?" is available for groups of all sizes. It details why maintaining scenic integrity is so important to our beautiful State.

### NEW DIGITAL LED BILLBOARD BY NEIGHBORHOOD (Cont'd)

(Continued from page 1)

companies will keep pushing for what is in their best interests and as one neighbor said "to *hell* with the way a community looks"!

The best we can tell, a nearby static billboard adjacent to I-894 was slated for removal due to reconstruction of the nearby interchange. This sign had a permanent easement so it was going to be both expensive and time consuming to remove.

In order to expedite the removal of this sign, WisDOT brokered a deal between the billboard company and the City. The static billboard up the road plus one other would be removed in exchange for the new digital LED billboard that would be erected behind

the library, police station, fire station and next to the municipal shop. The City would also earn \$2,000 a month (but probably lose more due to lowered property values) and could schedule messages on the new billboard.

In short order, the City approved a "waiver" to their own sign ordinance with no notice to the neighbors or a community wide public discussion.

CSW believes this new digital LED billboard is not in compliance with the Bonus Act of 1958 and the Highway Beautification Act (HBA) of 1965.

We are doing everything we can with our limited resources to assist the residents preserve their neighborhood and help other neighborhoods avoid similar scenic degradation.



# Citizens for a Scenic Wisconsin, Inc.

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## Wisconsin Barns

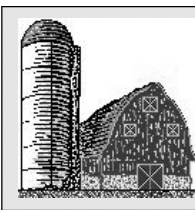
Wisconsin's iconic barns have come to represent a way of life defined by family, a connection to the land, ingenuity, and hard work. Experience the state's beauty and rich history through these varied and fascinating structures, from the 1840s log barns to grand, arch-roofed dairy barns.

Writer *Nancy Schumm-Burgess* and photographer *Ernest J. Schweit* set out on a two-year quest to document Wisconsin's historic barns, presented in 107 photographs complimented by fascinating details about some of the state's most storied structures.

Forward by *Chuck Law, Ph.D.* of the UW Extension Barns Preservation Program.



**\$20.00 each**  
*Includes domestic postage*



**Wisconsin Barns** ordered from CSW are signed by the author!  
**1 book FREE with a \$100+ Citizens for a Scenic Wisconsin membership!**  
*Please allow 2-4 weeks for delivery.*  
***Proceeds earmarked for barn preservation!***

<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Yes! I/We would like to join and support Citizens for a Scenic Wisconsin!!</b>		<b>Dues</b> \$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> \$35 Member	<input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Organization/Corporation	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Scenic Steward
<input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Scenic Leader	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000 Scenic Visionary	<input type="checkbox"/> \$_____ Scenic Benefactor
Yes! I/We would also like to order _____ copies of <b>Wisconsin Barns</b> @ \$20.00 per book.		<b>Books</b> \$ _____
		<b>TOTAL</b> \$ _____

Name		Spouse/Significant other	
Company/Organization		Title	
Address		Phone/Fax	
City, ST ZIP		Email (for confirmation and occasional alerts)	

Membership is open to any person or organization that subscribes to the purposes of Citizens for a Scenic Wisconsin  
We are a 501(c)3 non-profit organization and contributions are tax deductible.  New  Renewal

Check  Credit Card     Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

**JOIN CITIZENS FOR A SCENIC WISCONSIN**  
*And help us preserve and protect the scenic icons of rural Wisconsin!*



# Small town seeks help to preserve historic Chase Stone Barn

By **Nancy Schumm-Burgess** author of the pictorial book *Wisconsin Barns*

The Town of Chase (Oconto County) is reaching far and wide for help to preserve a cornerstone of Wisconsin's history. The Chase Stone Barn is on the State and National Register of Historic Places because it is one of the last surviving all-fieldstone barns in the country. Once restored it will be part of a historic park and will be used as a venue for events, including educational workshops for historic preservation, and will also include a museum inside the stable area.

The town needs to raise a total of \$430,000 for the restorations of the barn. In 2009, the town received a challenge grant from the Jeffris Family Foundation of Janesville. If they can raise \$287,000 by June 30, 2012, then the Foundation will grant the remaining \$143,000 to reach their goal. If they fall short, then the grant will be rescinded.

The story of the Stone Barn began in 1867 when Daniel Krause emigrated to the U.S. from Germany to settle in the Town of Chase. Settlement was happening rapidly as farmers sought newly cleared, rich farm land which was being sold dirt cheap.

In 1876 Daniel Krause Jr. married and took over running his father's farm. Daniel and his wife had nine children. They were a very hard working and innovative family who, in addition to farming, owned and operated a saw mill in nearby Sobieski and co-owned Krause and Krause Sales and Service;

a farm implement dealership. They were also great hunters and loggers and made their own tasty maple syrup.

In 1903, Krause enlisted the help of a local stonemason, Wilhelm Mensenkamp, to use local fieldstones to design a barn that would withstand the test of time. With unusual flair and in a style that harkens back to the great granaries of Europe, a stone barn like no other was erected. It was so magnificent that it ultimately became an icon on Wisconsin's scenic landscape.

Krause sold his farm in 1920, and between that year and 1954, there were 11 additional owners of the barn including one of the most famous physician/surgeons in Wisconsin at that time, Dr. John R Minahan.



The Stone Barn was nearly lost in the early 1990's when a small tornado took off part of its roof and destroyed the last remaining structures on the farm. Fortunately, owner's Casey and Stanley Frysh hired the Building Doctor to repair the damage and pull back in the massive 100 ft long by 2 ft thick stone wall that was leaning outward over a foot.

With the efforts of the Pulaski Area Historical Society, the barn was placed on the State and National Register of



Historic Places in 2000. The barn was later purchased by a local developer who, in 2007, agreed to sell the barn to the Town of Chase so they could protect it because he said it was the right thing to do.

The Chase Stone Barn is a link to Wisconsin's past which is fast disappearing. It is one of only 550 farms remaining in Oconto County of the original 3,300. Its strength and perseverance to survive represents the hard working men and women that helped build this country.

Like Daniel Krause, the Town of Chase has a dream - to restore and preserve the stone barn and build around it a historic park that will stand as a legacy to one man's vision and a testament to Wisconsin's rich history so that people everywhere can enjoy it for generations to come.

The rural Town of Chase would appreciate your help to make this historic park a reality. To make a tax-deductible donation, please make your check payable to the Town of Chase and memo Stone Barn Park Fund.

Mail to:

Jeanne Wroblewski, Town Clerk  
7793 County Hwy S  
Sobieski, WI 54171

For more information and photos, please visit [www.townofchase.org](http://www.townofchase.org).



## Wisconsin Barns & Scenery

By *Chuck Law*, Founder and Coordinator of UW-Extension's Barn Preservation Program

The fall issue of the CSW Newsletter featured a number of articles and references to the growing partnership with UW-Extension in helping preserve and protect Wisconsin's most valued barns. Much has happened since that newsletter was published.

First, let me recap what's happened since UW-Extension and CSW partnered to offer a barn tour last fall in Portage County. Organizers were so enthusiastic about their barns and concerned about how fast they were disappearing that they proposed to a small group of individuals that they photograph every barn in the county as a record of the buildings that were still standing.

After soliciting the help of 23 volunteers, most of them artists, farmers or members of the Portage County Historical Society, it took less than three months to photograph 1,516 different structures. With this database now on file, the historical society plans to make the photographs available for noncommercial use to the public.

A steering committee has begun sorting through the photographs, looking for the most historic and unique structures. The group plans to showcase the barns on a website and create a DVD containing information that groups can use for historical projects, lessons or presen-

tations. Eventually they hope to come up with a few barn sightseeing routes in the county as well.

Interest in the fall tour encouraged others in the state to undertake similar efforts. On Saturday, August 7<sup>th</sup>, a tour of several barns in Green County culminated at two locations of cantilevered Forebay Bank Barns whose design can be traced to Switzerland. This design is argued to be a uniquely Swiss invention.

To highlight this ancestry, the day began at the Swiss Center of North America located in Monroe and feature a world-wide simulcast from 9 different locations of Forebay Bank Barns from Wisconsin to Pennsylvania to Canada to Switzerland.

See: [www.uwex.edu/lgc/barns](http://www.uwex.edu/lgc/barns)

### Why barns & scenery?

Because the barns and other agricultural buildings and structures are a significant part of our scenic character as well as our historic and cultural heritage.

### Trempealeau County Barn Preservation Tour

**Saturday, Sept. 18, 10 AM - 2PM**

Presentations by *Nancy Schumm-Burgess* and *Charley Weeth* at the Trempealeau Village Hall followed by a bus tour with a box lunch.

\$45 per person. Reserve early!



A grand old barn that will be on the Trempealeau County Barn Preservation Tour, September 18th. This one is south of Galesville on US Hwy 53 and State Hwy 54.

I was so naive as a kid I used to sneak behind the barn and do nothing - **Johnny Carson**



A rare wooden silo with another classic Wisconsin beauty. This one is currently used for horses instead of cows and is located north of Galesville on State Hwys 35 & 54.



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We can't do it alone! Be sure to let your Legislators and other elected officials know how important our scenic Wisconsin is to you!

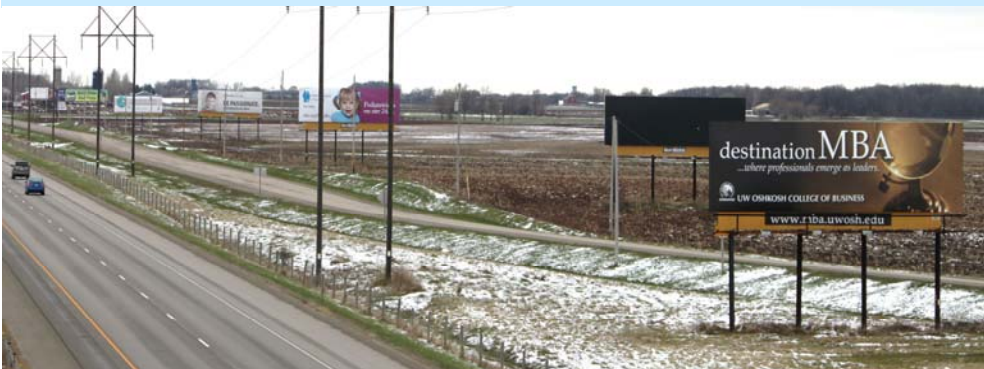
Also, consider joining our Board of Advisors!

*Help fight blight!*

**PRESIDENTIAL ANSWER**

President John F Kennedy also said in 1961 "it may be necessary to adopt more direct means of control, or to at least charge the billboard owners for the benefits they are receiving"

**US Hwy 41: A Billboard Gauntlet**



Anyone that travels US Hwy 41 has noticed the proliferation of billboards in many of the farm fields and forests adjacent to the highway. This major north-south corridor has become a "billboard gauntlet" in many places; and it is getting worse!

CSW believes many of these billboards do not comply with the Highway Beautification Act (HBA) of 1965. The "strip" and "spot" zoning of this agricultural land to commercial is nothing more than "phantom" or "sham" zoning according to the HBA - and should not be permitted.

No billboards should be erected or maintained in these farm fields and forests until and unless there is visible, permanent commercial or industrial activity on these lands.

A 2006 legal opinion issued by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) makes it clear local zoning alone is not sufficient to erect or maintain billboards: "If a combination of them [factors establishing legitimate commercial or industrial activity], however, shows that the zoning action is primarily to allow billboards *in areas that have none of the attributes of a commercial or industrial area*, the FHWA would not be compelled to accept the zoning action as valid under 23 U.S.C. § 131(d).

CSW is committed to making sure the HBA and the Bonus Act of 1958 are fully enforced. In order to do so, we need to grow our membership and speak up at all levels of government!

Please support our efforts!



**TOP:** The east side of US Hwy 41 north of County Hwy Z in the Town of Nekimi in Winnebago County. There are 7 billboards in less than a half mile located on land that is used exclusively for agriculture, with no visible, permanent commercial or industrial activity.  
**BOTTOM:** Another example of "strip" zoning. The west side of US Hwy 41 also has 7 billboards in the same stretch and are also located on land used exclusively for agriculture.