



A 2008 Scenic Beauty Winner. The Village of Ephraim in Door County

BARN POP QUIZ!

How many pre-1960 barns are left in Wisconsin?

- a) 15,000 b) 25,000
- c) 35,000 d) 45,000

(Answer on the back)



CITIZENS FOR A SCENIC WISCONSIN, INC

CHARLES WEETH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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La Crosse, WI 54601-4208

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Help fight blight!



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

PRESERVING WISCONSIN'S ICONS: THE BARN

Wisconsin's icons are the many historical barns that fill our scenic countryside. Barns in all shapes, sizes, colors and styles with purposes ranging from dairy barns with silos to tobacco barns to small animal barns dot our landscape.

There are also all the farm houses, from the simple to the grand, plus the granaries and creameries, the school houses and the churches.

Together they tell a visual and historic story of who we are and what we value today as well as who was here and helped build this paradise we call Wisconsin.

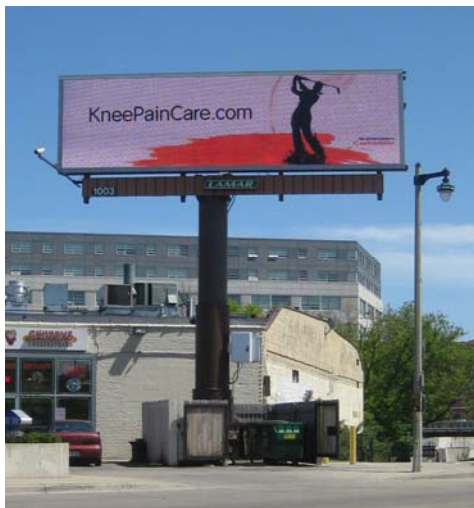
Many of these structures are no longer being used for agriculture and because of the economics of modern farming, urban sprawl, and other factors, we are losing barns and the other wonderful agricultural structures that are as much a part of our landscape as the hills and trees.

If we do not act to help preserve and protect the barns of Wisconsin, in another generation there could be only a dozen or so left in each county. Can you imagine *not* seeing any barns when traveling around our beautiful State?



One of the few remaining round barns in Wisconsin. This beauty is in Portage County and was featured on our recent Barn Preservation Presentation & Tour.

We're working with others and looking for additional support to do more in order to preserve and protect these icons of our scenic Wisconsin. Care to help?



This huge digital billboard on N Oakland Ave in Milwaukee is used primarily to build brand awareness to an urban audience. Billboards this big are completely out of scale to the rest of the structures in the neighborhood and stick out like a sore thumb—especially at night.

“Any jackass can kick down a barn, but it takes a good carpenter to build one” - Rep. Sam Rayburn, Speaker of the House



Junkyards are supposed to be screened from view along primary highways according to the Highway Beautification Act (HBA) of 1965 and State law. This one along STH 56 in Vernon County has spilled outside of the original screened yard. Junkyards are not required to have a State license or permit so new ones crop up without screening, and existing ones are not routinely inspected.

Executive Director's Report

By Charley Weeth, Executive Director

In the two and a half years since I took on this challenge after our founding Executive Director **Chuck Mitchell** retired, I've travelled to all 72 of Wisconsin's counties. My favorite routes are the two lane highways and byways that are the “real” Wisconsin.

On one of my many trips I took my 6 year old grandson Vaughn to the Mid Continent Railway Museum in North Freedom and Circus World Museum in Baraboo. We enjoyed a stop at a one room school house with an old fashioned merry go round and a steam tractor on display. He liked the “twisty turny” road through Wildcat Mountain State Park and operating a hand water pump for the dogs along the ‘400 State Trail’.

The four seasons combined with the different geography, farms, towns, villages and cities as well as all the plants, trees and wildlife make a trip to any part of the State an enjoyable experience any time of the year.

Model Sign Ordinances & Wind Turbine Policy

We've updated these documents at www.scenicwisconsin.org or call 608-784-3212 for assistance.

SCENIC PRESENTATION

Our scenic presentation “Why are you here?” is available for groups of all sizes. It details why maintaining scenic integrity is so important for all of our communities.

Billboards: Then and Now

The rise of the automobile in the early 20th century caused a shift in outdoor advertising. Companies with regional and national brands looked for ways to promote their products and began introducing the small metal “branding” signs along our highways.

Salesmen would travel the countryside offering coupons or cash to land owners to put the signs up on fences, barns or in the front yard. They would promise to return each year with a bonus if the sign was still in place.

These off-premises metal signs were much smaller than the usual

wooden billboards on vacant lots and the edges of town. Over time, many became obsolete like the one to the right. Now our landscape is being filled with monster “branding” billboards lit up all night long!





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

Wisconsin Barns

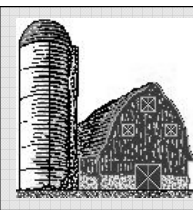
Wisconsin's iconic barns have come to represent a way of life defined by family, a connection to the land, ingenuity, and hard work. Experience the state's beauty and rich history through these varied and fascinating structures, from the 1840s log barns to grand, arch-roofed dairy barns.

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!

Yes! I/We would like to join and support Citizens for a Scenic Wisconsin!!

- \$35 Member
 \$50 Organization/Corporation
 \$100 Scenic Steward
 \$250 Scenic Conservationist
 \$500 Scenic Leader
 \$1,000 Scenic Visionary
 \$_____ Scenic Benefactor

Dues \$ _____

Books \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

Yes! I/We would also like to order _____ copies of **Wisconsin Barns** @ \$20.00 per book.

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!

What is a non-conforming billboard?

By **Charley Weeth**, Executive Director

Two of the questions I am often asked is “What is a non-conforming billboard?” and “Why is there so much fuss over removing them?” Here are the basics in laymen’s terms.

A sign advertising products, services or messages at some other place than the property the sign is located is an off-premises sign and is usually referred to as a billboard.

A non-conforming billboard is one that was conforming when it was erected, but a law or regulation or zoning standard or land use changed so it is no longer in compliance.

The most common reason for a billboard to be classified as non-conforming is it is located in an agricultural or residential area rather than a commercial or industrial area due to the enactment of the Federal Highway Beautification Act (HBA) of 1965 championed by Lady Bird Johnson..

Other classifications are: grandfathered (same as non-conforming), illegal (one that has been erected or maintained without permits or a non-conforming billboard that has been repaired), abandoned (no message for a year) and discontinued (the message is for a business that is not active).

State statute 84.30 was passed in 1972 as required by the HBA. The statute set standards for billboards along Interstates and Federal primary aid highways such as how close together they can be to each other, to intersections, where they can be located, etc. Later a Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT) permit was required for each sign as well as a DOT license for the sign company that erects and maintains the signs.

NOTE: The DOT *only* regulates about 1/3 of the estimated 15-18,000 billboards in Wisconsin. The other 2/3 are regulated by counties, cities, villages and towns, tribes and other government entities.

The law requires all non-conforming billboards regulated by the DOT be removed by the end of the 5th year of enactment, with reasonable compensation paid by the DOT to the sign owner. DOT regulations (Trans 201) has a whole section on the prioritization for the removal of non-conforming billboards, starting with non-conforming billboards with messages that are available in other media and not tourist or travel related.

The expectation was that if a non-conforming billboard is not removed with compensation to the owner, it

will eventually become so weathered and worn and/or structurally deficient over time it will be removed at no cost to the taxpayer.

Non-conforming billboards are limited by law to “customary maintenance and changing the advertising message”. This essentially means the sign can be painted and such, but when posts rot, sign faces are weathered and splintered, or the sign is falling over or apart, these components can’t be replaced, or other components (e.g. braces) added.

The proposed ‘Billboard in Perpetuity’ bills (SB 173/AB 242) use some very clever language to get around the limitation on repairs to non-conforming billboards. It simply adds a new section regarding removal but with ‘repair and maintenance’ allowed in amounts up to and a 50% of the cost of the billboard every 36 months. If one reads just the proposed bill and not the relevant sections of 84.30 and Trans 201, it appears this is an *additional* requirement; in fact it is creating a loophole to enable repairs **for-ever** to non-conforming billboards that are not currently permitted!

In other words, the billboard owners want their cake and to eat it too!



Left - Structural repairs using treated lumber to a non-conforming billboard.

Right - A non-conforming billboard with new framing and sign face.

These structural improvements are not permitted by State law, but with only 9 DOT outdoor advertising coordinators and over 4,000 non-conforming billboards on over 9,000 miles of Interstate and primary highways, improvements like these are common. There are no fines for violations and enforcement requires a great deal of research and documentation.



Wisconsin Barn Census

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

“By the end of the 1800s, a man who had a very grand and impressive barn and a very modest home was felt to truly have his priorities in order”

Rick Bott, R&B Enterprises

Once the most revered architecture on the American Farm, and truly the symbol of American Farming, the elegant and impressive barns of our past are fast disappearing from our landscapes. In a State such as Wisconsin, known for its agricultural production, the loss of these historic structures threatens the cultural history of the state.

According to Wisconsin historical census reports, farming reached its peak in Wisconsin in 1935, with over 199,876 farms reporting that they were farming 35 million acres of land. By contrast, the 2007 agricultural census reported that of those 199,876 farms, assuming they all had a barn, only 35,386 historic barns remain standing throughout the State.

There are several reasons for the

losses; changes in use, catastrophic loss, farms sold for development, farms consolidated, and abuse.

There is hope, however; grass-roots groups, recognizing the importance of the preservation of these icons, are taking steps to preserve them, one barn at a time. A prime example of these efforts is the work of the Chase Stone Barn volunteers from Pulaski.

Through hard work, grants, and community commitments, the Chase Stone Barn will live to see another century. The undeniable affinity for barns remains the hope of those formerly revered structures.

For more information on barn preservation efforts in Wisconsin go to www.uwex.edu/lgc/barns or contact Chuck Law at chuck.law@uwex.edu



A digital billboard in a farm field east of Janesville. The zoning may have changed but the use hasn't; so is this another instance where the zoning changed just to put in a billboard?

“If a farmer fills his barn with grain, he gets mice. If he leaves it empty, he gets actors.” - Sir Walter Scott



This Amish family barn near Cashton, was so beautiful and built in the 20th century! The owner is a carpenter, as are many family members. They moved to the area from Pennsylvania to settle in the beautiful rolling countryside on the edge of the driftless region. The property was well-selected, as there was a creek running along the edge, a nice woodland adjacent, and plenty of rich soil for crops. There was a real sense of peace to the land. Almost like stepping back in time. Made me feel like singing the soundtrack to Brigadoon.....



Another classic round dairy barn. It is along STH 54 in Waupaca County and is easily visible from the highway. Imagine if this gem disappears from the landscape? We need to do more to help farmers and other property owners preserve and protect these wonderful icons of Wisconsin!



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*Dedicated to preserving and enhancing
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This unique tile faced barn with windows is along STH 17 in Oneida County. There are distinct differences in the barns around Wisconsin based on ethnic heritage, use and location as well as trends at the time they were constructed.

Welcome to Eagle River, WI – Really?



Driving into Eagle River on US Hwy 45 one must pass a gauntlet of billboards in just 6 miles! This is controlling outdoor advertising? The combination of a weak State law, no local sign ordinance with wide open zoning allows this billboard blight! And believe it or not, State law allows even *more* billboards to be erected here - even though these remain vacant - if landowners are willing to sign leases!

Just over the Vilas County line in the Town of Lincoln, there are 13 billboards in about a half mile stretch of woodland! Many were erected in the past year and remain vacant while others promote health care services, a banker, storage warehouses and other non travel and tourist businesses.

The people who live and visit this beautiful area need goods and services, but there are other and better ways for businesses to reach their audiences than to litter our public viewsheds with spam on a stick!

Too many signs become just so much clutter and actually are counter productive because they make it more difficult for travelers to navigate.

Tourist Oriented Directional Signs (TODS) are available, often for less than the cost of renting a billboard. These highly visible little blue signs are in the right-of-way and are provided by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT) to qualifying travel and tourist businesses and attractions that are within 5 miles of the highway.

We support the use of TODS along two lane highways and the Specific Information Signs (SIS) [Blue background with business logos] on Interstate highways and freeways as reasonable alternatives to billboards.

We also would like to see greater efforts to update data needed for Global Positioning System (GPS) navigation devices to aid in navigation.



Tourist Oriented Directional Signs have a blue background with white letters and are well known for providing drivers with travel or tourism related destination information. TODS create less clutter and because they are in the right-of-way, are very effective.

ANSWER: POP QUIZ

The most recent USDA Census of Agriculture estimates 35,386 pre 1960 barns in Wisconsin. Anecdotal reports estimate we are losing about 400 barns a year, so it won't be long before they are all gone!