

## **KARE Email News, Vol. 1, No. 9, 19 September 2007**

**KARE Supporters,**

### **NEWS FLASH!!!**

The Historic 1918 Kasson School has been nominated for the National Register of Historic Places. The nomination documents are attached to this email message. The Minnesota Historical Society recently mailed copies to the city.

The Kasson Alliance for Restoration contracted with Dan Hoisington of Hoisington Preservation Consultants to prepare the nomination.

The nomination was submitted to the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office in August. The State Review Board will consider the nomination on October 16, 2007. The meeting will be held at 7:00 PM in the Cargill Commons Room, MacMillan Education Wing on the 2nd floor of the Minnesota History Center. The History Center is located at 345 West Kellogg Blvd, in Saint Paul, MN (see <http://www.mnhs.org>). The board meeting is open to the public and the public is invited to comment. The school is second on the agenda for the evening. The History Center is conveniently located near the intersection of Highways I94 and 35E. There is a large parking lot next to the building. Please plan to attend and show your support for this historic resource.

For each nominated property, Susan Roth, the Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, will give a brief introduction to the property. The board then requests comments from the floor and/or questions. The board then votes. Experts inform us that the nomination is very strong and that the board will very likely approve the nomination. This is a key component of KARE's effort to find a reuse of the school. Placing a building on the Register assists preservation efforts by providing eligibility for federal tax credits to investors and, when available, federal grants-in-aid for restoration etc. (you will hear more info on this later).

Mr. Hoisington uncovered some interesting and exciting school history during the nomination research process. You will find the following from Section 8 of the nomination form (see the attached file) very interesting.

[After it was completed] The [Kasson School] building quickly won plaudits. In early January 1919, R. B. McLean, a state school inspector, and B. M. Gile, a supervisor for the federally-funded Smith-Hughes agricultural school programs, visited and filed a positive report. Later, H. H. Flynn, a state high school inspector, also looked over the new building. The local newspaper reported, "These men all expressed their admiration for the beauty and conveniences of the new building and all thought that Kasson has every reason to be proud of their fine edifice."

No report was more enthusiastic than that of Samuel Challman, the first state inspector of school buildings and probably the man most knowledgeable about

new school buildings in Minnesota. Typically a tough-minded advocate of strict construction standards, Challman was effusive in his praise of the new school. The *Republican* carried news of his visit to Kasson in May 1919, noting:

*Mr. S. A. Challman, state inspector of school buildings, made the Kasson School a visit on Wednesday last and went into ecstasies over the structure erected here the past year. He says there is nothing equal to it in the state in the way of completeness and architectural design. He wanted a photo of it so that he could use it upon his letterheads. He stated that it was the first of its type — three separate units, connected with a corridor, to be built in the state, but said it would be an ideal pattern for others who could not resist the temptation when once they saw this model structure.*

An editorial writer for the *Rochester Post and Record* also pointed to the school as an example of the future of education in small-town Minnesota: “The era of the little red school house is rapidly passing. We are now coming to the popularity of the consolidated school, with its facilities for educational training. . . . . For architectural beauty and ornate simplicity the triple school buildings of Kasson, with their artistic brick bond, their well-balanced symmetry, and their spacious grounds will command the admiration of everyone.”

Clearly the historic school is a resource the city and its citizens should be proud of. It is unfortunate that the Kasson City Council has refused to explore all the reuse options (like the National Register and related funding vehicles). The school will soon join the following Kasson buildings on the Register: the 1895 Water Tower, the Eureka Hotel, the Jacob Leuthold Jr. House and the Old Kasson Municipal Building.

KARE appreciates your continued support. Questions and replies to this email will be cheerfully responded to. For general information on the National Register see <http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/index.htm>.

More information on KARE’s activities will be sent to you soon.

Thank you,

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