

Old Bellefontaine theater building to be refurbished

The Holland Theatre in Bellefontaine has been purchased by Logan County Landmark Preservation Inc. to house the new Logan Country Arts Center.

This move followed a year of activities beginning with the forming of the group in November 1998 and continuing with negotiations to purchase the theater. Much of the initial momentum for the project came from the Bellefontaine Middle School Enrichment Class's "Save the Holland Theatre" project for which the class received second place in an international competition in the spring of 1999.

The theater opened in February 1931. It was designed by architect Peter Hulsken of Lima, a native of Holland.

The 66- by 220-foot building's design incorporates Dutch cross bond brick and the main lobby features a beamed ceiling, slate floors

and rough walls. The foyer has a vaulted ceiling and paneled wainscoting walls, in the style of a great Dutch hall, and is decorated with shields and coats of arms representing the important cities of Holland.

The 64- by 112-foot auditorium originally seated 1,000 and the balcony seated 400. The stage, large enough to accommodate legitimate theater, is fronted by a stone arch and there are working windmills on each side of the main floor.

The building is basically sound but needs a new roof and tuckpointing. The interior will require major cleaning and restoration but is intact.

A kick-off celebration will be held from 5 to 8 p.m. Wednesday at the theater.

Benefactors Richard and Peggy Knowlton will be acknowledged for their gift to the project and theater tours, entertainment and refreshments will follow.