**Historic Tax Credit Improvement Act**

**H.R. 1158 / S. 425 - (HTCIA)**

The Bipartisan Historic Tax Credit Improvement Act

Introduced by Representatives Mike Kelly (R-PA-03) and Earl Blumenauer (D-OR-03) in the House and Senators Ben Cardin (D-MD) and Susan Collins (R-ME) in the Senate, this act will broaden the use and impact of the federal historic tax credit by encouraging the reuse and redevelopment of historic properties in small, midsize, and rural communities.

The Historic Tax Credit Improvement Act would create program efficiencies and simplify the application process for owners of smaller, historic properties on Main Street, expanding the use and accessibility of the program. Additionally, HTCIA will increase the credit from 20 to 30 percent for projects with rehabilitation expenses of less than $2.5 million, which will help inject new private investment into smaller and more rural communities. Other improvements include simplifying the process for a one-time transfer of historic tax credits to investors for smaller projects with rehabilitation expenses under $2.5 million. The bill provisions represent the first major changes to the federal historic tax credit since the 1986 Tax Reform Act.

In addition, some tax reform proposals would include elimination of Historic Tax Credits. This program supporting community revitalization and preservation of our historic properties is too valuable to lose.

Historic Preservation Tax Credits support investment, create jobs, and preserve the best of our historic building fabric for benefit of community economic development.

As of the printing of this newsletter, there are 73 cosponsors for H.R.1158; none of West Virginia’s three Representatives have signed on as cosponsors. Since the bill’s introduction in February, it has stalled in the House Committee on Ways and Means.

S.425 has 12 sponsors, none of whom are West Virginia Senators. The bill was introduced in February and has been read twice and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Urge your legislators to co-sponsor and support these Historic Tax Credit Improvement bills, and to oppose any efforts to weaken or eliminate Historic Tax Credits.

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**Support Federal Funding for Historic Preservation!**

The House Appropriations Committee released the Subcommittee Draft of the FY18 Interior and Environment Appropriations Bill. This bill funds the National Park Service and preservation programs like the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF). This is our first look as Congress begins the appropriations process. Overall the bill funds the HPF at $74.41 million, which is $6.5 million below FY17 enacted levels, but $23.3 million above the administration’s FY18 budget released in May. The subcommittee draft includes the following levels of funding for the HPF:

- **State Historic Preservation Offices and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices:** $56.41 million, $2 million below FY17 enacted levels
- **Civil Rights Grants:** $10.5 million, $2.5 million below FY17 enacted levels
- **Save America’s Treasures Grants:** $4 million, $1 million below FY17 levels
- **Historically Black Colleges/Universities Preservation Program:** $3 million, $1 million below FY17 levels
- **Underserved Communities Grants:** $500,000, equal to FY17 levels

The Trump Administration’s budget eliminated funding for all of the grant programs listed above and significantly cut funding to State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPOs) and Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (TTHPOs).

At the time this newsletter was printed, a Senate Appropriations bill has not been released.

Urge your legislators to support these levels of funding!
West Virginia’s Historic Theaters
Are the Place to Be!

By Joe Obidzinski, Preserve WV AmeriCorps Member, and Kelli Shapiro, PhD, Program Associate

If you are looking for some fun and exciting things to do this summer, check out the West Virginia Historic Theatre Trail! Summer is a great time to enjoy a nostalgic movie-going experience at one of the state’s drive-in theatres – such as our Trail members, the Warner’s Drive-In in Franklin and the Sunset Drive-In in Shinnston. Many of our member sites, like the Ritz Theatre in Hinton, are showing some of the season’s most popular films. The Capitol Theatre in Wheeling, which has primarily been a performance-oriented venue in recent years, is even featuring a weekly, summer film series that offers affordable entertainment for audiences of all ages. With 29 member sites across the Mountain State, there are a plethora of opportunities to enjoy.

A number of our Trail members across the state offer great children’s/youth theatre and performing arts programs over the summer, a wonderful way to get young people interested in theatre and the arts. Perhaps you are looking for some live music performances, or even a play or musical. The West Virginia Historic Theatre Trail features many fantastic venues for these types of entertainment as well! There are even summer concert and performance series occurring at Trail sites, including Carnegie Hall in Lewisburg and the Randolph County Community Arts Center in Elkins.

Here at PAWV, we are hard at work on a number of projects for the West Virginia Historic Theatre Trail, such as completing an article about the development of the Trail for Marquee, the journal of the Theatre Historical Society of America. We hope that the article will highlight not only the Trail itself, but also the great preservation work done by organizations operating theaters all across the state. We are also in the process of adding Trail members’ information to the Clio heritage tourism website/app (http://www.theclio.com) and will let everyone know when the members’ pages are ready for viewing.

Meanwhile, PAWV’s book project that sprang out of its work with the Theatre Trail is coming along well. PAWV has teamed up with Arcadia Publishing to produce an “Images of America” book entitled Historic Movie Theatres of West Virginia. Arcadia’s “Images of America” books must include at least 180 historical images, and we will have no trouble hitting that mark. We currently have scans of photographs, ephemera, and postcards in hand for over 180 individual theaters across the state. Arcadia expects to release the book in Spring 2018, and PAWV members will have the first opportunity to purchase this book. We hope that it will be an excellent promotional opportunity for the Trail and its member theaters.

No matter what type of entertainment you prefer, the West Virginia Historic Theatre Trail’s members provide many opportunities to enjoy the season in exciting and entertaining fashion, both this summer and throughout the year. Check out our website, http://wvhistorictheaters.com to find information about operational historic theaters near you. Also, be sure to like and follow our Facebook page at http://www.facebook.com/wvhistorictheaters for updates about all of our Trail members’ upcoming events and the progress of the Historic Movie Theatres of West Virginia book.
9th Annual Historic Preservation Awards

Municipal Auditorium
Charleston, WV
September 30, 2017

This year’s event will have a ‘50s theme. Dress up in your best ‘50s attire and help preserve the spirit of Hank Williams’s lost Charleston show.

5:00 pm – Doors Open
5:15 pm - Join PAWV for an optional, guided walking tour from the Municipal Auditorium to another of Charleston’s premier historic theatre venues, WVSU Capitol Center, for an interior tour.

6:00 pm – Reception with drinks and appetizers, an optional tour of the Municipal Auditorium, and a presentation about the Municipal Auditorium by General Manager John Robertson.

6:30 pm – Dinner buffet and dessert, catered by Distinctive Gourmet.

Guests will hear Hank Williams hits performed by Rob McNurlin, in honor of Hank’s tragic 1953 death in West Virginia following his cancelled Municipal Auditorium performance.

West Virginia historic preservation professionals and projects will be honored during the 10th annual awards ceremony. Historic preservation celebrity presenters, including Susan Pierce, Deputy Secretary of the West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office, will help us recognize these special projects.

This year’s Keynote Speaker will be Patrick Seymour, Archive Director for the Theatre Historical Society of America.

Mr. Seymour will discuss “The Important Legacy of America’s Theatres,” in which he will give a presentation on the history of movie theatre architecture and how it developed alongside changes in technology, audience demands, and forms of entertainment. From nickelodeons to movie palaces to drive-ins to multi-plex theatres and beyond, he will discuss the narrative of theatre architecture and will relate the importance of preserving the legacy and the remaining historic buildings.

Please mail to PAWV with your check:
(Online registration coming soon)

2017 AWARDS EVENT

Cost (PAWV Members): $50 / person
Cost (Non-members): $65 / person
Group Table: $600 / 10 people
Additional Donation: ______________

REGISTRATION INFORMATION:
Name_____________________
Address____________________
___________________________
Email______________________
Phone_____________________
Special Dietary Requests: ________________________________
Division of Culture & History Programming Funded in 2018

In Governor Justice’s FY 2018 Recommended Budget, all Division of Culture & History funding that comes from the state Lottery Education Fund (fund 3534 in the budget) was to be defunded. However, during the spring special legislative session, the West Virginia Legislature negotiated to pass the FY 2018 budget and continue funding programs made possible through the state Lottery Education Fund. Unfortunately, all of the historic preservation programs PAWV has been tracking were funded at lower levels than in FY 2017. Here are how things panned out (this is not a comprehensive list of line items):

- Preservation WV:
  FY 2018 level = $491,921 / FY 2017 level = $587,519

- Fairs and Festivals:
  FY 2018 level = $1,346,814 / FY 2017 level = $1,668,297

- Historic Preservation Grants (also known as Development Grants):
  FY 2018 = $294,742 / FY 2017 = $368,428

- Grants for Competitive Arts Program:
  FY 2018 = $580,800 / FY 2017 = $726,000

Thank your legislators for supporting these important programs! Encourage increased funding levels by inviting them to events or to visit projects that benefit from these grant funds. Now is the time to ask them to consider increasing these funds in FY 2019.

In This Issue: Current status of the State Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit
In early 2016, the Abandoned Property Coalition – a network of community leaders, and local, regional, and national organizations developing community-based solutions to vacant, abandoned, and dilapidated properties across West Virginia – held a strategy session to determine what the Coalition should focus its energy on over the course of the next year. Four people, including representatives from the Preservation Alliance of West Virginia, signed on to research the possibility of pushing forward policy around increasing the rate of West Virginia’s historic rehabilitation tax credit from 10% to 25%.

One major issue the group quickly came to realize was that although West Virginia has 92 commercial and mixed-use historic districts ripe for revitalization, developers choose to invest in neighboring states instead of our downtowns due to West Virginia’s uncompetitive 10% historic rehabilitation tax credit. Neighboring states, including Pennsylvania, Ohio and Virginia, all have 25% historic rehabilitation tax credits.

With this realization, the group quickly grew and was joined by a pro bono lobbyist. By the time legislation reached the floor during West Virginia’s 2017 regular session, the effort had grown to 39 organizers, and featured 38 cities, counties, and organizations who endorsed the proposal. The effort gained enough traction to merit four bills introduced in the House and Senate with 34 legislators sponsoring those bills.

The original group of four had spawned a grassroots movement in support of improving communities statewide that called itself Revitalize West Virginia’s Downtowns Coalition (https://revitalizewvdown-towns.com/). The group went on to attend 85 meetings with legislators, hold five public forums to educate more than 200 people total, and host a website that reached more than 3,000 individuals.

The state historic rehabilitation tax credit bill passed out of both the House and Senate during the regular session but died in conference committee on the last day. In an attempt to revive the legislation, the Office of the Governor included the historic rehabilitation tax credit increase as part of a larger taxation bill during the 2017 special session. The taxation bill ultimately failed.

The momentum and widespread support this policy received in its first year of introduction is a testament to the great value that West Virginians place on revitalizing their downtowns and — perhaps more importantly — the progress four people with a policy idea can make once they cast a wide net. The Coalition has already begun plans to reinvigorate this effort for the 2018 legislative session.

Thank the Sponsors of the Historic Tax Credit Bills!

SENATORS
Ryan Ferns, Majority Leader (R – Ohio, 01)
Robert H. Plymale (D – Wayne, 05)
Ryan Weld (R – Brooke, 01)
Mike Maroney (R – Marshall, 02)
Glenn Jeffries (D – Putnam, 08)
Mike Azinger (R – Wood, 03)
Sue Cline (R – Wyoming, 09)
Douglas E. Facemire (D – Braxton, 12)
Richard Ojeda (D – Logan, 07)
Corey Palumbo (D – Kanawha, 17)
Mike Romano (D – Harrison, 12)
Randi Smith (R – Tucker, 14)
Dave Sypolt (R – Preston, 14)
Mike Woelfel (D – Cabell, 05)
Ron Stollings (D – Boone, 07)
Greg Boso (R – Nicholas, 11)
Robert D. Beach (D – Monongalia, 13)
Ronald F. Miller (D – Greenbrier, 10)

DELEGATES
Erikka Storch (R – Ohio, 03)
Marty Gearhart (R – Mercer, 27)
Eric L. Householder, Assistant Majority Whip (R – Berkeley, 64)
Joe Ellington (R – Mercer, 27)
John Shott (R – Mercer, 27)
Guy Ward (R – Marion, 50)
Carol Miller, Majority Whip (R – Cabell, 01)
Gary G. Howell (R – Mineral, 56)
Paul Espinosa (R – Jefferson, 66)
Mark Zatzezalo (R – Hancock, 01)
John D. O’Neal IV, Assistant Majority Leader (R – Raleigh, 28)
Rodney A. Pyles (D – Monongalia, 51)
Jill Upson (R – Jefferson, 65)
Chad Lovejoy (D – Cabell, 17)
Linda Longstreth (D – Marion, 50)
Chuck Romine, New Member Coordinator and Assistant Whip (R – Cabell, 16)

You can continue to support the historic rehabilitation tax credit increase leading up to the next regular session. Ask your Delegates and Senators to make the state historic rehabilitation tax credit a priority in the upcoming regular session. Invite Delegates and Senators in your district to meet with you while they are at home. Ask them to meet at a historic property or in a downtown environment that would benefit from the historic rehabilitation tax credit increase. And don’t forget to say Thank You!
Hello everyone! I hope your summer is going well. The folks at PAWV have not only been busy but very productive in the past months, but before we get to that, just a quick update.

As many of you know, I have been quite ill in the past months. However, I am back up-and-running and very thankful for it. I learned many things during my days in bed, one of them being that I appreciate all of you very much and love working directly with those we serve.

I have traveled to several sites to conduct site assessments for the properties being considered for the 2017 Endangered Properties List. I have also written a paper on the entomology of the powderpost beetle and methods for its safe extermination, which is featured on our blog. To that end, I have been adapting technology used in bedbug extermination in hotels to the extermination of the beetles through dry heat. I am presently building the control board and heat unit for testing, which will then be applied to an infestation in Reed’s Mill in Monroe County (a grist mill built circa 1791 and still in use). Please check PAWV’s blog to follow my progress.

Mercy Klein, our intrepid Preserve WV AmeriCorps member focusing on Endangered Properties, has been doing a fantastic job organizing groups of Preserve WV AmeriCorps members for hands-on Civic Service Projects. Some recent projects include a cleanup at the vacant William and Mary Queen Store in Crum, Wayne County; a cemetery monument restoration workshop at the Old Stone Cemetery in Lewisburg, Greenbrier County; and a yardwork day at the former Altamont Hotel in Fayetteville, Fayette County.

Our executive director, Danielle LaPresta, has been working like a mad woman as usual. Her recent accomplishments include using grant funds from the 1772 Foundation to hire a consultant, Terrell Ellis & Associates. Ellis’s firm will help develop operating guidelines for the historic preservation revolving loan fund that PAWV has been working to establish.

Danielle also hired an evaluator, McMahon Consulting Group, to create an evaluation plan for PAWV’s Preserve WV AmeriCorps program’s required evaluation. The upcoming evaluation will help show the impact that Preserve WV is making statewide.

Danielle and Dr. Kelli Shapiro, our Program Associate, have also been actively recruiting applicants for the 2017-2018 Preserve WV AmeriCorps program year, which begins August 28th. There are approximately 30 AmeriCorps member opportunities at sites statewide, from museums to Historic Landmarks Commissions.

Well, there is more but I am out of space. I want all of you to stay busy, stay well, stay excited, and be sure to love one another.

—Lynn