

# News Release

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## **Virtual Presentation of the “Stapps Building” Historical Marker**

OSKALOOSA – The Stapps Building, located at 201 High Avenue East across from the Mahaska County Courthouse, has received a historical marker recognizing its 100-plus year history in Oskaloosa.

Historical Building Marker Steering Committee Member Ann Brouwer said that due to COVID concerns, the unveiling ceremony for the historical marker can be viewed virtually on the Mahaska Chamber and Development Group website, <https://www.mahaskachamber.org/history>.

“This is the 9<sup>th</sup> of 10 historical markers to be placed in the community, and the first to be unveiled virtually,” Brouwer explained. “This presentation also includes marking an incredibly unique time in the history of our community, the country and the world! Our volunteer committee started this project after it was approved by the Historical Preservation Commission in September 2017.”

In addition to the virtual presentation by researcher Adam Rohloff on the webpage, there is a video recorded by Oskey News with remarks from Oskaloosa Mayor Dave Krutzfeldt concerning COVID’S effect on gatherings in the community. Another video recorded by Oskey News features Dave Langkamp, who was part of the “Stapp’s Coffee Group” that was featured in a 1988 New

York Times article entitled, “The Sound of Politics in Iowa Town.” The article appears in its entirety on the historical building marker website.

Sherry Vavra, Historical Building Marker Steering Committee Member, said that the goal of the project is to educate the community and visitors regarding the history of these beautiful buildings, as well as to preserve the information for future generations. “We targeted 10 buildings in our downtown area, and only the Book Vault is remaining to receive a historical marker and complete this multi-year project, Vavra said.

“Each historical marker includes the year the building was built, pictures of the building through the years and a few interesting and fun facts to appeal to the community and visitors. The marker also indicates the prominent type of architecture of the building as well as a link to a webpage, hosted by the chamber, so that those interested can get ‘the rest of the story’ regarding the building. This webpage is a work in progress and will be updated as information is obtained. We encourage community members with any information regarding the buildings to please contact us.”

Calvin Bandstra, Historical Building Marker Steering Committee member, said that in order to complete such a major undertaking, local historians were asked to adopt a building and do research as part of the project. In addition to the researchers, many other volunteers stepped up to make this community project possible. “It has taken several years for us to get this far, and we could not have gotten this close to the finish line without many incredible volunteers and businesses that stepped up to assist us.”

Bandstra said that the historical markers themselves are on a bond board insert with a brass bandstand backdrop, which was designed by Tessa Van Veldhuizen. Committee members worked with Clow Valve, which has donated the brass for all the markers. The mold to make the markers was developed by Tom Stone from Musco Lighting and donated to the committee.

Brouwer added that the installation of the markers is being donated by Colt Mefford Masonry and corporate and individual sponsors have come forward to cover additional costs. "It has been such a blessing and truly highlights all the wonderful things we can accomplish as a community when we work together toward the greater good," Brouwer stressed.

If you would like more information or have information to share about our historical buildings, contact Brower at 641-660-8075 or Vavra at 641-660-7504.