

Historic Preservation presenting awards May 8

The Decorah Historic Preservation Commission will present its annual Historic Preservation Award to volunteers Norb Bohr and Pete Meyer and to the Decorah Street Department for their ongoing maintenance of the brick paving on Court Street in downtown Decorah.

The award will be presented at 5 p.m. Monday, May 8, in the historic Winneshiek Hotel central lobby. The brief ceremony will include remarks on the history of downtown Decorah street surfaces by Commission member Judy van der Linden.

Light hors d'oeuvres will be provided, and drinks will be available for purchase. The public is encouraged to attend.

The award reflects the continued progress on the Commission's efforts to have a Decorah Commercial Historic District included on the National Register of Historic Places.

"The Commission evidently tried several years ago to have the Court Street paving included on the National Register, but they learned that the paving was not eligible for nomination on its own. We were excited to learn this year, however, that a structural feature like a street can be included as part of an Historic District," Commission Chair Mark Muggli said.

The Court Street paving joins the 127 downtown buildings nominated to the National Register that will be voted on by the State Nominations Review Committee June 8, according to Muggli. A federal Department of Interior vote is expected in early fall 2017.

The award winners

For several years, Bohr and Meyer have helped maintain the 100-year-old brick paving on Court Street. They have been assisted by the Street Department, led by Street Commissioner Kevin Nelson.

According to Nelson, the Street Department staff has learned much from the volunteer "masters," and now carry on repairs of their own. The repairs have been especially challenging and important at intersections and drain collection points, and next to the newly installed gutters along the north section of Court Street.

"I think it's really neat that we can honor these folks for their work on this street. So often the awards go only to major building owners. But this small section of paving adds considerably to downtown Decorah's historic character," Commission member Tony Clarke said.

According to National Register consultant Jan Olive Full of Iowa



Court St. in downtown Decorah has been nominated for the National Register of Historic Places along with 127 downtown buildings. On May 8, the Decorah Historic Preservation Commission will present its annual Historic Preservation Award to volunteers Norb Bohr and Pete Meyer and to the Decorah Street Department for their ongoing maintenance of the brick paving on Court Street. (Submitted photo)

City, the brick paving in downtown Decorah coincided with the construction of many of the iconic brick buildings that epitomize the present downtown.

Previous Commission historic preservation awards have been given to Kevin and Dan Sand, Helen Basler, Deborah Bishop, Dominique and Michael Bockman, David Wadsworth, and Elizabeth Lo-

rentzen and Ed Epperly. The 2016 award was presented to the Hacker, Nelson & Co. accounting firm for their continued sensitive rehabilitation of their building at 123 West Water St.

Questions about the preservation award or the DHPC's work can be directed to Commission Secretary Judy van der Linden (563-382-4282; j.p.vanderlinden@q.com).