

June 1 - 3 Kansas State Historic Preservation Conference, Topeka. City, state, and community leaders meet in Topeka for the annual State Historic Preservation Conference. Topics included: [insert a session titles that reference \$\$, like economic impact, funding, etc.]

Katrina Ringler, Kansas Historic Society Grants Manager and Certificate Local Government Coordinator summarizes one of the many valuable sessions offered as follows:

Last week the 2011 Kansas Preservation Conference was held in Topeka. On Friday morning a great group of preservationists concerned about their local communities came together to listen and discuss. The session moderators were Mary Helmer of Kansas Main Street and Christy Davis of Davis Preservation and the Topeka Landmarks Commission. These two have a wealth of experience working with local communities. They proposed four issues/challenges that many local communities face and then asked the participants in the session to break into groups to discuss possible solutions. Below are the challenges and suggested solutions proposed by each group:

Group #1: How do we work with local code officials to encourage historic preservation?

- Start at the top. Contact the city manager/council/mayor and have them suggest/require code enforcement officials attend preservation training.
- Utilize design committees to review proposals before building permits are issued.
- Bring in speakers (i.e. an expert in wood windows to teach alternatives to putting in vinyl replacement windows).
- Preservation people should educate themselves about codes.

Group #2: How do we ensure local review is consistent with funding programs like historic tax credits?

- If planning department knows it will be a tax credit project defer to SHPO to review.
- Get involved in the process early – before permits are pulled.
- Have people who have used tax credits educate others in the community.
- Be very specific about design approval under local law. Clearly state that approval at the local level may not meet state and federal funding program requirements.

Group #3: How do we get the word out about preservation early in the planning process?

- Create a preservation “buzz” around those who already care – i.e. historic society members, museum and library staff, history teachers, etc. Utilize these folks when issues come up and you need their support when talking to city government leaders.
- Develop design committees within local preservation commissions to discuss plans before they come to the commission for official review.

Group #4: How do we address the special needs of small towns (under 2500)?

- Tap into county resources and those of nearby larger cities for preservation support.
- Continue to evaluate your resources and needs. Communities change over time.

We hope those of you who attended this session will take these suggestions back to your communities and begin to implement some of them. Let us know how it works for you.