

Michigan Paper Company Recommended to National Park Service for Listing on the National Register of Historic Places by the State Historic Preservation Office



National Park Service Expected to Approve Recommendation within 45 Days.

In less than two months, the Michigan Paper Company commonly referred to as the Plainwell Paper Mill, is expected to be listed among some of the nation's most treasured cultural resources worthy of preservation. The National Register is a program of the National Parks Service, United States Department of the Interior. In Michigan, the State Historic Preservation Office administers the program. Michigan boasts over one thousand National Register Listings, including such diverse historic properties as houses, commercial and residential areas, farm and factory complexes, cemeteries and parks, monuments, ships and shipwreck sites. Demonstrating its commitment and dedication to its own unique historic resources, the City of Plainwell features almost 200 buildings on the National Register of Historic Places that can be found throughout the Island and West Bridge Historic Districts and also include the J.F. Eesley Milling Company located at 717 E. Bridge Street, the Cherry DeLefebvre House at 115 Chart Street, and the James Noble Sherwood House located at 798 Riverview Drive.

Acknowledging the significant role the former Plainwell Paper Mill has played in Plainwell's heritage, the City of Plainwell and its development partner, Conestoga Rovers & Associates in 2010 nominated the 36-acre site for listing on the National Register of Historic Places which entailed a very detailed analysis of the mill's quality of significance in terms of local history, architecture, engineering, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and feeling. The Mill's basis for eligibility was also based upon strong evidence of the site's association with events that have made significant contributions to the broad patterns of our history and embodiments of distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction representing the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values.

The nomination was first submitted to the State Historic Preservation Review Board, which is composed of professionals in the fields of American history, architectural history, cultural geography, prehistoric and historic archeology, historic preservation and related disciplines. This review board then made a recommendation to the State Historic Preservation Officer to accept the property, who in turn has issued a recommendation to the National Parks Service, which makes the final decision on the property's listing. Final approval is anticipated within 45 days. By successfully meeting the rigorous evaluation criteria set forth by the State Historic Preservation Review Board and Officer, the Plainwell Paper Mill's nomination has crossed a large hurdle, and will undoubtedly be approved by the National Park Service.

There are both social and economic benefits associated with having the former Plainwell Paper Mill listed on the National Register of Historic Places. For instance, by being included among the listing of resources that have been researched and documented as significant to the nation, state, or community, listed properties are given special consideration when the federal government is planning or giving aid to projects. Listing gives private citizens and public officials credibility when attempting to protect these resources. A 20 percent federal Investment Tax Credit, a 5 percent state Rehabilitation Tax Credit, and a 25 percent state Rehabilitation Tax Credit are among the economic benefits granted toward the rehabilitation of properties that are listed on the National Register.

Years of planning and anticipation for the potential redevelopment of the former Plainwell Paper Mill have prepared for its nomination. The Mill's listing on the National Register will help propel the redevelopment forward by alleviating the tax burden associated with the costs of rehabilitating and developing the property. Mayor Rick Brooks summed it up best when he said, "just as there was an enormous amount of excitement in the late 1880's with the birth of the mill, so should there be now at its re-birth."

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