

PRESERVATION & RESTORATION PROPOSAL



PRESERVING THE PAST, BUILDING THE FUTURE: THE YELLOW SCHOOLHOUSE PROJECT

Prepared By:

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THANK YOU

FOR CONSIDERING!

I would like to thank you sincerely for taking the time to consider my proposal regarding the preservation of the Yellow Schoolhouse. Your willingness to hear this idea is a meaningful first step toward ensuring that one of our community's most recognizable and historic landmarks is not lost to time. The schoolhouse has stood for generations as a symbol of our shared past—representing the early families who built this town, the children who learned within its walls, and the values of hard work and community that remain at the heart of Kennan today.

Preserving the schoolhouse is not just about saving a building; it is about honoring our heritage and creating a lasting gift for future generations. Once these structures are gone, they cannot be brought back, and with them disappears a piece of our identity. By working together to protect and restore the Yellow Schoolhouse, we ensure that Kennan's story continues to be told—through its architecture, its history, and its living presence in the landscape. I am deeply grateful for your consideration and look forward to the possibility of partnering with you in this important effort.

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WHY ME?

My name is Kate Arquette. I'm here to talk to you today about the yellow schoolhouse located at W11310 HWY 8 in Kennan- also known as the Four Corners School, The Yellow Schoolhouse, or the Kennan Town Hall building.

To preface- my family has lived on the adjoining property at W11330 Highway 8 in Kennan for **five generations**—beginning with my children's great-great-grandparents, William and Anna Pfaffendorf. And it is presently owned by their great-grandfather, my grandfather, Larry Pfaffendorf. This land holds deep meaning to us and our family, and on it stands the small yellow schoolhouse that I'm here to talk about today.

As you know, this schoolhouse hasn't been in use for many decades- ceasing to operate as a school in the early 1960s. It's now **visibly deteriorating**, and it's clear that the Town has not been maintaining it, for reasons I completely understand- it takes time, money, resources- it's a lot. But what worries me is that this little building—so full of history and character—may continue to decay until it's beyond repair or eventually demolished.

Years ago, even prior to my great-grandparents' ownership, the property that the school is on belonged to the connected property currently owned by my grandfather. It was owned by Ernest C. Rothe, who deeded the parcel to School District No. 4 of Kennan on August 23, 1901 to be used for building the Four Corners schoolhouse in 1902. At the time, **there was an understanding that once the schoolhouse was no longer in operation as a school, the deeded parcel would be returned back to the original property.** I do have a copy of that original deed but there, unfortunately, appears to be no language indicating a reversion clause, making it likely that this agreement was based on the trust and honor of handshake and a gentleman's agreement. So, while not legally binding, **I do hope the Town of Kennan would be open to still honoring the spirit of that agreement.**

I am formally requesting that the Town of Kennan consider allowing me to take over care and ownership of the schoolhouse and the land that it sits on.

Ideally, I would love for the Town to **donate the parcel back to the original property parcel**, as was originally intended back in 1901. But I'm also very open to discussing other options—whether that's a formal sale, or a long-term stewardship agreement that transfers responsibility for the building and its preservation to me.

In return, I would:

- **Cover any necessary legal, survey, or title costs;**
- **Fully assume liability, taxes, and future maintenance;**
- **And begin the process of restoring the schoolhouse with the goal of getting it listed on the Wisconsin State Register of Historic Places.**

My long-term vision is to restore the building as a historic site—possibly a small museum—as part of my larger effort to turn our family land into a working farm and community destination called Pfaffy's Place. We plan to offer walking trails, seasonal events, and educational programs that honor the rural history of this area. The schoolhouse could be a beautiful part of that vision—and a meaningful piece of Kennan's story preserved for future generations.

PRESERVING A PIECE OF KENNAN'S HISTORY



I AM FORMALLY REQUESTING THAT THE TOWN OF KENNAN CONSIDER:

- **Donating** the schoolhouse parcel back to the original parcel
- Or alternatively, offering it through a **sale** or long-term **stewardship** agreement

IN RETURN, I WILL:

- Assume full responsibility for restoration, liability, and maintenance
- Cover any necessary legal, surveying, or title costs
- Apply for **State Historical Register** listing through the **Wisconsin Historical Society**
- Integrate the restored schoolhouse into my larger plan for Pfaffy's Place, a family farm business on the adjoining property that will serve the community with seasonal events, agri-tourism, historical interpretation, and education

A Building at Risk



The schoolhouse has now been unused for decades. It's in **visible disrepair** and faces the risk of being **lost forever** to time or demolition. The Town is not currently maintaining the building, and no formal preservation efforts are underway.

A Vision for Preservation and Community Use



Once restored, the schoolhouse could become:

- A small museum or community education space
- A landmark celebrating Kennan's rural history
- A unique asset within a broader community destination promoting local pride and heritage

"History is not a burden on the memory but an illumination of the soul."

— John Emerich Edward Dalberg-Acton

Let's Work Together!

I'm not asking for funding—only the opportunity to honor a longstanding family and community connection by saving this important piece of Kennan's past.

Thank you for considering my proposal.

BENEFITS OF DONATING SCHOOLHOUSE PARCEL BACK TO ORIGINAL PARCEL

1. Relief from Liability and Maintenance Costs

- The building is deteriorating and potentially unsafe.
- If someone is injured on the property, the **Town could be liable**.
- Donating it removes the **burden of future repairs, maintenance, insurance, and legal responsibility** from the Town's shoulders.

2. Avoidance of Demolition Costs

- If the building becomes too dangerous, the Town could be forced to demolish it at **significant taxpayer expense**.
- Donating the parcel avoids that cost entirely while ensuring a **preservation-focused outcome**.

3. Historic Preservation Without Municipal Expense

- By transferring ownership, the Town enables a private citizen to pursue **state and federal funding** for restoration—**without using public funds**.
- This is a win-win: the Town retains the **heritage value** and community pride, without the budget impact.

4. Strengthened Community Image and Tourism Potential

- A restored historic schoolhouse contributes to **Kennan's identity**, rural charm, and local storytelling.
- Incorporated into our future vision (Pfaffy's Place), it could become a draw for **seasonal tourism**, school groups, and community events.
- This aligns with **rural revitalization efforts** without asking the Town to lead or fund the project.

5. Honor a Local Legacy and Build Goodwill

- Donating the parcel **honors the original spirit of the informal agreement** made with my family decades ago.
- It shows the Town values its relationships with long-standing families and is committed to preserving shared history.
- This aligns with rural revitalization efforts without asking the Town to lead or fund the project.

6. Avoid Public Conflict or Controversy

- If the building continues to decay and is ultimately torn down, it may spark **community criticism or regret**.
- Donating the parcel to someone who wants to **preserve, not erase**, history turns a potential liability into a **public goodwill story**.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Yellow Schoolhouse stands as a rare and irreplaceable piece of Kennan’s history, and this proposal outlines a comprehensive strategy to secure, restore, and sustain it for generations to come. By adopting a **Hybrid Ownership Model**—placing the property under a trust or preservation easement for long-term protection, while operating programming through an LLC or nonprofit—we ensure both legal safeguarding and financial sustainability.

A diverse range of **Funding and Grant opportunities** at the local, state, and federal levels provides a strong foundation for restoration, while strategic partnerships can amplify community support.

Our **Restoration and Use Plan** follows a phased approach: immediate stabilization, professional assessment, careful rehabilitation, and ultimately, vibrant public programming including tours, school partnerships, and community events.

To protect these investments, the **Insurance Roadmap** evolves with the property’s use, from vacant coverage to builder’s risk during construction, and finally to specialized historic property insurance once fully operational. Together, these steps create a clear path to not only save the Yellow Schoolhouse but to transform it into a living landmark that educates, inspires, and strengthens the community.

OWNERSHIP & LONG-TERM STEWARDSHIP OPTIONS



LLC (LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY)

- Flexible for fundraising, events, rentals, and tax credits.
- Provides liability protection.
- Can transfer membership to heirs or other stewards.
- Risk: future managers could repurpose or sell the schoolhouse unless the operating agreement restricts this.



TRUST (HISTORIC/PROPERTY TRUST)

- Legally ensures preservation beyond an individual's lifetime.
- Can restrict future use through trust terms or historic easements.
- Trustees control property management.
- Less flexible for income-generating uses.



HYBRID MODEL (RECOMMENDED)

- Place the property in a **trust or preservation easement** (Wisconsin Historical Society or National Trust).
- Operate programming and fundraising through an **LLC or nonprofit**.
- Guarantees both protection and sustainability.

WHY THE HYBRID MODEL?

The **Hybrid Model** is recommended because it balances long-term legal protection with practical sustainability. By placing the Yellow Schoolhouse in a **trust** or under a **preservation easement** (with the Wisconsin Historical Society or the National Trust for Historic Preservation), the property itself is legally safeguarded from demolition, inappropriate alterations, or neglect—even decades into the future. This ensures that the building's historic character and integrity will remain intact, regardless of changes in ownership or leadership.

At the same time, operating programming, fundraising, and community engagement through an **LLC or nonprofit** provides flexibility and financial viability. An LLC or nonprofit can apply for grants, host events, manage donations, and develop revenue-generating activities (such as educational tours, rentals, or cultural programming) to keep the schoolhouse self-sustaining. This dual structure guarantees both **permanent protection** of the historic asset and the **practical means to fund and maintain it**, making the Hybrid Model the most effective and resilient path forward.

RECOGNITION & HISTORIC DESIGNATION

The first step in preserving the Yellow Schoolhouse is building strong local support by partnering with the **Price County Historical Society** and gathering letters from community members and leaders. With this foundation, we will apply for a **Wisconsin Historic Preservation Fund Subgrant** to cover the cost of a professional survey and documentation, ensuring the building's story is thoroughly recorded. Finally, we will pursue listing on both the **Wisconsin State Register of Historic Places** and the **National Register of Historic Places**—unlocking recognition, credibility, and eligibility for significant preservation funding.



Step 1: Build Local Support

- Partner with Price County Historical Society (Fifield).
- Collect letters of support from community members, officials, and local groups.



STEP 2: RESEARCH & DOCUMENTATION

- Apply for a Wisconsin Historic Preservation Fund Subgrant to fund a survey.
- Work with an architectural historian to document the building's history, photos, maps, and context.



Step 3: State & National Register Nomination

- Submit nomination to Wisconsin State Register of Historic Places via State Historic Preservation Office
- Advance to National Register of Historic Places for broader recognition and funding eligibility.

FUNDING & GRANTS

Preserving the Yellow Schoolhouse will rely on a diverse mix of state, local, and national funding opportunities. At the state level, the **Wisconsin Historic Preservation Fund** and the **Homeowners' Historic Preservation Tax Credit** can support both survey and rehabilitation work. Locally, small project grants from the **Wisconsin Antiques Dealers Association** and potential fundraising partnerships with the **Price County Historical Society** provide important grassroots support. On a national scale, competitive programs like the **National Park Service's Save America's Treasures** and grants from the **National Trust for Historic Preservation** offer critical matching funds for major rehabilitation. Together, this layered approach ensures both immediate resources and long-term financial sustainability.

WISCONSIN STATE-LEVEL



- **Wisconsin Historic Preservation Fund (HPF)** – for survey and construction grants.
- **Wisconsin Homeowners' Historic Preservation Tax Credit** – 25% income tax credit for rehabilitation expenses.

LOCAL & PRIVATE



- **Wisconsin Antiques Dealers Association (WADA) Grants** – \$500–\$1,000 for small projects; awarded in Price County previously.
- **Price County Historical Society** – potential partner for joint fundraising.

FEDERAL & NATIONAL



- **National Park Service / Historic Preservation Fund** – for major rehabilitation.
- **Save America's Treasures (NPS)** – competitive federal funding for significant historic properties.
- **National Trust for Historic Preservation** – matching grants through the National Trust Preservation Fund.

RESTORATION & USE PLAN

"A generation which ignores history has no past and no future."

- Robert Heinlein

The restoration of the Yellow Schoolhouse will follow a careful, phased approach. **Phase 1** focuses on stabilization—securing the roof, foundation, windows, and exterior while carrying Builder’s Risk Insurance to protect the property during work. **Phase 2** involves a professional assessment to ensure structural safety, preserve historic materials, and maintain accessibility. In **Phase 3**, restoration and rehabilitation will address interior finishes, historically accurate details, and necessary system upgrades, with expenses submitted for state and federal tax credit reimbursement. Finally, **Phase 4** will bring the schoolhouse back to life through public programming, including tours, school partnerships, and community events, while exploring sustainable revenue options such as weddings and heritage celebrations.



PHASE 1: STABILIZATION

- Secure roof, foundation, windows, and exterior to prevent further deterioration.
- Apply for **Builder’s Risk Insurance** during this stage.



PHASE 2: HISTORIC STRUCTURE ASSESSMENT

- Commission a professional preservation plan.
- Prioritize structural safety, historic material conservation, and accessibility compliance.



PHASE 3: RESTORATION & REHABILITATION

- Interior finishes, historically appropriate details, upgrades to systems (electric, heating).
- Submit expenses for **state/federal tax credit reimbursement**.



PHASE 4: PUBLIC PROGRAMMING

- Host open houses, tours, and school visits.
- Develop educational partnerships with local schools.
- Explore revenue-generating uses: weddings, heritage events, community gatherings.

INSURANCE ROADMAP

Protecting the Yellow Schoolhouse requires a staged insurance plan aligned with each phase of use. **Stage 1** begins with vacant property insurance to safeguard against vandalism, storms, and fire, with the option of an umbrella policy for added liability. During **Stage 2** restoration, Builder's Risk Insurance covers theft, accidents, and vandalism, while General Liability Insurance protects contractors, volunteers, and visitors. In **Stage 3**, once the building is fully restored and operational, specialized Historic Property Insurance, paired with General Liability and optional Directors & Officers (D&O) coverage, ensures comprehensive protection. An umbrella policy adds extra security for large gatherings, weddings, and public events.



STAGE 1: Current (Vacant or Pre-Restoration)

- **Vacant Property Insurance** – protect against vandalism, storm, and fire. (\$1,520 to \$1,758 annually for vacant coverage.)
- Consider **Umbrella Policy** for added liability coverage.



STAGE 2: During Restoration

- **Builder's Risk Insurance** – covers theft of materials, vandalism, accidents.
- **General Liability Insurance** – covers injuries to contractors, volunteers, or visitors.



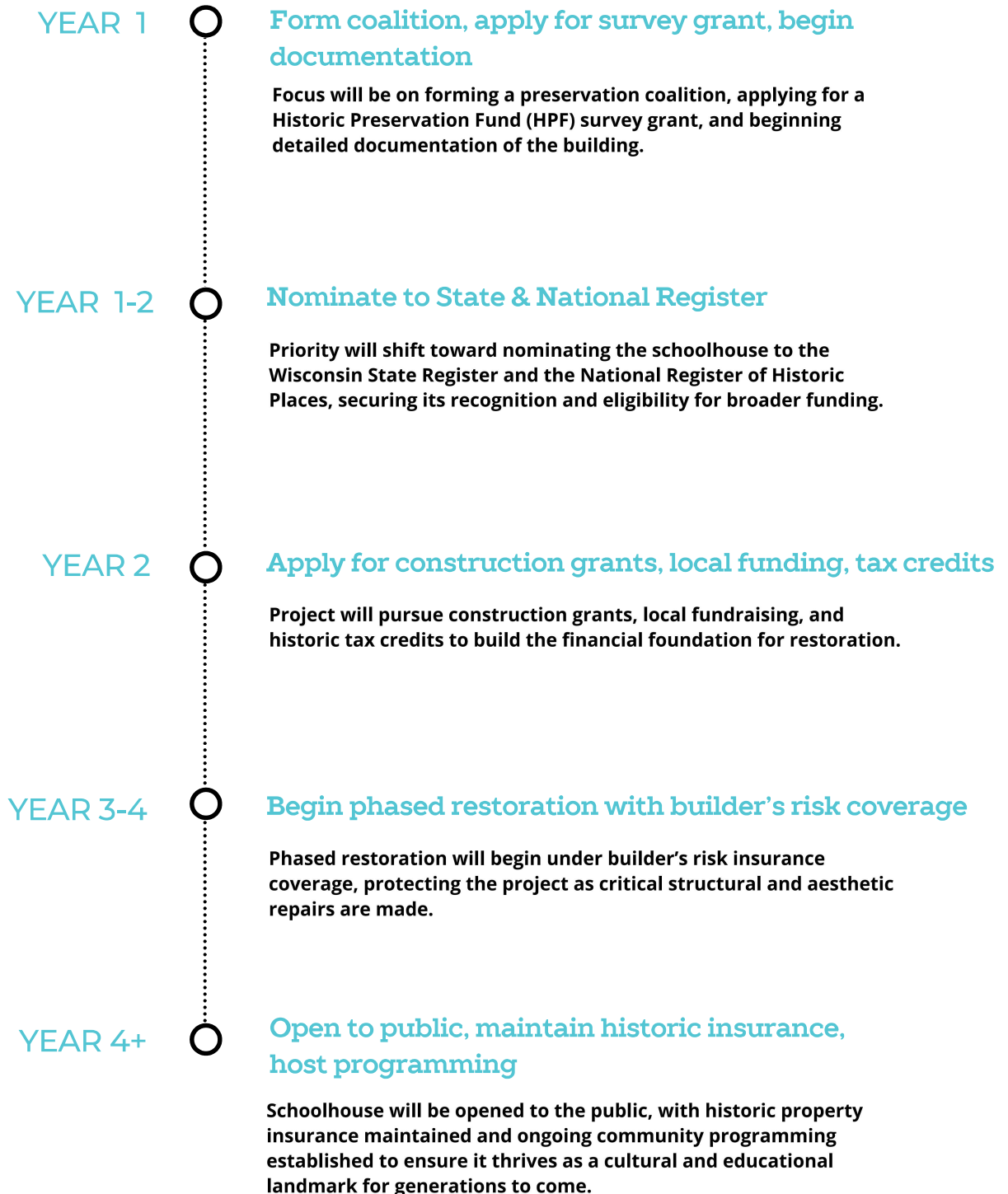
STAGE 3: Fully Restored & Operational

- **Historic Property Insurance** (through a specialist like *National Trust Insurance Services*).
- **General Liability Insurance** – for tours, public events, or rentals.
- **Directors & Officers (D&O) Insurance** – if run by a nonprofit or board.
- **Umbrella Policy** – additional coverage for large gatherings or weddings.

PROPOSED TIMELINE

“A goal without a plan is just a wish.”

The proposed timeline for the Yellow Schoolhouse restoration project is both practical and phased to ensure lasting success.



KEY ORGANIZATIONS & CONTACTS

WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

wisconsinhistory.org

PRICE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Fifield, WI

pricecountyhistoricalsociety.org

Local partner for grant's programming, and stewardship.

WISCONSIN ANTIQUES DEALERS ASSOCIATION

wisconsinantiquesdealers.com

NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

savingplaces.org

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE/HISTORIC PRESERVATION FUND

nps.gov

NATIONAL TRUST INSURANCE SERVICES

mdpins.com/historic-properties

Historic building insurance solutions

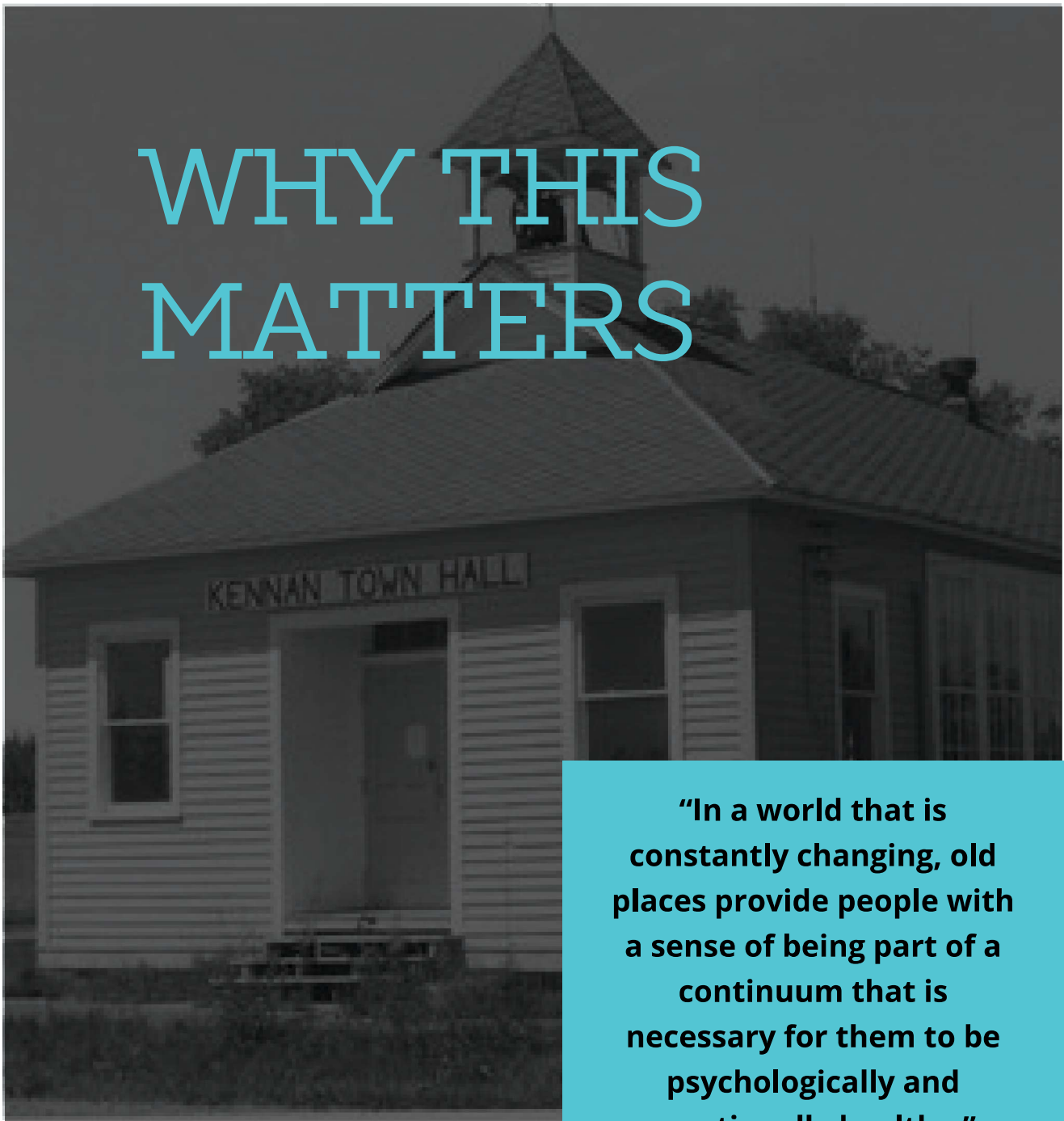
CHURCH MUTUAL INSURANCE

Merrill, WI

churchmutual.com

Insures historic community buildings statewide

WHY THIS MATTERS



The Yellow Schoolhouse is more than just a building—it is one of the last physical ties to Kennan’s earliest generations, a place where children gathered, neighbors met, and community life flourished. Preserving it means safeguarding not only brick and timber, but the **shared history, identity, and pride** of the town itself. If we act now, we can ensure that the stories, traditions, and lessons held within these walls remain alive for generations to come.

“In a world that is constantly changing, old places provide people with a sense of being part of a continuum that is necessary for them to be psychologically and emotionally healthy.”

— Tom Mayes, *Why Do Old Places Matter?*

CONCLUSION

To ensure the Yellow Schoolhouse is preserved for generations, I will:

- Place the property in a **trust** or **easement** for long-term protection.
- Operate programming through an **LLC or nonprofit** for flexibility and funding access.
- Secure **state, federal, and local grants** for restoration.
- Carry **appropriate insurance coverage at each phase**.
- Build partnerships with the **Price County Historical Society** and the **Wisconsin Historical Society** for support, credibility, and resources.

This dual strategy—**legal preservation + active community use**—will ensure the schoolhouse not only survives but thrives as a living part of Price County's history.

THANK YOU
FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

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