



# Iowa Lakes Resource Conservation & Development

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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Spencer House Receives State Preservation Award**

On May 19<sup>th</sup> the Iowa Historic Preservation Alliance (IHPA) in partnership with the Iowa Gaming Association awarded five historic properties the *Preservation at its Best* awards during Community History Day in Des Moines.

This partnership seeks to honor individuals, organizations, projects, and programs whose work demonstrates a commitment to excellence in historic preservation. In doing so, the IHPA hopes to inspire others to take action to preserve, protect, and promote historic resources.

The award for single-family residential was received by Julie Schmidt and Lee Vogel who brought their house back after serious neglect. The house was built in 1916, by J.E. McClurg who moved from Emmetsburg and built this house as well as a few others in Spencer. Mr. McClurg was in the real estate business. From the McClurg's the Bernhagen family owned the house from 1919-1943. The Bernhagen's were farmers. It is unclear when they lived in the house as parts of it were divided up and rented out to other families/individuals. One such family was the Rindsig family. Mr. Nels Rindsig established Spencer Construction a long-time area business. The Lawson Family owned the house from 1943-1968. They ran Lawson Oil Company in Spencer. In 1968, one of their daughters (Swenning) gained ownership of the house.

When Julie and Lee bought the house in 2004, it hadn't been painted in 25 years, ivy had taken over the exterior, and some wood trim was rotten. The property as a whole had been overrun by vegetation, including several trees that were dead or dying. With a lot of hard work, Julie and Lee restored it to livable condition, including installing a high efficiency hot water boiler, updating the electrical and plumbing systems, and insulating the attic and exterior walls. On the exterior, stucco was cleaned, repaired, primed and painted; wood trim was repaired or replaced, scraped, primed and painted. Many of the house's 73 windows plus traditional storms and screens were repaired or rebuilt. Interior work is on-going.

The house was recently featured in the quarterly publication, *The Iowa Preservationist*. For more information contact Sheriffa Jones.