

# IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

## University Extension



June 27, 2008

### *The Barns & Agricultural Properties of Palo Alto County, Iowa*

Dear Palo Alto Farm Owner:

Recently, the West Bend Historical Society received a Palo Alto County Gaming Development Corporation grant to conduct a reconnaissance survey of Palo Alto County's historic resources. The grant funds will enable a complete survey of communities; however, the funds would limit the agricultural survey area to the roads that are traveled between communities. Therefore, a partnership between Iowa State University Palo Alto County Extension, Iowa Lakes RC&D, and USDA FSA has been formed to complete this additional step for the agricultural areas of our county.

The historic Iowa barn is a rapidly diminishing resource. It is estimated that there were over 200,000 barns built in Iowa and that we have somewhere around 60,000 left. It is also estimated that Iowa is losing around 1,000 barns per year and that number is accelerating. For these reasons, we are excited to begin compiling information with the help of each farm owner.

The survey will be conducted using the National Barn Alliance form. Upon completion, the information will enable a better understanding of current historic resources in Palo Alto County.

Beginning in July community volunteers, which may include 4-H members will be taking photos and completing other research. They would like to speak with you and gather more information about the history of your farm and the buildings. With all the information gathered, we will compile a page on the Iowa Lakes RC&D website which will display various types of buildings in Palo Alto County that were documented during the survey. This will include barns and other farm structures, as well as churches, cemeteries, and other community buildings.

Please fill out the enclosed National Barn Alliance survey form and submit any photos (digital or **print copies**). Photos will not be returned. On a separate piece of paper, please tell us about the history of your farm and buildings, any memories, or other pertinent information you may have. We look forward to hearing about each of your stories. Submit all information to the Iowa Lakes RC&D Office, Agriculture Survey, 203 10<sup>th</sup> Street PO BOX 265, Spencer, IA 51301.

If you have questions about this project or the survey, please call Sheriffa Jones, Architectural Historian, at the Iowa Lakes RC&D office at 712-262-2083 or [sjones@iowalakesrcd.org](mailto:sjones@iowalakesrcd.org). Thank you in advance for your help on this exciting project.

Handwritten signature of Bob Behnkendorf in black ink.

Bob Behnkendorf  
Director, Palo Alto County Extension

Handwritten signature of Dan Heissel in black ink.

Dan Heissel  
Chair, Iowa Lakes RC&D

Handwritten signature of Les Zobrist in black ink.

Les Zobrist  
CED, USDA/FSA

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