

COMMUNITY CONTEXT 2.0



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Location and Description 2.1



McDonald County is a beautiful rural farming community nestled in the Ozark Mountains in the very Southwest corner of the state of Missouri. It ranks fourth in the state for total value of agricultural products sold and third in the value of livestock, poultry and their products, contributing greatly to Missouri's state economy.

The natural beauty of McDonald County and the clear water of Elk River which runs through it adds to the quality of life for residents and attracts tourists for recreation such as canoing, camping and fishing.



The Joplin Metropolitan Area stretches southward through Newton County to touch McDonald County's northern border. That



rapidly growing Metropolitan Area is attracting industry and increasing in population. On the southern border of McDonald County is another Metropolitan Area experiencing an even more dynamic

growth. The Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers MSA is the sixth fastest growing area in the nation. Since the 2000 Census, rapid development from Arkansas has reached over the Missouri state line into McDonald County. The US Census Bureau has officially included this rural Missouri

county as a part of the NorthWest Arkansas Metropolitan Area.

Hwy 71 Expressway runs North and South through the heart of McDonald County, connecting the two metropolitan areas on either side. That highway is rapidly being four-laned. In 2007, the highway from Interstate 40 in Arkansas to Interstate 70 in Kansas City was four laned, allowing easy access for transportation from McDonald County to anywhere in the country.

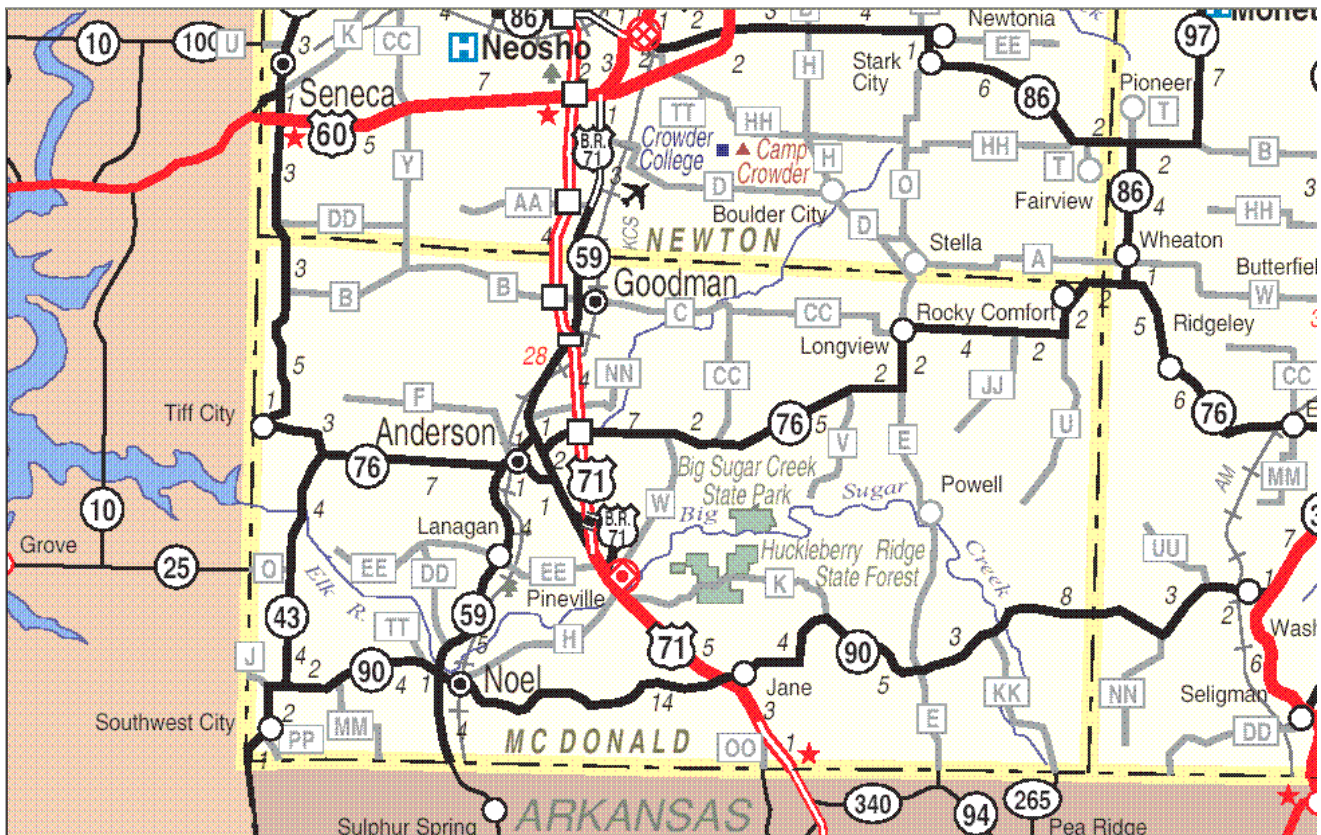
Over 800 miles of roads stretch across McDonald County connecting its citizens to each other and the world. More than half of these miles of road are unpaved. These simple country dirt roads are more desirable to many residents than the congestion of city traffic. Road improvements are financed by sales tax and roads are gradually being paved throughout the county. The county takes care of 660 miles of road, both dirt and paved. MoDOT maintains the remaining roads and in 2007 completed the four lane expressway from the state line to Pineville, stimulating retail development along that new expressway.



The Ozark hills and waterways determine land use and location of roads. Soils tend to be shallow and rocky with numerous limestone outcroppings. A porous limestone 'karst' base allows water to travel quickly underground and numerous caves are formed. Water tends to be clear and streams often become 'losing streams' which disappear underground only to reappear again downstream. Rugged hillsides host hardwood forests, an important economic resource for McDonald County. Streams of the Elk River Watershed meander throughout the county, frequently bordered by meadows and pasture. Little is produced in the way of row crops in McDonald County and hay is the primary crop farmed on these open areas.

In the winter, the average temperature is 36.6 degrees F. and the average daily minimum temperature is 26.8 degrees F.. In the summer, the average temperature is 77.3 degrees F. and the average maximum temperature is 88.2 degrees. The average annual precipitation in McDonald County is 43.61 inches. This mild climate with four distinct seasons provides pleasant living conditions and is ideal for retirement living as evidenced by the retirement community of Bella Vista, AR, which borders McDonald County to the south.

McDonald County remains a rural county with its 540 square miles being populated by just over 22,000 people at the time of the 2000 census. A third of those residents live in the County's eight incorporated communities. The remaining residents are spread over the County, frequently in close proximity to each other in small rural unincorporated communities.



The eight incorporated communities are:

Pineville is the County seat and hosts most County offices including the Courthouse.

Anderson to the Northwest of Pineville has grown to the largest of the cities in McDonald County and is home to the County's High School.

Lanagan to the SW of Anderson is sited along Indian Creek

Noel, known as the Christmas City, is situated on the Elk River at the intersection of Hwy 90 and 59.

Southwest City sits in the far SW corner of Missouri.

Goodman greets visitors along the interstate Hwy 71 in northern McDonald County.

Jane and **Ginger Blue** are newly incorporated villages which reflect the population growth that has been taking place in recent years.

County History 2.2

McDonald County was named after Alexander McDonald, one of Francis Marion's men who fought in the Revolutionary War. It has the distinction of being the only county in the United States having the name of McDonald County. The county has a rich and colorful history. The following pages reflect some of the highlights which helped shape the county as it is today.

In the pre-history period it was home to various Native Americans who hunted, fished, farmed and found shelter within the rugged landscape. After the first European contact, Hernando De Soto's expedition in 1541 and then Marquette and Joliet's arrival more than 100 years later, the "Great Dying" largely depopulated Middle America. In the early 1800's the Osage Indians claimed the land.

The Louisiana Purchase of 1803 included the land that would eventually become McDonald County. The territory was so sparsely populated in 1811 when the New Madrid earthquake struck that few lives were lost. No loss of life was recorded in Southwest Missouri.

In 1812, five counties were established in Missouri as east-west bands of land that extended to the western border of the Territory, an anachronism of the earlier French "districts." New Madrid was the southernmost band and made up what is now Southern Missouri. To understand the history and movement of families in Southwest Missouri one must take into account the shifting state and county boundaries, various and often times conflicting laws regarding land ownership, treaties with Indians and other counties, as well as the actions of land speculators.

The first recorded settlers in McDonald County were Valentine "Telty" Miller, his wife and his son in 1827. They established a homestead on Elk River south of Pineville and built a water-powered "corn cracker" mill. Miller also utilized a copper still that he brought from North Carolina to make whiskey until 1842. When Miller's son died, he and his wife moved on to California. In the 1830's several more families moved into the McDonald County area, totaling about 40 people. In the 1840's the pace of immigration increased throughout the county.

Early settlers in the 1830's found clear rivers, rolling timbered hills and fertile bottom land on which to raise crops. Game abounded in the woods and farm animals thrived. Families settled throughout the county on farmsteads along the waterways. These independent settlers of McDonald County were on the outpost of the frontier, with Indian Territory to the west.

The 1840's brought the "Pine War" between settlers and U.S. Marshals over cutting trees on public land. Nearly all of the land in the county was government land and there were extensive pine forests in the hills bordering the two Sugar Creeks and extending from Pineville to the east side of the county. There were also considerable pine lands along the river west of Pineville that extended south to the Arkansas line. A number of saw mills were in operation manufacturing pine timbers. The U.S. Marshals undertook to protect the timber. John B. King, who operated a mill on Kings Creek, was arrested. People generally took the side of the mill men. They gathered together, passed resolutions and organized for the purpose of obstructing and resisting the marshals in every way. It was carried to such an extent that, at Cassville, a marshal was run clear out of the state, seeking refuge in Bentonville, Arkansas. The government prevailed, but not until after much of the pine forest had been destroyed. Kings Creek, which rises in the Richwood township and runs southward to empty into Big Sugar Creek in Center township 2 miles below Powell, was named for John B. King, the first settler in the area, a lawyer and saw mill owner who figured quite prominently in the Pine War.

Also in the 1840's, a band of criminals known as the Avery mob had aroused great public indignation and frustration. Lives, property and money were no longer safe from this band of outlaws and the citizens were ill-equipped to protect themselves. A group of citizens decided to take the law into their own hands. These citizens became the gangbusters of the times. The justice they meted out was unique, but effective. Miscreants were stripped of their clothing and whipped in public with hickory branches that had been toughened by heating. This punishment was called "slicking" and the vigilante groups identified throughout the county during this time were known as "Slickers". (<http://crimemagazine.com/phantom.htm>)

Grain mills and sawmills used water power and were largely responsible for the development of communities. A portion of Newton County separated to become McDonald County in 1849. Pineville (then known as Marysville) and Rutledge both claimed the title of county seat and a tremendous rivalry ensued between the two factions. After about seven years of dispute, the state of Missouri stepped in and proclaimed Marysville the most appropriate location for the county seat and renamed it Pineville in 1857.

The Civil War took its toll on the area, including the burning of the Pineville courthouse by Bushwhackers in 1863 and the loss of valuable and historical records. In the War Between the States, McDonald County was a pro-Southern county on the Arkansas and Oklahoma borders. The county saw heavy troop movement, sharp skirmishes and guerrilla raids. Just over the border in Arkansas is the historic Pea Ridge Battlefield, the site of the decisive Union victory of March 7-8, 1862.



Courthouse on Pineville Square
circa 1870

After the end of the war came a rough period when drunken, reckless characters overwhelmed law and order. An awakening of a temperance movement resulted, long before prohibition at the national level. The citizens of the county were bitterly divided in loyalties between the North and the South, and over the issue of alcohol. Pineville's town doctor, Dr. Albert Chenoweth, a leading advocate of temperance and a bitter opponent of the liquor traffic, was murdered in 1883 over alcohol, showing how strong the feelings ran at that point. However, "moonshine" continued to be manufactured and was still going strong long after the repeal of prohibition.

A wealthy Wyandotte Indian by the name of Mathias Splitlog brought development and prosperity to McDonald County for a time following the Civil War. After selling property in Kansas City, he moved to Indian Territory where he set up a saw mill, a grist mill, store, school and fine home. A supposed "gold strike" west of Goodman brought Splitlog to McDonald County. He established a mine and created Splitlog City. He then built a railroad from Joplin to Splitlog which he planned to continue all the way to the Gulf Coast. Many couples rode that Splitlog line to spend their honeymoon at the fancy, ornate Occidental Hotel built by the millionaire Indian.

The gold mines, unfortunately, proved to be worthless. Splitlog felt responsible for the financial losses of the many people who had relied on his advise and spent most of his remaining wealth reimbursing others. He did not have the funds to continue the railroad and it was sold. That little railroad begun by Mathias Splitlog is now the Kansas City Southern Railroad, one of the most important north and south railroads in the US.

Splitlog made many journeys to Washington, D.C. on tribal business representing the Seneca Tribe who had "adopted" him and made him their Chief. At age 85, Splitlog was enroute to Washington once again when he sickened. Soon after his arrival in Washington in January, 1897, he developed pneumonia and died. His body was returned to Cayuga near Tiff City and laid to rest beside his wife.

Many of the settlers of McDonald County came from Kentucky and Tennessee. A history of the county written in 1899 gave the following illustration of the county culture at that time: "McDonald County is like central Kentucky, acts like middle Tennessee and is still old Missouri, where you can do anything, raise anything and be anything so long as you respect the laws, your neighbor and honor God." (The Enterprise-Herald, Special Edition, Vol XI, No. 17, May 30, 1899, Southwest City, MO. In: McDonald County, Missouri A Pictorial Interpretation by Larry Bradley, 1972. p. 69)



Ginger Blue Resort near Lanagan, Mo. in 1923

With the hard years of settlement and the horrors of the Civil War behind, life began to change in McDonald County. The railroad was built through the county and trains brought waves of tourists to enjoy the beauty of McDonald County and stay at resorts such as Ginger Blue. Next came automobiles and the trucking industry. Highways became critical to development of the area.

The history of McDonald County is punctuated by natural disasters such as floods, droughts and even fires. The combination of the dust bowl and the depression was felt deeply by the local citizens. Although the suffering was intense, the ability to raise their own food helped many families make it through those trying times. The filming of the *Jesse James* movie in 1938 was one of the biggest things to happen in McDonald County. Pineville was chosen for the location of the movie because of the resemblance of the historic courthouse on the square to the one in St. Joseph, Missouri.



Old Courthouse in Pineville, Missouri
established 1870 – white stucco 1943

Industry came to McDonald County first in the form of canning factories. This stimulated the local economy by providing jobs at the factories and a ready market for produce from area farms. Those farms also produced other cash crops such as: dairy products, apples, peaches, corn and strawberries. The Kansas City Southern Railroad had a strawberry shed in Anderson from 1920 through 1970. As the canning factories waned, mobile home factories and poultry processing gained prominence in the county. Poultry production continues to have a major economic impact on McDonald County.

A colorful time in McDonald County's history took place in 1961. After being unintentionally omitted from the official State of Missouri Tourism Maps, the county good-naturedly threatened to secede from the state as a public relations stunt. Calling itself “McDonald Territory”, a militia was formed, stamps and passports printed and the national media took notice. McDonald County was soon on the map nationally. After a few weeks, citizens grew worried about the game and concerned over possible long term repercussions. The “Territorial Uprising” was over for McDonald County.

The waterways in McDonald County continued to be a major attraction to residents and visitors alike. Changing travel patterns of Americans during the mid 20th century resulted in a gradual decline of resorts in McDonald County. To keep the legacy of Ginger Blue alive, the surrounding area incorporated as a village in 1964. Ginger Blue Resort was lost to fire in 2003.

During the 1970's, campgrounds evolved to accommodate tourists' desire to enjoy the waterways and outdoor activities. Campgrounds and RV parks provided overnight accommodations and some canoe outfitters added cabin rentals. Canoes, rafts and tubes were enjoyed by thousands of people of all ages during the summer float season. Recreational tourism became so popular that it continues to be a major source of income in McDonald County, second only to agriculture in importance.

Change was occurring to the south of McDonald County as the retail trade and poultry industry expanded and became major contributors to the local economy, stimulating growth in population and jobs. The retirement village of Bella Vista was formed in Arkansas next to this county. It was only the beginning of a sustained period of growth that continues today for McDonald County.

County Growth 2.3

Passers-by on a country road often greet each other with a wave of the hand, a nod of the head. These simple gestures acknowledge stranger, neighbor or friend alike as an individual who shares that special corner of the world. Country roads lead to rural communities where folks gather for sociable meals in a neighborhood cafe, where they can carouse at a local watering hole or buy a tank of gas and a gallon of milk, where schools develop children into responsible citizens with the support of parents and community, and where churches beacon those who share personal convictions to join together in faith and fellowship.



As country roads turn onto a faster highway, individuals become lost into “vehicles” and the vehicle soon disappears into “traffic” – leaving behind individual identity and that special sense of community. Country roads represent the rural lifestyle which many McDonald Countians hold dear. Rapid population growth that is occurring here is like turning onto the

highway. It's good to be connected to the world, but home is here in McDonald County and citizens are concerned that their way of life needs to be preserved.

Change is here in McDonald County and more is coming. There is no way to put out your hand to stop it. The USDA agricultural census reports that farm land in McDonald County decreased by 12% between 1997 and 2002. That trend has continued since 2002 and is apparent in the farmland being converted to commercial development along the new expressway and the appearance of new housing subdivisions. A farm annexed into Pineville is now the site of a subdivision for 800 residences which will double the population of that city when build-out is completed. Signs of development are visible all over the county and much of the land is becoming too valuable for use as farmland. McDonald County is part of an area that is entering a new era of growth, one based on expansion of the region as a whole.

McDonald County has been absorbing urban spillover from Northwest Arkansas because its rural atmosphere is an attraction for those seeking to escape the bustle and expense of urban living. Recent trends have been for businesses to follow the new population base. This is especially evident near the Arkansas state line with the opening of the Wal-Mart Supercenter, major car dealership, motel and two banks in 2005. A medical center under construction nearby and new businesses at two “mini-malls” are forerunners of the many new businesses expected in the area when the sewer extension is completed in 2007. Because much of McDonald County's budget comes from sales tax, retail growth is especially welcome. A major increase in sales tax revenue accompanied the opening of these new businesses, providing increased budget resources for County operations and projects.

New businesses also bring new jobs to our community. The growth of retail and commercial businesses have the potential to accelerate population growth and economic development at a rapid pace. Land is available to accommodate that growth in McDonald County at bargain prices compared to those in Arkansas and tax rates are also more favorable here. Infrastructure improvements will be critical to facilitate this development.

It is important to direct growth toward established communities where it is possible to provide cost effective services such as water, schools, paved roads, wastewater treatment, as well as jobs and shopping. Many new residents will expect urban levels of services unavailable in rural areas. New rural communities should also be encouraged to provide support for a growing population at strategic locations. As these communities develop, they may incorporate into villages or towns in order to focus on the needs of the citizens.

Urban growth areas on the fringes of incorporated areas need to meet standards of neighboring communities as they are likely to be incorporated in the future.

Our farmland, natural resources and watershed should be preserved by discouraging urban sprawl.

Floodplains need to be protected from development.



Preserving our Heritage 2.4

“Historic preservation isn’t simply about saving old buildings or creating opportunities for economic development; it’s about keeping alive the elements that make a community unique. Ultimately, what it has to do with is preserving a sense of identity.” (5/10/07 Greg Allen, chairman, Missouri Advisory Council on Historic Preservation http://www.ioplinglobe.com/local/local_story_130234403.html)

Vision For The Future Of Preservation In Missouri

Missouri will be a state that progresses and prospers while preserving and respecting its unique heritage. Citizens of all ages will appreciate the unique and fragile nature of Missouri's historic places and archaeological resources. Preservation will be widely recognized as a major contributor to tourism, economic development and quality of life. Government officials at all levels and private-sector leaders will include preservation concerns as they make decisions about Missouri's future.

Missouri's diverse constituencies will work together as partners in a statewide preservation movement, creating an effective and vocal constituency. A high level of services will be provided by the preservation community to assist the citizens of Missouri in accomplishing preservation goals throughout the state.

<http://www.dnr.mo.gov/shpo/preshor2004.pdf>

Over time, the state of Missouri has demonstrated solid support for historic preservation.

Missouri passed the first State Historic Preservation Act in the country. That legislation established and funded a state revolving fund and created a landmark state historic preservation tax credit. In addition, the state offers numerous financial and technical assistance programs available to local governments, organizations and individuals through the departments of Natural Resources and Economic Development.

Historic preservation begins as a grassroots movement focused on local resources and action at the local level remains the pivotal factor in the success of Missouri's preservation program. The state looks to local governments and their constituents as the most effective partners in carrying out a statewide plan for preservation.

McDonald County shares the State of Missouri's commitment to preserving our heritage.

McDonald County takes pride and satisfaction in celebrating its heritage. Time and change threaten to remove for all time, physical reminders of our past in the form of historic buildings, landmarks and farmsteads. This comprehensive plan addresses ways to preserve our heritage, to protect our historic buildings and places, and to celebrate those citizens who contributed to the fabric of McDonald County. Following are important contributions to the preservation of McDonald County's heritage.

The McDonald County Library has an outstanding selection of Genealogy and historical material, including some very rare records that are specific to McDonald County. The library also has a rare history of McDonald County published in 1897 by Judge Sturges, presiding judge of McDonald County from 1887-90. That book is available online in PDF format and can be downloaded at <http://www.librarymail.org/genehist/index.html>.

In the McDonald County SESQUICENTENNIAL Family Histories, published by the McDonald County Press in 1999, the history and people of McDonald County from 1849 to 1999 are

recorded for all time in text and photos. This is an invaluable contribution to the preservation of McDonald County's history.

McDonald County's first courthouse was built of logs five miles downriver from Pineville at the Rutledge settlement and served as the contested county seat from 1849 to 1857. That log structure which stood on the Eppard Farm on EE Highway and was donated to the McDonald County Historical Society. Efforts to move the building intact were unsuccessful. The McDonald County Historical Society, with the financial assistance of the County Commission, is undertaking the task of restoring the log courthouse one log at a time to a permanent location in Pineville.



McDonald County Historical Society is dedicated to the preservation of the County's history by documenting, researching, and sharing information, data, and research with the public. The Society is building a website to host a variety of news and resources for persons interested in the history and genealogy of McDonald County, and can be accessed online at <http://www.mcdonaldcohistory.org>



The McDonald County Museum is becoming a reality thanks to a partnership between the McDonald County Commissioners and the Historical Society. The county has provided the building in Pineville known as the "old sheriff's" home for the museum, and is providing utilities for that museum. The Historical Society restored the building at an astonishing rate and opened its first exhibit in September of 2007.

The Powell Historical Preservation Society was formed in 2008 as a non-profit organization to take ownership and maintenance responsibilities for the Historic Powell Bridge which was built in 1914-15 and funded by McDonald County and community volunteers. The Powell Bridge, constructed of steel and wood, is distinguished from the thousands of other bridges built during the same time period because of its relatively long span length,





combining both through and pony truss spans. A new bridge is to be built nearby, and the community is raising funds to preserve the historic iron bridge. The Historic Powell Bridge is eligible for the Missouri Historic Registry.

These and other grassroots efforts to preserve McDonald County's heritage are examples of the commitment of

citizens and county government alike. An important step to continue these efforts would be a program to identify and evaluate historic resources within McDonald County.

Under Missouri law, counties and municipalities can enact local preservation ordinances and establish preservation commissions.

The Planning Commission recommends establishing such a commission with the goal to "Identify and encourage the preservation of lands, sites, and structures that have historical, cultural, and archaeological significance." Such resources serve as tangible reminders of McDonald County's history and cultural roots.

Preservation can be a significant redevelopment strategy for communities. It is necessary to be very creative to instill a new economic role in historic buildings. Missouri's Department of Economic Development would be a valuable partner in such an effort.

The Planning Commission will promote heritage tourism as a means of resource protection and economic development.

The Planning Commission will support projects that encourage restoration and maintenance of historic properties.

Preservation of historic resources may not always be practical and may conflict with other goals such as accommodating housing or job growth. In these cases, alternative means of making the community aware of its heritage and preserving community identity should be pursued. Where there are instances when alteration or demolition of a Historic Landmark is necessary, it is valuable to keep records of the modifications and past history for the use of future researchers.

A Historic Landmark designation is the most common method to identify which historic and cultural resources to protect. Designation of a property can occur at three levels; local, state, or national. A County Register of Historic Places enable McDonald County to recognize those properties which are significant to the heritage of our County. The county could provide economic assistance for such properties when possible. Proposed alterations to a property listed on the Local Register would be reviewed by the Landmark Preservation Committee.

The role of the "certified local governments" by the State of Missouri should be pursued by McDonald County.

Such certification would make McDonald County eligible to apply to the State Historic Preservation Officer for matching funds earmarked for "certified local governments." It also

would enable properties in McDonald County to achieve listing on the National Register of Historic Places and qualify for federal funding. Guidelines for participation in Missouri's Certified Local Government Program can be found at http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/workingonthepast/missouri_clg.pdf

While historic designation might qualify the local governments and business owners for grants, federal and state tax credits and other assistance, it could impose restrictions and public hearings on any work to be done. It is necessary to ascertain what mandates might be imposed. Grassroots projects may well continue to provide the best venue for preserving McDonald County's heritage.