

NATIONAL BARN ALLIANCE - REGIONAL NEWS

MICHIGAN- The Thumb Octagon Barn:

A Preservation Success Story

Gagetown, Tuscola County-

The Thumb Barn was built in 1924, with tamarac timbers. It is 100 feet in diameter, 8,600 sf on the ground floor, has 8 sides, 42 ft. long and 24 ft. tall, and 3 roof levels crowned with a cupola supporting a large steel ventilator.

It was built to be a model of efficiency; it was state-of-the-art, and meant to be the barn of the future. From a few neighbors uniting in 1993, to stop the demolition of this grand old barn, the renowned, 700-member,

Thumb Agricultural Museum was created. A highlight of the educational program is the School Tour,

full of demonstrations and displays, available to all school classes, 4-H, FFA, Boy & Girl Scout groups and Latch Key programs.



September is time for Fall Family Days at the Thumb Octagon Barn. Step back in time as farming and rural life in the early 1900s comes to life through the many activities, displays and demonstrations. You'll see a saw mill operating; a demonstration of corn and grain harvesting with early to mid-1900 tools and equipment; steam engines; and a stone grist mill. If you have an appetite, you can try homemade ice cream and donuts, hand pressed cider, fresh apple butter and hog kettle popcorn. The children can make a rope, pet their favorite farm animal, play checkers, or ride on a horse-drawn wagon. There is plenty of shopping in the arts & crafts and flea market area. Anyone can wander through the antique tractor and gas engine displays or the quilt displays and tour the one room schoolhouse, the barn and craftsman-style 12-room house.

For a lesson in successful preservation and ideas for your own barn project, visit their website at www.thumboctagonbarn.org

Michigan Barn Preservation Network Fall Conference, Oct. 4 at the magnificent Ellis Barn in Oakland County's Springfield Oaks County Park. This grand 1884 barn measures 129' by 46' and 48' high, and is a "double Dutch" or "Madawaska Twin Barn." This *free* conference includes *free* presentations from 1 to 4 p.m., on the Ellis Barn, the role of barns in tourism in Oakland County, the work of the MBPN, the importance of sustainable agriculture, the relationship between modern building codes and the preservation of historic structures, and evaluating heritage barns for preservation purposes. Also, horse-drawn hayrides, antique tractors, farm animals, games, demonstrations, and much more including a real-true barn dance. The MBPN board will hold its quarterly meeting, October 3 at the Ellis Barn. Board meetings are *free* and open to the public. More info at www.mibarn.net and www.oakgov.com/parksrec.