

## HISTORIC PERRYSBURG

### Perrysburg, Wood County

**Date Completed:** Ongoing program

**Description:** The mission of Historic Perrysburg, Inc. is to cultivate an interest and awareness of the history and architecture of the Perrysburg area...and to provide assistance in the preservation of old buildings and sites. This broad historic preservation program incorporates a variety of strategies.

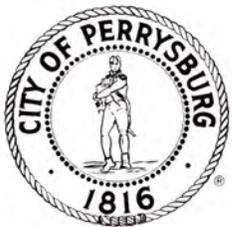
**Project Size:** Approximately 220 acres or near 30 city blocks.

*Below: Perrysburg Riverfront at Hood Park  
(photo: City of Perrysburg)*



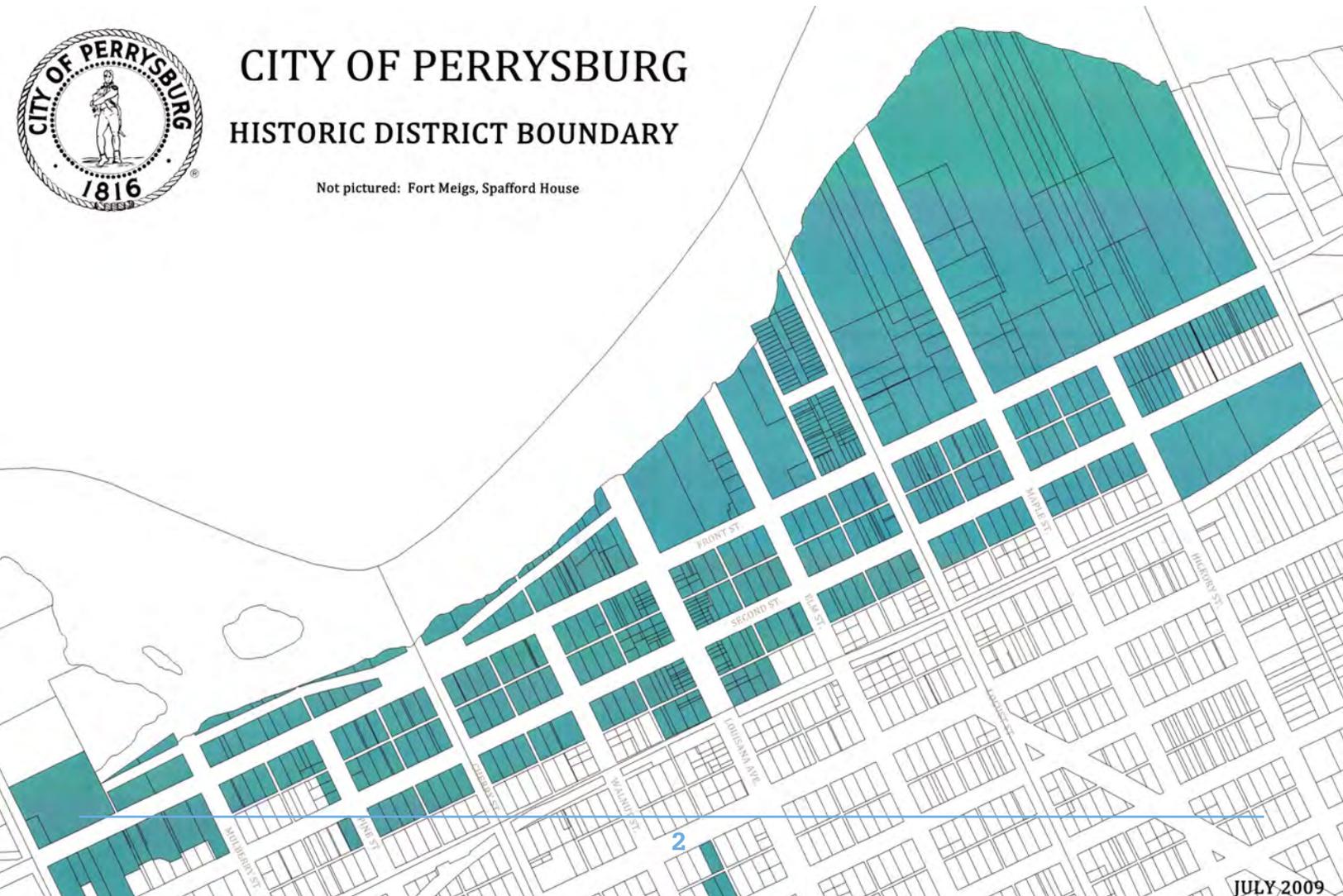
**About Historic Perrysburg:** "Historic Perrysburg is a non-profit organization whose members love this community the way it is and who wish to keep it that way forever. And they work toward this goal without any power or authority to dictate what owners can do with their properties, nor do they in any way function as a part of the City of Perrysburg."

*Below: Perrysburg Historic District  
(map: City of Perrysburg)*



## CITY OF PERRYSBURG HISTORIC DISTRICT BOUNDARY

Not pictured: Fort Meigs, Spafford House



# History Hits the Streets

*Historic Perrysburg's new sign program offers a historic look at downtown.*

by Angie Zam  
Editor

**H**istoric Perrysburg Inc. is taking its mission to the streets in the form of a signage program downtown. New easel-style signs — eight in total — are going in along Louisiana Avenue and feature some historical insights about the buildings across the street.

The program is the brainchild of David Hoffmann, vice president of the historical society. The husband, father and retiree returned to Perrysburg in 2009 after his career had taken to him to Dallas decades earlier. Now back home, Hoffmann says he and his wife joined Historic Perrysburg and quickly found the local history room at Way Public Library.

"We've got to find a way to get this

out there," he says of the local history housed in the room.

So, just more than a year and a half ago, he brought an idea to fellow Historic Perrysburg member and architect Michael Barthold. Hoffmann proposed plaques be hung on buildings downtown explaining their history.

Although Barthold disagreed with the plaque plan, he was on board with the idea of getting the information out there right away.

Barthold went home and started sketching, returning with a first draft of what is now posted downtown.

"Mike showed me that and I immediately fell in love with the idea," says Hoffmann of the first sketch.

Instead of the plaques, an easel-style design was adopted so the viewer can look over the sign to the buildings across the street, those featured on the sign.

After a presentation to the board, a team of Historic Perrysburg members — Bob Boyd, Judy Justus and Richard

Baranowski — joined Hoffman and Barthold and the research and design process began in earnest.

## The look

Much of the information on the signs is gathered at Way Library and from local historians. Then, the team comes together and starts pinning things on a board.

"We've got several different versions of it that we looked at and fixed and discarded and changed," Hoffmann says.

Then, once it is worked out just what information should be included, the old photos are digitized and sent along to graphic designers Rex Russell, of Big Daddy Graphics, and Frank Kuron.

The signs themselves include photos from different eras of Perrysburg's history, the addresses they go along with and a short description.

Because of size limitations, there was additional historical information that Hoffmann could not allow to go to waste. So more can be found inside some of the buildings. These framed posters go into more detail and the businesses that contain them feature a small, black sign on the door or window stating: "History of this building can be seen inside."

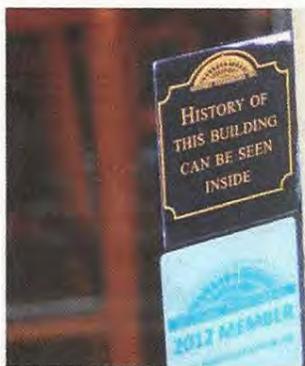
## Making it Happen

Each sign is designed and sponsored by Historic Perrysburg but others in the community — like the Perrysburg Messenger Journal, visitors and convention bureau, the city and the historical group itself — have stepped up to sponsor them. In addition, the city has accepted the responsibility of installing and maintaining the signs. According to Barthold and Hoffmann, the expected completion date of the project is spring.

With this effort well under way, the group is already looking at how to bring the history to the public in other ways including possible signage along the river and other places.

## For information

To keep up with Historic Perrysburg Inc., visit [historicperrysburg.org](http://historicperrysburg.org) or email [info@historicperrysburg.org](mailto:info@historicperrysburg.org).



The first of eight signs planned, at top, tells the stories of the buildings across the street. A window sticker — shown above — depicts which buildings include more information inside. Michael Barthold and David Hoffmann, of Historic Perrysburg Inc., have been instrumental in the project.

Photos by Angie Zam

***Developers/Clients/Owners:***

City of Perrysburg  
201 West Indiana Ave.  
Perrysburg, OH 43551  
<http://www.ci.perrysburg.oh.us/>

Historic Perrysburg, Inc.  
PO Box 703  
Perrysburg, OH 43552  
[www.historicperrysburg.org](http://www.historicperrysburg.org)

*Below: Louisiana Avenue  
(photo: Jim Rees)*



## **Key Features:**

The City of Perrysburg's downtown and historic district feature:

1. **Historic District Signs:** the City of Perrysburg has signs throughout the city directing people to the historic district, and within the district we have unique sign posts informing visitors they are in the district.
2. **"History Happened Here":** a local citizen and member of Historic Perrysburg Inc. (HPI) has spearheaded an effort to install 24"x36" informational signage in the historic downtown business area. These are all-weather signs that describe the historical significance of each block and even provide pictures of the way things used to be.
3. **Self Guided Walking Tours:** the City of Perrysburg offers a self-guided walking tour for residents and visitors to enjoy. A nice brochure highlights some of the significant examples of history/architecture and describes their location on the tour.
4. **Historic Year Signs:** the City of Perrysburg has a program that residents can apply for and purchase bronze plaques for their homes and businesses that designate the date of construction. Most of these signs are readable from the street and many residents have obtained these plaques.
5. **Downtown Improvement Program:** a program that the City of Perrysburg employed several years ago (maybe 5-7 years ago) was to provide building owners with matching funds grants (up to \$25k) dollars for improvements to historic buildings along our main street of Louisiana Avenue. Many of the wonderful buildings in the downtown have utilized this funding and this program has resulted in many maintenance issues being remedied. This program is no longer in effect.
6. **Downtown Perrysburg Inc.:** this organization has significantly contributed to the programming success of the downtown area. They are responsible for "First Friday" events (first Friday of each month), Car Shows, movie nights, art shows, holiday tree lighting, Rock-the-Dock events, concerts, and other programming for all ages.
7. **Perrysburg Chamber of Commerce / Convention and Visitors Bureau:** this group is credited with the wildly successful Farmer's Markets during which vendors line the streets selling crops, crafts, and other goods. In addition they coordinate the Harrison Rally Days event, Music at the Market concerts and are sponsors for the fireworks display on the 4th of July. It is the mission of the CVB to promote Perrysburg as a visitor destination area. They market Perrysburg to cultural, educational, historical, trade and other similar organizations.

8. **Sidewalk Leases:** the City of Perrysburg has recently allowed private enterprise to lease sections of sidewalk for “outdoor cafes” which creates a unique setting for diners and provides social interaction between residents and visitors alike.

9. **Historic Landmarks Commission:** the City of Perrysburg has become a Certified Local Government, officially taking control of its own historic review process. We have a 7 member volunteer commission that has membership qualifications and monthly meetings. All design review is done locally and enforced locally.

10. **Perrysburg Area Historic Museum (PAHM):** the museum has been a work in progress for several years and is finally nearing its grand opening. This relocated historic home (former home of Amos Spafford) has been renovated and restored to house any and all things historic to the area.

11. **577 Foundation:** the 577 Foundation is a non-profit organization that provides wonderful community services, such as gardening, bee keeping, pottery, library, greenhouses, and other educational opportunities. They are within the historic district and their offerings future enhance the desirability of the entire historic district.

*Below: An Historic Queen Anne Home  
(photo: Steve Brown)*



12. **Fort Meigs State Park:** the City of Perrysburg is fortunate to have Fort Meigs State Park in our historic district and within walking distance to our downtown. The Fort attracts a significant number of visitors each day and is a huge anchor and draw for the downtown businesses. The Fort provides great synergy to other parts of the city such as businesses, parks and schools.

13. **Way Public Library:** the City of Perrysburg's award winning library has designated a portion of the library to exclusively local history, in hopes of making our unique history more accessible to students and visitors.

14. **Riverfront Masterplan:** the City of Perrysburg has teamed with a local architecture firm as well as with a major planning firm to complete a riverfront master plan in hopes of better connecting the many wonderful resources that have previously been listed. The master plan will focus on connectivity, recreation, and riverfront utilization.

*Below: First Presbyterian Church at the corner of East Second and Elm Streets  
(photo: Sauterry)*



***Project Cost:***

The Historic Landmarks Commission is all volunteer with no budget or funding provided by any jurisdiction.

***Maintenance Cost:*** Donations and volunteer time.

***Funding Sources / Incentives:*** Donations and volunteer time.

The Riverfront Master Plan – Grants, general fund dollars, private donations.

The Signage Initiative - Private donations.

*Below: Sunset over the Maumee River from Hood Park  
(photo: Andrew Weills)*

