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Bolivia Road Bridge makes statewide endangered list

Wednesday, April 6, 2011, Springfield, Ill.—The Bolivia Road Bridge, North Fork, Sangamon River (Christian and Sangamon counties), was named to Landmarks Illinois’ annual “Ten Most Endangered Historic Places” list, which was announced today at a press conference in the State Capitol.

“This is one of the state’s most beautiful bridges from the turn of the last century,” said Jim Peters, President of Landmarks Illinois. “We hope local officials can develop a viable use and renovation plan for this unique structure.”

Landmarks Illinois, the state’s leading voice for historic preservation, listed nine other endangered historic properties on its annual list which focuses attention on sites throughout Illinois threatened by deterioration, lack of maintenance, insufficient funds, or inappropriate development.

The Bolivia Road Bridge, is the oldest in Illinois to include a Parker through-truss span (named for the engineer C.H. Parker) that still serves vehicular traffic. Connecting the counties of Sangamon and Christian, this single-lane, steel-and-timber bridge was built in 1901. In 2001, the Sangamon County Highway Department announced plans to replace it with a new concrete structure. Due to lack of funding, however, the bridge has not yet been demolished and replaced. Local advocates are working with county and state officials to preserve the bridge for cycling and pedestrian use. In the meantime, the bridge continues to deteriorate and may risk closure.

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Background

Since the inception of Landmarks Illinois' "Ten Most" list in 1995, more than a third of the listed properties have been saved, less than a quarter have been demolished, and the rest remain threatened or are being rehabilitated.

This year's list also includes: an 1859 mansion, a pair of buildings that housed one of the state's most noted artists, a 1920s community center that promoted physical fitness, an 1871 county sheriff's residence and jail, a former social settlement house, a 1930s Art Deco theater, a Bertrand Goldberg-designed modern hospital, three century-old Catholic churches, and one of the state's most extravagant movie palaces.

Landmarks Illinois is celebrating its 40th year as a statewide advocacy and education organization. The not-for-profit works with citizens and communities throughout Illinois to preserve, protect and promote historic places through advocacy and education. In addition to the Ten Most Endangered list, the organization also sponsors an annual awards program and a matching grants program for County Courthouses.

The complete "Ten Most" list, including photos of the following sites, is available at www.Landmarks.org through the "Press Room" link.

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Landmarks Illinois is the state's leading voice for historic preservation. Since its founding in 1971, the 2,500-member statewide organization has saved countless architectural and historic treasures throughout Illinois. Landmarks Illinois' mission today focuses on saving buildings, facilitating preservation, and educating the public. For more information, visit www.Landmarks.org.