

2011 CONFERENCE VENUES

Three of the iconic buildings in downtown Baker City will serve as the venues for this year's Oregon Main Street Conference. Each represents a truly inspiring restoration story!

BAKER TOWER

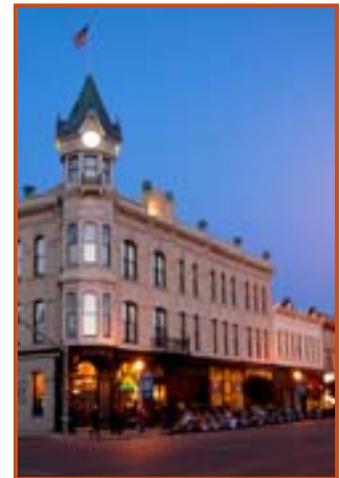


Standing proud at the end of Baker City's Main Street, the Baker Tower is Oregon's tallest building east of the Cascade Mountains. Originally constructed in 1929 as an 82 room hotel, the exterior features of the building include decorative scrolls, garlands, decorative deco urns at the corners of the eighth floor, and each entry is guarded by a pair of eagles four feet in height. Funding for the ten story concrete building was through the issuance of stock by the Multnomah Hotel Chain, purchased by 300 residents of Baker. The building was originally designed as the Baker Community Hotel by Architects Tourtelotte and Hummel. It is one of a trio designed by the team; the Mark Anthony Hotel in Ashland, Oregon and the Hoff Building in Boise, Idaho; both still in use today. Architecturally notable is the tenth floor octagonal observation center. This cupola offers spectacular views of the surrounding Powder Valley and Elkhorn Mountains. Interesting to note is that in the late 1960's the Hotel's claim to fame was its role in the filming of "Paint Your Wagon." It served as headquarters for the Paramount Studios crew and stars. Portland developer and former Baker City resident Shayne Olsen renovated the Baker Tower in 2001, with an investment of \$2.2 million. The Baker Tower has retail and office space on floors one through five and condominiums on floors six through ten.

GEISER GRAND HOTEL

Built in the Italianate Victorian architecture style and designed by architect John Bennes, the Geiser Grand Hotel opened its doors in 1889. It was known as "the Queen of the Mines" during Gold Rush times and described as being the finest hotel between Portland and Salt Lake City, with the third elevator built west of the Mississippi River. After closing in 1968, the once-lavish hotel sat abandoned for years and the neglect and lack of maintenance took its toll on the building. By 1978, several portions of the exterior had cracked, other parts had either been removed or fallen apart, the roof had collapsed, and the interior was badly cracked and molded from the resulting water damage. Serious consideration was given to tearing down the hotel altogether and replacing it with a parking lot. The hotel was rescued from demolition by the current owners, Dwight and Barbara Sidway, who undertook a complete restoration, re-opening the hotel in 1993. The Sidways had their work cut out for them.

Before any restoration work could start, the building needed serious foundation stabilization and a new roof to stop water (and pigeon droppings) from saturating the interior. The couple submitted their rehabilitation proposal to the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office who approved the seemingly impossible task and the Sidways went to work. The Sidways' vision for the Geiser Grand Hotel was to restore it to its original appearance in celebration of its historic heritage. The cupola that once towered over Main Street was restored, as was the stained glass ceiling. While the cupola could be recreated using original photographs, no such records could be found for the ceiling so it was decided to design



the stained glass in keeping with 1889 sensibilities. Similarly, the original small 70-80 guest rooms were enlarged to house the more practical 30 guest rooms. Over 100 crystal chandeliers were brought in to adorn the hotel, including the guest rooms, which boasted ten-foot high windows to overlook the city and the landscape. The hotel was opened in stages in order to fund the restoration, but after five years and several million dollars, the Geiser Grand Hotel is again in service. An architectural treasure combining ornate details with all modern amenities—the Geiser Grand Hotel is still the finest in the region. Come and explore and find out why True West Magazine recently declared the Geiser Grand to be "Best of the West--Historic Hotel."

CROSSROADS CARNEGIE ARTS CENTER



In 1909, The Carnegie Library, Baker County's first public library building, opened its doors. The Carnegie Library Building had not been occupied for several years when Crossroads Art Center signed a 30-year, rent-free lease with additional 30-year options with the city in 2001 for the Carnegie Library building to become Crossroads' permanent home. Funds were subsequently raised by the Crossroads Board of Directors and the community to completely renovate the building and bring it back to life. In April 2008 Crossroads Art Center moved to its beautiful and permanent home.

That year the Crossroads Carnegie Restoration Project received one of eight Oregon Heritage Excellence Awards for creating a successful public-private partnership to preserve, restore, and reuse the historic library building. Crossroads Art Center was established to create opportunities for the entire community to be engaged, inspired, and transformed by the arts through participation in classes, workshops, exhibits, mentorships, and partnerships—a welcoming place where people meet and the arts speak. The Crossroads Center is an integral part of downtown Baker City and the greater Baker County community, as a member of the Historic Baker City district. Their gallery showcases the work of local and regional artists.