The restoration of the Tibbits Opera House, Coldwater

Tibbits Opera Foundation and Arts Council, Inc.; Tom Roberts; Owen-Ames-Kimball Co.; Grand River Builders, Inc.; and the Greater Coldwater Community

The Tibbits Opera House façade was renovated during the 1930s and again during the 1960s when the façade was covered with brick, window openings were covered, and a mansard roof was added. The homely exterior belied the ornate interior theater space and it detracted from the fine architecture present in Coldwater’s downtown historic district.

In 1999 Tibbits Opera Foundation and Arts Council, Inc. began efforts to restore the opera house exterior. In 2011 the plain exterior was removed, and restoration began in 2012. The restoration effort rallied the Coldwater community and the surrounding area, as permanent residents and summer residents alike contributed funds to the project.

The spectacular restoration of the Tibbits Opera House has renewed community pride. The project has inspired appreciation for and understanding of the value of historic preservation, and it has spurred interest in the rehabilitation of other historic properties in downtown Coldwater.