

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Lake Nebagamom Auditorium

and/or common N/A

**2. Location**

street & number First Street \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Lake Nebagamom \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ congressional district Seventh

state Wisconsin code 55 county Douglas code 031

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Recreation; Community activities

**4. Owner of Property**

name Village of Lake Nebagamom, Attention: James Springsteele, Village President

street & number Box 585

city, town Lake Nebagamom \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state Wisconsin 54849

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Douglas County Courthouse

street & number

city, town Superior \_\_\_\_\_ state Wisconsin 54880

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1979 \_\_\_\_\_ federal  state \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_ local

depository for survey records State Historical Society of Wisconsin

city, town Madison \_\_\_\_\_ state Wisconsin 53706

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Lake Nebagamon Auditorium sits on a sloping site on the northeastern shore of Lake Nebagamon in the Wisconsin village of the same name. The building is in the center of the commercial core, composed of a variety of small one-and two-story commercial buildings. A wide, tree-shaded lawn surrounds the building on the east and west sides; the twenty-foot slope to the lake in the rear (south) is broken by a terraced concrete stair framed by stone walls. A concrete apron spans the front of the building from groundline to sidewalk.

In form, the Lake Nebagamon Auditorium is a large, T-shaped bungalow. In elevation, the building is one-story high, covered with log siding. Wide bracketed eaves extend from gable roofs on the front, rear, and west side; on the front facade, board-and-batten panels are centered in the peaks of each small gable to the side of the higher gable end of the roof. Two sets of double wood doors, divided by a section of siding, constitute the main entrance in the bridge between the front gables. Rectangular windows are regularly-distributed on each side, and accented with window boxes on the front and east and west sides. Transoms top paired double-hung openings in the side gables on the front facade; similar units (without transoms) fill a continuous band in the center of the rear facade, and are regularly-spaced on the east side. Two sets of three openings in the large gable-roof wing extending from the west side are filled with glass brick. Visible only from the sides and rear, the concrete basement, painted to match the asphalt roof, is set with glazed hoppers along the sides; in 1977, plate glass windows and doors (for handicapped access) were installed to provide a lake-side entrance. Three small triangular dormers are set into each side of the center roof. One tall cobblestone chimney rises from the front (north) slope of the gable roof wing to the west.

Until the plan for the lower level auditorium was implemented in 1964, only the first floor of the building was used. Dressing rooms with restroom facilities and the village office are located to the right and left sides of the center dining room, with a kitchen and stairs (to the lower level) at the south end of the floor. A furnace room and storage occupy the west wing. Original "antique" hardware still trims the interior, with its "nuwood" ceilings, linoleum floors, and stained plywood panelling. The lower-level stage is centered in the west wall; backstage are restrooms and stairs to the dressing rooms upstairs. Plywood panelling, linoleum floors and acoustical tile of newer vintage characterize the large open space. The room is covered by a low vaulted ceiling. A vestibule and concession stand are located at the north end of the floor.

Only the 1964 development of the auditorium and the installation of a handicapped entrance in the rear in 1977 post-date the original construction.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1936<sup>1</sup>

Builder/Architect R. C. Buck, Inc.<sup>2</sup>

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Lake Nebagamon Auditorium is significant historically as a Works Project Administration project which provided jobs for the unemployed during the severe depression years<sup>3</sup> while giving the village a structure of great importance to (1) its livelihood as a resort town, (2) its local cultural and recreational needs, and (3) its civic needs as a place for conducting the village's affairs and housing its records.<sup>4</sup> Architecturally, the "rustic" log bungalow, a characteristic WPA form, represents a period of construction.

### Social/Humanitarian

The Village of Lake Nebagamon originated as a sawmill and railroad town during the late nineteenth century logging era in northern Wisconsin. When logging eventually came to an end, the village became a recreational area and a summer haven for vacationers from both Wisconsin and adjacent states, especially Illinois. As was the case in many communities, the existing pavilion at Lake Nebagamon was apparently inadequate by the time the great depression began.<sup>5</sup>

Between the years 1935 and 1939, 35,000 to 84,000 Wisconsinites set to work on a four billion dollar national appropriation for Works Project Administration jobs.<sup>6</sup> Projects varied, including sewer and water systems, public buildings, and streets. In November, 1935 a newspaper article told of many jobs that might become available in Douglas County because the countersigning of "Treasury department warrant No. 644" would permit the state works administrator for Wisconsin to initiate work on a number of selected WPA projects. The list from which the project selections were to be made included the construction of a new community center at Lake Nebagamon.<sup>7</sup> Nothing was certain at that time, but in late January, 1936, the Superior newspaper ran a feature article about a \$16,000 WPA appropriation to build a "Rustic Village Hall" in Lake Nebagamon. A further appropriation of \$6,000 would be used for a WPA program of beach improvements there in the spring, including the beach at the south end of the village hall property.<sup>8</sup>

The new building—actually a combination civic, cultural, and recreation center—was sure to brighten the community's future. Village supervisor George Babb commented that "the new hall will be open to the public at all times. It will provide a boon to both summer and winter visitors alike. When the winter sports season is on, those skating and using the toboggan slide will find the hall a readily accessible warming house."<sup>9</sup> This local enthusiasm proved to be well founded. The hall, long known as the Lake Nebagamon Auditorium, has continued to fulfill the needs for which it was built. "It is a visual landmark, from both the Village streets and from the Lake. The auditorium is used by many Douglas County and Twin port (Duluth-Superior) residents. The Duquesne University Institute of Folk Arts...uses this building as a summer training site." A boys camp that was started there in the early days still "brings young boys from all over the United States and Europe."<sup>10</sup>

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

"Many Douglas County Jobs Are Possible," Superior Evening Telegram, Nov. 20, 1935.  
 "Lake Nebagamon Will Soon Have Rustic Village Hall," Superior Evening Telegram, Jan. 28, 1936  
 U.S. Works Project Administration: Report on Progress of the Works Program, April 15, 1936-  
 June 30, 1942 (Washington, 1939-1942), Vol. 1, U.S. Public Works Through 9/15/36, p. 17  
 Information from Swan S. Herlevi, Village Clerk, Village of Lake Nebagamon, Wis., March 1981.

# 10. Geographical Data

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED  
 UTM NOT VERIFIED

Acreeage of nominated property 1.49  
 Quadrangle name Brule, Wis. Quadrangle scale 1:62500

### UMT References

A	1 5	5 9 9 8 2 5	5 1 5 1 7 0 0	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Lot K, Townsite of Lake Nebagamon, Wisconsin.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Diane H. Filipowicz, Architectural Historian and Donald N. Anderson, Historian & Registrar, Historic Preservation Division  
 organization State Historical Society of Wisconsin date May 21, 1981  
 street & number 816 State Street telephone 608/262-2970 (DHF), 262-0746 (DA)  
 city or town Madison state Wisconsin 53706

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*Richard Murray*

title Director, State Historical Society of Wisconsin date 7/20/81

For HCERS use only	
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	
<i>William H. Brown</i>	date <u>9-14-81</u>
Keeper of the National Register	
Attest: <i>Linda McCallard</i>	date <u>9-14-81</u>
Chief of Registration	

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Lake Nebagamon Auditorium  
Continuation sheet

Item number 8

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To area residents the Lake Nebagamon Auditorium remains a source of pride. Not only does it contribute much to the local economy, but also, because of its log veneer construction, it reflects the village's origin as a lumber milling town born of the logging days.<sup>11</sup> In addition, it symbolizes a positive aspect of the WPA program of the depression years.

Architecture

Project #2691, the Lake Nebagamon Auditorium, was designed in "rustic" style typical of public buildings constructed in smaller towns by the Works Project Administration. Better suited to their communities than the grander Modernistic city halls and armories sponsored by the program, the log and log-like structures were simple in form; large cabins, and variations on Bungalow and Western Stick Styles were characteristic. Sheathed in log siding and fitted with a "nuwood" and plywood interior, the Lake Nebagamon Auditorium is thoroughly a statement of the resourcefulness of the Depression-era construction. Both in scale and quality of construction, it is the village's most notable building.

The firm of R. C. Buck, Inc., who constructed the building, was well-known in the city of Superior (twenty-five miles northwest) for its waterfront projects and general contracting.

Although the Lake Nebagamon Auditorium does not meet the National Register's fifty-year age requirement, it is nonetheless eligible for listing because it is a classic example of a building type associated with a phenomenon of recognized significance in American history whose peak period occurred in the late 1930s.

<sup>1</sup> Superior Evening Telegram, January 28, 1936.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., Nov. 20, 1935.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., Jan. 28, 1936.

<sup>5</sup> WPA Reports, 1936-1942. Existing recreational buildings were often lacking or unfit for use. Through WPA projects, communities had been able to obtain construction of "about 1,440 recreational buildings such as gymnasiums, community halls, and auditoriums..." by September 15, 1936.

<sup>6</sup> James I. Clark, Wisconsin Meets the Great Depression, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1956, p. 18.

<sup>7</sup> Superior Evening Telegram, Nov. 20, 1935.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., Jan. 28, 1936.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Information from Swan Herlevi.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.