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NATIONAL REGISTER  
OMB NO. 1010-018

NPS Form 10-900  
(Rev. 8/86)  
NPS/CHS Word Processor Format  
(Approved 03/88)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable". For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries. Use letter quality printers in 12 pitch. Use only 25% or greater cotton content bond paper.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name: The Farmers State Bank Building  
other names/site number: 5MR.411

**2. Location**

street & number: 300 Main Street (NA) not for publication  
city, town: Fort Morgan (NA) vicinity  
state: Colorado code: CO county: Morgan code: zip code: 80701

**3. Classification**

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	No. of Resources within Property	
		contributing	noncontributing
( ) private	(X) building(s)		
( ) public-local	( ) district	<u>1</u>	<u>      </u> buildings
(X) public-State	( ) site	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> sites
( ) public-Federal	( ) structure	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> structures
	( ) object	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
N/A

No. of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

**4. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this (x) nomination ( ) request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property (x) meets ( ) does not meet the National Register criteria.  
( ) See continuation sheet.

Barbara Sudler 8-3-90  
Signature of certifying official Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Colorado Historical Society  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ( ) meets ( ) does not meet the National Register criteria. ( ) See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Commenting or Other Official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

**5. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

Entered in the  
National Register

- (x) entered in the National Register.  
( ) See continuation sheet
- ( ) determined eligible for the National Register. ( ) See continuation sheet
- ( ) determined not eligible for the National Register.
- ( ) removed from the National Register.
- ( ) other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Alvord Byrum 9/13/90

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

for \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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**6. Functions or Use**

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**Historic Functions**

(enter categories from instructions)

Commerce: Financial Institution  

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**Current Functions**

(enter categories from instructions)

Education: College  

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**7. Description**

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**Architectural Classification**

(enter categories from instructions)

Art DecoModerne  

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**Materials**

(enter categories from instructions)

foundations concretewalls stone (panels)limestone (Indiana limestone)roof asphaltother bronze doors  

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**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

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The Farmers State Bank building is one of the most classically derived buildings in the downtown Fort Morgan business district. It is prominently located on the southwest corner of Main Street and Kiowa Avenue. The classical, Art Deco / Moderne style bank building is a rectangular, one-story, smooth buff colored Indiana limestone structure with a flat roof and parapet. At the end of a row of commercial buildings, the facade which faces west on Main Street is developed with the classical grandeur of a projecting entrance bay topped with a dentiled cornice. The entire south side of the building on Kiowa Avenue is given to nine bays of window space and two rear side doors arranged in a system of set-backs and geometric patterns. The \$55,000 bank building was designed by a well-known Denver architect, Eugene G. Groves and was constructed by Roy Butler. The exterior remains unaltered other than removal of the original bank sign.

The exterior form of the building is a modified Greek temple form, long a favored expression of strength for financial edifices. The three bay facade emphasizes the vertical and geometric form with a series of set-backs and a broken cornice line. The Greek influence can be seen in the fluted stone pilasters with plain plinths and stylized flat capitals flanking the doors and to the guttea and a dentiled cornice above. Elegant carved stone panels enhance the top of the main entrance and windows. A large square window with diamond-shaped leaded glass above the brass/glass double doors and the zig-zag decorative bands above the door and windows further highlight the linear style.

The classical vertical composition with modernistic treatment continues around to the south side of the building. A strip of seven set-back, long bronze frame

(x) See continuation sheet

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Farmers State Bank Building

windows with transoms and decorative leaded side lights are separated by six fluted pilasters and topped with carved stone panels. The entablature has guttea, carved stone panels in the frieze and a dentiled cornice. Two Vitruvian scrolls above the two plain pilasters and the zig-zag bands above the windows contribute to the horizontal lines. There are two rear south entry doors.

The heavy brass/glass double doors open into a foyer lighted by a large hanging wrought iron ceiling light. A second set of glass double doors open into the spacious banking room. The interior has imported black and gold Italian marble and St. Genevieve or "Ozora" domestic marble tellers counters with walnut wainscot and trim. The modern counters have low glass cages with wrought iron grillwork. The floors are hard terrazzo with brass strip inlay which match the marble. The stuccoed walls have metal deco electric light fixtures and wrought iron hand railings on the stairway. The ceiling has 600 square feet of stencil painted Acousti-Celotex panels supported by ceiling beams with brackets. In the rear of the banking room above the vault on the mezzanine were executive offices and the director's room.

The vault walls were constructed with one and one-half foot of reinforced concrete and a ventilating system which admitted fresh air into the chambers of the vault. Charpiot Safe Company of Denver installed the vault equipment which included 552 safety deposit boxes and an 8,000 pound steel door. Another smaller vault was built for the bank books.

The present building is in good condition. The exterior remains largely unaltered. The bronze letters of the original bank sign have been removed but have been kept and could be replaced. The interior has had minor remodeling. The marble tellers counters and glass cages have been removed. The large hanging wrought iron ceiling light in the banking room has been removed and hanging neon lights have been added. There are reversible additions of wood panels covering the windows and room dividers panels. The doors to the bank building are replacements.

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**8. Statement of Significance**

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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:      ( ) nationally      (x) statewide      ( ) locally

Applicable National Register Criteria      ( ) A      ( ) B      (X) C      ( ) D  
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)      ( ) A      ( ) B      ( ) C      ( ) D      ( ) E      ( ) F      ( ) G

**Areas of Significance**

(enter categories from instructions)

**Period of Significance**

**Significant Dates**

Architecture

1930

1930

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

**Architect/Builder**

N/A

Groves, Eugene G.

\_\_\_\_\_

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**State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.**

The Farmers State Bank building, 300 Main Street, Fort Morgan is significant under Criterion C for the high artistic values of architecture. The building is a finely articulated example of classical Moderne and Art Deco style with its smooth surfaces, carved stone panels and stylized decoration emphasizing the geometric form. Eugene G. Groves, a sought after Denver architect, designed the new modern bank building in a modified Greek temple form with fluted pilasters, stylized flat capitals, guttea and a dentiled cornice. In these details the Farmers State Bank building is one of the most classically styled buildings in the downtown business district. When the bank was completed and opened to the public on December 20, 1930, it was one of the most complete and up-to-date bank buildings in the state. The president of the Farmers State Bank, John H. Bloedorn Sr., and his brothers built this building on the site of the 1900 Curry Hotel which had been demolished in 1930.

The new bank building incorporated the most modern ideas of bank architecture and planning. The classical form of the building with stone, steel and marble and the modernistic treatment of ornament expressed strength, security, conservative progressiveness and wholesomeness for the ever growing clientele. The new building was faced with smooth oblong limestone blocks placed in linear patterns to form clean lines with distinct spacial divisions. The streamline bronze lettering for the bank sign was unified with the design of the building. The projected entrance bay embellished with vertical fluting and horizontal motifs of zig-zag bands and carved stone panels caused a conspicuous degree of attention toward the drama of life within.

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The bank's style capitalized on window treatment to lead the eye along lines of continuous movement. The windows in the southwest corner bays were designed to smoothly move the eye from the facade around to the side of the building. The architectural design of the strip of windows was used to break up the flat plane of the surface and to emphasize the vertical lines. The dimensional use of set-backs also amplified the qualities of lightness and openness.

The symbols and decorative imagery in the carved stone panels reveals the style's romantic nature. The sun is a fundamental source of life with linear rays projecting radiance. The floriated patterns amplify the organic energy of the style. The repeated patterns in the stone panels across the frieze on the south side of the building is an architectural device for an overtone of harmony.

The finest quality of traditional materials for the Art Deco style were also used on the interior of the building. Imported black and gold Italian and domestic marble fixtures were prepared and matched for their location. Also common to the modern style is the hard high gloss terrazzo floor with brass inlay to form geometric patterns to match the marble. The wrought iron electric light fixtures, stair railings and iron grillwork play an important part in the Art Deco style and also heightens the use of the color black. The walls were cream colored stucco with walnut wainscot and trim. The ceiling was the latest in modern sound proof Acousti-Celotex panels finished with stencil painted pastel murals designed by Mr. Groves.

Eugene G. Groves, the architect who designed the Farmers State Bank building in Fort Morgan, is uniformly recognized for his experimental and futuristic use of poured, cast and reinforced concrete and was widely sought after for his technical expertise. He was born in Dana, Indiana in 1882 and studied architecture at Harvard University. He practiced architecture in New York and Indiana until his health required him to relocate in 1914 to Denver where he practiced until his death in 1967. He received numerous public and commercial commissions throughout Colorado, including the Fairview School in Denver. He designed the First National Bank buildings in Boulder, Golden and Canon City. Groves never developed a style of his own but he had a capacity for imaginative design. The Moderne/Art Deco period was the last era in modern building in which industrial crafts and quality workmanship were integrated with the concepts of the architect. The stonemasons, metal workers and mosaicists and sculptors were all of one mind relating style, fine precision and finish of their individual craft.

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**Historical Background:**

The plans to build the new Farmers State Bank building in 1930 marked the beginning of a new era in the class of business buildings in Fort Morgan. It meant tearing down the Curry Hotel, a pioneer class of construction and building on a new and modern plan. Structurally there was a break from the confines of masonry construction with the new technology of reinforced concrete.

The Curry Hotel building was considered one of the historic landmarks of Fort Morgan. Mr. J. P. Curry, one of Morgan County's pioneer bankers, was a principal stockholder in a corporation that built the Curry Hotel. Mr. Curry paid \$1,050 for the lots in 1889 and the hotel was constructed for \$10,000 and opened for business in 1900. At the time the immense red brick building was constructed it was considered a business gamble but the stockholders were confident of the future of Morgan County. The population of Fort Morgan was about 1,000 people and there were two other smaller hotels at that time.

The Curry Hotel became the most prominent hotel in northeastern Colorado. The three-story building had bathrooms on each floor with a water supply tank in the attic filled from a well in the basement where a gasoline engine operated a pump. An annex was built two years later for \$4000 with new equipment and furniture for \$6000. The Curry Hotel had a barber shop and one of the finest dining rooms in town. In the rooms slept cattlemen, sheep ranchers and easterners who came to establish new homes. Rooms were rented by men who dug irrigation canals, built business buildings and homes and to people who conducted important business transactions for Morgan County.

In 1917, the Fort Morgan State Bank leased the corner of the Curry Hotel which was considered to be the most valuable location in the Fort Morgan business district. In 1919, John H. Bloedorn, Sr. and his brothers purchased the Fort Morgan State Bank which quickly became the Farmers State Bank. In 1920 the Farmers State Bank bought the Curry Hotel for \$47,000 and in 1930 the Curry Hotel was torn down and the new Farmer's State Bank building was built on the same site.

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The Bloedorn family came from Platte Center, Nebraska in 1919 and founded the Farmers State Bank. John H. Bloedorn Sr. held the position of president of the Farmers State Bank from 1919 until 1967. Bloedorn was also a prominent social leader in town. He held many offices in service clubs, sponsored the Bloedorn Foundation through which are channeled education scholarships and other charitable gifts. He was also a director of the Great Western Sugar Company for 10 years, president of the Colorado Bankers Association and he served three successive terms as director of the Denver Branch of the Federal Reserve System. The Farmers State Bank became the largest financial institution in northeastern Colorado.

The January, 1931 Mountain States Banker magazine described the formal opening for the bank on December 20, 1930. There were 4,322 people from Fort Morgan and the surrounding territory who crowded into the Farmers State Bank building to congratulate the officers on their fine work. The entire lobby was a mass of beautiful flowers sent to the bank in honor of the occasion. "The new building is one of the most complete and up-to-date structures in the entire West. The interior is not only beautiful but is also as comfortable, complete and convenient as that of any financial institution in the state, or in fact, in the entire West." Following is a partial list of the out of town bankers and business associates who visited the bank on its opening day: Grant McFerson, state banking commissioner, Denver; J.C. Scarboro, Mountain States Bank, Denver; L.G. Kennedy, First National Bank, Denver; J.V. Cockins, Central Savings Bank & Trust Co., Denver; R. R. Ridge, Omaha National Bank, Omaha, Nebraska; R. F. Tibbet, Citizens National Bank, Torrington, Wyoming.

The new modern bank building had every feature of beauty, convenience and safety including 30,000 pounds of vault equipment from Charpiot Safe Company of Denver. Even though the vault was equipped with the most modern burglar proof triple time locks, the bank was robbed of \$10,311 on July 8, 1939. Most of the money was recovered after the bank robbers, Myron Howan and Kenneth Allen of Denver were tracked down and killed in Sidney, Nebraska and Garden City, Kansas.

The Farmers State Bank Building was evaluated at the state level and is of state significance. In Colorado, there are relatively few art deco buildings outside of the major cities such as Denver and Colorado Springs. The Farmers State Bank building is a restrained example of the art deco style utilized in a relatively small scale building. It is also one of the few known banks to use this style and, of know examples, the one with the most integrity.



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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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Fort Morgan Heritage Foundation, Inc. One Hundred Eleven Trees, pp. 34, 133.

Blumenson, John, Identifying American Architecture. (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History), 1977 p. 77.

(x) See continuation sheet

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> preliminary determination of individual listing ( 36 CFR 67) has been requested | Primary location of additional data:<br><input type="checkbox"/> State Historic Preservation Office<br><input type="checkbox"/> Other State agency |
| <input type="checkbox"/> previously listed in the National Register                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Federal agency<br><input type="checkbox"/> Local government   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> previously determined eligible by the National Register                         | <input type="checkbox"/> University<br><input type="checkbox"/> Other  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> designated a National Historic Landmark   | Specify Repository:<br>_____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____                          |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____                        |  |

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**10. Geographical Data**

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Acreeage of property: .07 (less than one acre)

**UTM References**

A <u>1 3</u> <u>6 0 2 0 2 0 </u> <u>4 4 5 6 0 0 0 </u>	B <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>
Zone   Easting   Northing	Zone   Easting   Northing
C <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	D <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>
Zone   Easting   Northing	Zone   Easting   Northing

( ) See continuation sheet

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**Verbal Boundary Description**

Lot 9 and south 5' of Lot 10 Block 15, orignal town, Fort Morgan, Colorado

( ) See continuation sheet

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**Boundary Justification**

Boundaries include the property historically associated with the Farmers State Bank.

( ) See continuation sheet

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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Name/Title: <u>Lyn Deal, Trustee</u>	
Organization: <u>Fort Morgan Museum</u>	Date: <u>June 1990</u>
Street & Number: <u>404 Sherman</u>	Telephone: <u>867-7928</u>
City or Town: <u>Fort Morgan</u>	State: <u>CO</u> Zip Code: <u>80701</u>

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Harris, Cyril. Historic Architecture, Dover Publications, Inc., New York.

Weber, Eva, Art Deco in America, Exeter Books, New York, p. 69.

Vlack, Don, Art Deco Architecture in New York, Harper & Row Publishers.

Farmers State Bank scrapbook.

The Fort Morgan Times clippings.

Noel, Thomas J. and Barbara S. Norgren, Denver: The City Beautiful, Historic Denver.