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Wisconsin Word Processing Format (Approved 1/92)

United States Department of Interior  
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900A). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property


historic name St. Peter's Catholic School  
other names/site number Northwoods Center

2. Location

street & number	115 South Third Street	N/A	not for publication
city or town	Eagle River	N/A	vicinity
state	Wisconsin	code	WI
county	Vilas	code	125
zip code	54521	zip code	54521

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  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  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

  
Signature of certifying official/Title  
Date 8/9/18  
State Historic Preservation Office - Wisconsin  
State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting official/Title  
Date  
State or Federal agency and bureau

St. Peter's Catholic School

Vilas

Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the

National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the

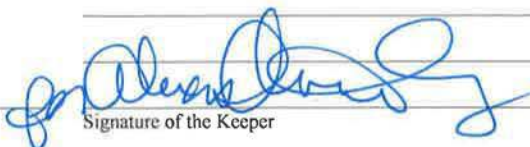
National Register.

See continuation sheet.

removed from the National

Register.

other, (explain:)

  
Signature of the Keeper

10/4/2018  
Date of Action

### 5. Classification

**Ownership of Property**  
(check as many boxes as  
as apply)

private  
 public-local  
 public-State  
 public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

building(s)  
 district  
 structure  
 site  
 object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources  
in the count)

<input type="checkbox"/> contributing	<input type="checkbox"/> noncontributing
1	buildings
	sites
	structures
	objects
1	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing:**  
(Enter "N/A" if property not part of a multiple property  
listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources  
previously listed in the National Register**

0

### 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/school

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

SOCIAL/meeting hall

### 7. Description

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century American Movement

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

walls brick

roof asphalt

other

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Name of Property

County and State

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Education  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1926 - 1968  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1926  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Billmeyer, Anton F.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

St. Peter's Catholic School  
Name of Property

Vilas  
County and State

Wisconsin

## 9. Major Bibliographic References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

### Previous Documentation on File (National Park Service):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

### Primary location of additional data:

- X State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State Agency
  - Federal Agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository:

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 16T 325825 5087158  
Zone Easting Northing

2 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

3 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

4 \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

See Continuation Sheet

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title	Patricia Lacey	date	6-28-2017
organization		telephone	715-462-4621
street & number	10688 W. Twin Bay Road	zip code	54843
city or town	Hayward	state	WI

Name of Property

County and State

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

**Maps** A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs** Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional Items** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

### Property Owner

Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

<b>name/title</b>	Jeffrey Visner	<b>date</b>	6-28-2017
<b>organization</b>	Design/Build By Visner Inc.	<b>telephone</b>	715-479-2110
<b>street &amp; number</b>	PO Box 1057 (509 E. Wall Street)	<b>zip code</b>	54521
<b>city or town</b>	Eagle River	<b>state</b>	WI

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects, (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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St. Peter's Catholic School  
Eagle River, Vilas County, Wisconsin

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**Introduction**

St. Peter's Catholic School, constructed in 1926, is located at 115 South Third Street in the City of Eagle River, Wisconsin. The school was originally part of a larger complex containing a church, rectory, and parish center. Subsequent years have seen the church demolished and the rectory and convent (parish center) repurposed, resulting in a lack of integrity for the former church complex; however, the school; is individually eligible under Criterion A in the area of Education and therefore is being nominated as an individual building, apart from the remaining buildings.

The City of Eagle River is located on the banks of the Eagle River, which travels from the southwest to the northeast, bisecting the city. Upon exiting the city, Eagle River empties into the Eagle River Chain of Lakes, a popular tourist destination. St. Peter's Catholic School faces west toward South Third Street. To the north of the school is the former St. Peters Catholic Church Parish Center and to the south of the school the former St. Peter's Catholic Church Rectory and a parking area which housed the former St. Peter's Catholic Church. To the west and north of the school are late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century homes. Wall Street, the cross street located directly south of the school, supports light commercial businesses.

Unique lamp posts line South Third Street, in front of the school, from Wall Street to Division Street. These lamp posts have served several interesting purposes over the years. They began as the original street lights for the city of Eagle River. When Reverend Father Eric Kemerling was in the process of building the 1948 St. Peter's Catholic Church, he was on an extreme budget. He re-purposed the discarded city street lights by turning them upside down and using them as chandeliers in the new church. When the 1948 church was demolished, Jeff Visner returned these lights to their original purpose as street lights in front of St. Peter's Catholic School.

St. Peter's Catholic School was designed by architect Anton F. Billmeyer with elements reflective of the Classical Revival and Craftsman periods. This free-standing building is 96' x 60'8" and 1-story on a raised basement. The building has a hipped roof which has a centered projecting main entry gable located on the primary (west) façade. The pitched roof is a later addition. The ½ story raised basement of the school projects 6'1" above grade with regularly spaced windows. The foundation is of concrete and the walls are of red brick. Contrasting against the brick is a limestone string course at grade and a second one above the basement level windows, creating two decorative bands around the building. The red brick is laid in a common bond with five stretcher rows per header row.

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St. Peter's Catholic School  
Eagle River, Vilas County, Wisconsin

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**Exterior**

The school was originally constructed with a main entrance flush with the exterior wall, a parapet wall ornamented with limestone, and a flat roof behind the parapet. The side walls had three bands of windows, with five windows within each band. The projecting entrance vestibule was added to the building in the 1960s during the period of significance, while the window infill was completed in the 1970s during the energy crisis. While the windows were altered while the building was still a school, the date of that change is outside of the period of significance. The removal of the parapet wall and installation of a sloped roof in place of the flat roof occurred when the building was converted to a community center in the late 2000s.

Primary (West) Façade

The west façade exhibits strong horizontality, emphasized by the two horizontal limestone string courses and the rows of identical windows. The windows at the raised basement level have the same appearance. The first floor windows are stacked directly above the basement windows. All of the first floor windows also have the same appearance and are taller than those below. One's eyes are drawn to the small, centered, main entry gable which projects slightly from the main body of the building. The wall of the gable is clad with wide horizontal boards. Directly below the gable is a window opening, slightly recessed into the wall and having a row of three windows. The three double-hung windows each have a single lower light and an upper sash divided into four lights. Three, vertically oriented and evenly spaced, diamond-shaped limestone decoration are inset into the brick of the walls located both to the north and to the south of the window unit.

Projecting to the west from the first floor wall of the projecting entry gable is a flat roofed vestibule. The north and south sides of the vestibule support a single, double-hung window which has a single lower light and an upper light that is divided into six lights. The north and south walls of the vestibule are clad with brick. The paired west-facing entry doors are glass with a single glass light appearing at each side of the glass entry doors. Centered above the paired entry doors is a single light which is the same width as the paired entry doors. An additional single light appears to the north and to the south of the centered light. This entry vestibule was added in the 1960s, replacing the original flush entry which also had similar paired doors and glass transom.

The walls of the main body of the building, which appear at either side of the central bay, mirror each other. Three, evenly-spaced double-hung windows, which have a single lower light and an upper light divided into six lights, appear on the walls of the raised basement, to the north and to the south of the central bay. A limestone string course, which travels the circumference of the building, becomes the sills of the basement windows. A second limestone string course, which travels the circumference of

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St. Peter's Catholic School  
Eagle River, Vilas County, Wisconsin

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the building, is placed above the windows of raised basement. A limestone cornerstone is located in the lower southwest corner of the west main entry elevation. It reads; "St. Peter's School A.D. 1926.

Each first-floor window has a limestone sill. There is an infilled arch above each window. This infilled area is comprised of cream-colored brick with a small centered red diamond. Above the cream colored brick is an arched row of red rowlock brick with a centered limestone keystone. The spring post of each arch is a square limestone block.

South-facing elevation

The south-facing wall of St. Peter's Catholic school is divided into three sections by two brick pilasters that rise from the base of the building and travel to the roofline. Originally the first-floor fenestration was comprised of three identical window groupings, located on each one-third section of the first floor elevation. The window groupings were comprised of a ribbon of three, double-hung windows with another identical double-hung window at either side of the group of ribbon windows. The side windows were separated from the ribbon window by a brick pilaster.

Today, a small casement window is located in the lower portion of each of the openings of the flanking double hung windows. The center windows and much of the flanking windows have been bricked in.

The raised basement originally had four, double-hung windows which were located on each 1/3 section of the building created by the pilasters. Currently a total of four windows remain. The remaining window openings have been bricked in.

East-facing elevation

The east-facing elevation has a centered arched recessed entry. A brick eyebrow, which is located above the recessed entry, is comprised of alternating rows of a vertical stretcher brick and a vertical rowlock brick followed by a row of vertical rowlock brick and a vertical stretcher brick. These two rows repeat across the surface of the arch that utilizes the same brick that appears on the body of the building.

A three-window unit, identical to the three-window unit found above the entry of the west-facing central bay, is centered above the east entry. The three-window unit has a limestone sill. To the south of the centered entry on the first floor is a single, double-hung window. The double-hung window has a single lower light and an upper sash which is divided into six lights. The window has a limestone sill. Another larger window which was located to the south of the single, double-hung window has been bricked in. No windows were ever located on the raised basement level.



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Eagle River, Vilas County, Wisconsin

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North-facing elevation

The first floor fenestration of the north-facing elevation is identical to the south-facing elevation. The windows in the raised basement are identical to those on the south side, although none of the window openings have been eliminated.

The eaves, doors, windows, and surrounds of St. Peter's Catholic School are painted brown. The roof is clad with brown asphalt shingles.

**Interior**

The interior plan of the St. Peter's Catholic School remains intact with classroom spaces, offices, auditorium, kitchen, bathrooms, and storage spaces located on double-loaded corridors on both floors. Each floor's primary circulation corridor is oriented east to west with stairs located at each end of the corridor.

After entering the school through the main west-facing 1960s vestibule, you then enter the original vestibule which remains an arched opening on both the west and east wall. The west wall of the original vestibule (which would have been an exterior wall) is open, the doors having been removed. The east wall of the vestibule remains as glass entry doors with a glass transom. After passing through the original entry vestibule, one immediately encounters the single-return stairwell that provides access to the first floor and to the basement level.

The rear, east-facing entry vestibule retains the original paired exterior multiple light entry doors on the east wall of the vestibule. Above the doors is a fourteen-light transom. The west wall of the vestibule has paired single light metal entry doors with a fourteen-light transom.

First floor

The first floor has six similar rooms. Three rooms are located to the north of the central hallway and three rooms are located to the south of the central hallway. Four of these rooms were dedicated to multiple grade classrooms including the three classrooms located to the north of the central hallway and the one classroom located in the southwest corner of the first floor. The remaining two rooms located south of the central hallway in the southeast corner of the first floor were the Sisters' living quarters.

The doorways to the six first floor rooms are located within a recessed plastered arch. The six panel doors (with lights in the top two panels) are not original to the school but do come from St. Peter's

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Eagle River, Vilas County, Wisconsin

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Catholic Church. The four classrooms have their original blackboards and their original built in shelving units. A built in cupboard, with glass doors in the upper portion of the cupboard, appears at one end of the wall of recessed shelving. Floor to ceiling pilasters separate each built in shelving unit.

Located above both the east and west stairwells are offices that were occupied by the Sisters. A stairway rises to an entry door which is flanked by a large interior window. This window provided the Sisters an excellent view of all activities taking place in the hallway below. Currently, red lockers line the north and south walls of the central hallway.

**Basement**

The lower level, or basement, is dominated by the large auditorium/assembly space which occupies the entire south half of the basement level. The auditorium has a 22'8" x 15'10" stage at the east end. The four, twelve-pane doors which enter the auditorium are original to the school.

A large kitchen, boy's bathroom (with multiple sinks and toilets), girl's bathroom (with multiple sinks and toilets), a mechanical room, and two storage rooms are located to the north of the central hallway. The doors to both bathrooms and kitchen are original.

**Alterations**

Over time, St. Peter's Catholic School was adapted to the evolving needs of the school. During a building renovation in the 1960s, an exterior entry vestibule was added to combat the brutal northern Wisconsin winters. During the energy crisis of the 1970s, the large classroom windows were bricked in to conserve the energy needed to heat the school in the winter. When the building was renovated in the 2000s, a hipped roof was placed atop the flat roof of the school. This solved the many leakage issues that were occurring with the original flat roof.

**Integrity**

St. Peter's Catholic School is in excellent condition having been stabilized due to the work done by the Northwoods Center. It maintains very good exterior integrity retaining its historic form, main façade detailing, and building materials. The only significant changes involve the building's windows, entry vestibule and hipped roof addition. The entrance vestibule was altered during the period of significance. While the other alterations affect the integrity of the school, they are not sufficient to render the building ineligible in the area of education.

The interior of the building has high integrity retaining its original plan, historic double-loaded corridors and spatial configuration of classrooms, auditorium, bathrooms, kitchen, and storage rooms.

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The classrooms still contain their original built-in shelves and cabinets. The interior has its original plaster walls, railings, blackboards and doors on the basement level. New floor surfaces were added during the rehabilitation in the 2000s. The changes made to the building do not hamper its character or association with parochial education. Although no longer used as a school, the building still communicates the feeling of its association with education.

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St. Peter's Catholic School  
Eagle River, Vilas County, Wisconsin

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**Introduction**

St. Peter's Catholic School is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, locally significant for its contribution to education within Eagle River and the surrounding area. Designed by Wisconsin Rapids architect Anton F. Billmeyer and opened in 1926, St. Peter's Catholic School offered an elementary education coupled with religious instruction. The school's core religious curriculum developed students as practitioners of the Catholic faith and as future members of the Catholic Church. Combining both an intellectual and spiritual education was a priority for Catholic families and the concentration of Catholics in the region is reflected in the large St. Peter's parish which constructed this school in 1926.

The St. Peter's School is locally significant under Criterion A for the history of education as one of only four total schools in the county offering elementary education. This school was also significantly larger than the other three, and continued as a school, in some cases, decades longer than the others. The other historic period elementary school in Eagle River, for example, is the Mayo School. The Mayo School had only two classrooms, opened in 1924 and closed in 1953. The era of school consolidation meant the closure of rural one-room schools which brought children into town to attend school. The construction of graded schools met this demand and St. Peter's School, one of the largest graded schools in the county continued in active use through 2004, far outpacing the longevity of the other historic period graded schools. The St. Peter's parish prioritized religion-based instruction and provided a high-quality education for the families of the county.

In *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin Vol. 3*, it states that during the early-nineteenth century, many private schools were established by particular immigrant groups and religious organizations such as the Catholics and Lutherans. By 1893, there were 279 Catholic schools in Wisconsin with over 44,000 students. The Catholic Church became the largest private school system in the United States. The majority of these schools were parish-operated elementary schools which, at one time, were almost exclusively staffed by religious sisterhoods.<sup>1</sup>

**Summary of Significance**

St. Peter's Catholic School operated as an elementary school providing an optional parochial educational opportunity to Eagle River's area residents from its construction in 1926 to its closure in 2004. It is important for the role which it played in education in the Eagle River area by offering

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<sup>1</sup> Barbara Wyatt, Ed. *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin a Manual for Historic Properties, Vol. 3*, (Historic Preservation Division State Historical Society of Wisconsin, June 1986)

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religious orientated instruction coupled with the standard required Wisconsin curriculum.

When the United States public school system was implemented, it was deliberately organized to omit any and all suggestion of religion. This forced the Catholic Church to mandate at their Third Plenary Council (1884) in Baltimore that it was an obligation that each parish priest establish a parochial school as an integral part of each Catholic parish. It also required the church membership to support the church school by sending their children to the school. The Catholic school did not see itself as an alternative to the public school, but as a complementary educational institution. The Catholic Church established the largest private school system in the nation. Concerns over their status in America, Catholics felt that they had a great deal to lose if their schools failed. The Catholic Church believed that their broader status and strength in America was tied to the reputation of their schools. The success of the St. Peter's Catholic School is evident in its scale, strong enrollment and longevity as a center of high quality elementary instruction in the community.

Period of Significance

The period of significance extends from 1926 to 1968. This period begins with the date of construction and ends with the year 1968 which is the fifty-year cutoff date for National Register listing.

**Vilas County History**

In 1893, Vilas County was formed with territory removed from Oneida County. Additional area from Forest County and Oneida County was added in 1897. In 1905 a small portion of Vilas County was given back to Oneida County and additional land was removed from Forest County and added to Vilas County. These are the boundaries which remain today. The county was named in the honor of William F. Vilas, a graduate of the University of Wisconsin Madison who held the offices of Post Master General (1885-1888), Secretary of the Interior (1881-1891) and United States Senator (1891-1897).

At the time of the organization of Vilas County, the few European settlers living in the county identified themselves with one of three small towns that had established in the county. Eagle River comprised the easterly and northeasterly area of the county, Minocqua comprised the western area of the county, and Arbor Vitae the central and southern portion of the county. Eagle River was designated as the county seat.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> George O. Jones, *History of Lincoln, Oneida and Vilas Counties, Wisconsin*, (H. C. Cooper Jr. & Co., Minneapolis – Winona, MN, 1924), pages 162-169

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St. Peter's Catholic School  
Eagle River, Vilas County, Wisconsin

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John O'Connor (b. 1833, d. 7-4-1889), who is considered the founder of the village, arrived in the area of what would become Eagle River on April 12, 1883. Born in Newcastle, New Brunswick, Canada, O'Connor arrived in Milwaukee, Wisconsin with his family in 1845. At the age of eighteen he left home seeking employment in the lumbering industry. One year later he became a mill foreman. After marrying, he moved to Oconto, Wisconsin where he became the head sawyer of the mill where he was employed. In 1866 he took up residence in Green Bay where he pursued his own lumbering interests and operated a hotel. In 1874 his lumbering interests took him to Eau Claire, Wisconsin. Nine years later he arrived in Eagle River.<sup>3</sup> On his second trip to Eagle River his son George E. O'Connor (b. 8-31-1865) accompanied him.<sup>4</sup> John O'Connor, who was drawn to the area by the abundance of virgin white pine, purchased one thousand acres of land from lumberman John Phelps.<sup>5</sup>

O'Connor built a small cabin on the south bank of the Eagle River. After he had prepared a residence, O'Connor brought his remaining family to Eagle River. The first school was conducted in 1883 in an early log structure owned by John O'Connor and the few attending students were taught by his wife Anna O'Connor. In 1885, with the arrival of more families, a two-room schoolhouse was built. Anna O'Connor ordered the original plat of the village to be executed by Daniel Graham on June 5, 1885. At this time there were fifteen families in the area. In addition to lumber speculation, John O'Connor operated a real estate business and a general supply store.

The expansion of Eagle River was brought to fruition with the arrival of the Milwaukee, Lake Shore & Western Railroad in June of 1883 (MLS & W became the Chicago and NorthWestern Railroad). The establishment of the railroad launched the lumbering boom in Vilas County and throughout northern Wisconsin. Lumber which was sawn into boards at the Eagle River mills traveled to various markets by rail. In addition, huge log rafts were fashioned from the white pine logs and floated down tributaries to the Wisconsin River and then onward to the saw mills located at Rhinelander, Merrill, and Wausau.

Before the arrival of the railroad, all supplies for Vilas County residents were brought up the Wisconsin River or overland by wagon.<sup>6</sup> Lyman J. Cook (b. 9-17-1850, d. 3-1-1921) and George P Dickinson (b. 8-17-1849, d. 3-11-1942) arrived in Eagle River in May of 1883 becoming Eagle River's first merchants. Cook and Dickinson came to know one another in Marathon County,

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<sup>3</sup> George O. Jones, *History of Lincoln, Oneida and Vilas Counties, Wisconsin*, (H. C. Cooper Jr. & Co., Minneapolis-Winona, MN, 1924), pages 184-195

<sup>4</sup> Harry H. Hemig, *The Catholic Church in Wisconsin*, (Catholic Historic Publishing Co., Milwaukee, WI, 1896), pages 628-631, 1162

<sup>5</sup> *Commemorative Biographical Record Counties of Waupaca, Portage, Wood, Marathon, Lincoln, Oneida, Vilas, Langlade, and Shawano*, (J. H. Beers, Chicago, 1895), pages 44-45

<sup>6</sup> George O. Jones, *History of Lincoln, Oneida and Vilas Counties*, (H. C. Cooper Jr. & Co., Minneapolis-Winona, 1924) pages 184-195

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Wisconsin and in 1877 formed the partnership of Dickinson & Cook where in the village of Norrie they operated a general mercantile and drug store.

In early May of 1883, Dickinson & Cook set off from Three Lakes, Wisconsin traveling to Eagle River by wagon hauling their mercantile merchandise and drug inventory. Prior to the construction of a substantial building on the south side of the river, they conducted business in a tent. Dickinson & Cook became Eagle River's largest merchants. In addition, they purchased large tracts of pine acreage for lumbering purposes.<sup>7</sup> In 1887, Dickinson & Cook, along with Frank Tambling, purchased lands adjoining Eagle River. They hired a surveyor and laid out an expansion of the village to the north of Division Street.<sup>8</sup> In 1887, the size of the current school had become inadequate and a six-room schoolhouse was built.

Soon additional lumbering companies began to arrive. The T. B. Scott Lumber Company built a mill and company store. The York and Son Lumber Company also built a saw mill. A hotel and saloon were opened and even a roller-skating rink was built.

George W. Gerry, a lumberman from Maine, established the Gerry Lumber Company saw mill and planing mill in Eagle River in 1886. The seasonal supplies needed for their loggers totaled in excess of \$75,000 which was a tremendous boost to the Eagle River economy. Two additional general stores and a second hotel were opened in Eagle River in 1886.

When St Peter's Church began holding services in a building John O'Connor built at the corner of Wall and Railroad streets, the Reverend Father Goepfert wrote of his memories of early Eagle River in 1898: "For years the camps were many; the mills ran night and day; wages were high; there was activity and abundance in every store and department, and the "Lake Shore" as it was called, had its hands and cars full to ship out the products of industry and to supply the inhabitants with the necessities of life."

Eagle River was incorporated as a village on March 9, 1921. A survey was conducted in January by W. J. Walsh which indicated that the village had an area of 544 acres and a population of 790 people.

The logging industry sustained the Eagle River area through the early 1920s. The Wisconsin-Michigan Lumber Company built a new mill in Eagle River in 1920 in order to harvest the hardwoods and hemlock timber which had not been harvested by early logging operations. Their arrival gave

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<sup>7</sup> *Commemorative Biographical Record Counties of Waupaca, Portage, Wood, Marathon, Lincoln, Oneida, Vilas, Langlade and Shawano*, (J. H. Beers & Co., Chicago, 1895) pages 187-188, 953-954

<sup>8</sup> George O. Jones, *History of Lincoln, Oneida and Vilas Counties*, (H. C. Cooper Jr. & Co., Minneapolis-Winona, 1924), pages 184-195

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Eagle River new life. As was the practice in other areas of northern Wisconsin, the cut-over-land was sold to settlers who then established farms. In many instances, the poor soil and short growing season made farming in the northern one-third of Wisconsin very difficult.<sup>9</sup>

When the lumber harvest was over it was the expansion of tourism that was the salvation for the Eagle River area. A realization came in the early-twentieth century in northern Wisconsin that area lakes and rivers offered excellent locations for summer resorts and cottages. That concept gave birth to the Resort Era. During this time there was a renewed interest by many Americans to re-connect to the unspoiled forest. Many city dwellers saw their urban environment disintegrating. At first tourist travel was confined to only the wealthy, but the popularity of the affordable automobile and the cementing of the forty-hour work week<sup>10</sup> opened up travel and the annual vacation to the ordinary working American. Early entrepreneurs used the building materials available in the area to build charming rustic log lodges and cabins alongside sparkling lakes that were teeming with fish. Eagle River capitalized on the tourist's desire to escape the cities and offered food, lodging and perhaps illicit spirits (due to Prohibition) to the traveling tourist.

Currently tourism sustains Eagle River year round. In the summer it is fishing and water sports and in the winter it is snowmobiling. Eagle River is known as the "Snow Mobile Capital of the World" and hosts the Amsoil Championship Snowmobile Derby each January. Even St. Peter's Catholic Church was affected by summer tourism. They enlarged the first church in 1919 and built a larger second church in 1948 in order to comfortably accommodate the seasonal tourists.

### **History of St. Peter the Fisherman Catholic Church**

A number of the early settlers, including John O'Connor, who located in the Eagle River area were Catholics. Having the desire to sustain their spiritual needs, they reached out to traveling pastors and missionary priests. The first Mass was celebrated in 1883 in John O'Connor's log home. Reverend Father John Seubert from Clintonville officiated. After 1886, Catholic services were held in John O'Connor's building at the corner of Wall and Railroad streets, the homes of T. B. Walsh and M. Holland, and in the town hall.

It became very important to Catholics in Eagle River to have a church, not only for worship, but for many the church was also a center of community social activity. In 1890, Samuel W. Smith, a local hotel keeper and practicing Catholic, visited the area lumber camps soliciting for donations in order to

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<sup>9</sup> George O. Jones, *History of Lincoln, Oneida and Vilas Counties*, (H. C. Cooper Jr. & Co. Minneapolis-Winona, 1924), pages 184-195

<sup>10</sup> Encyclopedia.com, *Labor Laws*,  
[www.encyclopedia.com/searchresults.aspx?q=fair%2blabor%2bstandards%2bact%2b1938](http://www.encyclopedia.com/searchresults.aspx?q=fair%2blabor%2bstandards%2bact%2b1938),



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build a Catholic Church. Many Catholic settlers in the area also received a visit from Smith. John O'Connor donated the lots, others donated money and some donated their labor to build the church. The first St. Peter's Catholic Church was built at the corner of 2<sup>nd</sup> and Wall streets for \$1,325 and was solemnly blessed by the Bishop of Green Bay. Reverend Father Nicholas from Rhinelander became the resident priest.

On September 10, 1894 St. Peter's Catholic Church officially became a parish with Reverend Father Prosper Goepfert C. S. Sp. officiating. Goepfert directed that additional property should be purchased at 2nd and Wall streets where a rectory was constructed. The frame church was appointed with altars, statues from Paris, stations and a bell. Goepfert, like Samuel W. Smith, continued to minister to the lumber camps for financial support.<sup>11</sup>

In 1898, a Catholic writer said: "At the present time the parish of Eagle River and dependent missions extend to a territory comprising 4,000 square miles. North of Eagle River there is not a priest located within a distance of 100 miles, while to the south there are two at Antigo 51 miles away."

Goepfer remained the priest until 1899 being replaced by Reverend Father F. J. Toplak who guided the parish for the next twenty years. In 1919, Reverend Father Bernard Gerlitzki became the parish priest. He undertook the project of enlarging the existing church to accommodate the growing church and summer tourist attendance.

In 1922, Reverend Father Arthur Shank replaced Reverend Father Bernard Gerlitzki. Reverend Father Arthur Shank immediately recognized the need to build a new larger church. He received the authorization from the bishop to purchase nine city lots at the corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> and Wall for \$6,000.<sup>12</sup>

The construction of a new church would have to wait for more than twenty years. In 1924, Reverend Father Arthur Shank began to suggest to parishioners that St. Peter's Catholic Church should consider building a school. Wisconsin architect Anton F. Billmeyer designed the school building which was built on the Third Street property. The school was completed in late 1926 and was opened in February of 1927 with the arrival of the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi teaching staff.

The church's finances fell into dire straits in the early 1930s, owing more than \$40,000 to creditors and it slipped in foreclosure. Hard times had fallen on the country due to the ongoing Great Depression.

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<sup>11</sup> Harry H. Hemig, *The Catholic Church in Wisconsin*, (Catholic Historic Publishing Co., Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1869), pages 628-631, 1162

<sup>12</sup> George O. Jones, *History of Lincoln, Oneida and Vilas Counties*, (H. C. Cooper Jr. & Co., Minneapolis-Winona, 1924), page 192

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On February 4, 1937, the bishop appointed Reverend Father Eric Kemerling to get St. Peter's Catholic Church back on its feet. As the Depression came to an end, the tourists returned and the need for a larger church was evident. In 1947, St. Peter's parishioners pledged \$60,000 toward the building of a larger church at the corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> and Wall streets in close proximity to St. Peter's Catholic School. Contractor estimates ranged from \$250,000 to \$300,000 so Reverend Father Kemerling became the contractor for the new church. He hired laborers, purchased materials, rented equipment, and had church members pitch in along with the workmen.

By the end of 1948 the two church towers were completed. With money still an issue, discarded Eagle River street lights were suspended upside down and became chandeliers for the inside of the church. Reverend Father Kemerling searched salvage yards for scrap metal for Communion rails. He found a large movie theatre organ sitting unused in a warehouse and had it installed in the church.<sup>13</sup> The interior enhancements continued for seven years when Bishop Joseph Annabring of Superior formally dedicated the new church.

In 1960 a convent for the Sisters and a Rectory were added to St. Peter's campus. St. Peter's Catholic Church remained an active parish at this location until 2002, when the congregation moved to their newly built church on Highway G. St. Peter's Catholic School was utilized by the congregation until 2004.

In 2005 Design/Build by Visner Inc, owned by Jeff Visner, purchased the St. Peter's campus. St. Peter's Catholic Church was demolished and the remaining three buildings located on the campus were refurbished. Shepherd's Way Christian School, which was the remnant of St. Peters School, operated a non-denominational Christian school in St. Peter's Catholic School until 2008. The 1960 Rectory houses the offices of Design/Build by Visner Inc. and the 1960 convent (Parish Center) houses a day care. St Peter's Catholic School is now the Northwoods Center, a site for social and cultural activities.

### **Religious Instruction in Wisconsin**

Wisconsin has a long history of religion-based schools. The first Roman Catholic missionary to reach present-day Wisconsin was the Jesuit priest Rene Menard. In 1665, Claude Allouez utilized La Pointe, Madeline Island, as his base for ministering to the Huron Indians who were located in the vicinity. His evangelistic activities moved from La Pointe to the Indian tribes located along the Fox River and on the shores of Green Bay. Allouez and Father Louis Andre built the first permanent mission, St

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<sup>13</sup> *Eagle River It's History and It's People* "History of the Catholic Church in Eagle River" by Jane Cramton and Edith Stein Gardner, (Compiled by the Eagle River Historical Society, Hahn Printing Inc. Eagle River, 2008) pages 203-207

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Francois Xavier, on the Fox River at De Pere in 1671. During the late-seventeenth century and early-eighteenth century Roman Catholic missionaries traveled throughout the northern United States ministering to both the Natives and the French Fur traders. In 1846, Father Victor Jouanneault, a French priest who was the pastor of St. Paul's Parish in Mineral Point, built a small red brick building there and established the first Catholic grade school in Wisconsin.<sup>14</sup>

Early-twentieth century laws limiting child labor, increased European immigration and compulsory school attendance laws precipitated a steady rise in the school age population. Both Catholic and public schools organized efforts to respond to the tremendous expansion of enrollments.

When the United States public school system was implemented, it was deliberately organized ignoring any type of formal religion. Sectarian crusaders such as Horace Mann (1796-1859) dedicated themselves to eliminating religion from public schools. When it became obvious to the Catholic Church that the government operated school system was not going to include religion, a mandate came down from the Third Plenary Council (1884) in Baltimore. This mandate stated that it was an absolute necessity, as well as an obligation of each pastor, to establish a parochial school as an integral part of their parishes.

The Catholic school also became a center for family activities that promoted culture accompanied by the religious life. It also advocated for the importance of a civic-minded society in which the entire community took part. The Catholic school did not see itself as an alternative to the public school, but as a complementary educational institution.<sup>15</sup> The Catholic Church became the single largest operator of a private school system in the United States. The majority of these schools were parish operated elementary schools. Since parochial schools did not receive assistance from the state's school tax revenue, most Catholic students were required to pay tuition. Catholic schools did not restrict enrollment to only Catholics. The school accepted nondenominational students, provided that they met the admission and tuition requirements.

At one time, Catholic parochial schools were exclusively staffed by religious orders of sisters. This was the case for many years at St. Peter's Catholic School. The utilization of religious staff is how the Catholic school survived during the Great Depression. The Sister's salaries were greatly reduced or eliminated which enabled the Catholic schools to maintain operation. Gradually the schools evolved to incorporate more lay teachers reflecting changes in economic trends, and especially when the number of nuns available to teach was reduced due to the shrinking numbers within these religious orders.

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<sup>14</sup> Barbara Wyatt, *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin a Manual for Historic Preservation, Vol. 3*, (Historic Preservation Division State Historical Society of Wisconsin, June 1986)

<sup>15</sup> Harold A. Buetow, *The Catholic School its Roots, Identity, and Future*, (Crossroads Publishing Co., New York, 1988), pages 1-133

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**St. Peter's Catholic School**

In 1924, Reverend Father Arthur Shank began to campaign throughout his congregation for St. Peter's Church to build a school. In 1884, the American Catholic Bishops met for the Third Plenary Council in Baltimore. At the completion of this meeting a decree was made which boldly articulated that it was the obligation of all pastors to establish Catholic Schools as part of their churches. The decree also mandated that parents *must send their children to such schools*.<sup>16</sup>

In 1924, Reverend Father Arthur Shank began to suggest to parishioners that St. Peter's Catholic Church should consider building a Catholic school where instruction in Catholicism could be included with the Wisconsin required curriculum.<sup>17</sup> By 1926, \$17,627.98 had been raised from local parishioners and non-resident friends. A loan in the amount of \$31,842.38 was secured for the remaining construction cost. Architect Anton F. Billmeyer was contracted to design the school. Anton F. Billmeyer's Construction Company, located in Wisconsin Rapids, began construction on July 12, 1926.<sup>18</sup> On August 8, 1926, the cornerstone was placed during an impressive religious ceremony. The corner stone ceremony included a procession of fifty seminarians from St. Mary of the Lake Villa who were dressed in cassock and surplice. They also served as the choir.

St. Peter's Catholic School was completed in late 1926 on the property at 3<sup>rd</sup> and Wall which had been procured in 1922. The concrete and brick building was 96' long and 60'8" wide. The first floor contained four large multi-grade classrooms and the living quarters for the sisters. The basement level contained a large auditorium that seated 300 people with a large stage at the east end. Across the hall from the auditorium were a well-equipped kitchen, a boy's bathroom, a girl's bathroom, a club room, and a boiler room. The cost for the construction of St. Peter's Catholic School was \$49,470.36. When the Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi arrived, the school was opened on February 26, 1927.

A day-long dedication celebration was held on May 29, 1927. The Bishop of the Superior Diocese, Theodore H. Reverman, officiated. A Communion Mass was held at 7am, a Low Mass at 8am, and a High Mass at 10:15am. From 12pm to 2pm the ladies served a luncheon. At 3pm the dedication of St. Peter's School took place. The men of the parish formed an arch from the rectory to the school for the bishop. The dedication sermon was held in the auditorium of the school. After the dedication of the school, they proceeded to the church where the sacrament was given. At 5pm a program honoring the bishop was held in the school auditorium.

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<sup>16</sup> Erik P. Goldschmidt Ph. D. M. DIV, *Sustaining Urban Catholic Elementary Schools* (Boston College, Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, 2011), page 5

<sup>17</sup> *St. Peter the Fisherman Church 125 Years....1890-2015*, Commemorative booklet by Jane Stein Cramton and Edith Stein Gardner\* (Printed by St. Peter's Catholic Church, 2015), pages 57-62

<sup>18</sup> *Report of School Building Fund, St. Peter's Congregation, Eagle River, Wisconsin, January 22, 1928*, pages 1-2

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In 1932, Reverend Father Peter Rivers remodeled the classroom at the southwest corner turning it into a chapel which eliminated the daily heating of the old frame St. Peter's Church.

Concern over the comfort of the Sisters led Reverend Father Pius Markalonis to build a convent (parish center) that included a chapel in 1960. The Sisters' living quarters in the school were later converted to a library and a kindergarten classroom. The Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi continued in their roles as teachers until the late 1950s when lay teachers, three full-time and one part-time, were hired.

In 1975, St. Peter's Catholic School had 124 students and began its first kindergarten class. The convent was closed in 1980 and the Sisters were recalled to Milwaukee. The school up to this period of time had been tuition free (other than books, supplies and extra activities). To help alleviate financial strains on the school operations, a-dollar-a-day tuition was instituted at this time.

In 1994, the sixth, seventh and eighth grades were removed from the school. Early in 2000 the decision was made to build a new church just north of Eagle River on Highway G. The building was started on Memorial Day weekend of 2001. By 2002, student turnover was high and enrollment in the school had declined. Six lay teachers staffed classes from preschool through fifth grade. St. Peter's Catholic Church, experiencing the financial burden of declining enrollment and an aging building, decided to close the school in 2004.<sup>19</sup>

St. Peter's Catholic School became the Northwoods Center in November of 2015. The Northwoods Center offers the former St. Peter's School as a site for social and cultural activities. The 2016 Mrs. Wisconsin Pageant was held in the auditorium. Bridal shows, Eagle River Chamber of Commerce business, after-5 get-togethers, meetings, stage programs, art exhibits, community fundraisers and a host of other activities have all been held in the former school building.

**Architect Anton F. Billmeyer**

Anton F. Billmeyer was born in Grand Rapids, Wisconsin (now known as Wisconsin Rapids) on February 22, 1873. His parents, Anton and Ludwine, arrived in America from Germany in 1868 aboard the steamship *Saxonia*. They landed in New York and then made their way to Grand Rapids, reaching their new home in 1869.

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<sup>19</sup> *St. Peter the Fisherman Church 125 Years...1890-2015*, Commemorative booklet by Jane Stein Cramton and Edith Stein Gardner (Printed by St. Peter's Catholic Church, 2015), pages 57-62

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Anton received his education at the Howe School in Wisconsin Rapids. During this period of time, Anton was exposed to the carpentry trade. In 1889 he started working as a carpenter in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. At night he attended civil engineering classes where he learned the technical skill of creating a blueprint. In 1895, Anton returned to Wisconsin Rapids where he opened a contracting and building business. Included as part of his business were his services as an architect.

Anton married Mary Jeffrey on November 28, 1900 and they produced six children. Carl J. Anton was born on November 29, 1901. Carl attended the Carnegie Institute in Pennsylvania and upon graduation joined his father's architectural firm.<sup>20</sup> Graduates from Assumption High School in Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin who are furthering their education may apply for the Carl J. Billmeyer Memorial Scholarship if majoring in architecture, engineering or business.

Anton F. Billmeyer died suddenly on August 8, 1927 after an appendicitis attack.<sup>21</sup> Anton was a prolific architect in Wisconsin Rapids, central, and northern Wisconsin. Some of the buildings attributed to him are; in Wisconsin Rapids, Issa P. Witter House, First National Bank, Mayer Otto R. Roenius House, Lowell School, Club House Bulls-Eye Country Club, Citizens National Bank, Elks Club House, Congregational Church, Daly Music Company, 15 bungalows for the Nekoosa-Edwards Paper Company, St. Peter and Paul Catholic School and the Holy Rosary Catholic Church. Buildings which he designed in other locations are: Charles Cornelius House in Neillsville, the IOOF in Mauston, the Mauston Hospital, the Dexterville School, and St. Peter's Catholic School in Eagle River.

**Conclusion: Criterion A – Education**

Religious education has a long history in Wisconsin and the educational history of Vilas County reflects both public and religious instruction. The St. Peter's School contributed to the educational development of Eagle River and represents the transition from rural, one-room schools to graded schools, constructed in town and serving the children from consolidated rural school districts.

The first known school in Eagle River was a log building built by John O'Connor in 1883. O'Connor, credited as the founder of Eagle River built this building for a dual-purpose: during the day it was a school, at night was used to house loggers, and on Sunday it was used for church services for fifteen families. By 1899, Vilas County was divided into three townships: Eagle River, Arbor Vitae and Minocqua. Eagle River was the easterly and north easterly part of the county. The school census of 1893 shows 275 students attending schools in four school districts. In 1897 the school census shows three districts with 315 students. The population of Eagle River was 1,454 in 1900.

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<sup>20</sup> George O. Jones, *History of Wood County Wisconsin*, (H. C. Cooper Jr. & Cooper, Minneapolis, 1923), page 534

<sup>21</sup> *Wisconsin Rapids Daily Tribune*, Anton F. Billmeyer obituary, August 9, 1927

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By 1900 almost all Wisconsin children within the required age ranges went to school for at least part of the year. There were a total of eleven rural schools in Eagle River with only a few standing today. In 1901 and 1905, the State Legislature passed legislation creating funding for graded schools. Communities were encouraged to take advantage of this funding for constructing schools, and this marked a shift away from local autonomy. Graded schools were generally meant to refer to any school that had more than one room and one grade of students. Professional educators advocated the position that students of different ages had different abilities and learning requirements which, in turn, needed separate classrooms. In January of 1911, the county superintendent of schools reported that there were 31 public school facilities in Vilas County with an enrollment of 1,545 students. By December of 1922, the annual report showed that there were thirty-six rural schools in Vilas County employing thirty-seven teachers. The school census indicated that there were 2,066 children who ranged in age from four to twenty within the county with 1,522 children actually enrolled within the system.

The shift from one-room schools to graded schools was just one change. Of greater influence still was the consolidation movement which profoundly altered public primary education. In 1937-1938 there were over 7,700 separate administrative units in the state – and by 1967 there were fewer than 500 school districts. This consolidation movement affected the Eagle River schools. In 1945 all of the outlying schools in the Eagle River area were consolidated into one district, kindergarten through twelfth grade. The small rural schools were closed and children from these areas were bused into Eagle River to attend school in town. There were very few graded schools to accommodate these children and St. Peter's School was constructed at a time to take advantage of the need for more educational space. After the Great Depression, the economy of Eagle River began to strengthen due to the resort and expanding tourism industry.

Schools able to accommodate the consolidation in Vilas County included the St. Germain State Graded School in St. Germain; the Mayo School in Eagle River, the Presque Isle State Graded School in Presque Isle, and St. Peter's Catholic School in Eagle River. Of these schools, the St. Germain School has been heavily altered and no longer retains historic integrity, and the Presque Isle School has been demolished. The Mayo School (NRHP 94000135) is National Register-listed, but has only two classrooms and was a school between 1924 and closed in 1953. The St. Peter's Catholic School is significantly larger and remained an elementary school until 2004. Eagle River built a high school in 1923 which was expanded in 1955. A new high school was constructed in 1976 known as Northland Pines High School. In 1992 a graded and a middle school known as Eagle River Elementary school was built on the same campus as the Northland Pines High School. The city of Eagle River took over the 1932 high school which was demolished except for the 1955 wing. The 1955 high school wing became the Eagle River City Hall. Later, the 1976 Northland Pines High School was demolished and a new high school was built on the same site in 2006. Currently, Eagle River's public school system is

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under the control of the Northland Pines School System. Education opportunities are also available from Christ Lutheran School.

**Summary**

The St. Peter's Catholic School is significant to the history of education as one of only four total, historic period schools in the county offering elementary education in graded schools. This school was also significantly larger than the other three, and continued as a school, in some cases, decades longer than the others. The other elementary school in Eagle River, for example, was the Mayo School. The Mayo School had only two classrooms, opened in 1924 and closed in 1953. The era of school consolidation meant the closure of rural one-room schools which brought children into town to attend school. The construction of graded schools met this demand and St. Peter's School, one of the largest graded schools in the County continued in active use through 2004, far outpacing the longevity of the other historic period graded schools. The St. Peter's parish prioritized religion-based instruction and provided a high-quality education for the families of the County.

For seventy-eight years St. Peter's Catholic School provided a high-quality education to the several thousand young men and women of the Eagle River area. St. Peter's School served both Catholic and non-Catholic families. St. Peter's Catholic School operated as an elementary school from its construction in 1926 to its closure in 2004. In 2005 the non-denominational Shepherd's Way Christian School opened in this building and continued until 2008, when it closed. This building played an important role in the history of education in the City of Eagle River and is one of the few remaining historic school buildings in the community. It played a role in the context of education for its contributions as a parochial school as well as within the larger framework of the advancement of the requirements of Wisconsin's standards for curriculum. In addition, St. Peter's Catholic School played a central role within the entire Catholic community of Eagle River.

The visual nature and presence of the St. Peter's Catholic School building still conveys its former purpose. It remains a local landmark that played an integral role in the community's historical and cultural identity. St. Peter's Catholic School retains sufficient exterior integrity to reflect its history as a school and has very good interior integrity retaining its historic plan, features and finishes. The building is still clearly identifiable as a school and continues to reflect the educational history of Eagle River, Wisconsin.



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**Verbal Boundary Description:**

Parcel 221-660-02, also referenced as: Lot 2 18CS 131 LOTS 7-14 BLK 1 ORIGINAL PLAT EAGLE RIVER PRT NW NE.

**Boundary Justification:**

In 1922, Reverend Father Arthur Shank was given the approval from Bishop J. G. Pinten from the Superior Diocese to purchase nine lots on Third Street between Wall and Division Streets for the purpose of church expansion. Currently, the east side of Third Street between Wall and Division Streets (originally owned by St. Peter's Church) is divided into three legal parcels. Each of these parcels is owned by Design/Build by Visner Inc. These include parcel 221-660-01 which housed St. Peter's Parish Center (now a day care center), parcel 221-660-02 which housed the St. Peter's School (the subject of this nomination) which has the above description, and parcel 221-660-03 which housed the St. Peter's Church (demolished) and St. Peter's Rectory which now houses the offices of Design/Build by Visner Inc. The boundary encompasses all of the land originally associated with the school.

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Name of Property:	St. Peter's Catholic School
City or Vicinity:	Eagle River
State:	Wisconsin
Name of Photographer:	Patricia Lacey
Date of Photograph:	May 2017
Location of Original Digital Files:	Wisconsin Historical Society
Number of Photographs:	15

Photo 1  
West-facing main entry elevation  
Camera facing east

Photo 2  
Southwest corner of south-facing elevation  
Camera facing northeast

Photo 3  
Northeast corner of north-facing elevation and  
east-facing elevation  
Camera facing southwest

Photo 4  
West-facing elevation first floor window  
Camera facing east

Photo 5  
Original west entry vestibule  
Camera facing east

Photo 6  
First floor hallway  
Camera facing northeast

Photo 7  
Arched recessed classroom entry  
Camera facing north

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places**  
Continuation Sheet

Section photos Page 2

St. Peter's Catholic School  
Eagle River, Vilas County, Wisconsin

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Photo 8  
Classroom built-in shelves and cupboard  
Camera facing southeast

Photo 9  
Classroom blackboard  
Camera facing east

Photo 10  
Sister's office over stairwell  
Camera facing west

Photo 11  
Auditorium  
Camera facing west

Photo 12  
Stage east end of auditorium  
Camera facing east

Photo 13  
Girl's bathroom  
Camera facing north

Photo 14  
Rear east entry  
Camera facing east

Photo 15  
Historic lamppost  
Camera facing northeast

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

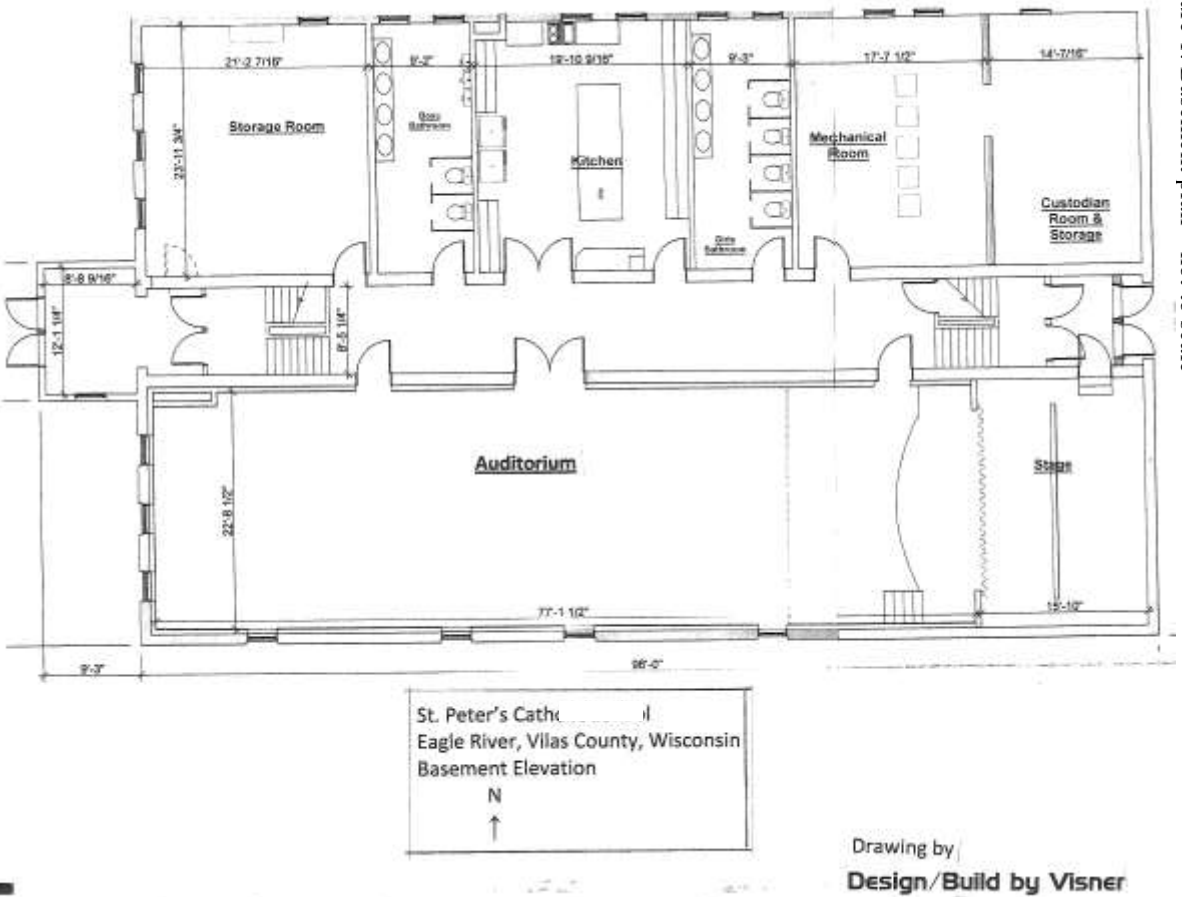
National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section figures Page 1

St. Peter's Catholic School  
Eagle River, Vilas County, Wisconsin

Figures

Figure 1: Basement plan – not to scale



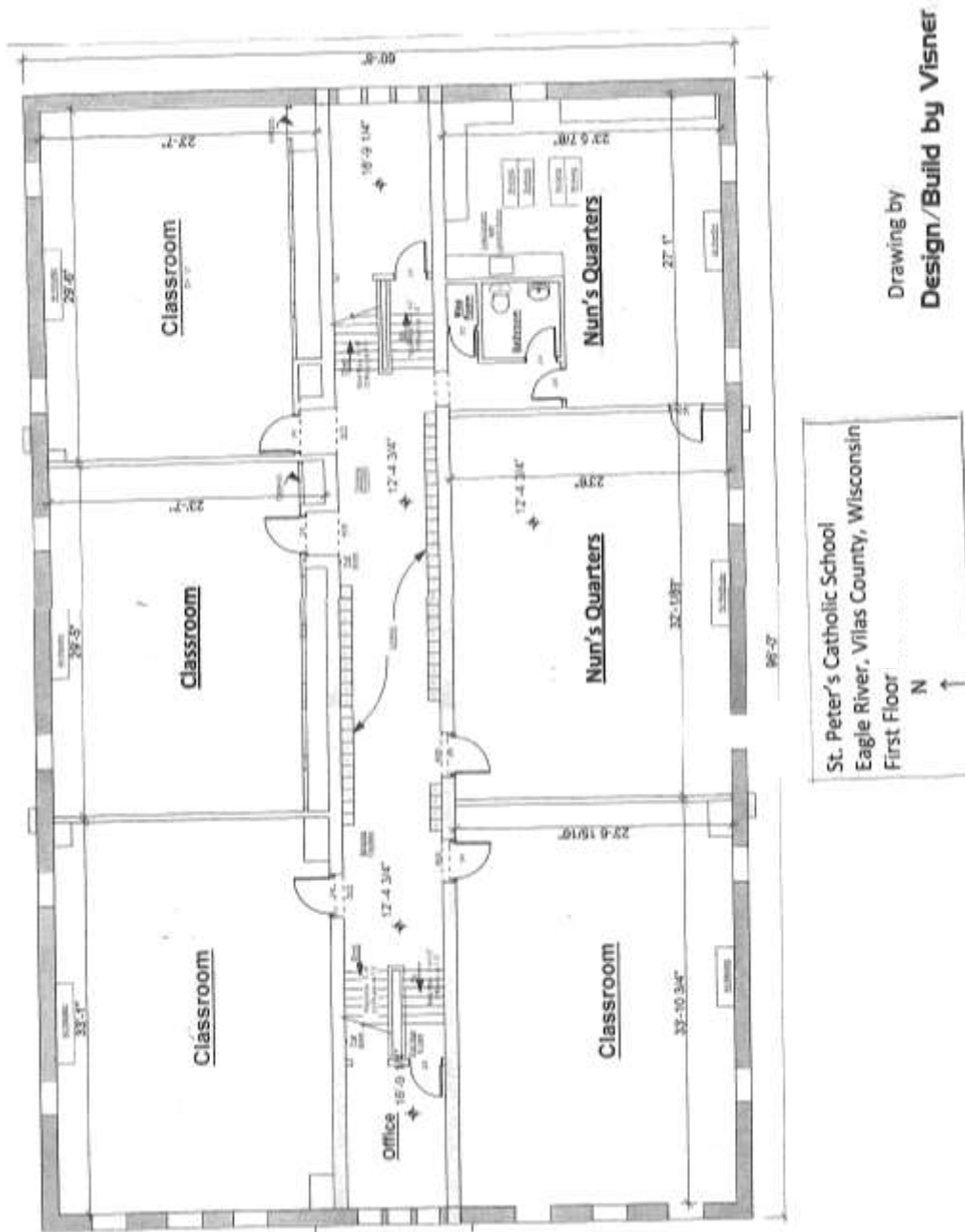
**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

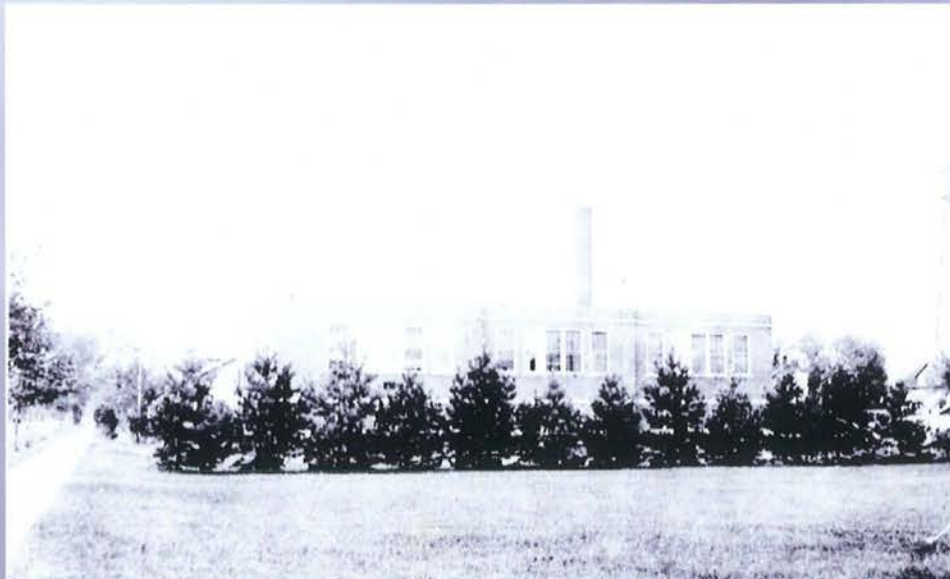
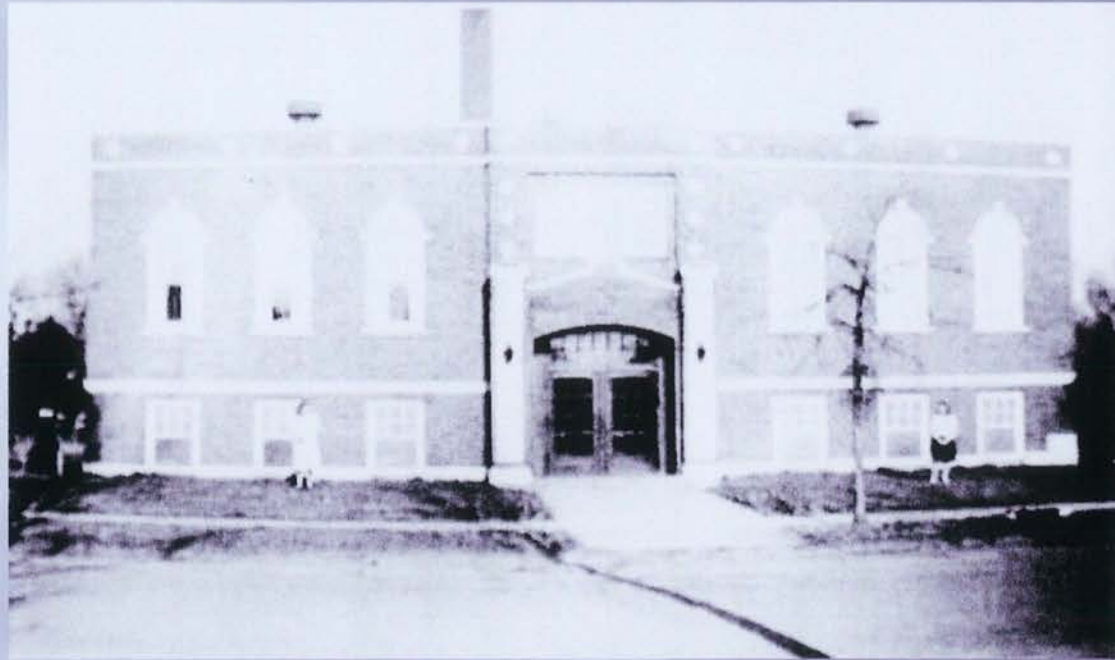
Section figures Page 2

St. Peter's Catholic School  
Eagle River, Vilas County, Wisconsin

Figure 2: First floor plan – not to scale



\_\_End Figures



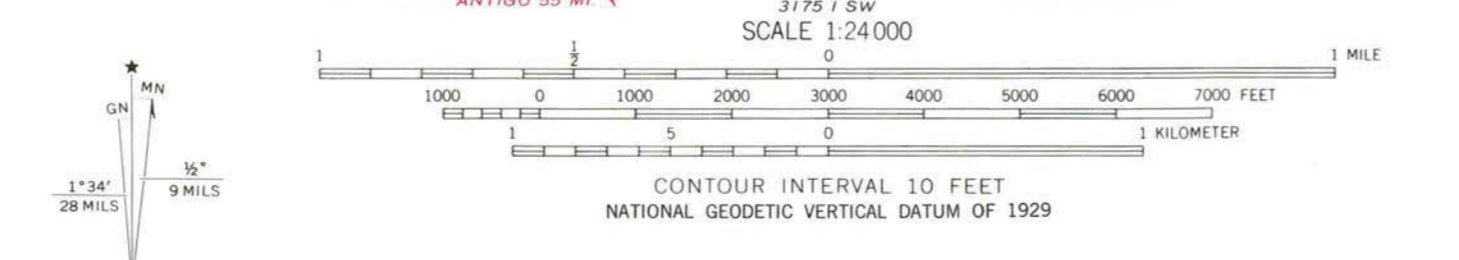
St. Peter's Catholic School – Eagle River, Vilas County, Wisconsin  
Historic photos c1930





St. Peter's Catholic School  
Eagle River, Vilas Co., WI  
16T 325 825.15  
508 7158.54

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
Control by USGS and USC&GS  
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1966. Field checked 1970  
Depth curves compiled from charts furnished by Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources  
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum 10,000-foot grid based on Wisconsin coordinate system, north zone 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 16, shown in blue  
To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983, move the projection lines 6 meters north and 10 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks  
Map photoinspected 1981  
No major culture or drainage changes observed



ROAD CLASSIFICATION  
Primary highway, all weather, Light duty road, all weather, improved surface  
Secondary highway, all weather, Unimproved road, fair or dry weather, hard surface  
U. S. Route State Route



EAGLE RIVER EAST, WIS.

N 4552.5—W 8907.5/7.5  
1970  
PHOTOINSPECTED 1981  
AMS 3175 1 NW—SERIES V861

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092  
AND BY THE WISCONSIN GEOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY, MADISON, WISCONSIN 53706  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST





115 S THIRD STR



107-4 THIRD ST

*Northwoods Center*  
*"The Place for Social & Cultural Activities"*



AMERICAN  
FENCE CO.







Lake

















EXIT







UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: 8/21/2018      Date of Pending List: 9/14/2018      Date of 16th Day: 10/1/2018      Date of 45th Day: 10/5/2018      Date of Weekly List: 10/4/2018

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept       Return       Reject      10/4/2018 Date

Abstract/Summary  
Comments:

Recommendation/  
Criteria

Reviewer Control Unit      Discipline \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_      Date \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION:    see attached comments : No    see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.

SEAN P. DUFFY  
7TH DISTRICT, WISCONSIN



COMMITTEE ON  
FINANCIAL SERVICES  
SUBCOMMITTEES:  
CHAIRMAN, HOUSING AND INSURANCE  
CAPITAL MARKETS, SECURITIES AND  
INVESTMENTS

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WASHINGTON, DC 20515-4907  
PH: (202) 225-3365 • TOLL-FREE: 1-855-585-4251  
WEBSITE: duffy.house.gov

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives

May 17, 2018



Dear Wisconsin Historic Preservation Review Board Members,

I encourage you to support the nomination of the St. Peter's Catholic School in Eagle River to join the Wisconsin State Register of Historic Places and the National Register of Historic Places. The school, which is now known as the Northwoods Center, made a significant contribution to the educational environment of the Eagle River community for more than 80 years. To this day, it continues to stand as a beautiful historical testament to the importance of holding on to our core northern Wisconsin values of education, religious guidance, and community service.

Since opening in 1926, the building has educated hundreds of young minds, creating generations of citizens with strong moral convictions thanks to the commitment of the Catholic nuns and other religious leaders who dedicated their lives to raising and teaching these students. As time passed, the school evolved to meet the changing needs of the region, but it continued to provide our children with a strong education guided by Christian moral principles, thus directly contributing to the development of our productive, community-minded northern Wisconsin culture. After closing in 2004, the community stepped in to show their loyalty to this important piece of local history by supporting its renovation into the Northwoods Center. This remodel intentionally preserved many of the unique historical aspects of the school by integrating modern amenities while still retaining much of the historic character of the building. Through this strategic repurposing, the former St. Peter's School has been able to continue its tradition of supporting education and community service by providing much-needed space to host business classes, entrepreneurial ventures, and community activities.

I am proud to give my support to this effort to add the St. Peter's Catholic School building (now the Northwoods Center) to both the state and national Registers of Historic Places. This building represents almost one hundred years of Wisconsin education and community service. The time has come to formally recognize and preserve its contributions so the lessons it has taught, and will no doubt continue to teach, can impact our world for many generations to come.

I encourage you to join me in supporting this historic register nomination, which will enable us to actively preserve an important piece of northern Wisconsin's history and culture.

Sincerely,

Sean Duffy  
Member of Congress

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HAYWARD  
15954 RIVERS EDGE DRIVE, SUITE 206  
HAYWARD, WI 54843  
PH: (715) 392-3984 • FAX: (715) 392-3999



WISCONSIN  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY

TO: Keeper  
National Register of Historic Places

FROM: Peggy Veregin  
National Register Coordinator

SUBJECT: National Register Nomination



The following materials are submitted on this Sixteenth day of August 2018, for the nomination of the St. Peter's Catholic School to the National Register of Historic Places:

- 1 Original National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form
- 1 CD with NRHP Nomination form PDF
- Multiple Property Nomination form
- 15 Photograph(s)
- 1 CD with image files
- 1 Map(s)
- 3 Sketch map(s)/figures(s)/exhibit(s)
- 1 Piece(s) of correspondence
- Other:

COMMENTS:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Please ensure that this nomination is reviewed
- \_\_\_\_\_ This property has been certified under 36 CFR 67
- \_\_\_\_\_ The enclosed owner objection(s) do or do not constitute a majority of property owners
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other: