

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

For NPS use only

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

received **MAY 23 1986**

date entered **JUN 20 1986**

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

**1. Name**

historic Southern Minnesota Depot

and/or common N/A

**2. Location**

street & number Corner of Elm Street and Pickle Alley N/A not for publication

city, town Rushford N/A vicinity of

state Minnesota code 22 county Fillmore code 045

**3. Classification**

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

**4. Owner of Property**

name Tri-County Electric Co-op

street & number 210 West Jessie

city, town Rushford N/A vicinity of state Minnesota 55971

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Fillmore County Court House

street & number Courthouse Square

city, town Preston state Minnesota

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Minnesota Statewide Historic Sites Survey has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1980  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Minnesota Historical Society, Ft. Snelling History Center

city, town St. Paul state Minnesota

## 7. Description

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

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

The Southern Minnesota Depot in Rushford has not been greatly altered since its construction about 1867, even though it has had a succession of owners. Located adjacent to the City Hall one block off the main business district of the city, it once stood as the terminus of the railroad line. In its heyday several trains a day would stop and take on passengers and freight.

Not much is known about the actual design of the station itself. The station is similar in exterior design to other stations in southeastern Minnesota. That could be due to similarity of functional requirements as well as a common source of design.

The Rushford Depot is a two-story frame structure which measures approximately 30 by 60 feet. It is capped with a gable roof and is sheathed in a combination of clapboard and board-and-batten siding. A telegrapher's window projects slightly from the center of the longitudinal facade (formerly track-side). This facade is also provided with a wooden canopy at the first story level which extends the entire length of the building. The roofing is cedar shingles. Decorative trim is limited to a small band of scrollwork at the base of the gable along the east end. The windows are six-over-six double hungs on the second floor, four-over-four in the waiting room area of the first floor and two-over-two in the station master's office area.

The interior of the depot is divided functionally accordingly to level and floor plan. The ground floor is relegated to a baggage room (now divided by a central partition), ticket and stationmaster's office, and two waiting rooms. The second story formerly consisted of quarters for the stationmaster and railroad workers (the allocation of space for railroad workers is conjectural, however, the second floor appears to be divided into two distinct apartments).

Examination of the structural system of the depot shows it to be constructed of post-and-beam with mortise-and-tenon rather than the characteristic late nineteenth century ballon frame system. Interior walls are constructed of regularly spaced studs sheathed with plaster on wooden lath. A great deal of sag as well as a distinct outward lean in the rear facade is noticeable on the second floor. This condition is due in part to the weight of a cantilevered chimney (supported by a stud partition) and to extensively rotted sills at the rear of the structure--a condition caused by poor footings and improper grading. It is certainly possible that the nature of the post-and-beam structural system has tolerated greater wracking of the structure, much the same as in barns, and resisted collapse of the building.

Shortly after the building was built, a 6' canopy was added on the south side to protect the waiting passengers. In 1912, the wooden boarding platform was removed and a patterned brick pavement installed.

The building was sold in the early 1970's and the new owners added a garage door to the west end. The building has not been well maintained and it is in a deteriorated condition at the present time.

(See continuation sheet)

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Item number 7. Description Page 2

Finally, the exterior of the depot has undergone alterations throughout its lifetime. The most obvious of these alterations has been the addition of a large door at one end of the building, resulting in the removal of intermediate crossbaracing between the structural posts. The canopy mentioned previously is also an addition, evidenced by the method by which it is attached to the building; it is, however, of ca. turn-of-the-century appearance. Also, the former trackside and one end of the depot have been resheathed in narrow-lap clapboard, contributing to the "Stick-Style" character. The clapboard, interestingly, has been applied over the original board-and-batten sheathing, the battens being removed. The original color scheme of the depot is evident on the original boards.

## 8. Significance

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

Specific dates	Builder/Architect
1867	Unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Southern Minnesota Depot, located in Rushford, is the last vestige of the regional Southern Minnesota Railroad still on its original site in the City. It was the expansion of the railroad that led to the development of this area. The depot constructed just a few years after the close of the Civil War, best represents the impact the railroad had on the community of Rushford.

The idea of a railway in the Root River Valley was first conceived in 1854, but a national financial crisis impeded its progress and by 1858 only some roadbed grading had been accomplished. The onset of the Civil War further delayed the project and no tracks had been laid by the end of 1862 in Minnesota. By January 1, 1867 when the first locomotive whistled its arrival at the Rushford Station, more than 16,000 miles of iron rails crisscrossed the Minnesota landscape. The railroad had long been anticipated in Rushford and by the summer of 1866 it became an assured fact with the conveyance of additional lands by Congress to finance the project on July 4, 1866.

Minnesota had celebrated its eighth anniversary of statehood when the first Southern Minnesota locomotive signaled its arrival at the Rushford Depot on January 1, 1867 from LaCrosse, Wisconsin. From that moment on, the sleepy little hamlet at the confluence of Rush Creek with the Root River took on the character of a boom town and the fever of building a commerce which transpired in the next two years (while it remained the western terminus of the railway) led many to believe it was destined to become the metropolis of southeastern Minnesota.

From the moment the railway was assured, the population of Rushford began to swell to more than 1600 people. Within one year the "shanty village" of 20 dwellings saw the addition of 150 buildings, stores, shops, and warehouses, breweries, mills and houses, with an aggregate value of more than \$204,000 as of January 1866.

At this time, much of the prime agricultural land had been settled in Fillmore County but being the western terminus of the railway, Rushford served as the conduit to the vast unsettled western frontier. The Southern Minnesota Railway greatly expedited the conveyance of landseekers and their emigrant goods on their trek westward.

Rushford was the link between the industrialized east and the new western frontier and most importantly, wheat could be conveyed by rail to grain markets of the east. Until the railroad arrived, it was necessary to transport the grain by ox cart to McGregor, Brownsville, LaCrosse or Winona, often a three day journey. With the advent of the railroad, all this changed. By 1868 there were seven grain buyers with as many warehouses, shipping 10 to 12 railcars daily to Milwaukee during the harvest season. In 1871 a record 35 railcars were conveyed along the Southern Minnesota Railroad by one of their small locomotives.

Capital shortages and extensive litigation, in addition to the 1873 depression, caused a severe financial strain to the Southern Minnesota Railroad. On February 10, 1877 the line was sold to Albion P. Mann and Henry H. Camer, Trustees for Mortgage Bond Holders and the company was reorganized.

(See Continuation Sheet)

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet Item 9 Page 1

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property .35 acre

Quadrangle name Rushford West, Minn.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UTM References

A 

1	5	6	0	0	0	8	0	4	8	5	1	0	0	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H 

Zone			Easting				Northing							

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Lot 1, Block 3, Rushford Industrial Park Addition

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

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mark R. McKechnie, AIA

organization Mark McKechnie Architect PA

date August 16, 1985

street & number 2025 West Main Street

telephone 612-388-1555

city or town Red Wing

state Minnesota

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*Russell W. Fridley*

Russell W. Fridley

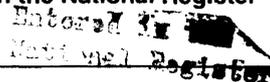
title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 5/16/86

### For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

*for* *Alvina Byers*  
Keeper of the National Register



date 6/20/86

Attest:

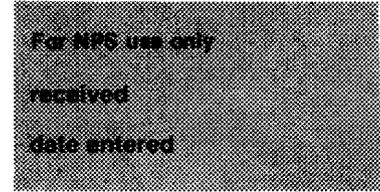
date

Chief of Registration

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Financial difficulties continued to plague the Southern Minnesota Line and on May 1, 1880 the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul took possession of the beleaguered railway. This firm later assumed the name of Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railway Company.

During its heyday the depot was a popular gathering place and the center of excitement and activity upon the arrival and departure of the trains. In the 1930's the railroad lost the contract for the mail to trucks and that signalled the final decline of the railroad through this part of the state. The buildings were sold in 1973, the line was closed and the track pulled up in 1981.

On its Original site, the depot is little changed except for the the gray color covering the original red which was the tradition along the Southern Minnesota Line, and the replacement of the plank walkways with brick cobblestones about 1912.

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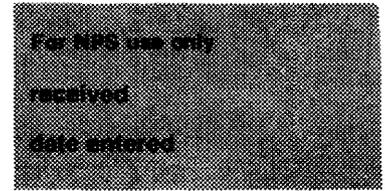
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Minnesota

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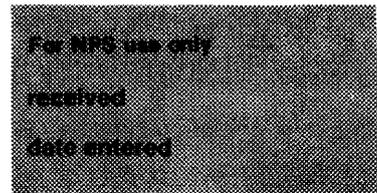


The Southern Minnesota Depot Nomination  
contains 1 contributing building.

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Bibliographical



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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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