

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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NATIONAL REGISTER

### 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 any 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 N/A

other names/site number Superior Downtown Historic District; NeHBS #NU13: Multiple

#### 2. Location

street & number See continuation sheet not for publication [N/A]

city or town Superior vicinity [N/A]

state Nebraska code NE county Nuckolls code 129 zip code 68978

#### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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.)

*Shirley Sumner*  
Signature of certifying official

November 1, 1993  
Date

Director, Nebraska State Historical Society  
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 certifying official/Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this 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.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

*Gregory Lapsley*

1/21/94 Entered in the  
National Register

for Signature of Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

Superior Downtown Historic District  
Name of Property

Nuckolls County, Nebraska  
County and State

**5. Classification**

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

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

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

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
34	21	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
34	21	Total

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

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

N/A

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

See continuation sheet  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

COMMERCE/TRADE: business  
specialty store  
GOVERNMENT: city hall  
post office  
public works  
EDUCATION: library  
RECREATION AND  
CULTURE: auditorium

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

foundation BRICK  
walls BRICK  
roof OTHER: tar and gravel  
other  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

- [x] 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 a 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)

Commerce

Period of Significance

1883-1937

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- [] 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:

Superior Downtown Historic District  
Name of Property

Nuckolls County, Nebraska  
County and State

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### 10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property 13.3 acres

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1.	14	579215	4430280	3.	14	579450	4430050
2.	14	579450	4430280	4.	14	579215	4430050

[ ] 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.)

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### 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Stan Sheets, Chairman S.T.A.R.T. Historic Committee and Debra Hansen

organization S.T.A.R.T. Historic Committee date September 1993

street & number 443 N. Central Ave. telephone (402) 879-3419

city or town Superior state Nebraska zip code 68978

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### Additional Documentation

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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)

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### Property Owner

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

name \_\_\_\_\_

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

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**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 the 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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Superior Downtown Historic District

Name of Property

Nuckolls County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 2,6,7 Page 1

### Location

#### Street and Number

304 through 454 North Central Avenue  
132 through 200 East Third Street  
112 through 118 West Fourth Street  
127 through 214 East Fourth Street  
213 through 452 North Commercial Avenue

### Function or Use

#### Historic Functions

COMMERCE/TRADE:      business  
                                 professional  
                                 organizational  
                                 financial institution  
                                 specialty store  
                                 department store

GOVERNMENT:         city hall  
                                 post office  
                                 public works

EDUCATION:            library

RECREATION AND CULTURE:    theater  
                                 auditorium

### Description

The Superior Downtown Historic District is a commercial area in Superior, Nuckolls County, Nebraska. The district is comprised of thirty-four commercial, governmental, recreational and educational properties that reflect the changes in Superior during the period of significance from 1883 to 1937. Architecture in the downtown area represents distinct periods in Superior's history and reflects the building styles popular in the region during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Superior (1992 population: 2,397) is located in the Republican Valley Region of the state, two miles from the Nebraska-Kansas state line, and 123 miles southwest of Lincoln. The town was founded in 1872 and was named for the superior quality of the land in the area. Superior's basic economic activities include farming, cattle feeding, manufacturing and retailing. The district, as a whole, retains its historic character as the main business area of Superior.

The Superior Downtown Historic District is square in shape and includes businesses facing Central Avenue, Commercial Avenue from Third to Fifth Streets, and some on Third and Fourth Streets. With a count of thirty-four contributing buildings over twenty-one non-contributing buildings, the integrity of the district is fair to good. Covering approximately thirteen acres, the district includes half of blocks 28, 30, 35, and 37, and all of blocks 29 and 36, in the original town of Superior. All of the lots in the district are twenty-five feet by one hundred thirty-five feet, except for some subdivided lots which are twenty-two and one-half feet

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Superior Downtown Historic District

Name of Property

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### Description (continued)

by either sixty-five or one hundred and ten feet. Central Avenue is one hundred feet wide, Commercial Avenue is ninety feet wide, numbered streets are eighty feet wide, and the alleys are sixteen feet wide.

The district exhibits various architectural styles popular during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including Commercial Italianate, Renaissance Revival, Jacobethan Revival, Moderne and Art Deco. Degree and richness of detail vary considerably on the front facades of the commercial buildings. For the most part, buildings are two-stories in height (with some one-story and three-stories) and of masonry construction. Detached buildings include a hotel, post office, library, and auditorium. Although many of the buildings have experienced modernization on the street level facade, the majority retain their original appearance on the upper stories, thus preserving the overall integrity of the district.

In 1991 the Community Planning and Design Assistance Team from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Architecture conducted a three-week planning and design study workshop in Superior. The team focused on goals, objectives, and activities to promote comprehensive planning, economic development, historic preservation, and tourism. As part of their plan for preservation and protection of historical structures and landscapes, the team recommended National Register listing for the downtown historic area. The team was invited to Superior by the Superior S.T.A.R.T. Committee, a 41-member group formed to establish goals, objectives, and activities to enhance Superior's economic viability. The S.T.A.R.T. Committee put out a planning document in 1990 entitled "A Strategic Plan for Economic Growth and Community Betterment" (Superior, Nebraska: Planning and Design Study, pp. 3, 24-25).

As a result of these planning processes, there is strong interest by some property owners to pursue rehabilitation work through the tax incentive program. Some commercial buildings, although counted as non-contributing in this nomination due to their current exterior appearance, retain their original store fronts under non-historic facade coverings and could, through rehabilitation, become contributing properties in the district.

Contributing properties of the Historic District are described below with available data arranged according to the following format: Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey (NeHBS) number; historic name; address; photograph number; number of stories; building material; date of construction; style; notable exterior and/or interior features; historical information; and alterations. Names of architects and builders are included if known.

### CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS

NU13-003 United States Post Office. 214 East Fourth Street (lots 7-13, block 30), (photo #18). It is a one story brick building with terra cotta trim built in 1934-35. The style is Classical Moderne with notable terra cotta trim displaying Art Deco motifs. Louis A. Simon was the supervising architect and George O. VonNerta the supervising engineer. The original steam heating system was replaced and air conditioning installed in the 1970s. The original front entry transom window and double doors with ornate Art Deco styled door handles were replaced in 1963. The front steps and hand rails were replaced in 1968 and the wooden windows were replaced with a metal combination system in 1980.

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Superior Downtown Historic District

Name of Property

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**Description (continued)**

NU13-004 Bank of Superior/Opera House. 401 and 407 North Central Avenue (lots 11-12, block 28), (photo #3). This two story brick building has a pressed metal cornice, window arches and sills. Built in 1883 by James G. Meek, A.C. McCorkle, and A.J. Briggs, this Commercial Italianate building originally had a metal arch over the corner cornice carrying the words "Bank of" so the whole signage read "Bank of Superior". The second floor, a large open space, was known as the "Opera House", and housed social, civic, and political activities. This was Superior's first masonry building and first bank.

NU13-703 Nebraskan Hotel (currently Leslie Hotel). 445 North Central Avenue (lots 1-5, block 28), (photo #1). Constructed of brick, concrete and limestone, this three story Art Deco hotel was built in 1929-1930 by Robert Turner, owner of the Turner Hotel Company of Mankato, Kansas. Art Deco motifs decorate the columns and capitals in the interior spaces and terrazzo floors are still visible on the ground floor. Some second floor rooms have been remodeled, but the third floor rooms and all corridors are in near original condition except for the added fire escapes and fire walls. Glass block in-fill was added to street level window openings in 1946.

NU13-704 Dahlgren Building. 411 North Central Avenue (lot 10, block 28), (photo #2). This one story brick, built c1920, by Albert Dahlgren has brickwork panels and pilasters. The building, more utilitarian in design, housed auto and motor repair shops. It was the location of the Chevrolet, Essex and Chandler automobile dealerships from the 1920s to 1930. The original entry door was located at the glass panel on the left. The present door is located where a show window was originally. The present door was added in the mid-1930s when a small hardware store was partitioned off at the left. The original door was closed in the 1940s when the building was converted into a frozen food locker plant. At the same time a 30 foot addition was installed at the rear for a butcher shop, thus covering the original garage shop doors. The only other alteration is the awning over the front windows installed in the 1950s.

NU13-706 W.S. Young Building. 335 North Central Avenue (lots 5-6, block 37), (photo #4). Constructed in 1906 by Walter S. Young, this two story brick and stone Renaissance Revival style building housed his wholesale bakery and confectionery. It later contained a retail grocery business. The second floor was occupied by the Masonic Lodge. The entire street level facade was modernized in 1974 with a new brick front, entry, and display windows. Second story window opening have in-fill panels.

NU13-707 Kendall Building. 325 North Central Avenue (lot 7, block 37), (photo #4). This is a two story Renaissance Revival style brick building constructed in 1912. The second floor exhibits two large segmentally arched window openings with brick window hoods, brick corbeling, and transom. Built by Wallace Warren Kendall, a druggist, to replace his original frame store constructed in 1880. Kendall also operated stores in Fairbury, Nebraska and in Kansas City, Missouri. The store front was replaced in the 1960s. The second floor windows are intact under wooden panels.

NU13-708 Hunter Block. 317 and 321 North Central Avenue (lots 8-9, block 37), (photo #5). Built in 1888, this Renaissance Revival style two-story brick building features molded brick, stone trim, brick corbeling and pressed metal cornice. Alexander Hunter constructed this building on the site of his original wood store and the vacant lot next to it. The second floor is intact even to the windows concealed by wood panels. The ground floor has been altered with 321 receiving a new cover over original cast iron columns in the 1940s and 317 receiving a new front in the 1960s.

NU13-709 Brodstone Building. 315 North Central Avenue (lot 10, block 37), (photo #5). This Renaissance

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Name of Property

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**Description (continued)**

Revival style two-story brick building was constructed in 1912 and features brick corbeling on the second story. Evelene Brodstone used the second floor as a retirement apartment with business rental on the ground floor. A second floor balcony was removed in the 1930s, the door leading out to it was partially bricked and a window installed. The center window and the wood and metal awning were also added at this time. The ground floor store front is from the 1970s. Much of the second floor is original.

NU13-710 Laird Building. 307 North Central Avenue (lot 11, block 37), (photo #4). This two-story Renaissance Revival style brick building was constructed by Frank Laird in 1914 to house his bakery. The ground floor store front is original. A suspended ceiling conceals the original pressed metal ceiling. During the 1930s the canvas awning was replaced by a wood and metal awning. In the 1980s the transom glass and second story windows were covered with plywood panels concealing the original components which are still in place.

NU13-718 The Telephone Building. 355 North Commercial Avenue (lot A, block 36, McCorkle's Subdivision), (photo #14). Erected in 1922 by the Lincoln Telephone and Telegraph Company this two-story brick building has terra cotta trim, brick walls, and steel reinforced concrete floors and roof. It was designed by the K. H. Gedney Company of Hastings, Nebraska. In 1965 the interior of the first floor was extensively remodeled into a suite of offices for a law firm. Windows and trim are intact except for the removal of transoms which were filled in with porcelain panels. Also, one garage bay was converted into an office. In the 1980s the second floor was remodeled adding an office suite and covering most of the windows with painted aluminum panels.

NU13-719 The Bagley Building. 335 North Commercial Avenue (lots 4-5, block 36), (photo #14). Built in 1913 this one-story brick building features a five bay facade with brick ornamentation and large show windows. The owner, Oren Bagley, rented it to a automotive sales and service business. The automobile entrances to the showroom were in the rear off the alley. In the late 1920s an office was partitioned off in the front right corner and another entry cut into a show window. Most of the interior is original except for the partitioned corner and the recent addition of dividers.

NU13-724 The Dahlgren Building/I.O.O.F. Hall. 156 East Fourth Street (lots 8-9, block 29, Fogel's Subdivision), (photo #16). Constructed in 1908, Albert F. Dahlgren used this two-story Renaissance Revival style brick building to house his repair and auto livery business, and to provide a meeting hall for the I.O.O.F. Lodge on the second floor. Originally, the ground floor was partitioned to provide a garage on the left and two store fronts for rental on the right. All originally had canvas awnings. In the late 1920s, the partitions were removed, a new front was installed, and new metal and glass awnings were installed complete with electric lights. A new aluminum entry door was installed in the 1970s.

NU13-725 The Laird Building. 148 East Fourth Street (lot 10, block 29, Fogel's Subdivision), (photo #16). This two-story brick building, constructed in 1912, has decorative brick work at the top of the middle of three bays and brick coping which is stepped out, forming a cornice. The facade also features three large double-hung windows on the second floor and textured glass transoms above the original wood and metal awning.

NU13-726 The Fogel Block. 134, 136 and 138 East Fourth Street (lots 11, 12 and A, block 29, Fogel's Subdivision), (photo #17). This Commercial Italianate style two-story brick building was constructed in 1889. It has a metal facing on the second floor and a pressed metal cornice. The second floor has had the ceiling lowered and the windows changed in the center. The wood and metal covered awnings were added in the late



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Superior Downtown Historic District

Name of Property

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**Description (continued)**

1920s. The two left were altered when new fronts were installed on the ground floor in the 1970s. The transom glass is original except that the right bay has been covered with wood panels.

**NU13-727 The Spohn Building.** 122 East Fourth Street (east 50 feet lots 13-14 and the south 6 feet of lot 15, block 29), (photo #16). Built by George Spohn in 1923, this two-story building was constructed with dark ironspot face brick from the Endicott Brick Company, Endicott, Nebraska. The ground floor was for commercial rental and the second floor as an apartment for Mr. Spohn. The ground floor and store front are all original. The second floor received some remodeling of the kitchen and bath in the 1960s. A wooden deck was added on the left side of the building in 1991.

**NU13-730 The Mullet Building.** 134 East Third Street (west 50 feet of lots 9-12, block 36), (photo #11). This two-story brick Renaissance Revival style building, constructed in 1925, features brick-bearing walls, reinforced concrete floors covered with maple flooring on sleepers, reinforced concrete roof, sand finish plaster ceilings, exposed walls and concrete columns. The building is in near original condition. Designed by K. H. Gedney from Hastings, Nebraska, the building was originally used as a hardware, furniture and undertaking business.

**NU13-733 The McCorkle Building.** 308 North Central Avenue (lot 14, block 36), (photo #9). Built by A. C. McCorkle in 1887, this Commercial Italianate style two-story brick building has stone and metal trim. The elaborate pressed metal cornice is nearly intact. The second floor windows have been replaced, but all stone trim and ornamental brickwork are also intact. The cast-iron store front is original including the eight-foot doors. The left door to the stairway is new (1991). The fishscale shingles were also added in 1991.

**NU13-734 City Hall and Auditorium.** 450 North Commercial Avenue (lots 15-18, block 30), (photo #19). This Art Deco style three-story steel and concrete building has brick face and limestone trim. Built in 1936-1937, it was designed by Kenneth Gedney of Hastings, Nebraska and was a WPA project. The original steel sashes are intact except for three openings on the north side which have been filled with concrete block, stuccoed and painted. The wood doors inside are intact, but the front entry doors were replaced with aluminum tube in the 1980s. Some of the original exit doors were replaced with steel doors in the 1990s. All floors and ceilings are original as are the lighting fixtures. Footlights have been removed from the stage and the original heating system has been replaced. A small tile building addition was made to the southeast corner.

**NU13-735 Carnegie Public Library.** 354 Commercial Avenue (lots 14-18, block 35), (photo #13). Built in 1908, this one-story with raised basement brick building displays Jacobethan Revival styling. It has stone trim in a horizontal band at the main floor line and on top of the gable walls which extend above the roof line. Brickwork details include arches over the windows and brick quoins at the corners and entry. The front entry door was replaced in the 1970s as were the light fixtures on each side. Some windows have been closed to expand the book shelves inside and a handicapped elevator was installed in the rear.

**NU13-736 The Elliott and Myers Building.** 320 North Commercial Avenue (lots 10-13, block 35), (photo #12). Built in 1920, this one-story brick building features seven bays with ornamental brickwork including a dentil at the coping. It was the first building in Superior with a fire sprinkler system and was built for use as a farm implement business. The building also housed automobile dealerships. In the 1960s, the slide-by garage doors were replaced with overhead doors and the window glazings were replaced with aluminum. The entry door was installed in 1989.

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Name of Property

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### Description (continued)

NU13-737 The Medell Building. 312 North Commercial Avenue (lot 9, block 35), (photo #12). This one-story building, constructed in 1913, has a brick front and concrete block side and rear walls. The main facade has an interesting profile of brick coping, dentilling and corbeling. B. C. Mendell had this building erected for his monument works. The front part still has the one inch white octagon ceramic tile floor installed for the monument show room and the entire original pressed tin ceiling is still extant. In the 1960s the store front was remodeled and an addition was put on the rear for a machine shop. In 1990 a new sign was installed covering the original transom windows.

NU13-741 The Mauck Building. 139 East Fourth Street (lots E and F, block 36, McCorkle's Subdivision), (photo #15). Built c1889, this two-story brick building housed H. H. Mauck's law offices on the second floor and Frank Mauck's meat market on one half of the first floor. The second floor has had a balcony removed and the door leading out to it bricked up. The first floor was remodeled in the 1980s when a mansard awning was added and the original cast iron columns covered.

NU13-742 The Robinson Building. 143 East Fourth Street (lots C and D, block 36, McCorkle's Subdivision), (photo #15). Constructed in 1924, this one-story brick building has a five bay front with brick corbeling. Bruce Robinson used this building to house his repair shop specializing in automotive electric systems and electric motors. The building remains almost intact except for some remodeling of the central office area and the partial covering of the display windows. The wooden overhead doors are original.

NU13-743 The Dr. Molzahn Building. 145 East Fourth Street (lot B, block 36, McCorkle's Subdivision), (photo #15). This one-story brick building, constructed in 1924, has been used by a variety of businesses. The show windows were reset in aluminum in the 1940s, but the rest of the exterior is nearly all original including the entrance door. Additionally, the interior has been partitioned, paneled, had the ceiling lowered and the floor carpeted.

NU13-745 The Spohn Building. 406 and 408 North Central Avenue (lot 14, block 29), (photo #6). In 1923, George Spohn had this one-story brick building constructed. Alterations include new entry doors, panels covering the prism glass transoms and painted brick.

NU13-746 The Dahlgren Building. 410 and 414 North Central Avenue (lots 15-16, block 29), (photo #6). Built in 1914, this one-story brick building has a fifty-foot front facade relieved only by a brick coping and segmental arches over two windows and the original garage door. It originally housed Albert Dahlgren's motor repair, auto sales and livery business. The left twenty feet was remodeled into office space with contemporary paneling and ceilings. The right thirty feet was remodeled in 1991. The front has been painted since the 1940s. The awning is from the 1960s, but the store front is original.

NU13-747 The Jones Building. 426 North Central Avenue (lot 17 and south 10 feet of lot 18, block 29), (photo #6). Built in 1923 for Ernest Jones' grocery business, this one-story brick building features simple brickwork with only one inset panel in the facade. The interior retains the original pressed tin ceiling. The store front is from the 1940s. In the 1970s the awning was added and the transom patterned glass was covered with wood panels.

NU13-748 The Oliver Building. 358 North Central Avenue (lot 24, block 36), (photo #7). This one-story brick building, constructed in 1909, has a three bay front with brick detail. It originally housed Ralph Oliver's general merchandise store. In 1929, the building became the site of the first J. C. Penney store in town. The

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**Description (continued)**

present store front was installed in the 1960s and ceramic trim replaced glass trim in 1989. In the 1970s, part of the north coping was removed because of deterioration of the mortar.

NU13-749 The Sweet Building. 352 North Central Avenue (lot 23, block 36), (photo #7). Built for Frank Sweet in 1923, this two-story brick building replaced the last wood constructed business building in the district. The store front is original except for the replacement of a recessed entry by a new door with sidelights flush with the sidewalk.

NU13-750 The King Building. 348 North Central Avenue (lots 21-22, block 36), (photo #8). In 1883, Issac King had a building erected on lot 21. King acquired lot 22 in 1915, removed a wooden building that stood on the site as well as the building standing on lot 21. He then had the present two-story brick building erected and had the 1883 date stone placed on it. The 1915 building has a four bay front and was, at one time, used by the Hested Stores Company. The second floor was used as apartments. The original pressed tin ceiling is still extant and visible on the interior. The new ground level store front was installed in 1990.

NU13-751 The Martin Building. 336 North Central Avenue (lot 20, block 36), (photo #8). Robert Martin had this two-story brick building constructed in 1901 to house his grocery business. This three bay front building also contained a second floor apartment which retains its original design. On the interior of the main floor the pressed tin ceiling remains extant above a lowered ceiling. On the exterior, the coping has been replaced in recent times. The store front is new (1989) including the bronze color aluminum tube and thermopane with ceramic tile trim.

NU13-752 The Carter Building. 318 North Central Avenue (lot 16, block 36), (photo #8). This Victorian style two-story brick building was built in 1886 to house Agnes and James Carter's dry goods business. It has an elaborate pressed metal cornice and window heads, and stone sills. The store front was rebuilt in 1937. At the same time a one-story brick addition was added to the rear of the building. The second floor is original and the ground floor retains its pressed tin ceiling.

NU13-753 The Plummer Building. 314 North Central Avenue (lot 15, block 36), (photo #8). Built by B. C. Amberson for Harry Plummer in 1890, this two-story brick building features a pressed metal cornice. The second floor is original including the windows behind the wood panels. The ground floor storefront is original except for the door and sidelights which were installed in the 1970s as was the awning. Part of the pressed metal cornice is missing and has been temporarily repaired pending possible restoration.

NU13-757 The Gates and Laird Building. 323 North Commercial Avenue (lot 8, block 36), (photo #14). Constructed in 1910 by Carmel Gates and Frank Laird for rental, this one-story bevel faced concrete block building features some brick trim. Over the years the building has housed a number of different businesses. The store front and awning are original. The glass has been replaced with plywood panels.

**NON-CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS**

Eight-plex apartment (1949), W 29 feet of lots 1-3, and part of lot 4, block 28.

Laundry building at rear of hotel (1944), W 28 feet lot 5, block 28.

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**Description (continued)**

- Superior Manor (1978), 429 North Central Avenue, lots 7-9, block 28.
- Superior Cleaners/H&R Block (1912), 120-122 West Fourth Street, W 50 feet of lots 11-12, block 28.
- The Beal & Fogel Building (1886), 402 North Central Avenue, lot 13, block 29.
- Marlan Watson Building (1966), 430 North Central Avenue, N 20 feet lot 18, block 29.
- Sears Store (1948), 436 North Central Avenue, lots 19-21, block 29.
- Home Federal Savings & Loan (1979), 454 North Central Avenue, lots 22-24, block 29.
- The Florea Building (1936), 436 North Commercial Avenue, lot 14, block 30.
- Alexander Motors (1954), 302 North Commercial Avenue, lots 7-8, block 35.
- McKee's Recycling (1900), 329 North Commercial Avenue, lots 6-7, block 36.
- The Bossemeyer Elevator (1894), 317 North Commercial Avenue, lot 9, block 36. - N413-757
- The Mullet & Long Building (1903), 311 North Commercial Avenue, E 35 feet lots 10-12, block 36.
- Superior Publishing Company (1971), 148 East Third Street, S 50 feet lots 10-12, block 36.
- J.C. Penney Catalog Store (1888), 302 North Central Avenue, lot 13, block 36.
- Farmers Bank Building (1889), 324 North Central Avenue, lot 17, block 36.
- The Naylor Building (1891), 328-330 North Central Avenue, lot 18, block 36.
- The Pierce Building (1901), 334 North Central Avenue, lot 19, block 36.
- Security National Bank (1960), 355 North Central Avenue, lots 1-3, block 37.
- Scott's TV & Appliance (1973), 341 North Central Avenue, lot 4, block 37.
- Ye Ole Shoe Market. (1908), 305 North Central Avenue, lot 12, block 37.
- All buildings are in the original town plat unless otherwise noted.

**Statement of Significance**

The town of Superior, in Nuckolls County, Nebraska, is located in the Republican Valley Region, which extends from south central to southwestern Nebraska.<sup>1</sup> The Superior Downtown Historic District is significant at the local level under Criterion A for its association with commerce and it typifies the growth

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### Statement of Significance (continued)

of a town's commercial district in the region. Adding to its significance is the integrity retained by the district. The period of significance is from 1883 to 1936. The year 1883 marks the earliest date of construction in the historic district and 1936 denotes the latest. Like many communities in the region, changes in Superior's commercial district reflected fluctuations in population and in consumer demands. By examining the uses of new construction and the reuse of existing buildings, these changes can be followed and analyzed.

A study of commerce in the area resulted in the development of Historic Context Reports for retail commerce in hamlets, villages, towns, and cities in the Republican Valley Region.<sup>2</sup> Each clustering classification was divided into temporal periods to reflect significant change in the commercial districts. Because of an increase in population during the period of significance, Superior begins as a village and then moves into the town category. Since the period of significance begins in 1883, the first relevant population count came from the 1880 census. This figure classifies Superior as a village. That same year also marks the beginning of the first temporal period for villages, "Early Commercial Establishment (1880-1909)." By the beginning of the next decade, Superior moved into the town designation. Towns also experienced the same temporal period, "Early Commercial Establishment (1880-1909)," which was followed by "Modern Commercial Development (1910-1940)."

Superior had its official beginnings in 1872 with the establishment of a post office. Three years later the town was surveyed and platted. In 1880, the first railroad line arrived in Superior connecting it to other settlements in the Republican Valley. The introduction of this line and four additional ones by 1890, marked a period of rapid growth for the community. Census records indicate a growth in population from 458 in 1880 to 1,614 in 1890. It is safe to assume, although there are no records to substantiate it, that the population growth was stimulated by and grew proportional to the increased railroad activity. Superior, therefore, probably passed from village to town status by the mid- to late-1880s.

Of the buildings in the Superior historic district, two were built in 1883; the Bank of Superior/Opera House (NU13-004) and the King Building (NU13-750) (the use of which is unknown). According to the Historic Context Report, "Retail Commerce: Villages in the Republican Valley Region," communities of this size during this time (1880s) had a bank and general stores, but not a great number of other services and even fewer single-line specialized stores. This would indicate that the operation in the King Building was probably some type of general store or mixed-use commercial and office space.

Four other buildings in the historic district were built in the same decade beginning with the Carter Building (1886) (NU13-752) and the Mauck Building (c1889) (NU13-741). About this same time Superior was probably passing from village to town status. The increase in population which caused the change in designation also resulted in an expanded commercial district. The increase in the number of consumers and businesses meant that aside from the multi-purpose general store, more single line specialty shops would be available. Unfortunately of the four previously cited buildings, business uses can only be associated with one of them: the Carter Building (NU13-752) which housed a dry goods store.

In 1890, Superior had a population of 1,614 which clearly placed it in the town category. At this time Superior did reflect the typical town in the region going through a period of early commercial development. While it had several dry goods stores which sold a variety of items, consumers could also choose to shop at an increasing number of specialty stores. The Hunter Block (NU13-708) featured a grocery store in 1892 while

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### Statement of Significance (continued)

the Fogel Block (NU13-726) contained a drug store. In the same year the McCorkle Building (NU13-733) housed a clothing store with a dentist office on the second floor and the King Building (NU13-750) was used as a meat market.

Later in this time period the first evidence of building reuse comes to light, although it undoubtedly happened prior to 1890. By 1897, the use of the Carter Building (NU13-752) changed from a dry goods store to a barber shop. The Plummer Building (NU13-753) saw its dry goods converted to a drug store later in the decade. While these changes were occurring, new specialty stores were coming to the business scene. Grocery stores, a furniture dealer, photographer's shop, and a confectionery all opened during this period. A rather unique addition was a Y.M.C.A. on the second floor of a commercial building. A Carnegie Public Library (NU13-735), although not a business, was also an addition to the commercial district. Its construction in 1908 gave some diversity to the district, a trend which continued in the following decades.

The advent of the "Modern Commercial Development" period (1910-1940) in Superior was characterized primarily by the addition of businesses that reflected changing technology. The automobile certainly had the most profound impact on the business district. Six buildings were either built for or converted to uses associated with car sales and/or repair.

There were other additions that resulted from technological advancements and increased reliance on public utilities. The construction of the Telephone Building (1922) (NU13-718) resulted from an increasing use of this new form of communication. The people of Superior also benefitted from a new form of commercial recreation. By 1922, a movie theater in the Hunter Block (NU13-708) offered a new diversion form that proved to be increasingly popular. A battery station was operating by 1931 which indicated an increasing reliance on electric power. Finally, the operation of a plumbing store during this time suggests a greater number of houses had indoor plumbing.

The rest of the commercial district was dominated by specialty stores. There were several drug stores, all of which were in buildings that had previously housed other businesses. A number of grocery stores also occupied the district as did a bakery, a clothing store, a furniture store, and a millinery. Other businesses included a jewelry store, barber shop, photography studio, dry cleaner, monument dealer, and a cobbler. Aside from the movie theater, pool halls offered the only other form of recreation in the district. The final notable new construction was the Nebraskan (now the Leslie) Hotel (NU13-703) in 1930.

There are two deviations in Superior from the typical Republican Valley Region town commercial district. The first was the introduction of chain stores. Both J. C. Penney and Hested operated stores in Superior during this period. This phenomenon did not seem to occur in other towns in the region at this time. Almost contradictory to this was the continued existence of dry goods stores. Although fewer in number they continued to operate in Superior, while throughout the rest of the region these types of stores disappeared from towns during this period.

Adding to the variety of the commercial district were two public buildings. A post office (NU13-003) was completed in 1935 and a City Hall and Auditorium (NU13-734) was built in 1937. These buildings, along with the Carnegie Library, gave a mixed-use environment to the commercial district and reinforces the district's significance as a "social" and public center.

Superior's commercial district is an excellent example of the transition a typical town in the region

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### Statement of Significance (continued)

experienced from 1880 to 1940. The two apparent deviations from the norm do not detract, but instead give the district a sense of individuality. Rather than being a unique, one-of-a-kind resource, the fact that it so closely exemplifies the evolution and development of regional commercial history makes it significant at the local level under Criterion A for its association with commerce.

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### Verbal Boundary Description

Commencing at the center of the alley between North National Avenue and North Central Avenue, proceed east on West Fifth Street to the center of the alley between North Commercial Avenue and North Kansas Avenue; thence south to East Third Street; thence west to the center of the alley between North Central Avenue and North National Avenue; thence north to the point of commencement.

### Boundary Justification

The boundary includes those commercial and civic buildings retaining integrity that are in or near the historic business and commercial area of Superior. Limits of the district were selected on the basis of visual changes in architectural character due to a decline in the concentration of potentially contributing properties.

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**Endnotes**

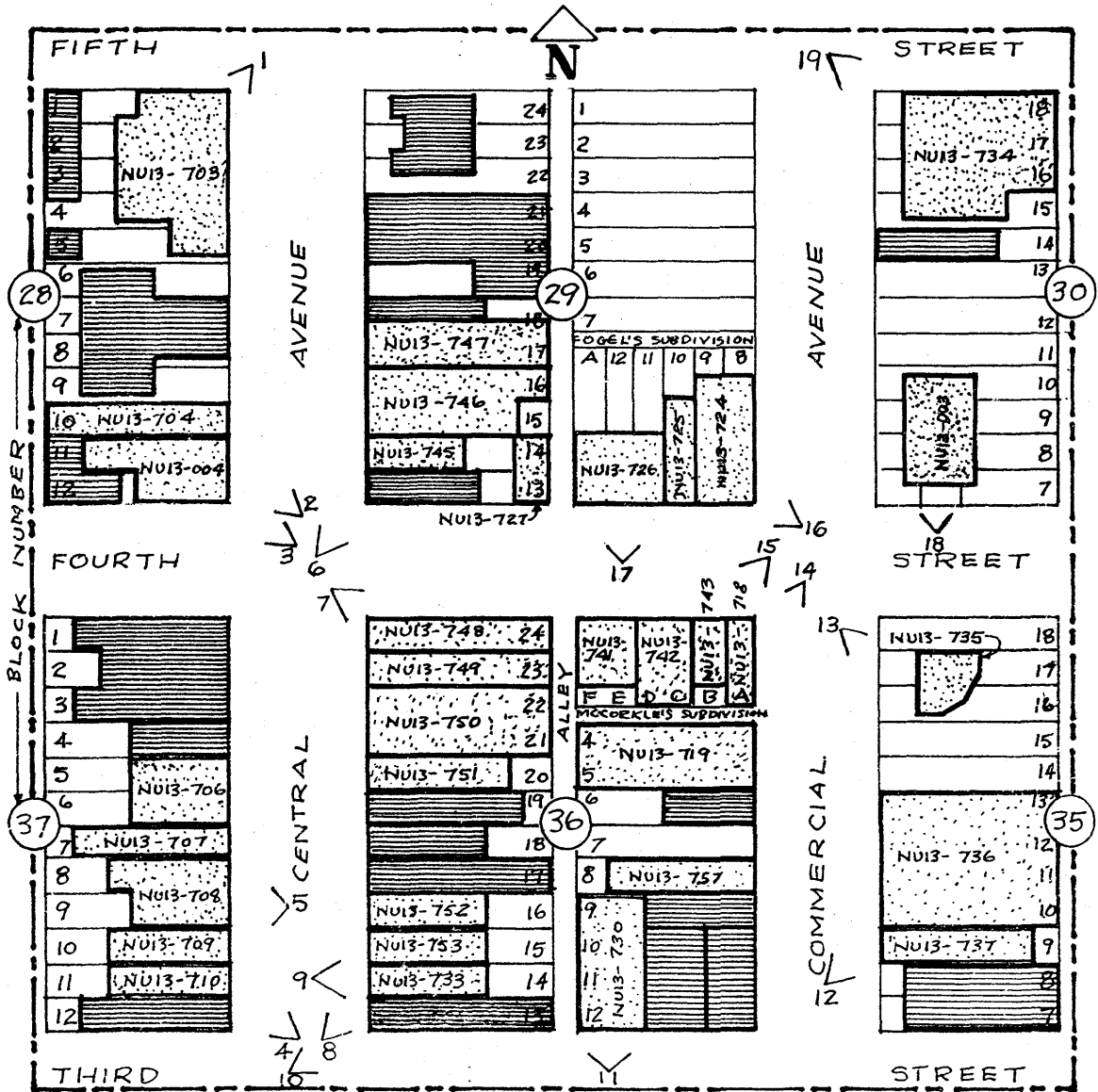
1. For a discussion of the geographic zones in Nebraska see the "Historic Contexts Reports: Topical Listing" section of the Nebraska Cultural Resource Plan.

2. Historic Context Report "Clustering: Hamlets, Villages, Towns, Cities, and Metropolitan Areas in Nebraska." Based on this report communities are classified by the following population limits: Hamlets <100; Villages 100-800; Towns 800-5,000; Cities 5,000-40,000; Metropolitan Areas >40,000.



# SUPERIOR DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT

## SUPERIOR, NUCKOLLS COUNTY, NEBRASKA



1 PHOTO VIEW & NUMBER  
 0 100 FEET

- CONTRIBUTING
- NON-CONTRIBUTING
- VACANT
- DISTRICT BOUNDARY