

## Saline farm may get historical status

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News file photoThe Rentschler Farm Museum is located between the Visteon Plant and Sauk Trail Shopping Center in Saline, next to US-12. The farm is celebrating its 20th anniversary under the Saline Area Historical Society's operation.

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By **LISA ALLMENDINGER**  
*News Special Writer*

Saline officials are planning to nominate the Rentschler Farm for the [National Registry of Historic Places](#).

"It's a part of the Saline community and an investment in future generations' ability to see their heritage," said Council Member Pat Little.

The city's Historic District Commission gave its approval for the nomination on Jan. 22 and the City Council unanimously approved the nomination Monday night.

If approved by the [Michigan State Historic Preservation Office](#), it would be the second place the [Saline Area Historical Society](#) has had listed in the registry. The railroad depot received the distinction in 1995.

The Rentschler Farm house stands on four acres at 1265 E. Michigan Ave. on the eastern edge of the city. It is owned by the city and operated by the Saline Area Historical Society. The 12-room house was restored with period furniture and depicts a rural way of life during the Great Depression.

"I commend the council for recognizing the benefits and importance of the Rentschler Farm Museum to the city," said Council Member David Rhoads, who is also a member of the historical society.

In December 2003, the City Council approved a contract with [Eastern Michigan University](#) to study and document the history of several properties in Saline. Part of the contract was the preparation of a nomination to the National Register of Historic Places for the Rentschler Farm.

The application was not submitted at the time because city staff had concerns that historic designation restrictions would hinder or prevent improvements to the property, Jeff Fordice, city engineer, wrote in a March 5 memo to the City Council. Later, it was determined that wasn't the case.

The historical society wants to apply for grant funding that is specifically designated for the National Registry of Historic Places.

Saline is one of 19 communities in the state eligible to receive federal historic preservation funds distributed by the state historic preservation office, Fordice's memo states.

The funds are awarded on a competitive basis. They require a 40 percent match. The amount of money available ranges between \$80,000 and \$100,000 per year, the memo states.

"We realize what an honor this award is and the effect it will have on the spirit and identity of the community," said Wayne Clements, outgoing president of the Saline Area Historical Society.

Bob Harrison, treasurer of the historical society, said he hopes the society will have the designation this fall and unveil the historic designation plaque in September during a ceremony. The farm is celebrating its 20th anniversary under the historical society's operation this year.

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