



Cultural Center Moves Forward with Appeal to Preserve and Repurpose Historic School

NAPOLEON, Ohio — August 12, 2026 — The Cultural Center of Henry County is moving forward with its effort to preserve and repurpose the former school building and is preparing to file a notice of appeal this week as the next step in bringing the matter before the Supreme Court of Ohio.

The decision follows a strong show of community support for preserving the historic building and exploring its potential for a new purpose rather than seeing it demolished.

“We believe there is still an opportunity to do something good with this building for our community,” said Cultural Center Board President Mark Giannetto. “The support we’ve received has shown us that a lot of people feel the same way. We are grateful to everyone who has contributed, spoken up, and encouraged us to keep going.”

The Cultural Center’s vision for the property, known as Three Arches Ohio, is centered on repurposing the historic building into a welcoming community space for arts, education, athletics and wellness, with opportunities for youth, adults and seniors to connect, learn and participate.

The name Three Arches Ohio comes from one of the building’s most recognizable architectural features: its grand façade and three large entrance arches. A hallmark of the building’s neo-collegiate design, the arches reflect a style commonly used in academic buildings of the era to convey tradition and longevity.

The Cultural Center believes communities nearby are demonstrating what is possible when older buildings are given new life. In Defiance, a high school building from the 1920s was restored, including its historic auditorium at the south end of the downtown area, which now serves as a venue for musical and theatrical performances. In Bryan, the former Bryan High School has been transformed into an arts and education center with performance, learning and creative spaces that bring residents of different generations together.

“These aren’t ideas that only work somewhere else,” Giannetto said. “We’re seeing communities around us find new uses for buildings that matter to them. We believe we have an opportunity to do that here, too.”

The decision to move forward with the appeal was made possible by the community response to the Cultural Center’s *When You Believe* campaign. The campaign, which will continue through the end of August, is providing resources not only for the next legal step, but also to help maintain the building and continue advancing the Cultural Center’s mission and plans for Three Arches Ohio.

“We don't take any of this support for granted,” Giannetto said. “People have donated, shared information, asked questions, and taken an interest in what happens to this building. And some of the unsung heroes of this effort are the volunteers who have given countless hours to maintaining the building, inside and out. Their commitment is a big part of what has kept this effort moving forward.”

The filing follows the June 29 decision by the Third District Court of Appeals. While the Cultural Center is moving forward with the legal process, its hope remains that the parties involved can come together and work toward a solution that is in the best interest of the community and allows the building's potential for reuse to be fully considered.

The Cultural Center will continue to provide updates as the appeal moves forward and encourages community members to stay informed and get involved. The Cultural Center also welcomes ideas from residents, business owners, and community leaders who see possibilities for the building and want to help explore what may still be possible.

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Three Arches Ohio: A Gateway to Community and Growth

Three Arches Ohio is the Cultural Center of Henry County's vision for transforming the historic former school into a vibrant community hub that bridges generations and creates opportunities in arts, education, athletics and wellness. Rooted in the building's distinctive historic architecture, the project is designed to create a welcoming place where youth, adults and seniors can connect, grow and thrive while contributing to the cultural and economic vitality of the community and region.

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