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Rochester Avon Historical Society honored

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The Historical Society of Michigan has presented its 2011 Distinguished Volunteer Service award to Rod Wilson, president of the Rochester Avon Historical Society.

The society also was awarded the 2011 Local Society award in recognition of its many successful efforts in restoration, preservation, oral history, walking tours and regular public meetings.

The awards were announced at society's 137th Annual Meeting and State History Conference Sept. 23-25 in Traverse City. The State History Awards are the highest recognition presented by the state's official historical society.

Wilson, of Rochester Hills, has spearheaded numerous restoration and education efforts in the greater Rochester community. He was honored for his leadership in notable preservation activities, including the restoration of Rochester's World War II Honor Roll, the effort to preserve the 1845 Lysander Woodward House, the repainting of the 1880 Griggs Brothers/Rochester Elevator Company grain elevator, and the restoration and re-hanging of the 1938 Marvin Beerbohm WPA mural in the Rochester Community Schools administration building.

Wilson was also recognized for the countless hours he has devoted to developing and leading educational programs. He created the Downtown Rochester Historic Walking Tour, participated in a multi-agency task force to develop interpretive signs for historic sites along Paint Creek Trail, and established a research committee within the Rochester Avon Historical Society to compile documentation on local buildings and sites.

The committee's efforts succeeded in having the Griggs Brothers Elevator placed on the National Register of Historic Places, and work is underway on other potential National Register nominations. Wilson also works with the Sons of the American Revolution and the Michigan Historic Preservation Network.

More information about the programs of the Rochester Avon Historical Society may be found on the society's Web site at www.rochesteravonhistoricalsociety.org.

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