



# Lake Agassiz Resource Conservation & Development Council

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*Teller Window*

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## Buxton Bank Historical Preservation

Saving the Buxton Bank is a project that was undertaken by "Buxton in Bloom." On March 31, 2005, "Buxton in Bloom", a local non-profit, purchased the old Buxton Bank building. The non-profit was created specifically by Bobbi J. Hepper Olson, a local architect and historic preservationist, to acquire, rehabilitate, preserve, and adaptively utilize the Buxton Bank.

A gentleman by the name of Oliver S. Hanson operated a bank from the rear of his residence in Buxton until 1890. He then decided to construct a new building for the bank, which today is referred to as the Buxton Bank. This bank changed ownership several times. In 1977, the owner of the bank was First State Bank of Buxton, who built a new facility to the south of the bank and the original granite structure was then vacated. In 1978, the building was donated to the Buxton Historical Society. The old bank remained empty until renovation began in 2005.

On May 17, 1933, three armed men entered the bank stealing \$1,000 and fatally wounding Leonard Hanson, the bank cashier. Hanson apparently tried to trip a tear gas device in the bank office, which is located adjacent to the letter cage. The men noticed a suspicious move on Hanson's part and shot him. The robbers fled the small community in haste and sprinkled tacks and nails on the road leading out of Buxton toward Grand Forks. That was the last time anyone saw the robbers. Buxton's Bank robbery remains unsolved. The project preserved the door to the office that is still marred by bullet holes.

The historic preservation of Buxton Bank and adaptive re-use will help revitalize the small rural community of Buxton, North Dakota by saving the cornerstone of its main street and utilizing it for office space and community activities. It is the last original storefront from Buxton's 1890's streetscape and its loss would be immeasurable. The Buxton Bank is a local and national landmark and was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978. Since the purchase of the building in 2005, there has been tremendous community and local support to save the bank.

The building's old Budd Reeve conference room is utilized as a place to archive old photos and memorabilia from the area and is used as a community conference space. The building will house a historic display of the bank and the City of Buxton. Ms. Olson purchased the back side lot and constructed an addition, that is used as a branch office for her architectural firm, in order to bring income to the project. The partnership between the public and private sector created a financially feasible project to save this irreplaceable gem. The Lake Agassiz RC&D assisted with this project by providing financial support and by searching for grant opportunities.



*Historic Photo from early 1900's*



*Photo during Restoration*

Excerpts from *Saving Buxton Bank* used with permission from Buxton in Bloom.