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## [A Treasure to be Remembered: USDA Support Turns a Historic Church into a Museum](#)

Posted by [Vicki Schurman, USDA Nebraska Public Information Officer](#), on June 4, 2013 at 4:35 PM

Rural communities carry with them a long line of history. St. John’s Catholic Church in Table Rock, Nebraska was built in 1877 and is one of the oldest churches in Southeast Nebraska. The church has large murals covering the interior that were painted by a displaced immigrant from Russia in appreciation for refuge in the small community. He used his artistic talents to create on plain wallboard an illusion of marble walls, pillars, and curtains. Most striking is the large mural behind the altar. Some of the original pews and church furniture remain and the Church’s interior is as it was when used for religious services.

The [Table Rock Historical Society and Museum, Inc.](#) wanted to preserve the church’s history with the creation of St. John’s Catholic Church Museum where the art and beauty of the church could be admired.

[USDA Rural Development](#) was pleased to assist the Historical Society with \$50,000 matched by the Historical Society to renovate the church as a museum. The funds provided for renovations that included replacement of the footings and foundation, new interior and exterior paint and the installation of a new roof and doors. The stained glass windows were repaired and the statues restored. Additionally, the interior wood floor was refurbished.

“The preservation of history is important as it traces the footsteps of the past for present and future generations,” said Nebraska State Rural Development

Director Maxine Moul.

“The Historical Society felt it was important to preserve this piece of history for our community. The church has a fascinating history and is unique in many ways,” said Board Member Kim Vrtiska, of Table Rock Historical Society and Museum, Inc.

The museum was dedicated on May 25, 2013.



Inside the St. John's Catholic Church Museum. Photo by Maxine Moul, Nebraska USDA State Director.

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## 2 Responses to “A Treasure to be Remembered: USDA Support Turns a Historic Church into a Museum”

1. *Theresa* says:

[06/05/2013 at 9:59 AM](#)

That is beautiful and I am so glad it was preserved. Do we know the name of the artist? There are some treasures in these small churches.

2. *Mary Rose Deak* says:

[06/05/2013 at 2:57 PM](#)

I think this is a beautiful church that is obviously (from the photo) a church that is currently an operational church, not something I would consider a museum; and while the church discriminates against women by not hiring female priests, cardinals, and bishops as well as popes, it is my humble opinion the Catholic Church should not qualify for federal funds. Not to mention separation of church and state, and the intensely pro-male agenda that is promoted by religions in the workplace in general and neighborhood environment. I feel that women deserve equal rights and pay.

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