

# Pulaski County Historical Society

Preserving history for a better future.

January 2016

If you received this newsletter via email and would like to see the photographs that accompany the printed version, go to our website: [www.pulaskihistory.net](http://www.pulaskihistory.net).

## Annual Program & Meeting

Join us at the Opera House on Thursday, March 10. Doors will open at 6:00. Enjoy coffee, tea, hot chocolate and homemade desserts. A short business meeting will start at 6:30, followed immediately by the program.

### Program: Ford Pinto Trial Remembered

In 1980, a jury returned “not guilty” verdicts on three counts of reckless homicide against the Ford Motor Company. The company was indicted after three teenagers were killed when their Ford Pinto burst into flames following a rear impact collision. The case came to Pulaski County on a change of venue from Elkhart County. For nine weeks beginning January 9, 1980, the town of Winamac was flooded with spectators, national reporters, lawyers and legal staff.

At the time, a number of civil suits were pending or had gone to trial across the country alleging that Ford had designed, built and sold defective automobiles. The Elkhart County Prosecutor upped the ante by pursuing a criminal case. This was the first time criminal charges had been brought against an American corporation for faulty product design. Because of the application of criminal law to corporate behavior, this litigation has been referred to as unprecedented and the trial has been called a landmark case.

Although Ford Motor Company was acquitted of all charges, the ramifications of this case were far-reaching. Many industry watchers believe regulators became tougher as a result of this trial, stating, “The only way we’re going to get quality products is to make corporate executives feel personally responsible for their decisions.” According to others, this trial raised both public consciousness and the awareness of manufacturers of their responsibility for public safety.

At the Annual Program, we will host a panel of speakers who were part of this trial. Trial evidence will be on display, including dozens of oversized posters, charts, photos and the gas tank from the Pinto itself. *Some information taken from an online source: American Journal of Criminal Justice, Vol 26 No. 2, 2002.*

### Board Slate & Revisions to Bylaws

At the business meeting, we will present a slate of officers and directors for election and proposed changes to the bylaws. Please go to the website to view the slate and bylaws. A few copies will be available at the meeting.

## Membership

It’s that time of year again. Time to commit to your historical society via membership. Membership offers just one benefit: the knowledge that you are helping to preserve and protect the history and historic sites of Pulaski County.

**Individual Dues are only \$30 per Calendar Year** (January – December).

Family dues are \$40.00 per calendar year; corporate or sustaining dues are \$80.00 per calendar year. We also welcome additional contributions. The Pulaski County Historical Society is a federally approved 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization and qualifies for tax-deductible donations.

### Send Dues & Donations, Made Payable To Pulaski County Historical Society:

PO Box 135, Winamac, IN 46996. Or go online to use PayPal:  
[www.pulaskihistory.net](http://www.pulaskihistory.net).

## Summer Celebration!

The log cabin on the river (behind the Library) celebrates 25 years in 2016! Watch for information about a summer celebration!



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## **Opera House Interior Renovations Completed**

If you have not had an opportunity to peer into the windows of the Opera House, or, even better, to have been inside for an event, it's time to go! Tall ceilings painted black, inset lighting, uncovered original brick, painted original plaster, some drywall, and a new accessible restroom. The stage remains, perfect for bands or displays. With the exception of the stage, the space is wide open, ready for lots of chairs, tables and chairs, square dancing, auctions, or exhibitor space. We're giving downtown some ZIP!

### **Rent the Opera House for Your Next Event:**

The facility is available for short term rental. Have a wedding? Reception? Graduation? Political or social event? This might be the venue for you. For information, contact Kathi Thompson, Cell: 574.270.0128, E-mail: [info@pulaskihistory.net](mailto:info@pulaskihistory.net).

### **The Opera House is Available for Sale or Long-Term Lease:**

Lease and sale listings for the property at 101 East Main Street in Winamac can be seen online: [www.harrisonpm.com](http://www.harrisonpm.com). Realtor: Ryan Harrison, BPOR, AHWD, Harrison Property Management, Real Estate & Auctions. Cell: 855.964.8433, E-mail: [ryan@harrisonpm.com](mailto:ryan@harrisonpm.com).



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PO Box 135  
Winamac IN 46996

Save A Tree (And Some \$\$\$)! Share your email address with us to allow us to share this in paperless fashion. Just send an email to [info@pulaskihistory.net](mailto:info@pulaskihistory.net). Thank you!!