



# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name Municipal Auditorium & City Hall

Other names/site number Museum of the Great Plains, DBA/Wichita County Historical Society, Inc.; KHRI #203-3130-00005

Name of related Multiple Property Listing New Deal-era Resources of Kansas

## 2. Location

Street & number 201 N 4<sup>th</sup> St   not for publication

City or town Leoti   vicinity

State Kansas Code KS County Wichita Code 203 Zip code 67861

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,  
I hereby certify that this x nomination    request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property x meets    does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

   national    statewide   x local Applicable National Register Criteria:   A   B   xC   D

See file.

Signature of certifying official/Title Patrick Zollner, Deputy SHPO Date \_\_\_\_\_

Kansas State Historical Society  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property    meets    does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

   entered in the National Register    determined eligible for the National Register

   determined not eligible for the National Register    removed from the National Register

   other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

Municipal Auditorium & City Hall  
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**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only **one** box.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>	
1	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>Total</b>

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

GOVERNMENT / City Hall

GOVERNMENT / Fire Station

RECREATION & CULTURE / Auditorium

SOCIAL / Meeting Hall

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION & CULTURE / Museum

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Other: WPA Moderne

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Limestone

walls: Limestone

roof: Concrete

other: \_\_\_\_\_

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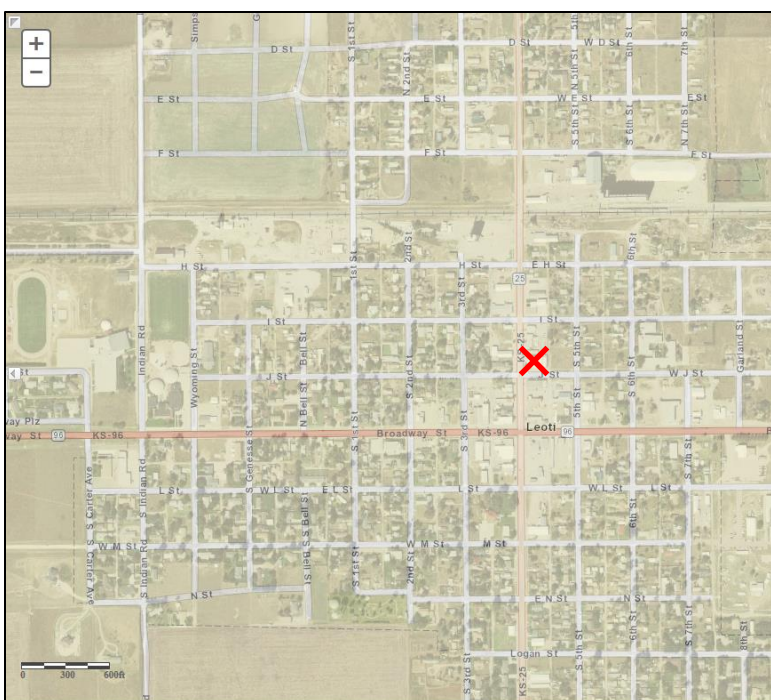
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## Narrative Description

### Summary

The Municipal Auditorium & City Hall is located at 201 North 4<sup>th</sup> Street in the center of Leoti, Wichita County, Kansas (*Figures 1 & 2*). Between 1939-42, the one-story restrained Moderne stone building was constructed as a local Works Progress/Projects Administration project and is typical of the simple building style used by the WPA.<sup>1</sup> The buff colored stone was quarried in Logan County, about 20 miles north of Leoti. The prominently-located building has two public façades; one faces west toward 4<sup>th</sup> Street and is the auditorium entrance while the south façade fronts J Street and is the entrance for the city hall and fire station. The building measures 127 feet from east to west and 70 feet from north to south. The usable basement measures 127 feet from east to west and 52 feet from north to south.

### Elaboration



**Figure 1:** Contextual image, showing location of building (X) within Leoti; north is up (Kansas Historic Resources Inventory).

### Site

Leoti's Municipal Auditorium & City Hall sits at the northeast corner of J Street and North 4<sup>th</sup> Street (K-25 Hwy) one block north of the intersection of 4<sup>th</sup> & Broadway around which the town's main commercial district developed. To the north, west, and south of the nominated building are one-story commercial buildings that are a mixture of historic and new.

The nominated building is bounded by North 4<sup>th</sup> Street to the west; J Street to the south; an inter-block alley to the east; and the north line of lot nine on the north. A concrete sidewalk lines the west and south facades, and to the south of the building are perpendicular parking spaces. A large cedar is located at the southwest corner of the building while a smaller deciduous tree is located in the west sidewalk.

### Building

The Municipal Auditorium & City Hall was built of native limestone (from the Frank Rody quarry 20 miles north of Leoti) and poured-in-place concrete. The foundation and exterior walls are comprised of limestone blocks. The exposed portions of the walls—both inside and outside—are smooth-cut, regularly-sized blocks with beveled edges and set in a running bond. The first three stone courses create a water table. The blocks forming the parapet cap are smaller in size than those of the rest of the building, and the tops are angled to add a definite visual end to the exterior wall. The floors, ceilings, and roof structure are poured-in-place concrete, and historic interior partition walls are concrete.

<sup>1</sup> As is discussed in the Narrative Statement of Significance below, the project began in 1938 under what was the Works Progress Administration; it was completed after the 1939 reorganization of the agency into the Works Projects Administration.

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Figure 2 (Boundary Map): Aerial image, showing Municipal Auditorium & City Hall at the NE corner of J & 4<sup>th</sup> streets (Google).

The footprint and massing express the building's two functions and are best described as overlapping rectangular volumes (Figure 2). The rectangular mass containing the auditorium is surrounded on the west and most of the south by the mass containing the city hall and fire department, as if the auditorium was placed on top of and offset from the city hall. The auditorium's exterior walls are about two feet taller than the walls of the city hall. The result of this form is that the building's north wall is a continuous plane that steps down at the west end, and there is a void in the massing at the building's southwest corner where the city hall mass is inset from the auditorium's west wall by about 20 feet.

### West (4<sup>th</sup> Street) Façade

The auditorium's west façade is the building's most detailed. The symmetrical façade contains a central entry portal accessed by a set of four concrete steps. These steps, which face 4<sup>th</sup> Street, are not historic. Upon acquiring the building in 1981, the Wichita County Historical Society (WCHS) replaced the original steps in order to include a concrete ADA ramp with iron railing; this ramp runs along the building to the south of the entrance. Historically, the concrete steps were bookended by stone wingwalls (Figure 3); patch marks in the face of the building indicate where the wingwalls once connected to the building.

The stone entry portal is approximately 12 feet tall and contains a non-historic pair of doors with tall two-horizontal-light transom and glass-block sidelights on either side. Stone separates the sidelights from the

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**Figure 3:** Municipal Auditorium in 1942 (WCHS)

doors; the top of the portal is defined by a single bowed row of stone. The original glass block is still in place. The original doors and transom are used in displays of the museum. On either side of the portal is a single exterior light; the north fixture may be original to 1942 (*Figure 3*).

Centered in the wall to the north and to the south of the portal is a rectangular masonry opening containing a single historic metal window. The openings have steel lintels and stone sills; below the sill, the stone is inset slightly to the water table. The window units each contain four evenly-spaced horizontal panes. Two panes are operable. This window and masonry opening detail is a typical feature throughout the building (unless otherwise noted); although, windows are

in various states of repair. Above each window, three stone rows below the parapet, is a single octagonal stone without any inscription or decoration. These may have been placeholders for a later medallion or plaque, as seen in the 1930s rendering (*Figure 4*). The sign above the entry doors reads “Museum of the Great Plains” and is installed where raised metal letters were historically located that spelled out “Municipal Auditorium.”

City Hall’s west façade steps back 20 feet from the auditorium’s west façade. Within this wall are two historic metal windows centered in the façade.

South (J Street) Façade

The westernmost 20 feet of the south façade is the south wall of the auditorium. Apart from a stone pilaster and a downspout, this wall is blank.<sup>2</sup> This pilaster is one of five evenly spaced along the auditorium’s wall that are part of the building’s structural system.

The south façade of the city hall contains ten masonry openings with the same lintel height. From west to east, the first four contain typical windows. The first three windows are grouped; the fourth is further to the east. The fifth opening contains an entrance into what was City Hall; the raised metal letters above the opening have been removed. The masonry opening is unadorned. Historically the opening contained a pair of doors with transom; today there is a single door with sidelight and transom. The historic set of concrete steps with stone wingwalls is still in place at this entrance. To the west of this entrance are two windows. To the east of these windows is another historic entrance, which led into the fire department offices. Today the entrance, including doors and transom, matches the entrance into the city hall. The easternmost two masonry openings make up the fire department garage bays. This section of the building extends approximately one foot out from the rest of the wall plane. The two masonry openings contain the building’s historic wooden garage doors; the doors themselves contain six rows of five panels; the third row from the ground are glass panels. The historic raised letters spelling out “Fire Department” above the garage bays are no longer extant.

West (alley) Façade

Six masonry openings span the west façade. The first two openings on the south are windows. North of these windows is a door opening with covered transom. The door is metal and is accessed by a set of concrete steps. To the north of this door are two more window openings. The northernmost opening is a door without transom accessed by a set of concrete steps. Except for this opening, all masonry opening lintels are at the

<sup>2</sup> Historically, the downspouts were fed by a stone scupper that drained the roof (*Figure 3*); today, the scuppers have been cut off at the face of the wall and a smaller leader inserted into the opening and connected to the downspout. The stones around these connections show signs of deterioration most likely due to water damage.

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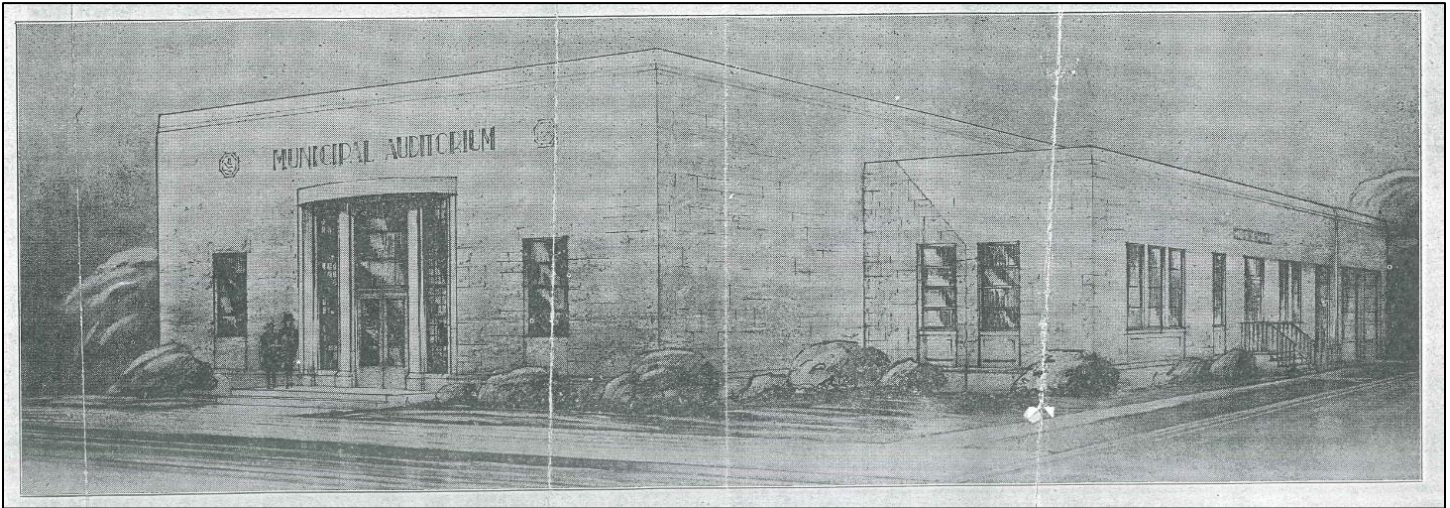


Figure 4: *Leoti Standard* Brochure Insert, Dec. 8, 1938.

same height. At ground level between the two door openings are three small openings into the basement. These openings were filled-in with concrete to eliminate vandalism and water leaking into building, as they are the same level as the alley.<sup>3</sup>

#### North Façade

The north façade is a single wall plane. The western 20 feet (+/-) contains no openings and is shorter than the rest of the wall. The majority of the wall is the north wall of the auditorium. A series of five equally-spaced pilasters run the length of this section of wall. On either side of each pilaster is a masonry opening; all but the westernmost opening once contained historic windows that lit the auditorium. In the early 1980s these openings were infilled with concrete and smaller windows were installed. This was done for security reasons and to preserve of the artifacts.<sup>4</sup> The westernmost opening is smaller than the others. It still contains a historic window that lights a restroom.

#### Interior

The building's interior contains a simple layout (*Figures 5 & 6*) and little ornamentation. Many interior doors are historic wood slab and contain their historic hardware. The auditorium building is entered from the 4<sup>th</sup> Street entrance. The lobby measures 16-½ feet (north-south) by 18 feet (east-west). To the south of the lobby is what was the men's restroom. Today, the room has been divided to create a cloak room (now kitchen) in the west half of the restroom.<sup>5</sup> To the north of the lobby is a stairway to the basement (located in the northwest corner) and the women's restroom, measuring 16-½ feet (north-south) by 10-½ feet (east-west). The restroom fixtures are original to the 1930s. The walls contain plaster wainscot scored to resemble tile.

A set of double doors centered in the lobby's east wall leads into the large auditorium hall, which measures 85 feet (east-west) by 52 feet (north-south) with a 19-foot concrete-beamed ceiling. In the early 1980s the ceiling between the beams was sprayed with a coating to help with acoustics in the room.<sup>6</sup> Along the north and south walls of the auditorium are load-bearing pilasters connected to the ceiling beams. Two doors are located in the south wall. A pair of doors at the southeast corner opens into a hallway that leads outside or into the city hall. A single door near the center of the wall opens into a storage room. Eight-foot tall non-historic display walls were

<sup>3</sup> "Leoti's Spacious Museum," *Leoti Standard* (Aug. 14, 1985): D-47.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> The room was converted to a kitchen in 2010.

<sup>6</sup> "Leoti's Spacious Museum," D-47.

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built throughout the auditorium to showcase the museum's collections. The walls intentionally were kept short to maintain the spaciousness of the room.

At the east end of the auditorium is the elevated stage, 23 feet (north-south) by 17 feet (east-west) and approximately 4 feet above the floor. To the south of the stage is a small room (9 feet by 14 feet) with three steps and a doorway onto the stage in the room's northeast corner.

To the north of the stage is a double-loaded corridor, 7-½ feet wide by 26 ½ feet long, that leads from the auditorium to the exterior. At the west end of the corridor on the south wall are three steps and a small landing onto the stage. Along the north of the corridor are four dressing rooms. The west room measures 6 feet by 13 feet, and the other three dressing rooms measure 6 feet by 4-½ feet. The solid metal door at the east end of this hall exits into the alley.

Along the south side of this corridor across from the smaller dressing rooms is a door into a room measuring approximately 6 feet (north-south) by 14 feet (east-west). This room formerly was another set of three small dressing rooms.<sup>7</sup> The room now contains a door in the south wall that leads into the fire department area along the east side of the building. The main room of the fire department consisted of two large closets and a meeting room. A door in the east wall exits into the alley. Through a door in the south wall are three concrete steps that lead down into the garage formerly for two emergency vehicles.

The City Hall offices are located in the south portion of the building. Today this area houses the genealogical functions of the historical society. A small foyer is accessed through the west doors of the south elevation. A door in the west wall of the foyer leads into the former city clerk's office, which is now the genealogical research room. The room measures 18-½ feet (north-south) by 33 feet (east-west) and contains a large walk-in vault in the northeast corner. A drop ceiling was installed in this room at an unknown date. Two doors in the foyer's north wall lead into a restroom and closet, respectively. The restroom has been made handicap accessible by changing the toilet to a higher model and adding grab bars. The original door is 36 inches wide, so it did not have to be changed. The closet is the same as the one accessed in the auditorium's south wall. A door in the foyer's east wall leads into a former meeting room, measuring 18-½ feet by 14 feet, which is now used as the genealogical library. A door in the meeting room's east wall leads into a small hall that contains a stairway into the basement in its northwest corner, a double-door into the auditorium in the north wall, and in the south wall is the east entrance into the building from J Street.

The basement is located under the auditorium and fire department (excluding the garage). Formerly the space was used as the American Legion meeting room, restaurant, and bar. As previously mentioned, two stairways access the basement. In the auditorium's west entrance hall, the 5-foot wide concrete L-shaped stairway leads down into a small room. To the south of the stairs, in the southwest corner of the basement, is the game room. A pair of doors in the room at the bottom of the stairs leads into a large open area with a bar at the east end. A door to the north of the bar leads into the food preparation areas at the east end of the basement. To the south of the bar is a doorway allowing access to the south stairway. This stairway is 46 inches wide and also made of concrete. On the north side of the large meeting room is a door leading into the food preparation areas. The entire basement area is currently used for museum displays or storage.

### Transite Vent Tubes

Before its conversion to air conditioning, this building was historically vented by transite vent tubes. This interesting feature was described in an article in *Kansas Territorial*, "This system is actually a flue that rises through the wall to a vent stack on top of the wall" that then exits through to the flat roof.<sup>8</sup> There are at least 14 of these pipes that can be seen from the ground today. "Based on modern engineering principles, [this vent

<sup>7</sup> As drawn on the 1938 blueprints in the care of the WCHS.

<sup>8</sup> Blaine Davis, "WPA Work Provides Assets," *Kansas Territorial Magazine* Vol. III (Jan.-Feb. 1983): 27.

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system's] efficiency for this size of structure is questionable but in theory correct.”<sup>9</sup> A better form of this type of ventilation has been proven to use both natural and mechanical strategies together.

### Restoration Work

In 2008, a small grant was written to repair the garage doors and the windows of the fire department rooms on the east side. The panels in the two garage doors were removed and new wood installed. The broken and cracked glass was replaced, then the doors were repainted. The old glass was taken from the other windows. The rust on the metal frames was removed using a grinder. The frames were then primed, repainted, and new glass was installed. The two exterior metal doors on the east were also painted. In the future, the windows on the south side of the building will need this same attention. Everything was kept original to the structure to preserve its integrity.

The air condition and heating system has been updated with units installed outside of the building's north elevation. At present, there is some deterioration of the lower two rows of the stone railings at both set of steps on the south side. This will need to be repaired soon. The stone railings were possibly constructed with some of the last stone quarried. The last stones may be a little softer than the first stones quarried.

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<sup>9</sup> Davis, 27.

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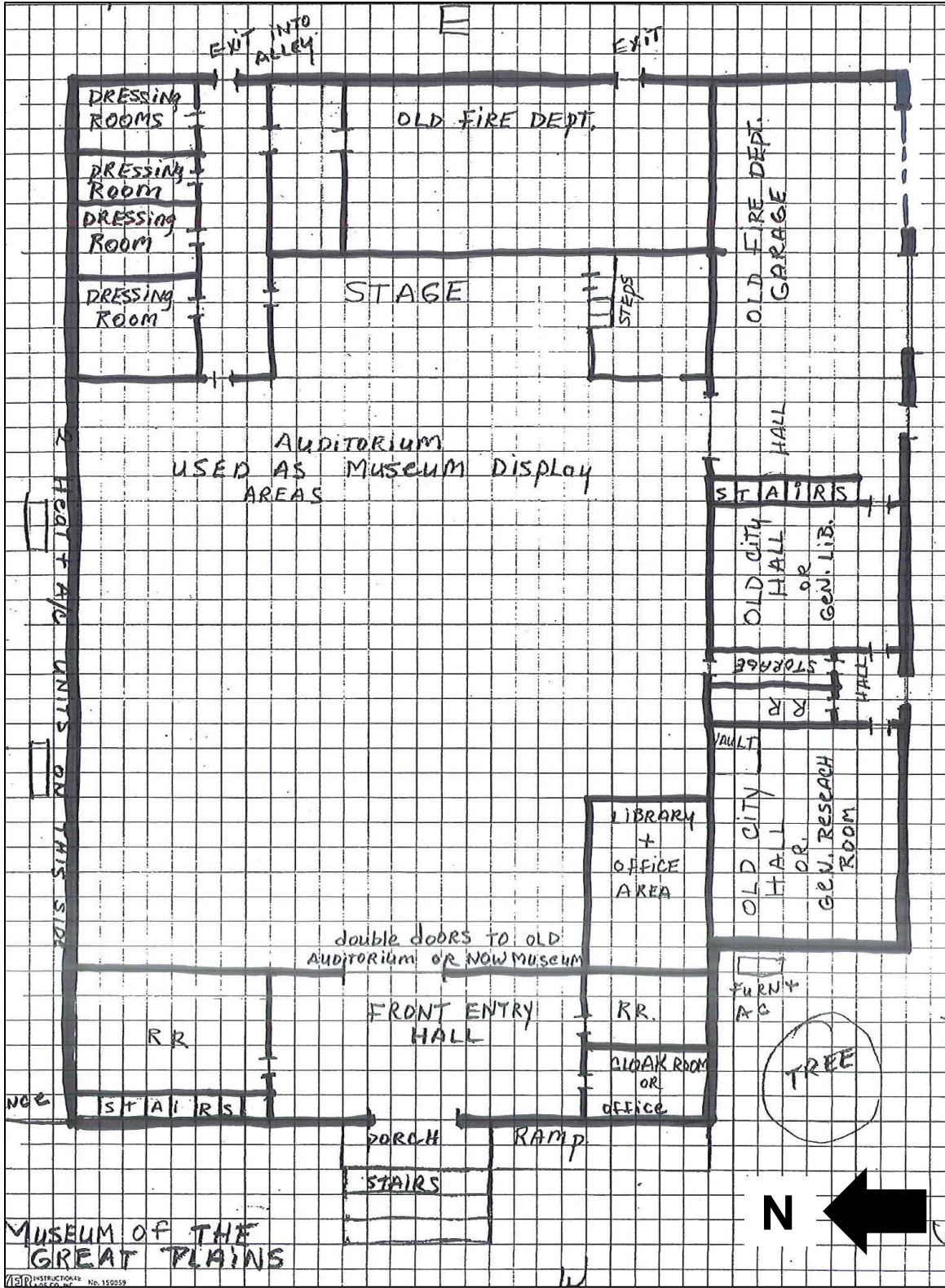


Figure 5: Main level floor plan diagram, as drawn by Karen Walk. Not to scale.

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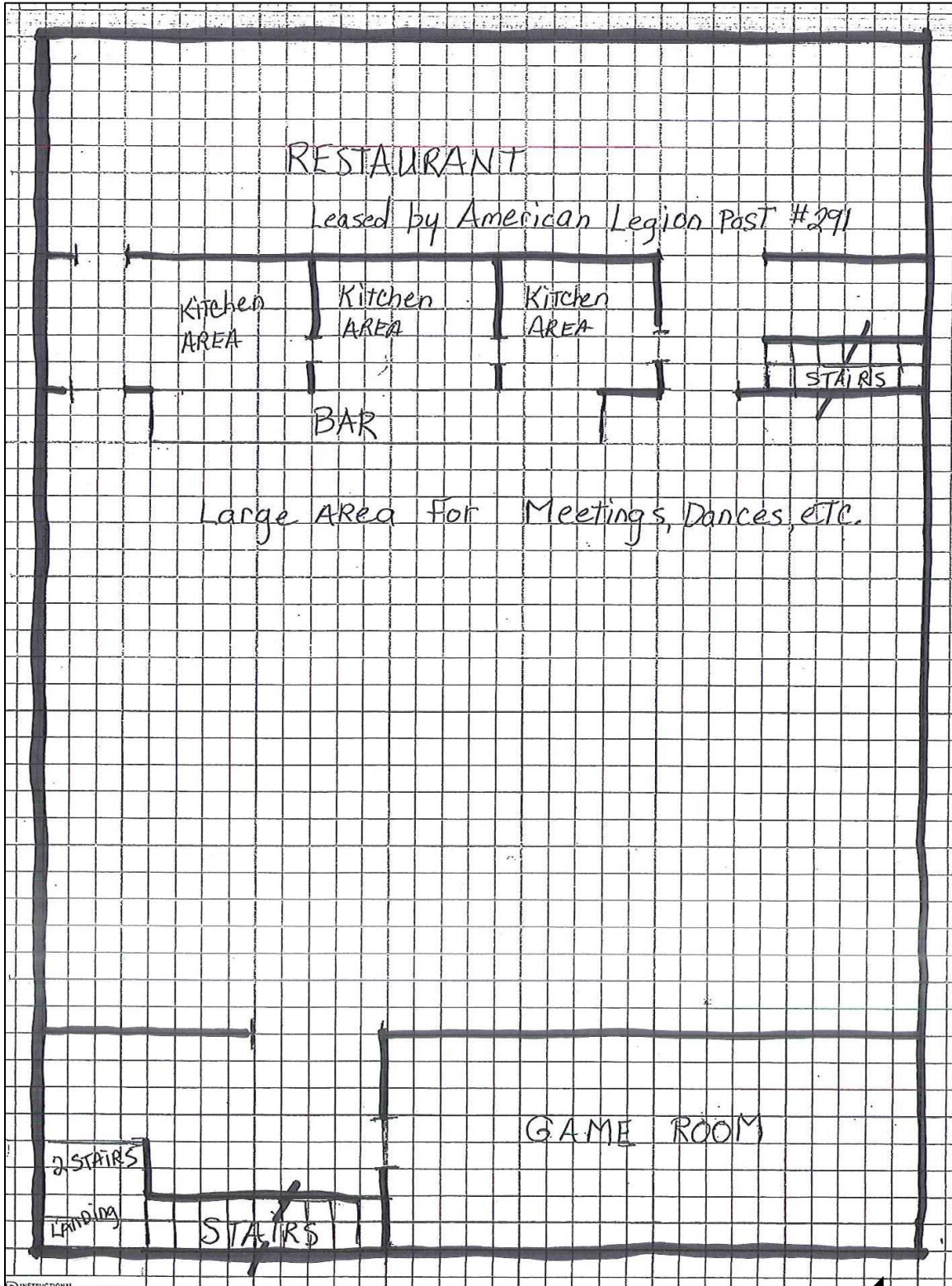
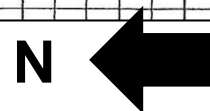


Figure 6: Basement level floor plan diagram, as drawn by Karen Walk. Not to scale.



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**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

Social History

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1939 to 1942

\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1939

1942

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Griest & Coolidge, Architect

C. W. Suit, Consulting Engineer

Archer, Cooper, & Robison

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The period of significance covers the years 1939-1942 following the Great Depression and the 1930's Dust Storms, at a time when farmers did not raise crops, and there were many people out of work. The WPA work relief programs provided able-bodied men of Wichita County a means of earning a wage, learning a new skill, along with self-respect.

**Criteria Considerations (justification)**

N/A

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## Narrative Statement of Significance

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### Summary

Constructed between 1939 and 1942, Leoti's Municipal Auditorium & City Hall is significant for its association with the Works Progress/Projects Administration (WPA) and as an excellent example of WPA Moderne architecture in western Kansas. The building served as city hall, fire department, municipal auditorium, and meeting hall for the American Legion.<sup>10</sup> In the early 1980s, the city of Leoti gave the building to the Wichita County Historical Society, which has operated the Museum of the Great Plains out of this building since 1983. Due to its association with the New Deal, this building is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under the *New Deal-era Resources of Kansas* MPS as an example of the Civic property type.

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### Elaboration:

The Leoti Municipal Auditorium and City Hall is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places as part of the New Deal-Era Resources of Kansas multiple property nomination as an example of the Civic property type defined by the multiple property submission. It is nominated under Criterion A for its local significance in the areas of Government and Social History.

### Community History

The western counties of Kansas were not opened for settlement until the 1880's. Wichita County was named in 1873 but was not organized until 1887. Wichita County is the center county running north and south, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> from the west, being 40 miles from the Colorado/Kansas border.<sup>11</sup> Leoti is in the center of Wichita County, and is at the junction of highways #96 and #25. The town was named Leoti, an Indian word for prairie flower.

The land in Wichita County is very flat and the loam was quite fertile. The U. S. government opened up the western section of Kansas for homesteading. Pioneers were coming to farm the land and make this their home. Leoti was settled in 1885 by a group of men from Garden City. Although their idea never came to fruition, their idea was that the small town would soon rival Chicago in commercial importance. Leoti became an agricultural community with a post office, several banks, general stores, attorneys' offices, real estate offices, hotels, churches, grain elevators, a flour mill, cafes, blacksmiths, livery barns and feed stores. People lived in very minimal homes. Many of the early homes were constructed of sod because of the shortage of trees on the plains. As they prospered they built better and larger homes. The Missouri Pacific railroad came through Leoti in 1887. Leoti became a community of hard working pioneers who struggled to raise crops against the storms, drought, wind, insects and years of crop failures on the Kansas plains.<sup>12</sup>

Farming had provided sustenance and incomes yet at the same time caused problems for the environment in the 1930s. A lack of rain and snow aggravated many of the problems that were brought on during the drought of the Dust Bowl days. Even the methods of farming and tillage of the soil used for many years caused problems. By planting rows of crops year after year in the same direction as the wind blows caused dirt and topsoil to erode worse. Continual deep plowing of the fields in the fall every year further complicated the problems of wind erosion. And without stubble remaining in the fields of the previous crops any amount of

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<sup>10</sup> City Hall until 1990; Fire Dept until 1979 and the American Legion until 1962.

<sup>11</sup> Wichita County Historical Association, *History of Wichita County Kansas*, vol. 1 (North Newton, KS: Mennonite Press Inc., 1980), 19.

<sup>12</sup> Wichita County Historical Association, *History of Wichita County Kansas*, vol. 1, *Preview of Kansas Settlement*, by Alice Burr (North Newton, KS: Mennonite Press Inc., 1980), 36-37.

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moisture was even more difficult to retain in the soil. During the Great Depression and Dust Bowl era, everyone was affected, businessmen and farmers alike. Farming methods have improved greatly.

In 1935, President Franklin D. Roosevelt established the Works Progress Administration. Later it was referred to as the Work Projects Administration [WPA]. The purpose of the program was to provide useful work for millions of unemployed victims of the Great Depression and thus to preserve their skills and self-respect. The economy would in turn be stimulated by the increased purchasing power of the newly employed, whose wages under the program ranged from \$15 to \$90 per month.

The first records of scheduled WPA projects in Wichita Co. KS appear in the fall of 1935.<sup>13</sup> The very first WPA scheduled project in Wichita county was the "Construction of Reservoirs County Wide" drawn up on October 2, 1935; (Project #65-82-1179 at \$48,925). On November 8, 1935, the Leoti Municipal Auditorium & City Hall was the second scheduled Wichita County WPA project; (Project #65-82-1746 at \$16,593). Other Wichita County WPA projects would eventually include the construction of new sewing rooms, ponds, curbs, guttering, sidewalks, and county wide community sanitation. Existing county roads were greatly improved by either straightening, draining, grading, surfacing. New roads were created. Construction of new bridges made roads safer for passage during inclement weather. There were many new privies constructed, landscape and beautification projects and the operation of a project to eradicate grasshoppers. There were improvements made to the Leoti High School. Stone pillars were assembled at the entrance of the Leoti Cemetery along with a stone war memorial and flag pole in the center. The largest of all the projects in Wichita Co. was the Leoti City Hall and Municipal Auditorium. At the time of the laying of concrete for that building, there were 40 men on the crew. Others were hauling, cutting and shaping stone.<sup>14</sup>

### Property History

In June of 1938, the city council came to the agreement that they were all in favor of building a new city hall. According to the discussion that took place, the proposed building will be financed by federal funds, under the WPA. An announcement was made that the proposed location for the city hall and auditorium will be a block north of Hwy #96 at the east corner of the main street. The proposed city hall will be constructed by the federal plan of furnishing 80% of the cost. The issue was taken to a vote to the people of Leoti which passed to the affirmative. The city government needed more room for offices, storage of records and for the city council meetings. The old City Hall was in a small, old building just one lot to the north of the proposed new building.<sup>15</sup>

They would use local labor, (many farmers) and the WPA program to construct this building to house all lodges, civic organizations, a fire station, offices for city officials, a large community hall with stage, in addition to a huge dining room, all in one central place. At that time, the fire department had vehicles in several different buildings around the community. The emergency had to be assessed first in order to go get the proper vehicle. In the time of an emergency, this could take several minutes, which in some cases, they did not have. it would be nice to have a nice large auditorium for organizations to use, or to hold dances. This is a community that loved to dance, that was their source of entertainment. The whole family could attend the functions. The American Legion could lease the basement. With the idea of using the WPA program, it was very soon thought to build a larger building for all of the entities involved.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Records of WPA projects undertaken in the U. S., Kansas, Wichita County. Accessed 10/23/2018 at Kansas Historical Society - State Archives Division. Microfilm roll #MF6040.

<sup>14</sup> "WPA Reports Finished Work in this County," *Leoti Standard* (Leoti, KS), June 9, 1938. 1.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

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Tearing down the old building on the site began on March 4, 1939. The native stone for the building was secured at the Frank Rody Quarry in south Logan County. John (Jack) Luebbers was the foreman and time keeper.<sup>17</sup> Weekly, front page stories in the *Leoti Standard* newspaper kept their readers informed on the progress of the construction of the new municipal auditorium and City Hall.

### Opening of the New City Hall & Municipal Auditorium

As soon as the basement was finished, the first public event was held in the basement with a Fireman's Ball and everyone was invited.<sup>18</sup>

Next, the city records were moved from the office on North Main to the new City Hall, a few feet south to the new headquarters in the south wing of the building.<sup>19</sup> When the main floor was finished, a huge crowd attended a dance at the first public opening of the new Municipal Auditorium on March 28, 1942.<sup>20</sup>

The Municipal Auditorium was used for a large variety of events. There were band performances, dances and other entertainment almost every week. Soon after it opened, there were several very large military funerals for service men whom had been killed in World War II. Military funerals continued to be held through the Vietnam era. Many people turned out to show their respects and give thanks for their service.<sup>21</sup>

The Leoti community held their annual Christmas party where Santa handed out bags of candy and fruit to over 700 kids. In a few years, Santa's brother came and helped give out the bags to make the lines go a little faster! No one ever knew which one was the "real Santa" and which one was "the brother!"<sup>22</sup>

The American Legion leased the basement for almost twenty-two years. They held their meetings and other activities along with running a restaurant and bar there until 1962. Square dancing for adults, gymnastics, tap and ballet lessons were held in the large room in the basement after the closure of the Legion.

Many organizations also held their activities and meetings in the auditorium. Among these organizations were the Girl Scouts, Brownies, Cub Scouts, and Boy Scouts.

The Municipal Auditorium served as a community building until 1965, when a new metal building was built at the fairgrounds. The new building had a large modern kitchen with commercial stoves & refrigerators and it was also handicap accessible. The Municipal Auditorium was used as a community building for 23 years.

Near the alley at the back, southeast corner of the building was the Leoti Volunteer Fire Department. There were bays with double garage doors for the firetruck and the ambulance. There was also a large meeting room and closets to store the volunteers' boots, hats and uniforms. In the earliest days, the Leoti volunteer fire department served only within the town of Leoti. No fires were fought in the county. Eventually the city acquired more and larger vehicles to serve both the city and the county. The increase in the number of fire-fighting vehicles created the need to park some of those vehicles in other buildings around town. For convenience sake, the city had to build a larger building and to have their equipment in one place. The fire department operated from this building until 1979 when they constructed the new metal building.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>17</sup> "Plans Developing for City Hall," *Leoti Standard* (Leoti, KS), March 26, 1942. 1.

<sup>18</sup> "Big Dance Saturday – Leoti Firemen's Ball," *Leoti Standard* (Leoti, KS), March 22, 1940. 1.

<sup>19</sup> "City Officials Move to New Headquarters," *Leoti Standard* (Leoti, KS), June 26, 1942. 1.

<sup>20</sup> "American Legion Holds Opening Night at Hall," *Leoti Standard* (Leoti, KS), March 26, 1942. 1.

<sup>21</sup> "Last Rites for Mason Krenzel," *Leoti Standard* (Leoti, KS), April 21, 1951. 1.

<sup>22</sup> "Santa Claus and His Brother at 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Legion's Christmas Party," *Leoti Standard* (Leoti, KS), December 26, 1968. 1.

<sup>23</sup> Wichita County Historical Association, *History of Wichita County Kansas, vol. II, Leoti's Fire Department 1935-1953* (North Newton, KS: Mennonite Press Inc., 1980), 67-72.

Municipal Auditorium & City Hall  
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In about 1951, the city hall's basement had been designated as a Fallout Shelter. Later, it was designated as the Severe Weather Shelter, for which it still is referred to as.<sup>24</sup> For many years the city hall was also the election polling place until 1965 when the new community building was constructed.<sup>25</sup>

The City Hall moved to a larger building with more space and more offices on June 20, 1990. The meeting room in the original building, having served in that capacity for almost 49 years, was not large enough for the public to attend meetings.<sup>26</sup>

The Wichita County Historical Society, Inc. was organized in the 1970's and wanted to build a museum. This sturdy, large historic stone building became their desired location. They leased the building in 1980 from the city and later made a trade for land that the historical society owned. The city built a drainage ditch on the land that had been traded for the building.

In March of 1981, the building was leased to the Wichita County Historical Society, Inc. After some restoration and much cleaning, the society went to work. In May of 1982 the museum celebrated its grand opening as the Museum of the Great Plains having only a minimal amount to artifacts. It was deeded by a quit claim deed to the historical society by the City of Leoti on Aug. 5, 1991. Today the museum houses a large collection of artifacts.

The Wichita County Genealogical Society was started in 1996 and works from the old City Hall.<sup>27</sup>

### Newspaper Accounts

*Leoti City Councilmen Consider a City Hall.* At the regular meeting of the city council Monday evening, the consensus of opinion was in favor of building a city hall. According to the discussion that took place, the proposed building will be financed by federal funds, under W.P.A.<sup>28</sup>

*City Hall Project is Slowly Taking Form.* The city hall project is taking form according to City Clerk, W. J. Yotter, who announces that the proposed location is at the east corner a block north of Hwy #96, on the main street. The engineer's plans are in the hands of government officials at Topeka and Washington D.C. at this writing. The proposed city hall will be constructed by the federal plan of furnishing 80% of the cost. Before the issue will take definite form, the matter will be put before the people of Leoti....<sup>29</sup>

*City Hall Project Subject of Discussion.* In the event the proposal receives an affirmative nod from the people of Leoti; work should start shortly after Jan. 1, 1939...<sup>30</sup>

*10,000 Bond Election Two Weeks Away.* Only two more weeks remain before the city election takes place.<sup>31</sup>

*What the People of Leoti Will Vote for or Against.* Brochure insert.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> "Let's All Vote Tuesday at the General Election," *Leoti Standard* (Leoti, KS), November 2, 1950. 1.

<sup>26</sup> "City Hall Has New Offices," *Leoti Standard* (Leoti, KS), June 20, 1990. 1.

<sup>27</sup> "A Century of Progress," *Leoti Standard* (Leoti, KS), August 14, 1985. Supplemental Section D. 17.

<sup>28</sup> "Leoti City Councilmen Consider a City Hall," *Leoti Standard* (Leoti, KS), June 9, 1938. 1.

<sup>29</sup> "City Hall Project is Slowly Taking Form," *Leoti Standard* (Leoti, KS), August 4, 1938. 1.

<sup>30</sup> "City Hall Project Subject of Discussion," *Leoti Standard* (Leoti, KS), December 1, 1938. 1.

<sup>31</sup> "\$10,000 Bond Election Two Weeks Away," *Leoti Standard* (Leoti, KS), December 8, 15 and 22, 1938. 1.

<sup>32</sup> "What the People of Leoti Will Vote for or Against," *Leoti Standard* (Leoti, KS), December 8, 1938. 1.

Municipal Auditorium & City Hall  
Name of Property

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*People Vote 170 to 109 for Municipal Auditorium.* The matter was voted affirmative, 170 to 109, to use local labor and the WPA program to construct a building to house all lodges, civic organizations, fire station, offices for city officials, a large community hall with stage, in addition to a huge dining room.....<sup>33</sup>

*Plans Developing for City Hall.* The work on the city's project will begin on February 20, 1939. Tearing down the old building on the site is set tentatively to begin on March 4. The native stone for the building will be secured at the Frank Rody Quarry in south Logan County. John (Jack) Luebbers will be the foreman and time keeper.<sup>34</sup>

*Sawing Rock.* A week ago today the W.P.A. crew in this county started the work of sawing and dressing rock for the new city auditorium...<sup>35</sup>

*Unearthed Fossils.* The Leoti crew of city hall workmen stationed in the rock division, dug into a native stone last week and carved out a petrified fish.<sup>36</sup>

*Another \$5,000 Bond Issue to Voters Next Week.* Friday, March 29<sup>th</sup> is just one week away. This is the date for citizens will go to the polls in the special city bond election. The election has been called for the purpose of deciding whether an additional \$5,000 bond issue would be made by the City of Leoti to continue work on the city hall now under construction. The first bond issue (\$10,000) election, Dec 23, 1938, carried 170 to 109.<sup>37</sup>

*Vote 154-72; \$5,000 More Hall Bonds. ...*<sup>38</sup>

*Big Dance Saturday--- Leoti Firemen's Ball.* You're Invited to a Dance in the Basement of the New Municipal Auditorium. First Public event in the new building...<sup>39</sup>

*Work Progresses on the City Hall Project.* The southern portion of the Leoti city hall project is taking a decided step forward these days with that end of the work going ahead of the north side. The entire W.P.A. crew working on this project have the work advanced to a point where each day a visible amount of the progress is noticed...<sup>40</sup>

*\$5,000 Bond Issue for Hall at City Election.* At the last regular city election in Leoti, only 186 votes were cast. However, at bond elections for the auditorium over 280 voted at the first election in December 1938; and 230 voted at the second bond election in March, 1940. Officials estimate the \$5,000 they ask for will conclude construction, the purchase of heating and lighting equipment, and go at least part way into the purchase of seats for the auditorium...<sup>41</sup>

*Only 94 Go to the Polls City Election Tuesday.* The \$5,000 additional bond issue for the municipal auditorium carried 63 to 29...<sup>42</sup>

<sup>33</sup> "People Vote 170 to 109 for Municipal Auditorium," *Leoti Standard* (Leoti, KS), December 29, 1938. 1.

<sup>34</sup> "Plans Developing for City Hall," *Leoti Standard* (Leoti, KS), February 9, 1939. 1.

<sup>35</sup> "Sawing Rock," *Leoti Standard* (Leoti, KS), June 29, 1939. 1.

<sup>36</sup> "Unearthed Fossils," *Leoti Standard* (Leoti, KS), October 5, 1939. 1.

<sup>37</sup> "Another \$5,000 Bond Issue to Voters Next Week," *Leoti Standard* (Leoti, KS), March 7, 1940. 1.

<sup>38</sup> "Vote 154-72: \$5,000 More Hall Bonds," *Leoti Standard* (Leoti, KS), April 4, 1940. 1.

<sup>39</sup> "Big Dance Saturday – Leoti Firemen's Ball," *Leoti Standard* (Leoti, KS), March 22, 1940. 1.

<sup>40</sup> "Work Progresses on the City Hall Project," *Leoti Standard* (Leoti, KS), May 9, 1940). 1.

<sup>41</sup> "\$5,000 Bond Issue for Hall at City Election," *Leoti Standard* (Leoti, KS), March 13, 1941. 1.

<sup>42</sup> "Only 94 to the Polls City Election Tuesday," *Leoti Standard* (Leoti, KS), April 10, 1941. 1.

Municipal Auditorium & City Hall

Name of Property

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*City Officials Move into New Headquarters.* This week, beginning Monday, the city records were moved from the office on North Main to the Municipal Auditorium, a few feet south, where the federal labor project is underway. The new headquarters are in the office room, in the south wing of the building...<sup>43</sup>

*WPA Reports Finished Work in This County.* The inventory of the WPA's accomplishments from the beginning of operations in 1935, shows that sizeable contributions have been made to the county's progress. During this period, Wichita County has acquired through the WPA, 3.37 miles of new roads and new and greatly improved streets. The improvements have included the laying of 4 miles of city streets and alleys, 6 culvert and improved sidewalks, improvements to one school building, one office building, 78 outdoor privies, 885 yards surface riprap, a one acre park, with landscape and beautification, a brick entrance gate at the cemetery with stone monument and flag pole in the center, and the largest of all, the project of the Municipal Auditorium and City Hall.<sup>44</sup>

*City Hall has New Offices.* The City Hall of Leoti recently moved into their new location. Formerly located at 104 E. J. Street (in with the Museum of the Great Plains building), they are now located at 402 South 4<sup>th</sup> St.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> "City Officials Move into New Headquarters," *Leoti Standard* (Leoti, KS), June 26, 1941. 1.

<sup>44</sup> "WPA Reports Finished Work in this County," *Leoti Standard* (Leoti, KS), June 26, 1941. 1.

<sup>45</sup> "City Hall has New Offices," *Leoti Standard* (Leoti, KS), June 20, 1990. 1.

Municipal Auditorium & City Hall  
Name of Property

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**Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

1. Copy of Original Plat of Leoti City, August 5, 1885
2. WPA Certificate of Work Project #7573, Donated by Paul Luebbers, son of John Luebbers, Timekeeper.
3. Copy of Original Blueprint of Municipal Auditorium, Griest and Coolidge, Architect and Engineers, C.W. Suit, Consulting Engineer, Garden City, Kansas.
4. Walk, Karen, 2017 Sketch of Main Floor of Municipal Auditorium, Leoti, KS.  
Walk, Karen, 2017 Sketch of Basement of Municipal Auditorium
5. Quit Claim Deed, from City of Leoti to Wichita County Historical Society, Lots 9, 10, 11, 12 of Block 44 in Original City of Leoti, Wichita Co. KS. Aug 5, 1991
6. Leoti Standard article, "90 Years Old Broadway Hotel Closes" Dec. 8, 1977.
7. Davis, Blaine, Kansas Territorial Magazine, Vol, III, page 27, "WPA Work Provides Assets, Jan. – Feb. 1983.
8. Leoti Standard, June 26, 1941, WPA Reports Finished Work in the County.
9. Leoti Standard, June 9, 1938, Leoti Council Considers A City Hall
10. Leoti Standard, August 4, 1938, City Hall Project is Slowly Taking Form
11. Leoti Standard, Dec. 1, 1938, City Hall Project of Discussion
12. Leoti Standard, Dec. 8, 15, 22, 1938, \$10,000 Bond Election
13. Leoti Standard Brochure Insert, Dec. 8, 1938
14. Leoti Standard, Dec. 29, 1938, People Vote 170 to 109 For Municipal Auditorium
15. Leoti Standard, Feb. 9, 1939, Plans Developing For City Hall
16. Leoti Standard, June 29, 1939, Sawing Rock
17. Leoti Standard, Oct. 5, 1939, Unearth Fossils
18. Leoti Standard, March 7, 1940, Another \$5,000 Needed for City Hall Project
19. Leoti Standard, April 4, 1940, Vote 154 – 72 \$5,000 More Hall Bonds
20. Leoti Standard, Mar 22, 1940, Big Dance Saturday
21. Leoti Standard, May 9, 1940, Work Progresses on the City Hall Project
22. Leoti Sandard, Mar 13, 1941, \$5,000 Bond Issue for City Election
23. Leoti Standard, April 16, 1941, Only 94 Go To The Polls City Election Tuesday
24. Leoti Standard, June 26, 1941, City Officials Move to New Headquarters
25. Leoti Standard, June 24, 1965, New 4-H Building Under construction
26. Leoti Standard, June 20, 1990, City Hall Has New Offices,
27. The Wichita County History Book, Vol. II, page 68, Leoti's Fire Dept. 1935-1953
28. Keystone Gallery, Scott City, Ks, Used with permission of Chuck Bonner and Barbara Shelton,  
[www.keystonegallery.com/fossils/geology](http://www.keystonegallery.com/fossils/geology)
29. Frank J. Rody Homestead Land Patent, US Govt., Topeka, KS., signed by Pres. Wm. Taft, Feb. 9, 1911
30. Supplement to Leoti Standard, Aug. 14, 1985. "A Century of Progress"  
Wichita County 1885-1985. "Leoti's Spacious Museum," Sec. D page 17, August 14, 1985.
31. Ninety Years On the Plains of Western Kansas, A Life Story of a Man In Search of New Frontiers., Chapter 3,  
"The Glanville Native Stone House, Built in 1888" page 9 & 10.
32. WPA Time Book for Project #7573, Donated by Paul Luebbers
33. Letter of Support of City Council and Mayor of Leoti, KS.
34. Official Resolution 2015-16 – Support of Wichita County Historical Society in Their Efforts to list "the Museum of the Great Plains" building on the National Register of Historic Places.

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Museum of the Great Plains  
Kansas Historical Society

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_ N/A

Municipal Auditorium & City Hall  
Name of Property

Wichita County, Kansas  
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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property** Less than 1 acre

**Provide latitude/longitude coordinates OR UTM coordinates.**

(Place additional coordinates on a continuation page.)

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1 38.482768      -101.358019      3 \_\_\_\_\_  
Latitude:              Longitude:              Latitude:              Longitude:

2 \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_      4 \_\_\_\_\_  
Latitude:              Longitude:              Latitude:              Longitude:

**Verbal Boundary Description** (describe the boundaries of the property)

Lots 9, 10, 11, and 12 of Block 44 in the original City of Leoti. The property is bounded to the west by 4<sup>th</sup> Street, to the east by the alley, and to the south by "J" Street and to the north by adjacent property lines between lots 8 & 9. Boundary excludes applicable rights-of-way.

**Boundary Justification** (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The boundary includes the property that is historically associated with the nominated building.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Karen Walk / Museum Curator

organization Wichita County Historical Society, Inc.      date \_\_\_\_\_

street & number 201 N 4<sup>th</sup> St      Telephone 620 372-2316

city or town Leoti      State KS      zip code 67861

e-mail [museum@wichitacountymuseum.org](mailto:museum@wichitacountymuseum.org)

**Property Owner:** (complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name Wichita County Historical Society, Inc.

street & number 201 N 4<sup>th</sup> St      telephone 620 375-2316

city or town Leoti      state Ks      zip code 67861

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Municipal Auditorium & City Hall  
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**Additional Documentation**

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Photographs**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each digital image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to a sketch map or aerial map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

**Photograph Log**

Name of Property: **Municipal Auditorium & City Hall**

City or Vicinity: **Leoti**

County: **Wichita** State: **Kansas**

Photographer: **Sarah J. Martin (KSHS)**

Date Photographed: **March 2014 (photos continue to represent current conditions as verified in March 2018)**

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 01 of 10:** Looking NE at west and south facades
- 02 of 10:** West façade, looking SE
- 03 of 10:** South façade, looking NW
- 04 of 10:** East façade
- 05 of 10:** Looking SW at north façade
- 06 of 10:** Auditorium, looking east toward stage
- 07 of 10:** Auditorium, looking west toward west entry foyer
- 08 of 10:** South entry foyer, looking east
- 09 of 10:** Garage, looking east
- 10 of 10:** Basement, looking NE