

# 2011-2012



In 2003, the Ada County Historic Preservation Council initiated the County Treasure sign program to raise public awareness of the historic sites and structures located within the County and to encourage private owners to preserve them for future generations. This program honors historic sites each year by placing the special County Treasure sign on their property for a two-month period.. Suggestions for nominations are solicited from local historic preservation commissions and societies and

## 2011-2012 Award Winners

Cottage Courts first began to pop up along highways of the United States during the 1930s to provide overnight accommodations for those traveling by car that desired a more comfortable stay than a roadside tent. These early roadside inns typically consisted of individual cabins or cottages designed along a common motif with parking either in front of, or adjacent to, the individual units. Services were limited, and amenities such as mattresses and linens were often an extra cost.

By the 1940s, the cottage courts were being replaced by motor courts as the preferred overnight accommodation. This new type of roadside lodging frequently provided greater services including on site cafes, gas pumps, and gift shops. Of course, bedding was no longer an optional expense. Classic motor courts consisted of a small number of units, generally 10 to 25, joined under a single roof and arranged around a central lawn.

As the name implies, motor courts were designed for the convenience of those travelling by car and parking was available in front of each of the units. Fanciful, theme-oriented signage designed to attract a fast-moving motorized public was also a hallmark of the 1940s motor court. Although time has taken its toll, three motor courts reminiscent of this bygone era can still be seen along Highway 20/26 in Garden City.

We seek to call attention to the historic background of this area by designating the included properties as County Treasures.

The County Treasures sign will be placed at each of the properties during the period shown.

*Ada County HPC  
May 2011*

**West River Inn**, located at 3525 Chinden was built in 1947. Currently the 22-unit motel operates as a pay by day commercial business at the corner of 36<sup>th</sup> Street and Chinden across from the iconic Ranch Club. The motel maintains the classic motor court configuration with three wings facing into an open parking courtyard with an office at the end of the southern wing. It is probable that at least part of what is now under the paved parking lot was an inviting lawn when the motel was built, but lost when Chinden was widened. Although the signage is thoroughly modern, it is reminiscent of the earlier days of the motor court when amenities such as phones and TVs were advertised with the hopes of attracting guests.

Jun/Jul 2011

3525 Chinden Blvd.



**The Chinden Motor Inn** is located at 4678 Chinden and was built in 1930 -the earliest of the three motor courts still in existence along Highway 20/26. Real estate developers Don Eagleson and Robert Randall purchased much of the land that is now incorporated Garden City in the early 1940s and subdivided the land into residential and commercial lots. Many of Garden City's earliest residents opted to build their homes during the summer and camp in tents on their lots until construction was complete. Others opted to stay at one of the few small motels located along Highway 20/26 including the J and O Motel, and very possibly what is now called the Chinden Motor Inn. The 16-unit motor inn is located in the Randall Acres subdivision, named after one of the original real estate developers.

Aug/Sep 2011

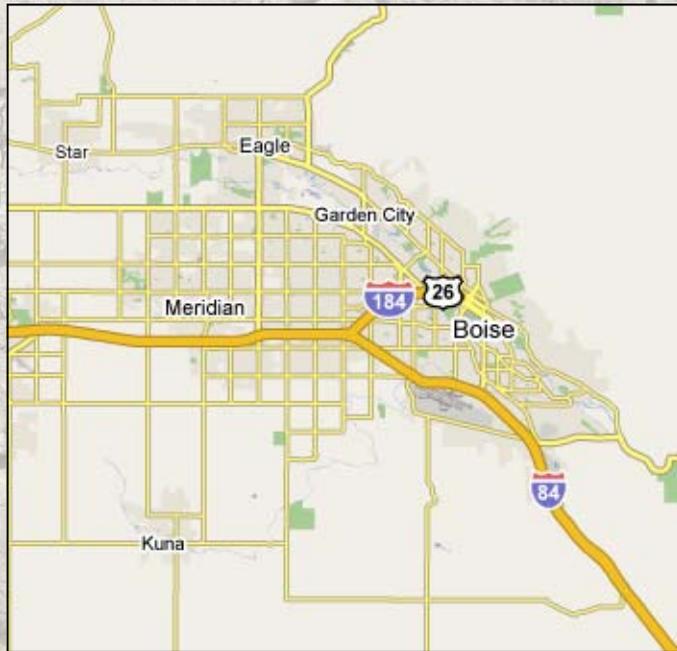
4678 Chinden Blvd.



## About the Council

The Council was created on August 25, 1988 to preserve and enhance cultural and historic sites throughout Ada County and to increase awareness of the value of historic preservation to citizens and local businesses. Currently the Council is composed of nine volunteer members that commit to serve a three-year term and are appointed by the Board of Ada County Commissioners.

This and other publications of the Ada County Historic Preservation Council are available from our website at <http://adaweb.net/hpc>.



*This program receives federal funds from the National Park Service through the Idaho State Historical Society. Regulations of the U.S. Department of the Interior strictly prohibit unlawful discrimination in departmental federally assisted programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, religion or handicap. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility operated by a recipient of federal assistance should write to: Director, Equal Opportunity Program, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, D.C. 20013-7127.*

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**The 7 K Motel**, located at 3633 W. Chinden was built in 1951. Originally, it had 18 brick-faced rooms arranged in an L-shape around a deep front lawn and central swimming pool. A large sign designed to look like cut timber sat at the property edge advertising the Seven K Lodge and its most valued amenities: TV, in room phones, and Air Conditioning. The sign and deep front lawn were lost when Chinden Boulevard was widened, the pool is gone, and five more units were added sometime after 1954, but the 7 K Motel still provides a glimpse into the past before the humble motor court was replaced by the multistory chain hotels.

Oct/Nov 2011

3633 Chinden Blvd



**The Urick Farmstead** features a historic pump house and stall barn, both constructed of native basalt (lava rock) rubble circa 1910. The pump house is a simple structure providing an enclosed shelter for the farmstead's water supply. The stall barn, or cow shed, is typical of the modest outbuildings of small-scale agricultural operations in the area. These barns are characterized by either a shallow gable or shed roof, with a long central alleyway in the interior with individual stalls for milking cows on either side. Though both structures are typical vernacular agricultural structures for southern Idaho, the use of native basalt in Ada County is unique. It is considered rubblework as the stones are not cut, but placed according to size and shape. The stones themselves were likely either cleared from the adjacent fields or made available through nearby irrigation, railway or road projects. The proximity of these projects would have also made skilled masons available for smaller endeavors once the larger public works projects were completed. The use of basalt in southern Idaho fell out of favor after World War II due to changing tastes and economic conditions, as well as a lack of skilled artisans to complete the work.



Dec /Jan 2012

552 East King Rd, Kuna



**The Ranch Club** is reported to have been built in 1907 on the banks of the Payette River near New Plymouth and has served as a barracks and later as a brothel. It is also reported that it was moved to its current location in Garden City in 1948 because Garden City had legalized gambling in 1947. It is not clear when the horse was added to the external ornamentation but, at one time, the horse had a rider which was apparently removed sometime in the 1960s. Some of the scenes from the Clint Eastwood movie "Bronco Billy" were filmed here in the fall of 1979.

Feb/Mar 2012

3544 Chinden Blvd.



**The Log Cabin Literary Center** is located at 801 South Capitol Boulevard north of the Boise River. The building was the vision of State Forester Franklin Girard who in the 1930s decided that the State Forestry Department, now the State Department of Lands, needed a permanent headquarters building. Unfortunately, there was little to no money to purchase materials or pay for construction. He creatively appealed to the Idaho timber industry to provide the raw materials for construction and in return pledged to place a copper plaque in each room identifying the donor and the type of wood used. At least six donors answered his plea and donated lumber for construction. Two Finnish round-log artists from McCall constructed the building in 1939 based on plans designed by Boise Payette Lumber Company architect Hans Hulbe. Girard christened the finished building *Chateau de Bois*, "castle of wood", which opened in 1940. The exterior of the Cabin is constructed of large Engelmann Spruce logs and the interior boasts dovetail joinery, and inlays and parquets to create wood patterns unique to each room.

Apr/May 2012

801 Capital Blvd.

