



JOHN RUCOSKY/THE TRIBUNE-DEMOCRAT

Eileen Holsopple (left), steering committee chairperson, and LuAnn Fair, acting secretary of Hollsopple Historical Building Inc., stand next to the railroad depot in their town. The group wants to restore the site.

Historic station getting new life

By KIRK SWAUGER

TRIBUNE-DEMOCRAT SOMERSET BUREAU

HOLLSOPPLE — A long-abandoned train station is on the fast track as a local historical group is being revived to stoke life into the turn-of-the-century depot.

"It will put Hollsopple on the map," said Lu Ann Fair, acting secretary of Hollsopple Historical Building Inc.

The society — inactive for a decade — has formed a steering committee, is conducting a membership drive, and will adopt bylaws and appoint directors in June. It has ticketed the depot as a potential railroad museum.

The old Baltimore & Ohio station, constructed around the time the Somerset & Cambria Railroad passed through

town in the late 1800s, has sat silent for years.

It was purchased by the historical association in 1980 and moved a short distance on the condition that it be used only for charitable, historical and related purposes, or it would revert back to its original owner, a former Hollsopple man living in Spokane, Wash.

County officials had been perplexed about the fate of the station after two of the three charter members of the association died and the third has been experiencing health problems.

The society was resurrected Wednesday night.

"It's wonderful to see the community taking charge," county heritage planner Tracy Shultz said. "We wanted to see if the community was interested — and

they are."

"A bunch of us have had a lot of interest in it. We figured now is the time," Fair added.

Fair said the association already has been contacted by model train enthusiasts interesting in building a replica Somerset County railroad for the museum. Railroad artifacts and memorabilia that have been donated through the years finally will have a place to go.

The association will meet at 7 p.m. June 8 in the Benson Borough council room.

Shultz said the county is assisting the association by sending samples of the bylaws from local historical societies and looking into potential grants.

"They're headed in the right direction," she said.