

Benson County Courthouse



1884 - 1900



1900 – present

Size of Benson County: 1393 square miles

2010 Population of Benson County: 6660

Benson County derives its name from B. W. Benson, a member of the Territorial Legislature. Minnewaukan is the county seat of Benson County. "The County Seat for said Benson County is hereby established, and located on Section Fifteen (15) in Township One Hundred Fifty-Three (153) Range Sixty-Seven (67) in said Benson County and Territory of Dakota. Done at the Village and Town of Minnewaukan, in the County of Benson, Territory of Dakota, the fourth (4th) day of June, Eighteen Hundred Eighty-Four". This excerpt was taken from the first recorded meeting of the Board of County Commissioners of Benson County, Dakota Territory, June 4, 1884.

In 1900, the present courthouse was built of brick and stone at a cost of \$40,000. Much of the original maple wood inside is still in use, although the building has been updated through the years. The county installed a chair lift at the cost of \$30,000 in 1993. A ramp to the front door is another ADA update.

The courthouse has several unique features. The commission room has an ornate fireplace, with glazed brick and a carved mantle. Tin ceiling tile is still in place in much of the courthouse. The original seats in the court room have hat racks under the seats. Paintings and other artwork, including the original blueprints, add warmth to the halls and office walls. It was, until 2002, the only courthouse in the state with a sheriff's residence still in use.

The Benson County Courthouse is a very impressive building being built of reddish brown brick and white stone. It is architecturally significant for its incorporation of the design principles of the Richardsonian Romanesque Style. The building is 60 feet wide, 90 feet long, and 96 feet to the top of the flagstaff.

In 1979, the Benson County Courthouse was named to the National Register of Historic Places, the nation's official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation. Resources eligible for the National Register consist of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant for their historical, architectural, or archeological value. Once a resource is placed on the National Register, it receives

limited protection from damage or destruction resulting from federally financed, assisted or licensed undertakings on the property. The Benson County Courthouse is one of the last major public buildings in North Dakota designed to express the picturesque aesthetic of the 19th Century prior to the onset of Academic Revivalism.

Despite the modifications over the years, the Courthouse retains its original character to a remarkable degree.

The people of Benson County are proud of their BENSON COUNTY COURTHOUSE.

Rhoda Pfeifer, Recorder

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Benson County

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Office Hours: Monday – Friday

8:30 am – 12:00 pm and 12:30 pm – 4:30 pm

We are closed most major holidays.

The Recorder's office is located on the 2nd floor of the Benson County Courthouse.

Benson County has digitized images on the NDRIN website dating back to the year 2000. We are in the process of scanning all the plats which will be completed soon. All of the corner records are scanned and indexed.

Benson County does not eRecord at the present time.

If you cannot find what you are searching for please feel free to contact us.