

## TARGETED FOR PRESERVATION



MICHAEL PATRICK/NEWS SENTINEL

The New Salem Baptist Church, the oldest remaining structure in Sevierville, could soon be restored and turned into a community center or historic destination. It was built by brick mason Isaac Dockery in 1886.



MICHAEL PATRICK/NEWS SENTINEL

The Brushy Mountain State Correctional Complex in Morgan County is back on the East Tennessee Endangered Heritage List. The prison was established in 1896 and closed in 2009.



EAST TENNESSEE PRESERVATION ALLIANCE

The former Tennessee Military Institute in Sweetwater is one of 12 properties previously listed on the East Tennessee Preservation Alliance's Endangered Heritage List.



J. MILES CARY/NEWS SENTINEL

A former one-room Sevier County schoolhouse, built in 1917 and used until 1949, was recently a project of Dr. Sam Lyle and his family, who were working on stabilizing the rural school on Boyds Creek Road.

# History on critical list

## Knitting mill, tavern in 'desperate need'

By John Shearer  
Special to the News Sentinel

A former knitting mill where locals toiled by day and a tavern where visitors passed their nights have been added to the East Tennessee Preservation Alliance's 2014 Endangered Heritage List.

Organizers with the nonprofit historic preservation organization announced Monday that the closed Magnet Mills in Clinton, which dates to 1906, and Dandridge's Roper Tavern, constructed in 1817, are new to this year's list.

"What the two new properties have in common is the fact that they are in desperate need for somebody to pay attention and to step in and do some restoration and rehabilitation work before they get to the point where they can't be repaired," said Scott Brooks, president of the ETPA board of directors.

Brooks, along with ETPA advocacy committee Chairman David Hearnese, unveiled this year's list, which includes 12 properties previously listed, during a gathering at the East Tennessee History Center on Gay Street.

According to officials, Magnet Mills had employed more than 1,000 people by 1930, often operating without a profit due to its dedication to the community

See **ENDANGERED, 9A**

### ENDANGERED

The East Tennessee Preservation Alliance's 2014 Endangered Heritage List:

- Magnet Mills in Clinton
- Roper Tavern in Dandridge
- Former Tennessee Military Institute in Sweetwater
- Stonecipher-Kelly-McCartt House in Morgan County
- Old Post Office in LaFollette
- Tanner Cultural Center in Newport

- Abandoned rural schoolhouses across region
- Morristown College in Morristown
- Historic Dandridge School in Dandridge
- Central Business District of Lenoir City
- Brushy Mountain State Correctional Complex in Morgan County
- Neglected cemeteries across region
- New Salem Baptist Church in Sevierville
- Oak Grove School in Sharps Chapel

### ENDANGERED from 1A

during the Great Depression. However, some later owners, the Burd family of San Francisco, closed it in 1967 following a prolonged strike by union workers.

Two businesses briefly occupied the structure in the 1980s, and a redevelopment plan for it was announced in 2008 before the economic downturn halted the project.

Clinton City Councilman Jerry Shattuck thinks the mill complex is an unusual facility and can be an asset to the town if it is restored in some way.

"The architectural uniqueness, its historical and cultural significance, and its riverfront location make Magnet Mills worthy of being preserved and

used in redevelopment efforts," he said.

Roper Tavern was one of four early Dandridge taverns that housed such overnight guests as Presidents Andrew Jackson, Andrew Johnson and James K. Polk. The facility was constructed by John Roper, a veteran of the War of 1812 and the president of the Bank of Dandridge.

The building, which is owned by attorney Rebecca Slone and the estate of another attorney, suffers moisture damage and problems with general upkeep, according to the ETPA.

Dandridge Community Trust board member Susan Ferguson said Slone is hoping a potential buyer can persuade the estate to let the property go to someone who will restore it properly.

"Roper Tavern is one of the earliest structures built in Dandridge," said Ferguson. "There is great concern in the community that if something is not done to preserve it soon, it will be beyond saving."

Among the properties on the endangered list again this year are the former Tennessee Military Institute campus in Sweetwater; the 200-year-old Stonecipher-Kelly-McCartt home in Morgan County; the old LaFollette Post Office dating to 1939; the former Tanner School for blacks (now Tanner Cultural Center) built in 1924 in Newport; abandoned rural schoolhouses throughout the region; and the former Morristown College campus near downtown Morristown.

The other six on the list again are the Barber

McMurry-designed historic Dandridge School dating to 1927; the central business district of Lenoir City; the now-closed Brushy Mountain State Correctional Complex in Petros in Morgan County; neglected cemeteries throughout the ETPA area; the 1886 New Salem Baptist Church in Sevierville; and Oak Grove School in Union County.

Besides announcing the list, ETPA officials try to work with owners or community advocates to come up with feasible plans to preserve the properties.

Officials also announced Monday that Ethiel Garlington, who has served as director of field preservation services of the ETPA since about the time of its inception, recently left to become executive director of the Historic Macon Foundation in Georgia.