

# Local attractions bridge past and present

BY ANGELA HUSTON

Parker and Swartz covered bridges are just two local Wyandot County attractions that bridge the area's past and present.

Parker Bridge was built in 1873 by J.C. Davis over the Sandusky River. The bridge, a Howe truss design, spans 172 feet and is located on TH 40, northeast of Upper Sandusky.

After the original bridge was destroyed by fire May 17, 1991, a group called Cross Over The Bridge Committee rallied to restore Parker Bridge. It formed July 29, 1991, to raise \$150,000 for both Parker and Swartz bridges. The committee achieved its goal and William Morton is listed as the builder of the 1992 refurbishment of the Parker covered bridge. The new bridge was dedicated Oct. 25, 1992.

Swartz covered bridge, a 96-foot Howe truss bridge, was built by Moses Weymouth in 1879. It also crosses the Sandusky River and is located on CH 130 east of Harpster.

Swartz Bridge was restored in the early 1990s.

Both bridges were added to the National Register of Historic Places in the 1970s, Parker in 1975 and Swartz in 1976.

Major rehabilitation work on both bridges wrapped up in July of 2018.

The Righter Co., Columbus, began the rehabilitation work the summer of 2017. The company is noted for its experience in wood construction covered bridges.

Restoration of both bridges was priced at approximately \$1.5 million. A grant funded about \$1.33 million of the cost.

Both of the bridges had more excessive repairs than what had originally been determined and "a lot of the main support structure was completely replaced," said Wyandot County Engineer Mike Kohl.

The plan originally called for 15-20 percent of the bridges to be replaced, Kohl said. He estimated that over 50 percent of the Swartz bridge is new and the Parker bridge is "close to it."

In addition to new structural support, the bridges received all new floors, siding and roofs and "look like brand new bridges," said Kohl.

"We've made a lot of safety improvements," he added. The bridges have a better flooring system and the addition of strengthening and post-tensioning.



Restoration of Swartz and Parker covered bridges was officially completed the summer of 2018. The work, which addressed the bridges' framework to their siding, spanned about a year. Top and bottom photos by Angela Huston. Center photo by Mike Lang.