

Colleen Bradburn
Kate Stone
Old Washington Street Festival

Though the smell of fried foods and sounds of live music helped to draw people to the Old Washington Street Festival, the home tour brings people from across the state to downtown Muncie.

The East Central Neighborhood Association (ECNA) has put on the Old Washington Street Festival (OWSF) for the past 30 years. The festival features historical demonstrations, craft artists and food vendors. Though walking through the festival is free, a ticket to the home tour costs \$10, which the ECNA uses to fund the next year's festival.

Cities like Indianapolis and Greenfield, Ind., hold many historic homes and historic districts. The Lockerbie Square Historic District in Indianapolis is home to the James Whitcomb Riley Museum House and offers a walking tour year-round. The Riley Days Festival in Greenfield winds through the town's main historic district, but Muncie is one of the only cities to still offer a historic home tour.

"Many towns have gotten rid of their house tours, so we get people from all over who come to see our historic homes," said Mavis, who has been in charge of the home tour since its inception.

Bill and Judy Smith traveled from Indianapolis to take the home tour.

"I grew up in this neighborhood, but this is the first time I've been back in almost 50 years," Bill said. "My best friend growing up lived in one of the houses on the tour. It's been a long time, but I still remember playing on that staircase."

The sites featured on the tour change each year but according to Mavis, the ECNA strives to showcase one to two large houses, four to five medium houses and at least one landmark, such as a church.

This year, the home tour made \$3,000, which the ECNA will use to assist with demolitions of dilapidated homes, upkeep of landscaping and to help fund next year's festival, according to Mavis.

In an effort to reach Ball State University students, the ECNA had pamphlets made about the festival to hand out to freshman during Welcome Week.

"The festival hit its peak popularity about 15 years ago," said Mavis. "But every year we try and brainstorm a way to bring more people in and get the word out sooner."