Abbey Christman spent time surveying rural Phillips County in 2011. She will be back in the area this summer to survey Haxtun, Holyoke and Paoli. This new round of surveying is made possible by a grant from the Colorado State Historical Fund and will provide for citywide surveys to be done.

The last round of surveying hit all the unincorporated areas of Phillips County, including Amherst.

This summer, Christman will bring graduate students from University of Colorado Denver to help with the project.

Students are involved with the Center of Preservation Research at the university. Christman said students will be able to use the survey project as experiential learning and training for the grad students studying historical preservation.

During the citywide surveys, Christman and students will photograph, record and gather as much information as they can about buildings in the towns built more than 50 years ago.

Holyoke residents shouldn’t be afraid if they see a group of college students roaming the streets this summer with clipboards and cameras. Christman said they won’t be roaming through private yards. Any photographs will be taken from the street and sidewalks.

**This was a common sight as University of Colorado Denver students took some photos of structures
at the Oltjenbruns farm Saturday, March 10.—Enterprise photo**

The group will be more than happy to sit and listen to stories and history about buildings in the three towns. Anyone with information, stories or photographs of buildings in the three towns is encouraged to contact Christman prior to this summer or snag the group while they are in Haxtun, Holyoke and Paoli this summer.

“We’re happy to talk to anyone who is open to talking to us,” Christman said.

Christman doesn’t have exact dates scheduled but knows they will be in the area a week or two each month from June-August.

Their main objective is to gather as much information as possible. They will spend a lot of time at the museum flipping through old newspapers and photographs.

“There’s no way we can collect all the information on our own,” Christman said. “There’s no way we can know everything that everyone in the town knows, so that’s why we’d love anyone who has anything to share. We will collect it and write it down and compile it.”

When the project is complete, a large bound copy will be made for each town. The budget won’t allow for lots of these copies to be made. To make the information available, they will have it on the university’s website.

Group wraps up rural survey

A small group of students visited Holyoke Saturday, March 10 to look at the farmstead of Ken Oltjenbruns located northeast of Holyoke. The Oltjenbruns farm is one of five the group hopes to nominate for the National Registry of Historic Places.

The University of Colorado Denver students took photographs and spoke with Oltjenbruns about the history of his place and found out a little about the area.

Kat Vlahos (seated on floor) asks Ken Oltjenbruns, at right, a question Saturday, March 10. A group of students from Denver visited the area Saturday to look at the Oltjenbruns farm located northeast of Holyoke to come up with ways it can be preserved.—Enterprise photo

Their main objective is to come up with suggestions on preservation ideas they can offer to Oltjenbruns.

“I do want to preserve and take care of these buildings the best I can,” Oltjenbruns said.

Local walking tour idea to benefit from survey project

A walking tour idea generated by Holyoke Chamber of Commerce and members of Phillips County Museum will hopefully benefit from the survey project. Christman said she teaches a class in the fall and is thinking the walking tour could be one of their main projects.

The idea is to have a brochure that outlines specific areas of downtown Holyoke and incorporates the history of area buildings. There is also hope to incorporate QR codes so visitors with smart phones could scan codes and be taken directly to information on the university website.

Students will use much of the information they gather from the summer survey project and compile it this fall. They hope to come up with a brochure design by the end of the winter.

Christman said her students could help design a pamphlet but wouldn't have the capacity to print it. She said they could handle the online portion of the project.

Chamber executive director Mary Tomky is very excited to be working with the preservation group and hopes they can help each other out in any aspect of the project.

Christman plans to attend the June 26 Chamber of Commerce meeting to talk about the project and provide information on the walking tour.

Anyone with questions or information that will help with the project may contact Christman at abigail.christman@ucdenver.edu or 303-315-5323.

Holyoke Enterprise March 15, 2012