

THE CAPITOL SOWER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CAPITOL COMMISSION | VOLUME ELEVEN | NUMBER ONE | FEB 2019

The Quest for a New Capitol Began 100 Years Ago

With the second Nebraska State Capitol crumbling around them, the Nebraska Legislature passed the Mears Tracewell Act on February 20, 1919. It was “an act to provide for the planning and construction of a capitol building, creating a commission to conduct the same, levying a tax of one and one-half mills therefor and appropriating the proceeds of said levy during the years 1919 and 1920 to the uses of said commission in said planning and construction, and to declare an emergency.” Soon after the Nebraska Capitol Commission was formed and began the process of selecting an architect to design a modern Capitol for Nebraska.

Nebraska architect Thomas Rogers Kimball, FAIA, was chosen as architectural consultant and given the task of organizing the

competition which would lead to Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue’s selection as the architect best able to design the monumental building which, in Kimball’s words, would become “...the outward sign of the character of its [Nebraska’s] people, their respect for its traditions and history, their belief in its importance and worth, and their love of its fair name -- all find expression in its Capitol. Of Nebraska highways of progress, provider of man’s necessities, battleground of freedom, distributor of learning, home of the volunteer - let the new Capitol be the symbol.” The competition which Kimball organized for Nebraska became the standard for the profession and is the basis for the American Institute of Architects’ current competition guidelines. 



The arrows in this image of the second Capitol, and inset, show the makeshift tension washers installed to hold the building together as it began to settle and structurally fail. The Legislature would soon propose to build a third Capitol.

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Vice-Chairman

Michael Heavican
Chief Justice Supreme Court
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OCC
 Office of the Capitol
 Commission

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 Vacant, Architect
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 Construction Coordinator
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 Tahir Karimi, Electrician
 Chris Lahmon,
 Maintenance Technician
 Jake Reiss,
 Maintenance Technician

TOURS

Roxanne Smith,
 Public Information Officer/
 Tourism Supervisor/
 Special Events Coordinator
 Bryan Dulaney, Tourism Aide
 Matt Hier, Tourism Aide
 Jessica Richard, Tourism Aide

OCC AT WORK

Experience and Service

The Office of the Capitol Commission welcomes five new members to the team. Each brings special skills to the job of supporting OCC's mission of preserving, maintaining and promoting the Capitol.



*Bryan Dulaney
 Tourism Aide*



*Chris Lahmon
 Facility Maintenance*



*John Massa
 Mechanic*



*Jake Reiss
 Facility Maintenance*



*Jessica Richard
 Tourism Aide*

Capitol Tourism Supervisor Roxanne Smith received the Nebraska Music Education Association Bryan R. Johnson Distinguished Service Award on November 15, 2018. Smith was recognized for outstanding service and contributions to NMEA's annual Capitol Concert Series. Each March, bands and choirs from across the state perform in the Capitol's 2nd Floor Rotunda to celebrate music's positive impact on student achievement.



Commission Sets 2019 Schedule

The Nebraska Capitol Commission meets quarterly in Hearing Room #1507 on ground floor of the Capitol to oversee and review Capitol maintenance and preservation projects; discuss and approve projects and the upcoming budget for the Office of the Capitol Commission, and set administrative rules for the use of the Capitol. The last meeting of the year includes a joint Capitol Commission/

Capitol Environs Commission meeting. The meetings are open to the public. 

- February 19, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.
- June 18, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.
- August 15, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.
- November 19, 2019
 Joint Meeting at 10:00 a.m.
 Capitol Commission at 11:00 a.m.

CONSERVATION PROJECTS

Exposing Original Conditions

One of the most anticipated aspects of the current Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning Replacement Project is the return of ground floor corridors to their original 1932 condition. The restoration work will address walls, ceilings, doors and light fixtures. Office of the Capitol Commission Carpentry staff are working diligently to repair and refinish the original walnut office doors and trim. The return of the refinished doors and trim will have the halls and offices looking as good as when staff moved in over 90 years ago.

Much to OCC Preservation Architects' surprise, contractors uncovered an unknown plaster crown molding detail in the south center corridor. During the dropped ceiling demolition the molding was revealed and a section removed intact. Architects will use this section in their planning as they determine the best way to replicate and restore this special feature. This single architectural detail, when restored, will establish the corridor as a main artery in the building and enhance the subtle elegance of ground floor.

Capitol preservationists have known for years that the bronze corridor lamps on ground floor were painted black at some point. It has long been a goal to remove the paint and restore the fixtures to the original bronze patinated finish mentioned in the design specifications used during construction. A conservator working with the Capitol archivist was given this task. Starting with the least invasive method, using soap and water, the conservator realized whoever painted the bronze fixtures hadn't cleaned the surface first. After soaking, the soap and water softened the thin layer of grime under the paint and released the paint layer. A final rinse with plain water removed most of the paint. Additional touch up cleaning and an application of wax will revive the original finish. 



Above, two doors in the finish shop. Disassembled pieces are kept together during the refinishing process. Then the doors and trim are labeled with room numbers and stored, right, to await reinstallation after each phase of the project is completed.



Above, crown molding in the south center corridor was hidden by dropped ceiling for years. Right, a removed section of the molding allows staff to conduct paint analysis and plan for repair and restoration of this detail.



Above, left, a corridor light with the black paint applied sometime prior to 1970, and right, the corridor light after cleaning. The original bronze finish will be waxed to highlight and protect the fixture surface.



Window Repair

Limiting
air
infiltration
key to
project
success

Wind rushing and rattling windows has brought shivers to Capitol occupants for years. The first rule of weatherization is seal off areas where infiltration and drafts are present. The Nebraska Capitol Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning and Window Replacement Project will include the removal and repair of all the windows in the Capitol's square base, and the repair of tower windows. This will be the first holistic treatment of the Capitol's windows since its 1932 completion. Some interior courtyard windows were repainted and reglazed in the 1980's and the tower windows had weather-strip installed during the Exterior Masonry Project.

Unlike the bronze tower windows, the windows in the base are steel with a painted finish. When the painted surface fails the windows rust and become hard to open and close, which in turns damages the windows. In the base contractors are removing the entire window, including the sash, taking them off-site for repair and repainting. A standardized method of removal, repair and reinstallation was developed for this project. The windows will be reglazed with glass comparable to the original and weather-stripping installed to improve their performance. Staff will notice the difference once they return to the first phase offices. 



Above, contractors remove windows from first and second floors for repair and repainting.



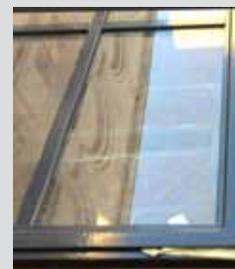
Above, first floor window removal goes smoothly. Right and below right, contractors easily set the window out and onto a cart to take it to the truck which will move the securely strapped windows to the repair shop.



Above, a repaired and repainted test window is returned and, at right reinstalled. Above right, the steel jambs are precisely installed so that all hinge hardware is in alignment and the latch hardware fits properly. The securely closed latches will hold tight and help minimize air loss.



Below, with the rust and old paint gone, the new powder coat finish is smooth and even. New glazing also improves efficiency.



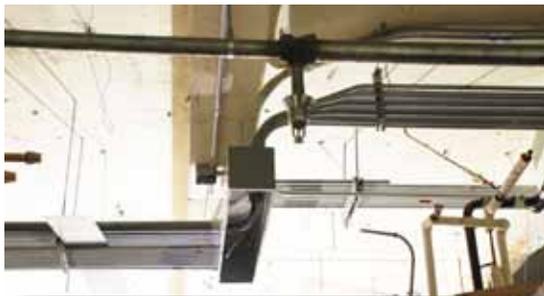
BEHIND THE SCENES

HVAC Project Progress

Working behind temporary walls constructed to keep debris and noise from infiltrating Capitol corridors, contractors are making progress in the southwest quadrant, first phase of the HVAC project. Contractors have removed obsolete components of the 1960's heating, ventilation and cooling system and are now repairing the areas affected by the demolition. In the basement, a new electrical system is being installed to support the geothermal well field system. As well, pipes which will circulate the refrigerant through the system are being installed. In the first floor corridors, the dropped ceiling and hidden air conditioning ducts are gone. Throughout, plaster contractors are repairing and restoring ceilings and walls. Ducts are being removed from wall chases; compressors and air handling units are being cleared from mechanical rooms. The HVAC project is progressing on schedule. 



Above, contractors working in the west corridor near the bill room remove the dropped ceiling sections that hid the air conditioning ducts added in the 1960's. Above right, the corridor is cleared of the obsolete system. The clerestory windows are fully exposed as originally intended. After the contractors fill holes and repair plaster, the corridors will appear as intended in the original design.



Above, pipes circulating refrigerant will be placed throughout the Capitol. Almost every room in the basement will have pipes for the new system in the ceiling.

Right, the induction unit cover is removed and the system exposed for demolition.



Far right, the system components are removed, the hole through the wall repaired and paint stripped. Next windows will be reinstalled, plaster repaired, and the new HVAC system installed. Lighting, picture molding, paint, carpet, walnut doors and trim will complete the work.



Left, a mechanical room with original beige painted ducts and galvanized 1960's ducts. The black air handler in the middle is original.

Right, the same room with obsolete equipment removed. The two red circled lights provide reference in the before and after images.



WHAT'S OLD IS NEW

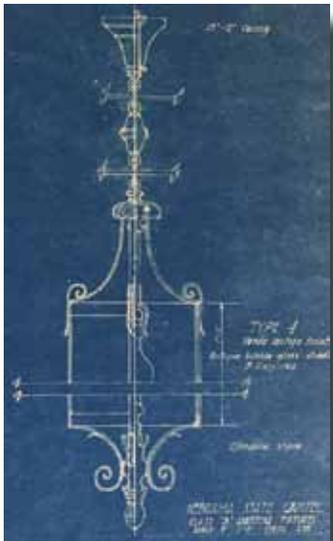
Restoring lamps in the first floor corridors was made easier through the use of original Nebraska Capitol Commission specifications, correspondence, drawings and blueprints available in the Capitol Archive. When the first floor corridor ceilings were lowered to hide the duct work added in the 1960's installation of air conditioning, the original hanging lamps were shortened to accommodate the lowered ceilings. The removed links were discarded. Capitol preservation architects and the Capitol archivist searched the documents and found all the information necessary to replicate the original chains and ornament and return the fixtures to service at their proper height. 



An original specification document, above, indicates "...bidders are required to furnish exact samples of what they propose to furnish...". Right, the Bailey Reynolds drawing of the lamp just inside the south door helped establish the original finish was a patinated bronze, not black paint.



The fixture above matches the drawing, left, and is in its proper location.



A blueprint, left, from the archive and produced by Capitol staff junior engineer Charles F. Fowler in 1932 shows design detail for the hanging lights in the first floor corridors. The blueprint would have been used by the architects and manufacturers to reference design detail and ensure the lights were consistent through all four phases of construction. Using historic images to determine chain length and a surviving chain ornament, current preservation architects worked with a manufacturer to produce new chains with ornament of an appropriate style and length to return the modified lights, right, to their original configuration, far right.



CAPITOL EVENTS

Presidents Day

February 18, 2019

The Capitol will be open for tours from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

MS Society Display

February 19-21, 2019

The National Multiple Sclerosis Society sponsors a first floor display about Nebraskans living with MS.

UNL 150th Anniversary Banner

February 19 - March 5, 2019

The University of Nebraska will have a banner in the first floor rotunda to begin the year long 150th anniversary celebration.

Statehood Day

March 1, 2019

The 152nd anniversary of Nebraska's statehood in 1867.

Music Education Week

March 4 - 8, 2019

The Nebraska Music Educators Association sponsors a series of noon concerts in the second floor rotunda featuring vocal and instrumental student groups from across Nebraska.

Suicide Prevention Display

March 5, 2019

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention will have a display in the first floor rotunda.

Business Development Display

March 11-15, 2019

The University of Nebraska will highlight activity of the Nebraska Business Development Center in a first floor rotunda display.

Problem Gambling Display

March 11-15, 2019

Choices Treatment Center, a DHHS contractor, will have a first floor display in association with the Governor's proclamation of March as Problem Gambling Month.

All events at the Nebraska State Capitol are free and open to the public. 

Youth Art Month Display

March 18-17, 2019

The Nebraska Art Teachers Association will display student artwork in the first floor rotunda.

I Love UNL Display

March 25-29, 2019

A University of Nebraska first floor rotunda display to highlight the many ways the university impacts Nebraska.

Youth Art Awards Ceremony

March 30, 2019

The Nebraska Art Teachers Association will hold a celebration of Youth Art Month at 2:00 p.m. in the 2nd floor rotunda of the Capitol.

No Limits Youth Rally

March 20, 2019

No Limits Nebraska is sponsoring an anti-smoking Kick Butts Day rally on the north side of the Capitol from 8:00 a.m. to Noon.

Public Health Week Display

April 2-5, 2019

The Nebraska Association of Local Health Directors will have a first floor display in the first floor rotunda.

Officer Candidate Graduation

April 6, 2019

The Nebraska National Guard will hold a graduation ceremony in the second floor rotunda at 1:00 p.m.

Victims Right Week Display

April 8-12, 2019

MADD Nebraska will sponsor a first floor rotunda display to honor those lost to impaired driving in Nebraska.

UNL Research Presentation

April 16-26, 2019

The University of Nebraska Office of Undergraduate Research will display student projects in the first floor rotunda.

Arbor Day Holiday

April 26, 2019

The Capitol will be open for tours from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Worker's Memorial Day Vigil

April 28, 2019

The United Support Memorial for Workplace Fatalities will be held at 6:30 p.m. on the north plaza of the Capitol.

UNK String Project Concert

May 1, 2019

The University of Nebraska-Kearney Department of Music, Theater and Dance will present a noon concert in 2nd floor rotunda featuring Nebraska youth as part of the National String Project Consortium.

Mayor's Run

May 5, 2019

The Lincoln Track Club sponsored youth run around the Capitol will occur between 7:00 a.m. and noon.

State Holocaust Commemoration

May 5, 2019

The Institute for Holocaust Education and the Jewish Federation of Lincoln will remember the Holocaust in the 2nd floor rotunda at 3:00 p.m.

Memorial Day

May 27, 2019

The Capitol will be open for tours from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Girls State

June 6, 2019

The American Legion Auxiliary sponsors afternoon Girls State activities in the Capitol.

Boys State

June 7, 2019

The American Legion sponsors afternoon Boys State activities in the Capitol.

Guided Tours are offered Monday-Friday hourly from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, except at noon. Saturday and Holidays from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm, except at noon and Sunday from 1:00 to 4:00 pm. Please call 402.471.0448 or visit www.capitol.org for more information. 



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FEB 2019

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Nebraska State Capitol

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Capitol Architect
Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue, 1869-1924

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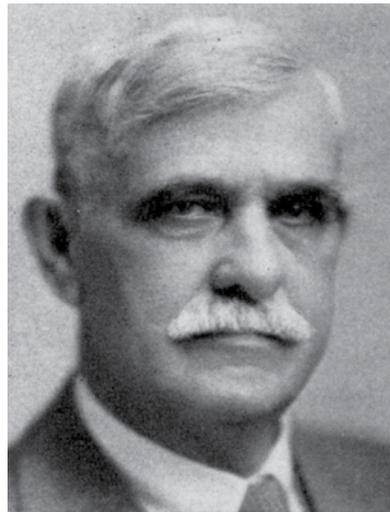
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The Capitol Sower, published by the Office of the Capitol Commission, is available online at www.capitol.org. Contact the Tourism Supervisor at <roxanne.smith@nebraska.gov> for more information.

Please contact us if you have any questions or comments about the content. All images are property of the Office of the Capitol Commission.

Kimball 2019 Hall of Fame Inductee



Thomas Rogers Kimball
1862-1934

Thomas Rogers Kimball, FAIA, will be honored with induction into the Nebraska Hall of Fame in June of 2019. Most significantly for Nebraskans, Kimball was the architectural advisor to the Nebraska Capitol Commission during the 1922-1932 construction of the Nebraska State Capitol. Born in Ohio, he came to Nebraska in 1878 and after his training returned to Omaha in 1882 and began his Nebraska architectural career with many important commissions, including the 1898 Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition in Omaha. In 1918 he was elected national president of the American Institute of Architects and in 1919 organized the design competition which resulted in Bertram Goodhue's internationally recognized Nebraska State Capitol. A few of his Nebraska

commissions include Burlington train stations in Hastings and Omaha, the Hall County Court House, the Nebraska Telephone Company Building in Lincoln, and St. Cecilia's Cathedral in Omaha. 