

THE CAPITOL SOWER

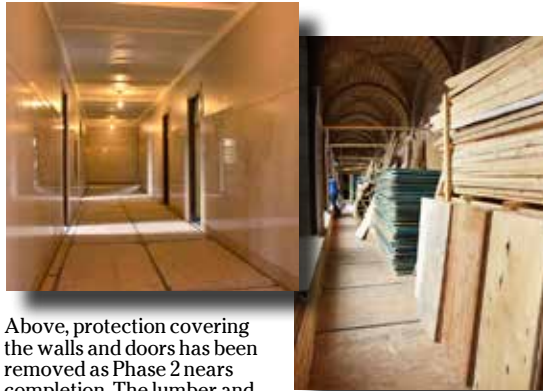
THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CAPITOL COMMISSION | VOLUME THIRTEEN | NUMBER TWO | JUNE 2021

HVAC Project Update

With Phase 2 of the Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning Upgrade Project being substantially complete in June, Phase 3 work will begin in August. The finishing touches are being done in the court area and then the Judicial branch offices will return to their second floor location. First floor southeast quadrant will see Judicial and Legislative offices return between June and August. As the southeast quadrant is reoccupied, Legislative offices in the northwest quadrant will move into the tower.

The George W. Norris Legislative Chamber will be included in Phase 3, with behind the scenes work beginning in August. However, the Legislative Chamber will remain functional throughout the Redistricting Special Session this fall and the Second Session of the 107th Legislature beginning in January of 2022. The Legislative Chamber and Lounge are the only Preservation Spaces included in Phase 3.

To facilitate demolition of the existing HVAC system, a temporary construction entrance and walkway will be created at the west entrance of the Capitol. On the north side of the Capitol, the accessible entrance ramp on the east side of the horseshoe drive will be open and access to the accessible elevator will be maintained through the construction work area.



Above, protection covering the walls and doors has been removed as Phase 2 nears completion. The lumber and sheeting used to protect the Capitol's high quality surfaces will be efficiently stored for reuse in Phase 3 beginning this August.

Right and below, Office of the Capitol Commission staff perform one of the final steps to ready offices for reoccupancy. The furniture shop team installs window blind hardware before they install the blinds.



Right, after the blind rail is hung on the bracket, staff secures it in place with screws. Finally cords are secured and function checked.



Left, once hardware is installed the blinds are lifted into place and the cords unwound and arranged in the window well.

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OCC AT WORK

Experience and Service

Master Craftsman in the Capitol

The Office of the Capitol Commission is very fortunate to have Michael Marshall as part of the team. For 20 years Mike developed his skills at Eno's Cabinetry and then had his own fine furniture business for 10 years before he brought his incredible skills to the restoration program at the Nebraska State Capitol for the benefit of all Nebraskans. Mike continues to turn one-of-a-kind custom bowls and take on special projects in his home shop. The Lincoln native likes to ride his motorcycle and hunt when not woodworking.

As manager of the Carpentry Shop, Mike has lead the team on many restoration projects including the custom furniture in the Governor's Suite (Sower Feb 2016 and Feb 2017 issues). With his skills, Mike fabricates custom tools to recreate the original molding profiles used in doors and door casings in the Capitol, and then fabricated the new matching doors to accommodate changes in adaptive use space.

In the current HVAC Project, Mike uses his talents to recreate finishes in Preservation Spaces modified or damaged during the HVAC changes in the 1960's. Phase 2 work included highly finished spaces associated with the Judicial Branch. He oversaw the furniture shop as they restored the finishes in the Supreme Court Chamber, and repaired and restored the Justice's chairs. Restoring the window seats in the Judge's Consultation Room took advantage of Mike's skills and demonstrated his importance to the long term preservation and restoration of Bertram Goodhue's National Historic Landmark Nebraska State Capitol.



Left and below, during the 1960's HVAC project modifications were made to the window seats of the Consultation Room. Long metal vents replaced the original decorative openings. Right, during installation of new equipment, the seat and face removed.



Right, the modified seat structure reused only the front piece of the original bench seat. Far right, the two recreated seat panels are shown with the shorter face panels. Mike reused the original front piece in the new seats. He layered the ash grilles with plywood for added strength and function. The Supreme Court Judge's Consultation Room is the only space in the Capitol finished with ash wood; the replicated seats further enhance the beauty of the room.



Above, Mike checks fit after installation, and fine tunes the hinges on the seat top. Right, the restored window seat.

CONSERVATION PROJECTS

Supreme Court Restoration

While Office of the Capitol Commission staff have worked to maintain the finishes in the Nebraska Supreme Court Chamber through the years, the opportunity for a holistic treatment of the chamber came during Phase 2 of the current Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning Upgrade project. Working in a coordinated manner, OCC's Carpentry, Furniture, and Custodial staff each had a turn working on the Chamber's finishes. A conservation consultant on the project cleaned the highly finished and symbolic wall sconces, which Maintenance staff then rewired. 



Above, OCC's mason cleans the badly soiled window surround with a latex/detergent application. Note the black soiling under the latex and how it is pulled off as the mason removes the cleaning agent.



Above, OCC furniture staff first removes soiling and the old finish before staining the sun-faded wood. Below, shellac is applied to seal and finish the wood. Notice the repaired windows and the cleaned limestone window surrounds in the photos.



Once the contractors completed their work on the windows and cleared the protection, OCC staff got to work. Above, first furniture staff vacuumed the chandelier. Then, right, custodial staff stripped and refinished the floor in sections. Left, audience benches were removed during floor finishing.



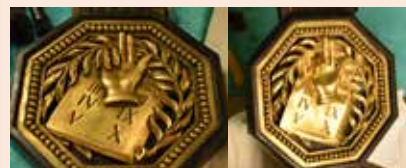
Above, right, and below, once floor finish was down, furniture staff touched up scuffs and scratches along the bottom of the benches.



Right, the conservation consultant inspects a court room scone before cleaning. Below, even the backing material is cleaned and treated.



Above, OCC's electrician rewires a Supreme Court scone.



Scone detail, left, before cleaning, and right, after cleaning.


Unique Finish Addressed

**Anaglypta,
from a Greek
word meaning
raised cameo,
is made of
wood pulp and
cotton pressed
between a
positive and
negative mold.**

During the ten year construction of the Nebraska State Capitol, the Capitol's architects expanded original design concepts to meet the expectations of the Nebraska Capitol Commission for a Capitol worthy of Nebraska. The private offices of the Supreme Court Judge's were finished in the same manner as all Capitol offices, plaster walls, picture molding and slate base.

Later on in construction a decision was made to upgrade the Chief Justice's Suite to befit the head of the judicial branch of government. Taking a cue from the ornamental plaster ceilings in some formal spaces, but avoiding the need to demolish and start over, the architects specified the installation of an Anaglypta ceiling and crown molding in the Chief Justice's Private

Office and Library. To complete the Suite raised panel wainscoting was added and the walls were finished with a special cloth covering.

While not as durable as plaster, the Anaglypta ceiling provided the desired ornamental effect. The material, somewhat similar to paper mache, was nailed and glued to the plaster ceiling. Without proper climate control the material expanded and contracted with seasonal temperature and humidity variations. Preservation staff was aware of the need to stabilize the ceiling material, and ultimately restore the Suite to original condition. The current HVAC Project addresses climate control and allows staff access to fully assess and stabilize conditions in the Suite. 



Above, one section of the ceiling finish had delaminated indicating the need for investigation and stabilization. Right, Office of the Capitol Commission staff carefully investigated and determined the panels were glued in place and then tacked around the edges. Several layers of paint had been applied following through the years.



Much was learned about the finishes in the Suite during the HVAC Project. Above, the original plaster wall became visible once the old air vent was replaced. The decorative fabric wall covering was installed around the original vents and will need to be expanded during restoration. The crown molding is thinner and more fragile than the ceiling panels and will require special attention. To stabilize the molding, the conservation contractors, seen replacing the ceiling panel below, patched and filled the expanded seams and tears in the six foot long sections of crown molding.



Above, OCC staff carefully removed the panel from the ceiling by cutting through the paint at the seams and gently prying the material away from the small nails. Right, the empty spot left by the 36 inch square sixteenth of an inch thick Anaglypta panel.



BEHIND THE SCENES

Electrical Upgrades

Electrical upgrades are undertaken in adaptive use spaces as office use changes and spaces are renovated to meet the needs of staff. The functions of preservation spaces in the Nebraska State Capitol do not change; they are continually occupied by the constitutional officers of the three branches of government. As the HVAC Upgrade Project moves through the building, Office of the Capitol Commission maintenance staff upgrades electrical systems in the temporarily vacated preservation spaces. These highly finished interior spaces often do not allow easy access to the electrical infrastructure. Opening attic space and removing vents during the HVAC project work allows Office of the Capitol Commission staff access to the internal conduit containing original electrical wires. Staff is replacing the 90 - 100 year old wire and upgrading for safety and to better serve modern office functions. In addition, light fixtures from preservation spaces are being cleaned and rewired.



Left, wall sconces removed from the Secretary of State's office were cleaned and rewired to await reinstallation.



Above, a standard electric port was modified to fit the shallower profile of the oak floor.



Above, sconce back soiled with old wiring upon removal. Below, cleaned, rewired and ready for reinstallation.



Above and right, staff located a sub-floor conduit between wall outlets and drilled an opening for a new electrical port. A center floor location allows easy access under a desk or conference table. The port was securely glued in the floor and then electrical wires were pulled in and hooked up.



Above and left, OCC's maintenance staff work as a team to replace electrical wire in conduit hidden in the walls and above the ceiling in the Judge's Consultation Room. Replacing the nearly 100 year old electrical wires will improve safety and extend the life of the fixtures.



Above, left, a Judge's Consultation Room chandelier after removal, and right, the chandelier after cleaning.

Below, rewiring the chandelier after cleaning will extend functional life of the fixture. Inset, the new wires are carefully woven through and around the lamp sockets to maintain the decorative detail and beauty of the fixtures.




To pull the new wires, one staff member ties the new wire to the old, while the other pulls on the old wire drawing the new through the conduit.



WHAT'S OLD IS NEW

Following the Office of the Capitol Commission's successful restoration of the custom designed chairs in the Governor's Suite, OCC preservation staff turned their focus to the Justice's chairs in the Supreme Court Chamber. From the few poor quality period photographs held in the Nebraska Capitol Collections, preservation staff were aware the ornamental leather on the chairs had been replaced at some point. Hoping to someday replicate the original leather design and restore the chairs, OCC's preservation staff needed to find additional information about the chairs. The Capitol Archivist began a search of available public resources, such as the Library of Congress, and was able to find better quality images and through enlargement find more detail. While the photos provided more information, they failed to show the original color of the leather and the detail of the ornamental tooling and embossing.

When the HVAC Project closed the Supreme Court Chamber, the Capitol furniture staff had the opportunity to repair and reupholster the Justice's chairs. The nearly 100 year old chairs were showing their age and needed complete disassembly, repair, reglueing, reassembly and reupholstery. It was during the disassembly process that Capitol furniture staff found the original leather backs had not been removed during the previous reupholstery. While the seats and arm rests had been reworked, preservation staff was amazed and pleased to find the ornamental backs intact. The original leather will be stored and preserved in the Nebraska Capitol Collection until the time when the leather can be replicated and the chair backs returned to their original beauty. 



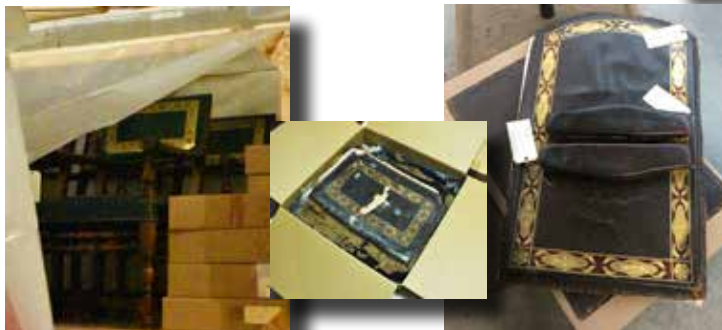
Left, a color photo of the Supreme Court in the Nebraska Capitol Collections gave an indication the chair backs had embossed detail, but enlargement and magnification did not provide the needed detail.



Above, the Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, Gottscho-Schleisner Collection [2013-012-107] photo gave a better indication of the design on the chair backs, but failed to reveal the detail needed for reproduction.



Above, once the Justice's chairs were in the furniture shop, staff began disassembly and discovered the original leather had not been removed, just covered over. The appearance of the detailed original design, right, will enable future replication to be accurate in color and design.



Above right, each chair was given a number and the removed original leather was labeled appropriately. The leather backs will be placed in acid-free boxes in the same manner as the original leather from the Governor's Suite chairs, above center and left, and stored in the Nebraska Capitol Collections for future reference.

CAPITOL EVENTS

No Limits Rally

June 17, 2021

No Limits Nebraska will have an anti-tobacco youth rally on the North Plaza from 4:00 - 5:30 p.m.

State Patrol Camp Graduation

June 18, 2021

The Nebraska State Patrol will hold a graduation ceremony in the second floor rotunda at 10:00 a.m.

Neihardt 100th Anniversary Celebration

June 18, 2021

The John G. Neihardt Foundation will hold a celebration of Neihardt being chosen Nebraska Poet Laureate in the Nebraska Hall of Fame at 1:00 p.m.

Star City Pride Parade

June 19, 2021

The Star City Pride parade will be held around the Capitol beginning at 10:00 a.m. with a gathering on the north plaza.

Celebrate Religious Freedom

July 2-10, 2021

Nebraska Atheists and Humanists will have an educational display celebrating Independence Day, the Separation of Church and State and the First Amendment to the United States Constitution in the first floor rotunda.

Independence Day

July 4, 2021

Independence Day State Holiday

July 5, 2021

The Capitol will be open holiday hours 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. in observance of the official state holiday.

Gastroschisis Awareness Day

July 30, 2021

The 10th anniversary of the Belly Button Run of Nebraska will be celebrated with an evening tower lighting.

Labor Day

September 6, 2021

The Capitol will be open holiday hours 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

World Lymphoma Awareness Day

September 15, 2021

September is National Blood Cancer Awareness Month and will be recognized with an evening tower lighting.

Walk to End Alzheimer's

October 9, 2021

The Capitol tower will be lit to recognize the Nebraska Alzheimer's Association's Walk to End Alzheimer's disease.

Columbus Day

October 11, 2021

The Capitol will be open holiday hours 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Red Ribbon Week

October 23, 2021

The Drug Enforcement Agency-Omaha Division will recognize the importance of a drug-free life with an evening tower lighting.

Licensing Ceremony

November 5, 2021

The Nebraska Board of Engineers and Architects will hold a licensing ceremony in the 2nd floor rotunda at 3:00 p.m.

Veteran's Day

November 11, 2021

The Capitol will be open holiday hours from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and there will be a tower lighting to recognize Nebraska's veterans.

Thanksgiving Holiday

November 25-26, 2021

The Capitol will be closed.

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

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.

The Capitol Dining Room will be open for courtyard access and have limited seating for breaks. It is anticipated a request for proposals for food service providers will be issued by the end of summer, bids taken, contracts signed and food service return to the Capitol during the 2022 Legislative Session.

The Vending Room in the ground floor south center corridor is once again operational.



2021 Capitol Arbor Day Tree Planting Ceremony

On a beautiful Arbor Day, April 30, dignitaries returned to the grounds of the Nebraska State Capitol to plant a Heritage birch in celebration of the 150th Arbor Day. Left to right, Steven Jara, Deputy Director Nebraska Forest Service, Alana Tucker, Programme Manager, Arbor Day Foundation, State Senator Julie Slama, District 1, and Tammy Patsch, Marketing Director with Nebraska City Tourism spoke about the significance of Nebraska's home grown holiday.



In this issue:

COURT WORK 3

CEILING REPAIR 4

ELECTRIC UPGRADE... 5

DISCOVERED..... 6

EVENTS..... 7

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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.

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Nebraska State Capitol

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Capitol Architect
Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue, 1869-1924

2021 Commemorative Ornament

To recognize completion of the restoration work done in the Nebraska Supreme Court during Phase 2 of the HVAC Upgrade Project this year's Office of the Capitol Commission Commemorative ornament is based on the Coat of Arms which occupies a central position in the front wall of the Supreme Court. Capitol sculptor Lee Lawrie's hand carved and colored limestone relief is based on a design Capitol architect Bertram Goodhue created for a 1921 competition to design of a new Nebraska State Seal. Variations of this Coat of Arms appear in several locations in the Capitol. But this is the only location where the Coat of Arms has color. For information about purchasing the ornament please contact the Tourism Supervisor at (402)471-0449 or go to capitol.nebraska.gov/visit/gift-shop.

