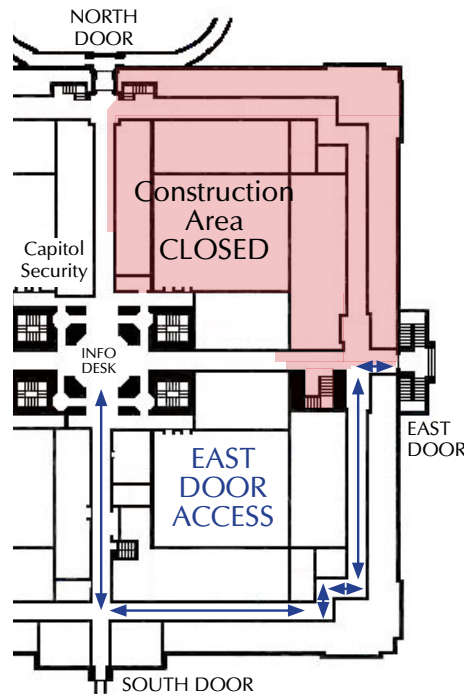


# THE CAPITOL SOWER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CAPITOL COMMISSION | VOLUME SIXTEEN | NUMBER ONE | FEB 2024

## HVAC Phase 4 Update

Contractors continue to work on replacing the 60 year old steam and chilled water heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system in the northeast quadrant of the Nebraska State Capitol. Because the northeast quadrant contains rooms with some of the finest finishes in the Capitol, Office of the Capitol Commission staff are much more involved in these areas. Contractors continue to work as usual in the remaining office spaces. Induction units and windows have been removed. The repaired windows are being returned to await reinstallation. As induction units are removed and paint is stripped, any cracks in the plaster are being repaired to ready the spaces for repainting. Plaster work is happening in the individual offices and in hall



corridors. Special attention is being given to the decorative moulding pattern in the corridor ceilings.

Work continues on schedule in the first, second and third floors.

Contractors have built special access stairs to attic spaces for the installation of the ducts being stored on site. The HVAC replacement project is in year six. Capitol staff housed in the quadrants with the new HVAC system are enjoying the comfort of the new system. At the end of 2024 occupants of the northeast quadrant will return to their offices to enjoy the updated system.



### Nebraska Capitol Commission Membership

Jim Pillen  
Governor, Chairman

John Arch  
Speaker of the Legislature  
Vice-Chairman

Michael Heavican  
Chief Justice Supreme Court

Kevin Van Den Wymelenberg  
Dean  
College of Architecture, UNL

Jill Dolberg  
Interim CEO  
Nebraska State Historical Society

Doug Carey  
Congressional District 1

Thomas Sanderson  
Congressional District 2

Trent D. Loos  
Congressional District 3

Brett Daugherty  
Acting Administrator  
Secretary



## The People of the OCC Office of the Capitol Commission

### ADMINISTRATION

Vacant, Administrator  
Matt Hansen, Preservation Architect  
Vacant, Preservation Architect  
Brett Daugherty, Capitol Manager  
Acting Administrator  
Tammy Honnor, Facilities  
Construction Coordinator  
Vacant,  
Administrative Assistant  
Clark DeVries  
HVAC Project Manager

### ARCHIVE

Karen Wagner, Archivist

### CARPENTRY

Vacant, Shop Supervisor  
Lana Gabel,  
Furniture Conservator  
Dawn Snider,  
Furniture Conservator  
Vacant, Finisher  
Dan Kratky, Mason  
John MacKichan,  
Hardware Conservator  
Mike Marshall, Cabinet Maker

### CUSTODIAL

Vacant,  
Capitol Conservation Supervisor  
Richard Mallam, Custodial Leader  
David Hoelscher, Custodial Leader

### GROUNDS

Heather Dinslage,  
Groundskeeper Leader  
Aud Koch, Maintenance Technician

### MAINTENANCE

Michael Jordan, Shop Supervisor  
Jeff Gillett, Plumber  
Tahir Karimi, Electrician  
Chris Lahmon,  
Maintenance Technician  
Harry Holcome,  
Maintenance Technician

### TOURS

Roxanne Smith,  
Public Information Officer/  
Tourism Supervisor/  
Special Events Coordinator  
Allison Monzu, Tourism Aide  
Susan Myers, Tourism Aide  
Kirk Wiota, Tourism Aide

# OCC AT WORK

## Service Recognized



*Brett Daugherty*  
35 years  
Capitol Manager  
Acting Administrator

**B**rett Daugherty was recognized by Governor Jim Pillen for his 35 years of public service in October of 2023. Daugherty's service to the Office of the Capitol Commission (OCC) now includes Acting Capitol Administrator. With the retirement of long time Capitol Administrator Robert C. Ripley, FAIA, Governor Pillen choose Daugherty to head the OCC team until a new Administrator is found. Daugherty's knowledge of all aspects of staff activity will serve him as he leads the team through daily operations and the completion of the current HVAC project. 🏠

## Conservation Supervisor Retires



*Perry Shuman*  
Custodial Supervisor

**A**fter 35 years of public service to the State of Nebraska, including 27 with the Office of the Capitol Commission, Conservation Supervisor Perry Shuman is retiring. During his time with the Office of the Capitol Commission Shuman elevated the work of the custodial team from basic cleaning to a full partner in the maintenance and preservation of Nebraska's nationally recognized Historic Landmark Capitol. During his years at the Capitol, Shuman helped to improve the quality of custodial staff's work with training on preservation cleaning techniques, and the introduction of better cleaning chemicals. With new equipment and better training Shuman improved efficiency to overcome staff reductions. In recent years, Shuman and the custodial team initiated a floor mosaic renovation program to strip and refinish the decorative floors in the Capitol. Shuman enjoyed working in the most beautiful Capitol in the country and leaves confident in the foundation laid for continued custodial improvement in Capitol preservation. 🏠

## Commission's 2024 Schedule

**T**he Nebraska Capitol Commission will hold their quarterly meetings in Hearing Room #1507 on the ground floor of the Capitol. The Commission uses these meetings 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. These meetings are open to the public. 🏠

- February 29, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.
- June 13, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.
- August 15, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.
- November 12, 2024,  
Joint Meeting at 10:00 a.m.  
Capitol Commission at 11:00 a.m.



# CONSERVATION PROJECTS

## Furniture Form Follows Function

As the Nebraska State Capitol approaches its 100th year of service, the furniture purchased for the 'new' Capitol in the 1920's also approaches 100 years of service. Desks and chairs purchased for daily use in Capitol offices were of the highest quality available. Preservation and maintenance of this solid walnut furniture, as with the Indiana limestone building, will ensure its service into the next 100 years. Office staff perform the same functions today as they did 100 years ago -- answering phone calls, corresponding with constituents, and keeping files organized. Desks were purchased in two basic styles, executive and steno. Executive desks are larger and have drawers on both sides. The smaller steno desks have drawers

on one side and a retractable table on the other. The retractable table accommodated office technology of the time, a typewriter.

During the HVAC Project, as time allows, Office of the Capitol Commission furniture staff are updating steno desks to meet the needs of office staff today and into the next 100 years. While computers have replaced typewriters, office staff still use paper for many daily activities. Furniture staff are modifying the desks, removing the typewriter table and adding drawers, one for office supplies and a larger one for files. Using a conservation approach, the changes are reversible and will not damage the furniture. 



Left, a steno desk arrives in the furniture shop and is assigned a number so it can be tracked in the Capitol original inventory system.



Right, two views of the retractable table which would have originally held a manual typewriter



Above left and right, the mechanical parts are taken from the desk's interior, and the faux drawer face removed from the assembly.

Above, once the hardware is removed, staff carefully split the faux drawer face into two sections to create a small and large drawer front.



Left, OCC carpentry and furniture staff fabricate new drawers and install drawer slides inside the desk. The faux drawer face is added to the newly created drawer and then slides are added to the drawers as they are fitted to the desk's interior.



The adaptability of the high quality solid walnut furniture purchased by the Nebraska Capitol Commission for use by Capitol occupants then, now, and into the future is testament to their wise investment of taxpayer money.



Left, the refinished and repurposed desk awaits its return to a Capitol office, equipped to serve for another 100 years.

# Cleaning the Capitol

Cleaning the ceilings of the Capitol requires building scaffold for access. Below, scaffold in the west legislative chamber allowed access to clean walls, and, with decking on top, access to clean the ceiling. From a scaffold deck in the Warner Chamber, staff cleaned the colorful ceramic tile mosaics. Right, the bottom tiles in the photo are clean.



Below, years of dirt and stains were removed using a soft cotton rag. Right, evidence of just how much dirt can be removed through cleaning.



Left, the latex cleaning product pulls dirt off the walls in the northwest rotunda stair revealing clean bright limestone. Above, looking down into the stairwell the difference in light reflection and appearance between cleaned and uncleaned walls is dramatic.

Right, following the successful test cleaning of the stair, OCC had contractors clean a section of the foyer wall. The dirt carried by the movement of air through the original steam heat and vent system was removed by the latex. The wall is much brighter and improves the appearance of Capitol.



Imagine not cleaning your house for 100 years. As construction of the Nebraska's new capitol progressed from 1922 to 1932, offices were occupied when completed and construction continued around them. With steam heat provided by radiators for warmth in winter and open windows in use for summer cooling, air was constantly moving through the building. Moving air circulated dust and smoke which adhered to walls and ceilings. The air conditioning added in 1960 allowed staff to keep windows closed in summer, but smoking was not eliminated inside the Capitol until the late 1990's with the resulting residue covering the walls and ceilings. As citizens, visitors and staff move through the Capitol they may not realize the darkened walls and dull shine on the vaulted ceramic tile ceilings is the result of years of accumulated dirt. The Office of the Capitol Commission has been cleaning the surfaces, including ceilings and walls, of the people's house as funding has allowed since the 1990's.

The Office of the Capitol Commission's first foray into large scale cleaning of interior surfaces came in the mid 1990's when the Legislative Branch renamed the East Legislative Chamber the Warner Legislative Chamber and created the Warner Institute for Education in Democracy. Using the same techniques available in the 1930's, scrub brushes, soapy water and soft cotton cloths, the limestone walls and ceramic tile ceiling mosaics were cleaned. Then in 2005, OCC cleaned the George W. Norris Legislative Chamber using a combination of techniques. Soft cotton rags and mild detergent cleaned the ceiling and a newly developed latex and detergent product was used to clean the walls.


Once the latex cleaning product was determined to be effective and efficient, staff began using the product in small areas, such as the south limestone arch in the first floor rotunda. During the 2014 Tower Elevator Upgrade Project the new latex product was used to clean the limestone walls flanking the elevator doors and the southwest 3rd floor elevator vestibule. When the Medal of Honor plaque was updated and moved to the Memorial Chamber, its former location, on a foyer Kasota stone pilaster, was cleaned. Recently, a section of the northwest rotunda stair from 2nd to 3rd floor was cleaned. The clean walls brighten the stair and make it safer for school children and visitors to navigate. OCC will continue to clean surfaces as time and funds allow. The cleaned surfaces brighten and enhance the beauty and safety of the building. 



# BEHIND THE SCENES

## Open Opportunity

The Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning Upgrade Project has giving the Office of the Capitol Commission the opportunity properly install electrical service added to the Capitol over the last 60 years. As government grew and electrical service was needed, it was offer added in the least disruptive way. By adding electrical wire in conduit tacked to the plaster walls, staff activity was minimally disrupted. With offices vacated during the HVAC project, it is possible for OCC staff to channel into the plaster and properly install the added service.

One such opportunity opened in the ground floor north hall. Photographs of Nebraska's Governors were added to the walls in the 1970's. Illumination for the photos was installed by adding electrical molding to the interior office walls and then drilling holes through the walls to the mounted panels holding the photos. OCC's mason cut and channeled into the clay blocks under the plaster allowing the electricians to run the needed electrical service through the walls. 



Above, the north ground floor hall is finished with Guastavino Rumford tile. Governor's photos on the west wall were removed and reinstalled during Phase 3 of the HVAC project. The photos were removed during construction in the northeast quadrant. Right, the exact location of the electrical service is marked with blue tape.



Above, on the interior office wall, the traces of the added electrical service can be seen. Previously, electricity was drawn from the light switch in the room. In the new configurations electrical service will come from attic space and wires pulled through the clay tile wall to the needed location. While structural walls in the Capitol are brick or concrete, the walls delinating office space are hollow clay tile. While still a challenge for the mason, below, it is much easier to drill through and open channels for new service.




When working with original finishes in preservation space, such as the ground floor north hall, there is no room for error. Left, OCC's mason carefully measures the exact location for the new wiring access.



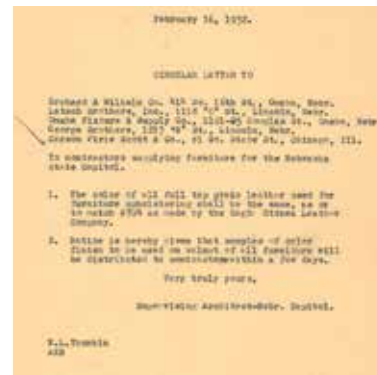
Left, the mason opened a spot in the wall large enough to hold an electrical junction box to feed power through the small hole in the center of the image to the light illuminating the photos of Nebraska Governors on the other side of the wall.

# WHAT'S OLD IS NEW

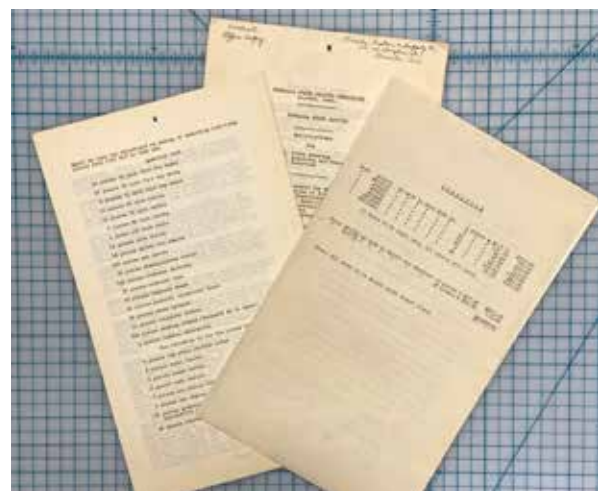
In the fall of 1931, the Nebraska Capitol Commission requested that state departments housed in the new capitol submit a list of furnishings required. Upon review, it was determined that to save the state money, new furniture purchased was to be limited to those rooms most visited by the public, such as waiting rooms, and that the very good furniture presently in use continue to be used in work rooms and other rooms not visited by the public. The Commission compiled a list of needed furniture and advertised for bids. The specifications included criteria for construction and finish, recommended brands, and a quantity list of desired pieces. Companies were instructed to itemize their bid according to the Quantity List. This enabled the Commission to pick and choose the items they wanted from various bidders. In the end, they purchased furnishings from more than 5 different companies. Omaha Fixture and Supply Company submitted a proposal that included quotes for 50 different items from the Quantity List and a catalog picturing these items. The Commission selected 9 of the items and contracted to purchase these pieces. The original Quantity List

specified 30 pedestal typewriter desks. The Commission ended up contracting for 50. According to the Office of the Capitol Commission inventory numbers, it appears they are all still in the building, and most still in use. 

Left, the cover letter for the furniture specifications sent by William Younkin, Supervising Architect to a list of local and national furniture suppliers. Below, the furniture catalog and bid sheet returned to the Capitol Commission by the Omaha Fixture and Supply Co.



Above, a close-up from the catalog shows how the desk functions for a stenographer. Below, one of the original desks purchased from the Omaha Fixture and Supply Company.



Above, the Quantity List, the price list and the contract between the Nebraska Capitol Commission and the Omaha Fixture and Supply Company. The Capitol Collection's Archive contains documents from the construction period which provide background and support for OCC's preservation work.

# CAPITOL EVENTS

## Malcolm X Awareness Display

February 23 - March 1 &

May 10 - 24, 2024

The Malcolm X Memorial Foundation will have information about the May induction of Malcolm X into the Nebraska Hall of Fame on display in the 1st floor rotunda.

## AFSP State Capitol Awareness Display

February 26 - March 1, 2024

The American Federation for Suicide Prevention Nebraska Chapter will have a display in the 1st floor rotunda.

## Statehood Day

March 1, 2024

Nebraska's 157th Birthday

## Naturalization Ceremony

March 1, 2024

The US Citizenship and Immigration Omaha Field Office will hold a naturalization ceremony in the 2nd floor rotunda at 9:00 a.m.

## State Fair Awards Ceremony

March 1, 2024

The NEBRASKAland Foundation will recognize State Fair educational poster competition winners at 1:30 p.m. in the 2nd floor rotunda.

## Capitol Closed

March 2, 2023

The Capitol will be closed for statehood day activities.

## Expanded Learning Opportunities Display

March 4 - 8, 2024

Beyond School Bells will highlight innovative after school and summer learning opportunities in the 1st floor rotunda.

## Theater in Our Schools Day

March 5, 2024

The Nebraska Thespians will have a first floor display celebrating the importance of theater in schools and a musical performance in the 2nd floor rotunda at noon.

## "I Love NU" Day

March 6, 2024

The University of Nebraska System will have a display in the 1st floor rotunda.  
Youth Art Month Display

March 9 - 23, 2024

The Nebraska Art Teachers Association will display student artwork in the 1st floor rotunda.

## Nebraska State College Display

March 11 - 18, 2024

The Nebraska State College System will have a display in the 1st floor rotunda.

## Railroad Safety Display

March 18 - 22, 2024

Nebraska Operation Lifesaver will have a display providing information on railroad safety in the 1st floor rotunda.

## NMEA Capitol Concert Series

March 18-21 & April 10 2024

The Nebraska Music Education Association will hold their annual concert series in the Capitol 2nd floor rotunda from noon to 1:00 p.m. each day.

## World Down Syndrome Day

March 21, 2024

The Tower will be lit with yellow and blue light to draw awareness to the most common genetic condition at dusk.

## Youth Art Awards Ceremony

March 23, 2024

The Nebraska Art Teacher's Association will hold an awards ceremony in the Capitol 2nd floor rotunda from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

## Problem Gambling Awareness

March 25 - 29, 2024

The Department of Health and Human Services and Creating Family Choices will have a display providing information on the Gamblers Assistance Program in the 1st floor rotunda.

## Nebraska Voter ID Display

March 25 - April 5, 2024

The Nebraska Secretary of State will display educational materials about Nebraska's new voter ID law in the 1st floor rotunda.

## Missing and Murdered Women Display

April 1 - 7, 2024

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women will be the focus of a Civic Nebraska and Nebraska Writer's Collective display in the 1st floor rotunda.

## Camp Catch-Up Display

April 8 - 12, 2024

Nebraska Children and Families Foundation will provide information in the 1st floor rotunda about a program bringing siblings separated by foster care together.

## Arbor Day

April 26, 2024

Nebraska's homegrown holiday.  
Capitol tours 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

## Worker's Memorial Day Vigil

April 28, 2024

The United Support Memorial for Workplace Fatalities will hold a vigil on the North Plaza at 6:30 p.m.

## Mayor's Run

May 4, 2023

The Lincoln Track Club will host a youth fun run around the Capitol from 8:00 a.m. to noon.

## State Holocaust Commemoration

May 5, 2024

The Jewish Federation of Lincoln and the Institute for Holocaust Education will hold a 2:00 p.m. ceremony in the 2nd floor rotunda.

## Peace Officer's Memorial Day

May 13 - 18, 2024

The Nebraska State Patrol will honor Nebraska's fallen peace officers in a 1st floor rotunda display

## Memorial Day


May 27, 2024

Capitol tours 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

## Cornhusker Girls State

June 6, 2024

The American Legion Auxiliary will hold the Girls State Inauguration ceremony in the 2nd floor rotunda at 2:00 p.m.

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

**Guided Tours** are offered Monday-Friday from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, except at noon; Saturday and Holidays from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., except at noon; Sunday from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. Please call 402.471.0448 or visit [www.capitol.org](http://www.capitol.org) for more information. 





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**The Capitol Sower**, published by the Office of the Capitol Commission, is available online at [www.capitol.org](http://www.capitol.org). Contact the Tourism Supervisor at [<roxanne.smith@nebraska.gov>](mailto: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 unless noted.

# THE CAPITOL SOWER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CAPITOL COMMISSION |

FEB 2024

## Nebraska Capitol Commission

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[www.capitol.org](http://www.capitol.org)  
402.471.6691



Capitol Architect  
Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue, 1869-1924

## More Mulch Matters

**P**rotecting the trees on the nationally recognized Historic Landmark landscape of the Nebraska State Capitol is an important responsibility of the Office of the Capitol Commission grounds maintenance team. The highly trained staff rely on best management practices to care for the landscape, including the latest research from the University of Nebraska. The highest value component of the landscape is the trees. While the turf is the most noticeable aspect of the grounds, maintaining perfect turf is not always compatible with healthy trees. In the autumn of 2023, grounds staff increased the size of the mulch rings around the Capitol's trees to reduce competition between the roots of trees and turf. Mulch moderates soil moisture and temperature, aerates soil and replenishes soil nutrients as it decomposes. Enlarged mulch beds also keep mowers and turf care equipment away from trees and prevent damage to the trunk and lower branches. While Capitol staff and visitors may miss the curb-to-curb carpet of green grass, the Capitol's trees will be healthier and more beautiful. 🌳



Above, the various sizes of the mulch rings reflect the sizes of the trees they surround. Where two large trees are adjacent, the mulched areas overlap.



Above and left, the added mulch appears lighter than the existing smaller mulch areas. Ideally, the mulch around the trunks of trees should extend to the edge of the tree's leaf canopy.