

THE CAPITOL SOWER



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CAPITOL COMMISSION | VOLUME ONE | NUMBER ONE | AUGUST 2008

Final Phase of Masonry Project

Nebraska's Landmark Capitol is clad in Indiana Limestone. When the children of pioneers built the current Nebraska State Capitol they anticipated they were building a statehouse to serve Nebraskans for hundreds of years. In Nebraska's climate, with extreme fluctuations of heat and humidity, any masonry building will require routine maintenance. To ensure the longevity of the Capitol, the Exterior Masonry Restoration Project was begun in 1998.

The first major exterior maintenance project undertaken since the Capitol was completed in 1932 is reaching its final stages. Following a survey of the Capitol's limestone façade, a five phase work plan was developed. Phase I rebuilt and waterproofed the north entrance; the second phase relieved the stresses in the limestone facade of the tower, repaired elements of the tower and tuck pointed the tower facade; the third phase addressed the dome and drum and included restoration of the Sower. The fourth and fifth phases of the Exterior Masonry Project are currently under way. These work phases involve tuck pointing the base of the Capitol, repairing the east and west entrances and

replacing the copper roof. The entire Exterior Masonry Project is to be completed in 2010. The contractor, Mark I Waterproofing working with the Office of the Capitol Commission, has completed the



Roofing contractors at work on west side

restoration of the north, south and west entrances, the east entrance repair remains. These entrances, as well as the parapet walls of the cardinal pavilions,

are exposed to the elements on both sides. The freeze-thaw cycle of winter and yearly temperature extremes caused the stone to shift position. Restoration involves the disassembly of the entrances, building a reinforced poured concrete core and the restoration and resetting of the limestone walls and granite steps. The parapet wall restoration involves a similar process. As Mark I restores and tuck points the base, the roofing subcontractor, Midland Engineering, will replace the entire copper roof of the Capitol and upgrade the internal roof drain system. The roof work has begun on the west side and will progress counterclockwise around the Capitol. As the remaining work is completed the construction yards will be removed and grass replanted on the grounds of the Capitol. 

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Speaker of the Legislature

Janice Walker

Court Administrator

Wayne Drummond

Dean
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Nebraska State Historical Society

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Jim Cudaback

Congressional District 3

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Secretary
Administrator
Office of Capitol Commission



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Administrative Assistant
Tom Kaspar, *Architect*
Mark Tonjes, *Capitol Manager*

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CARPENTRY

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Ron Dulas, *Furniture Conservator*
Roger Frink,
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Steve Janssen, *Furniture Finisher*
Phil Lagoni, *Mason*
Mike Marshall, *Cabinet Maker*
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Tourism Aide

Proper Cleaning Extends Life

A Registered National Historic Landmark as unique as the Nebraska State Capitol requires a unique custodial maintenance program. Cleaning methods at the Capitol have changed over the years to reflect new and improved techniques. The Capitol was one of the first to 'go green' with the use of pH neutral products for general purpose cleaning and floor care, and the use of disinfectants which kill germs and bacteria but do not harm fixtures. Capitol Conservation Supervisor Perry Shuman understands the impact of hundreds of workers and thousands of visitors on the Capitol and the requirements of cleaning up after them. Something as routine as a spill on the floor becomes a challenge

when the floor is limestone and readily absorbs spilled materials. A sticky palm print on a window with bronze ornament isn't cleaned with an easy spray and wipe.

Twelve custodial contract workers are busy each week night with the general cleaning of the 250,000 sq. ft. Capitol. Four OCC staff members do detail cleaning and restoration/renovation project cleaning. Day custodians handle recycling and keep rest rooms clean and stocked. Shuman and his Capitol Commission staff are skilled custodians who take pride in their work knowing they have an impact on preservation of the Capitol and its continued service to future generations. 

Capitol Commission Created

In 1867, the Nebraska Legislature passed an act to appoint a Commission for the purpose of locating the seat of government and the public buildings of the State of Nebraska. This Commission was also given the task of advertising for architects and specifications for the Capitol and to raise money for the state building fund.

Fifty years later the Nebraska Legislature created another Capitol Commission to oversee the 1919 competition for and subsequent construction of a new Capitol. The current Capitol Commission is a descendent of these earlier groups. The Nebraska Capitol Commission and its administrative and operational arm, the Office of the Capitol Commission were formed by legislation passed in 2004. The Nebraska Capitol Commission is chaired by the Governor and membership includes the Speaker of the Legislature, the State Court Administrator, The Dean of the

University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Architecture, the Director of the Nebraska State Historical Society and one member appointed by the Governor to represent each of Nebraska's three congressional districts.

The Commission meets quarterly in the Capitol to review reports on and oversee the maintenance and preservation of the Capitol, to discuss and approve upcoming projects, to plan the annual budget for the Office of the Capitol Commission and to set administrative policy for the Capitol. The group also meets annually with the Capitol Environs Commission, a joint city/state body, to coordinate their mutual interests in the Capitol, its site and environs with the City of Lincoln. 

CONSERVATION PROJECTS

Cleaning Reveals Murals' True Colors

Architect Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue relied on University of Nebraska professor Hartley Burr Alexander, Ph.D. to develop a thematic program for the decoration of the Nebraska State Capitol. As the building was being constructed between 1922 and 1932, these themes guided the design of floor and ceiling mosaics and exterior sculpture. The Great Depression caused the completion of the wall murals to be delayed. The twelve panels on second floor were added in the 1950's and 60's. The final murals, which completed Alexander's thematic program, were dedicated in 1996 on the 14th floor. The murals added in the 1950's and 60's were in need of cleaning and restoration. Some of these murals showed signs of water staining as a result of leaks in the clerestory windows. These windows were restored and grouted as part of the Exterior Masonry Project. Once that work was complete it was time to clean the murals.

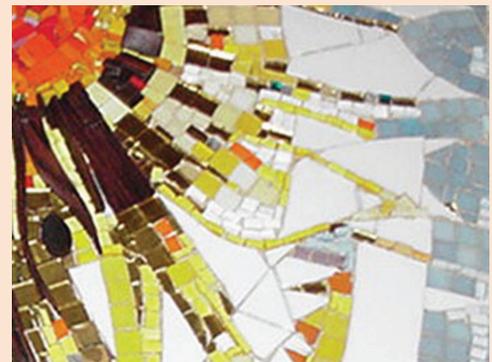
During the summers of 2006 and 2007, fine art conservator Anne Rosenthal cleaned and restored the oil paintings and glass tile mosaic murals on second floor. In 2006 she restored the Vestibule and Rotunda murals, and in 2007 she returned to clean and restore the Foyer artwork. Restoration of the James Penney and Kenneth Evett oil paintings involved removing dust from the surface, reattaching any delaminated sections and in fill painting where the paint had flaked off and been lost. Because the four artists of the six murals in the Foyer used different techniques to create and install their artwork, the treatment was as varied. Two of the murals required minimal treatment. Cleaning with detergent and a soft brush removed 40 years of accumulated dust from the Charles Clement and F. John Miller mosaics.

The restoration of the other murals was more intensive. Reinhold Marxhausen used pieces of wood and brick in addition to the glass. Marxhausen also experimented with adhesives. Jeanne Reynal's installation technique included sprinkling glass on the mortar



Conservator Anne Rosenthal cleans the surface of a Kenneth Evett mural

surface. These different applications required special attention. Anne Rosenthal was able to develop specialized cleaning and restoration techniques on site to successfully complete the restoration. Newly restored, color and detail come alive on the murals in a way not seen since they were installed. Staff in the Capitol has taken notice of the new brilliance in the colors of the glass tile mosaics. 



Detail of Marxhausen's mosaic sun in Spirit of Nebraska mural

West Chamber Restoration Begins



Detail cleaning the ceiling

and coincides with the replacement of the copper roof of the Chamber. The major restoration work in the West Chamber began with the installation of protective covers for the desks and removal of the chairs. The leather doors in the Chamber were removed and the damaged pig skin is being replaced. Once scaffold was installed to allow access to the ceiling and walls, conservators began the restoration process. Conservators are using a brushed on latex poultice to remove soiling and staining from the Indiana Limestone and Guastavino Tile walls.

Ceiling conservation work began with a thorough vacuuming of the walnut beamed ceiling. The next step was washing 70 years of accumulated dust and smoke from ceiling surfaces. The careful restoration of the wood and gilt ceiling will involve the reapplication of shellac and gold leaf where missing or damaged by water leaks. After a final rinse the ceiling work will be complete. Then Capitol Commission staff will replace blind and drapery hardware and reinstall repaired and cleaned blinds and drapes. A contractor will apply ultra-violet protective film to the windows at this time.

Part of the restoration of the Warner Chamber included the manufacture of replica carpet for both Legislative Chambers. Carpet will be repaired using additional shelf stock acquired during the carpet replacement. The final stage of Chamber work will be the installation of new glass vestibule doors at the Rotunda entrance to the Chamber. As work in the Chamber winds down conservators will move their activities to the West Legislative Lounge. Cleaning the lounge is the final step in this restoration project. 

Upon adjournment of the 100th Nebraska Legislature in April 2008, the Office of the Capitol Commission began a restoration project to prepare the Unicameral Chamber for its next 100 years of service. This work compliments the restoration work done in the East Chamber and Lounge in the 1990's. Speaker Mike Flood at the February 14, 2008 Capitol Commission meeting stated, "The West Chamber is the people's clearinghouse of ideas, and as such needs to be restored and maintained." He welcomed the scheduled work and expressed satisfaction that the George W. Norris Legislative Chamber would be cleaned from top to bottom.

Restoration work in the West Chamber and Lounge is scheduled to be completed by November 2008

*100th Legislature
adjourns;
cleaning begins.*



A section of the West Chamber ceiling gold leaf mural design shines after being cleaned

BEHIND THE SCENES

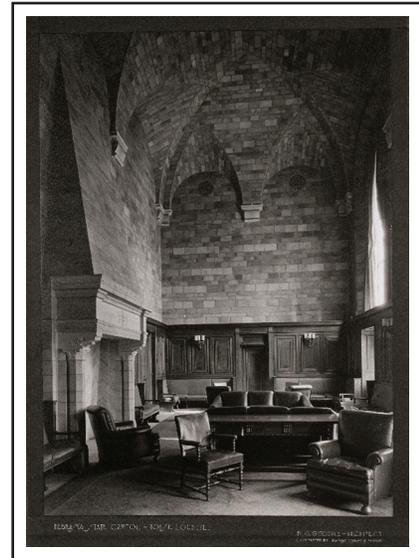
Legislative Lounges Provide Private Space

Bertram Goodhue, Capitol Architect, was instructed to provide appointed chambers for the functions of Nebraska's government: the Governor's Office, Legislative Chambers and Court Rooms and their associated suites of rooms. In 1932 Nebraska had a bicameral legislature; the East Chamber housed the Senate and the West Chamber held the House of Representatives. The only offices provided for legislators were their desks in the chambers. It wasn't until the 1974 completion of the State Office Building that private senator's offices became available.

Originally, Legislators shared a secretarial pool and legal staff. Behind each Chamber was a mailroom/cloakroom with a locker area for personal items and a Legislative Lounge located across the hall. Because legislators

had no private offices, these lounges were comfortably furnished private spaces where they could relax in a quiet environment.

The East Legislative Lounge was restored in the mid-1990's and the West Lounge is being restored as part of the current project. Adjacent to each lounge was a private office for the presiding officer. The original Lt. Governor's Office, adjacent to the east lounge, is currently used by the Secretary of State and the Speaker's Office #2022 is a special conference room for the Legislature. Both of these offices have previously been restored. 

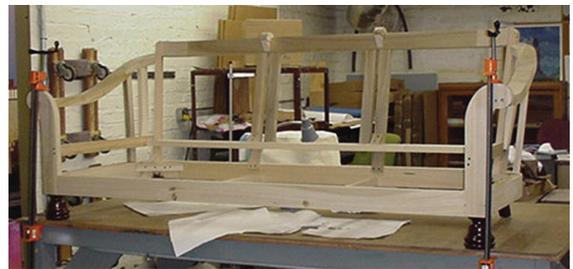


*East Legislative Lounge
ca. 1930*

Lounge Furniture Restoration

The Legislative lounges were designed to match the architectural and decorative schemes of their associated Legislative Chambers with corresponding Native American and Pioneer details. However, the furniture purchased to appoint the lounges was the same. When furnishing the Capitol in 1932, the Capitol Commission purchased two large couches, four club chairs and tables, and library tables for each room. Lining the perimeter walls of the lounges are built-in upholstered benches. The lounges each have operational fireplaces and Men's Rooms. Office of the Capitol Commission staff have worked since 1992 to restore these lounges with their original furniture. In anticipation of lounge restoration, OCC staff tracked down these furnishings and reunited the suites of original furniture. Once located, these furnishings were

reupholstered in leather matching the original burgundy and green with black washed colors. In 2007 carpentry staff used an existing couch and documents from the archive to replicate a missing couch from the floor up. With the completion of the West Lounge restoration this fall, senators will return to a beautiful inviting chamber for quiet relaxation, just as their predecessors enjoyed initially over 75 years ago. 



Replicated couch frame nears completion



Leather couch in service in lounge

WHAT'S OLD IS NEW

Capitol Collection Contribution

The Office of the Capitol Commission is forever indebted to the Capitol Commission which oversaw the competition and construction of the Goodhue Capitol. This body, task completed, assembled all the materials, commission meeting minutes, correspondence, architectural drawings, manufacturer's catalogs, samples, etc. and stored them in a vault. These materials form the nucleus of the Nebraska Capitol Collections. Added to this are the furnishings and office equipment purchased for the Capitol and in service or retired to the collection. These records provide documentation to support the mission of the Office of the Capitol Commission.

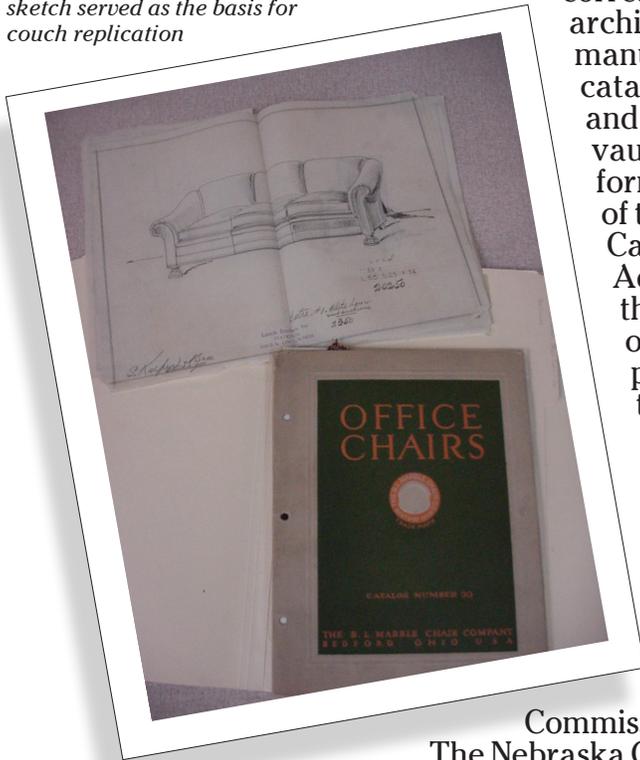
The Nebraska Capitol Collections support the day to day mission of the Office of the Capitol Commission. The architectural drawings associated with the Goodhue Capitol are used daily by staff in the operation and maintenance of the building, and to support work on special projects. The Capitol Archivist worked with the Project Architect for the Exterior Masonry Project and helped create a map (data base) of the dimensions of each individual stone used in the façade of the Capitol. This data base was valuable as the Project Architect and Masonry Contractor communicated with the quarry in Indiana to fabricated replacements

for the broken pieces of limestone in the tower. In fact, the Office of the Capitol Commission and the Indiana Limestone Company were able to locate the quarry pit where the original stone for the Capitol was cut following a thorough search of materials in their respective archives.

As the Office of the Capitol Commission prepared for the West Chamber project, the Capitol Archivist provided sections of the original pounce paper patterns used in the ceiling for reference. (See detailed image below.) Using these stippled patterns and bags of graphite craftsmen transferred the artist's designs through the small holes in the paper onto the walnut beamed ceiling. With the stippled outlines to follow, they then brushed on the gold leaf. Also useful was the correspondence between the architectural firm, the artists and Thematic Consultant Dr. Hartley Burr Alexander which helped staff uncover why specific materials were used and the intent of the architects and artists in choosing them; this information also helps in the interpretation of the artwork for guided tours.

The Capitol Collections provide information and specifications for staff as they replace missing elements of the Capitol. As the Legislative Lounge furniture restoration project progressed it was necessary to replace a missing couch. Capitol Furniture Conservation staff relied on the Archivist to find a catalog submitted to the 1920's Capitol Commission by the vendor which ultimately got the contract for the lounge furniture. The catalog showed a picture of the couch and listed specifications which they used to build a reproduction of the couch. 

Catalog and sketch from archive; sketch served as the basis for couch replication



Detail of artist's pattern with pencil lines and holes made by stippling wheel, graphite was pounced through the holes and onto the ceiling

CAPITOL EVENTS

Seal America

August 16, 2008

Unity rally on the north steps starting at 11:15 am featuring music, songs and speakers.

Step up for Kids

September 16, 2008

Sponsored by Voices for Children in Nebraska. The event will be held on the north steps of the Capitol at 10:00 am and include speakers, entertainment by children, and will feature booths sponsored by various service agencies.



Student visitors view the 2007 Duck Stamp Display in first floor rotunda

Nebraska Bar Induction Ceremony

September 16, 2008

The Capitol Rotunda will be the scene of the Nebraska State Bar Induction Ceremony at 10:00 am.

Recovery Walk and Rally

September 21, 2008

Sponsored by Nebraska Recovery Network the program will be from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. on the north steps. The event is part of a national celebration and 300 people are expected to attend.

Deaf Awareness Week

September 22-26, 2008

The Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing will have a display located in the first floor rotunda of the Capitol.

Junior Duck Stamp Exhibit

September 22 - October 3, 2008

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service in Scottsbluff, Nebraska are sponsoring a first floor rotunda exhibit to showcase entrants and winners of the Nebraska Junior Duck Stamp Contest.

Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration

October 10, 2008

The Mexican American Commission is sponsoring a noon time program to honor citizens of Hispanic Heritage.

2008 Governor's Employee

Recognition Program

October 30, 2008

At 10:00 am the State Personnel Division is holding a ceremony to recognize the Employee of the Year, and the Supervisor/Manager of the Year from agencies throughout state government. The Governor will present the awards in the Capitol Rotunda.

Veteran's Photo Remembrance

November 3-14, 2008

The Nebraska Veteran's of Foreign Wars is sponsoring a photo exhibit in the first floor rotunda featuring photographs of battlefields and veteran's cemeteries in Europe and the United States.

Nebraska Tribal Veterans Honoring Ceremony

November 6, 2008

The Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs is sponsoring a ceremony to honor Nebraska Native American Veterans at 10:00 am.

Commissioner's Recognition for Student Excellence in Career Education

November 24, 2008

At 3:00 p.m. in the second floor rotunda the Governor and the State Commissioner of Education will honor high school career education students who were top winners in national organization competitive events.

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

The Nebraska State Capitol will be closed for the Thanksgiving holiday November 27th and 28th. Free tours will resume on November 29th at 10:00 a.m.



Nebraska State Capitol Guided tours are offered Monday-Friday hourly from 9:00 am to 5:00 p.m., except at noon. Saturday and Holidays from 10:00 to 5:00 p.m., except at noon and Sunday from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. Please call (402)471-0448 or visit www.capitol.org for more information.



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Capitol Architect
Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue

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Goodhue Boulevard Dedicated

On June 16, 2007, in a special ceremony in the State Capitol Rotunda, Governor Dave Heineman and members of the Capitol Commission dedicated Goodhue Boulevard. Special guests at the ceremony were the grandchildren of Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue, architect of the Nebraska State Capitol. In a cooperative effort the Capitol Environs Commission, the City of Lincoln, the Nebraska Capitol Commission and the Near South Neighborhood Association created a lasting tribute to Goodhue by renaming 15th Street south of the Capitol from A Street to H Street Goodhue Boulevard. The boulevard south of the Capitol is the only element of the axial mall plan for the Capitol Environs created during Goodhue's life. Following remarks from Governor Heineman, Dean Wayne Drummond, Capitol Administrator Bob Ripley and Capitol Commission Chair Jeff Searcy, the Governor and Goodhue's grandchildren unveiled the new street sign. 



Governor Heineman speaks before unveiling the Goodhue Blvd. street sign



l. to r. Nicholas Goodhue, Jill Goodhue Hoeksma, Goodhue biographer Romy Wyllie and H. Yates Satterlee

The Capitol Sower, a quarterly newsletter published by the Office of the Capitol Commission, is available via e-mail by contacting the Tourism Supervisor at roxanne.smith@nebraska.gov. Please contact us if you have any questions or comments about the content. All images property of the Office of the Capitol Commission.