

# THE CAPITOL SOWER



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CAPITOL COMMISSION | VOLUME TWO | NUMBER TWO | JUNE 2009

## The Capitol Illuminated



View from Great Hall to Rotunda, Nebraska State Capitol

Whether using natural light or artificial light, Capitol Architect Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue dramatically sets the stage for people working or visiting at the Nebraska State Capitol. One of the things that makes the Capitol an architectural masterpiece is the attention paid to every detail and finish in the building. Goodhue designed each component of the public and private spaces in the Capitol to amplify and enhance the overall beauty and function of the building. This can be seen in the lighting used throughout the Capitol.

Upon entering Nebraska's Capitol via the north Grand Staircase visitors are drawn to the brightly lit Rotunda moving through the subdued light of the Foyer. Goodhue's tower stands on four massive steel and concrete shafts which allow large arched clerestory

windows to illuminate the central Rotunda space despite the 400 foot tower above. By design, the Foyer or Great Hall is lit by onyx windows which amplify the drama of entering the brightly lit Rotunda. The muralists representing Nebraska history on the walls beneath the onyx windows used Venetian Glass tiles to capture and reflect the subtle light the stone windows cast.

The large cast bronze chandeliers which hang in the ceremonial chambers provide supplemental light. As with all the original light fixtures in the Capitol, the chandeliers are both functional and decorative. They contain Nebraska symbols cast in bronze: corn, wheat, bison and arrows. Throughout the building the windows and light fixtures illuminate the beauty of the Capitol. 

### Nebraska Capitol Commission Membership

**Dave Heineman**

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Chairman*

**Mike Flood**

*Speaker of the Legislature  
Vice-Chairman*

**Janice Walker**

*Court Administrator*

**Wayne Drummond**

*Dean  
College of Architecture, UNL*

**Michael Smith**

*Executive Director  
Nebraska State Historical Society*

**Bryce Neidig**

*Congressional District 1*

**Stan Meradith**

*Congressional District 2*

**Jim Cudaback**

*Congressional District 3*

**Robert C. Ripley**

*Administrator  
Office of Capitol Commission  
Secretary*



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

**ADMINISTRATION**

Bob Ripley, *Administrator*  
 Tom Kaspar, *Architect*  
 Mark Tonjes, *Capitol Manager*  
 Tammy Honnor, *Facilities  
 Construction Coordinator*  
 Cecilia Curtis-Beard,  
*Administrative Assistant*

**ARCHIVE**

Karen Wagner, *Archivist*

**CARPENTRY**

Brett Daugherty, *Shop Supervisor*  
 Ron Dulas, *Furniture Conservator*  
 Roger Frink,  
*Hardware Conservator*  
 Steve Janssen, *Furniture Finisher*  
 Phil Lagoni, *Mason*  
 Mike Marshall, *Cabinet Maker*  
 Bill McClurg,  
*Furniture Conservator*

**CUSTODIAL**

Perry Shuman,  
*Capitol Conservation Supervisor*  
 Richard Mallam, *Custodial Leader*  
 Steve Miller,  
*Custodial/Housekeeper*  
 Rich Naber, *Custodial Leader*

**GROUNDS**

Mike Hoppmann,  
*Arborist/Groundskeeper*  
 Mark Lofgreen, *Groundskeeper*  
 Don Pracheil, *Mechanic*

**MAINTENANCE**

Michael Jordan, *Shop Supervisor*  
 Jerry Allen, *Plumber*  
 Kent Bonebright,  
*Sheet Metal Fabricator*  
 Tahir Karimi, *Electrician*  
 John Steele,  
*Maintenance Technician*

**TOURS**

Roxanne Smith,  
*Tourism Supervisor/  
 Special Events Coordinator*  
 John Little, Jr., *Tourism Aide*  
 Gloria Witherspoon,  
*Tourism Aide*

**Staff Profile** **ELECTRICIAN**  
*Tahir Karimi*

The Office of the Capitol Commission Maintenance Shop employs skilled tradesmen to care for the Capitol. Tahir Karimi has worked at the Capitol for 11 years. Karimi was trained as



*Tahir Karimi, Capitol Electrician*

an electrician while working at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and has since become a licensed electrician.

He is part of the team, working with Capitol architects, that reviews code compliance and updates electrical requirements for Capitol office renovations. To meet the daily electrical needs of the Capitol, Karimi works with electrical vendors who supply equipment for the Capitol. He is responsible for the annual bulb changing in the major chandeliers, ordering bulbs and setting up

equipment. TK, as he is known around the Capitol, is recognized for his cheerful and friendly service to staff.

Karimi shares his love of gardening with Capitol staff also. Bouquets of roses and iris from his garden have graced the Capitol Information Desk. He grows fruit trees as well. At home, he enjoys cooking for his 12 year old daughter, creatively combining Pakistani and American cuisine. 



*Tahir Karimi installs a new ballast in a tower fluorescent fixture.*



*Karimi and a contractor prepare to reinstall an original exterior light at the Capitol's south entrance.*



**Capitol Commission Legislative Update**

The 101st Legislature passed LB450 in the first session. The bill, introduced by State Senator Kathy Campbell of Lincoln, is of special interest to the Capitol Commission and the Capitol Environs Commission. It extends the western boundary of the Capitol Environs District five blocks. The original 1977 Environs Legislation which created the Capitol Environs District emphasized the long-term enhancement of the State Capitol's

setting for the enjoyment of the citizens of Nebraska. LB450 continues the enhancement of the district and the Capitol as its focal point. The new law extends the Capitol Environs District boundary beyond the Lancaster County Hall of Justice to the intersection of Rosa Parks Way and J Street protecting the Capitol vista as drivers approach downtown Lincoln from the west via the parkway. 

# CONSERVATION PROJECTS

## Lamp Restoration Projects

*Reproducing from the original*

The 1994-95 renovation of the East Legislative Chamber to celebrate the contributions of the Warner family and the creation of the Warner Institute for Education in Democracy required a top to bottom restoration of the room. The conservation of the light fixtures in the Chamber was one component of the project. Sometime during the 60 years between the adoption of Nebraska's Unicameral Legislature and the renovation project, one of the four large bronze chandeliers in the East Legislative Chamber went missing. Several of the custom glass shades for the lamps in the newly renamed

Warner Memorial Chamber had been broken and were missing. The limited supply of backup shades had been used and replacements were not readily available. Completion of the project required the manufacture of replacement shades and the complete fabrication of the missing bronze chandelier.

Office of the Capitol Commission Architectural staff, with assistance from Capitol Archivist Karen Wagner, located the full scale drawing of the chandelier in the Capitol Collections. With that documentation in hand, Capitol architects researched foundries throughout the United States which could cast a complicated bronze fixture

and then apply the special black patina and gold leaf finish which decorates the ornamental fixtures on second floor. Months of research lead the Capitol staff to a foundry in Utah who fabricated the new fixture by copying an original fixture sent to the facility. The staff electrician wired and rehung the fixture. The newly created fixture is a match to the originals and hangs in the chamber today.

At the time of construction custom glass shades were created for the fixtures in the East Chamber and the Rotunda galleries. The cased glass shades have a milk glass interior and colored stenciled designs on the outside. Once again Capitol architects had to research which glass manufacturers in the United States were still working and willing to do custom fabrication. Original shades had to be protectively

crated and shipped to the company for molds to be created. Molds which are kept in the Capitol Collections for future Capitol caretakers to use. The replicated shades so closely match the originals that it is difficult to tell the difference, the sign of a truly successful restoration project. 



*Custom glass shades were recreated in several sizes and shapes, ranging from the 4 inch acorn globes above to the larger 10 inch shade below left, to the torchere bowls below.*



*Chandelier, above and detail showing ornate decoration and special bronze finishes.*



# Daylight and Task Lighting

Different kinds of light for public and private spaces

Capitol Architect Bertram Goodhue relied heavily on daylighting in the Capitol for general illumination and to create a sense of space. Even though the Capitol was built with full use of electricity, every office in the Capitol has a window to allow for ventilation and natural light for illumination.

Staff can keep in touch with the weather and seasonal changes in daylight. Venetian blinds on the office windows allow staff to control the amount of daylight in their work space. Proper blind position increases or decreases solar gain and enhances the comfort level of the offices. General office illumination was originally provided by Bailey Reynolds chandeliers. Later these

bronze fixtures were removed and replaced with fluorescent lights. Most of the bronze office chandeliers were lost, but a few were saved. As part of the ongoing restoration of office space in the Capitol, the Office of the Capitol Commission has worked with Capitol occupants in highly visible locations to return the restored bronze

chandeliers to service after removing the 1960's fluorescent fixtures.

While the ornamental fixtures and fluorescent lights provide general illumination, desk lamps are used for task lighting to help illuminate the immediate work surface. During the initial occupation of the Capitol, desk lamps were ordered by the hundreds and

many are still in service. The Capitol Collections contains a representative sampling of the original desk lamps.

The public chambers have clerestory windows for illumination as well as large ornamental chandeliers. Perimeter corridors on ground level are also lit with clerestory windows which pierce an upper area of a wall. On second floor, transom windows above office doors allow daylight from the offices to illuminate and ventilate the corridors. To accomplish the goal of providing enough light for ease of movement, two different types of fixtures provide supplemental corridor

illumination for cloudy days and evenings, pendant lights on first floor and ceiling mounted globes on second



Two different types of Bailey Reynolds chandeliers have been returned to service in the Attorney General's Suite.



First floor corridors are illuminated with clerestory windows.



Daylight spills out of a second floor office via the transom window and door to illuminate the corridor.

*Providing the right light for movement and function*



Two different types of original desk lamps in use.

floor. Capitol Architect Goodhue used lighting to distinguish between public and private spaces. Private spaces and corridors for movement have less ornate lighting than the public chambers. 

# BEHIND THE SCENES

## Changing the lightbulbs

How many state employees does it take to change a light bulb? Within the Office of the Capitol Commission Maintenance Shop all five staff members get involved changing light bulbs in the Capitol. Even with all the daylight in the building there are thousands of light bulbs/tubes illuminating offices and public spaces. OCC staff relies on office workers to report burned out bulbs in offices and private spaces, in one office alone there are 58 light bulbs. On any given day staff can be called to change as many as 20 bulbs or none at all.

Each morning one maintenance staff member walks the public corridors of the Capitol to check for and replace burned out bulbs. To reduce the time it takes to keep the Capitol illuminated, staff has stockpiled light bulbs in storage closets throughout the Capitol. In the public corridors a combination of compact fluorescent and halogen lights are used. The compact fluorescent bulbs are used in corridors with plaster ceilings; halogen lights are used in the areas finished with limestone and tile vaulting.



*John Steele, Facility Maintenance Specialist with the Office of the Capitol Commission, changes the light bulbs in the Memorial Chamber chandelier. (See drawing next page.)*



*Brett Daugherty, Facility Maintenance Supervisor, climbs above the Rotunda chandelier as John Steele, Facility Maintenance Specialist and Tahir Karimi, Capitol Electrician, help change the 136 light bulbs in the Rotunda's 3,500 pound chandelier. The signs of the zodiac encircle the chandelier and represent the passage of the seasons.*

Using winches staff annually lowers each of the fifteen large gilt cast bronze chandeliers in the Capitol to change the bulbs. To preserve the chandeliers and limit wear and tear, this once a year activity requires the replacement of all light bulbs, not just those burned out. As the year progresses, any bulbs that burn out remain in place until the next annual replacement and cleaning. Staff wear cotton gloves to prevent the acids and oils on their hands from damaging the black patina and gold leaf applied to the bronze fixtures.

The aviation beacon which flashes at the Sower's feet is changed as needed or once every three years. Companies specializing in changing lights on radio and TV towers are contracted to change the aviation beacon. A red glass case encloses the clear bulbs.

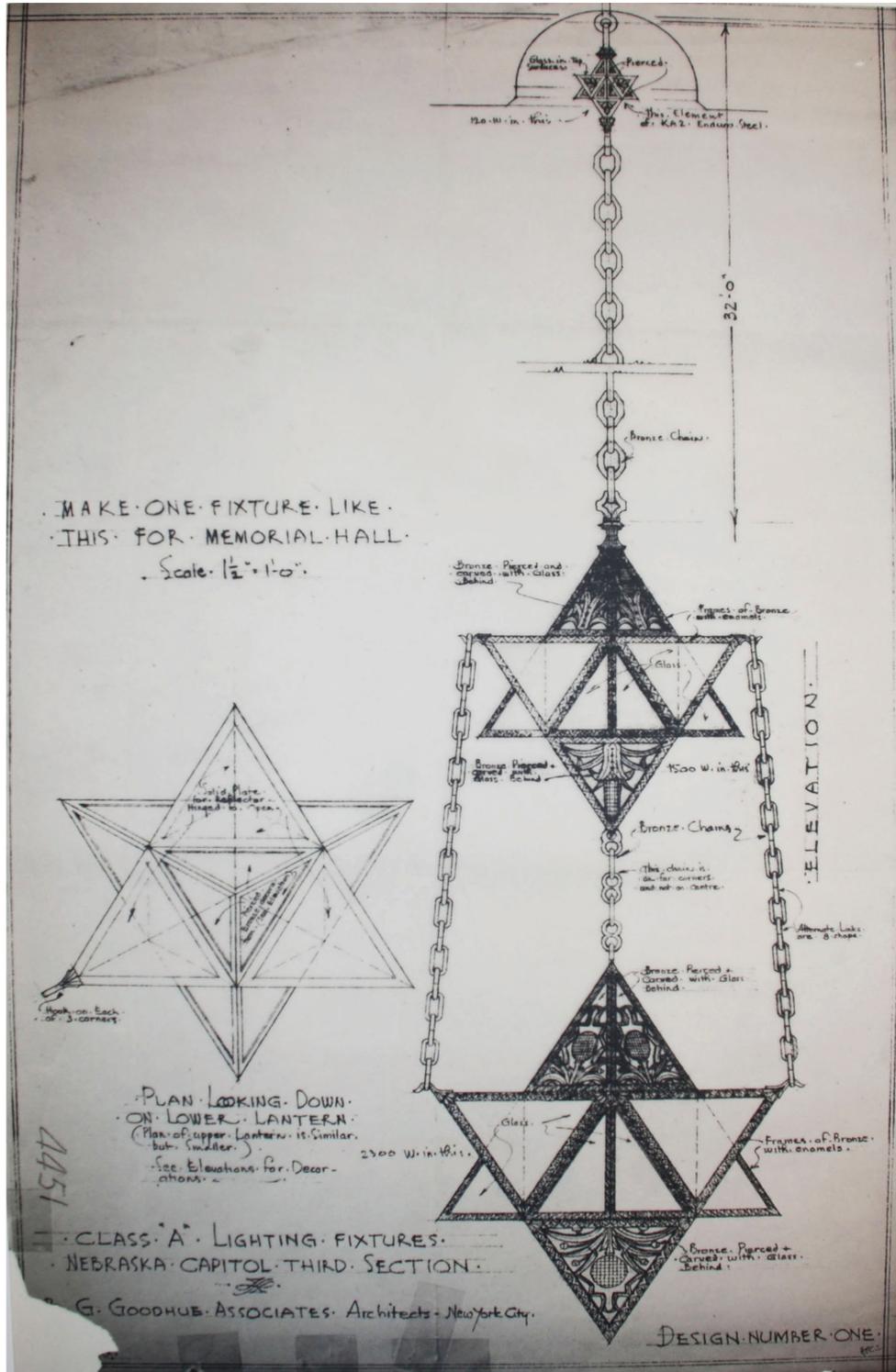


*Aviation beacon at Sower's feet.*

# WHAT'S OLD IS NEW

## Architectural drawing

A one of a kind chandelier



The Nebraska Capitol Collections includes architectural drawings by the Bertram Goodhue Associates, such as the 14th Floor Memorial Chamber chandelier pictured here. The drawings were used by manufacturers to

produce the custom gilt bronze chandeliers designed especially for the Nebraska State Capitol. Many of the drawings are full scale and show detailed designs and dimensions for the fixtures.

# CAPITOL EVENTS

## Girls State

June 4, 2009

The afternoon ceremony takes place in the Capitol Rotunda and Nebraska high school girls make state office visits. Sponsored by the American Legion Auxiliary.

## Boys State

June 5, 2009

The high school boys assemble in the Rotunda and then are released for state office visits. Sponsored by the American Legion.

## National Park Service Recognition

June 11, 2009

At 11:00 pm in the Capitol Rotunda the National Park Service will recognize the Nebraska State Capitol with an Award of Recognition.

## Silver and Gold Awards Ceremony

June 14, 2009

The 2:00 pm second floor Rotunda ceremony is sponsored by the Girl Scouts Spirit of Nebraska and Homestead Councils.

## Hall of Fame Induction

June 26, 2009

The Nebraska Hall of Fame Commission will induct University of Nebraska botanist and educator Charles E. Bessey (1845-1915) at 1:30 pm in the Warner Chamber.

## State Banking Expo

July 28, 2009

The 1:00 to 5:00 pm first floor Rotunda display is sponsored by the Nebraska State Treasurer's Office.

## Bar Induction Ceremony

September 15, 2009

The 10:00 am ceremony will take place in the second floor Rotunda of the Capitol.

## Jr. Duck Stamp Exhibit

September 21- October 2, 2009

A traveling display of Nebraska's 36 Junior Duck Stamp winning artworks.

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

## Nebraska State 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](http://www.capitol.org) for more information.

## Arbor Day at the Capitol



(left and center) State Forester Scott Josiah and First Lady Sally Ganem recognize the 2009 Nebraska Arbor Day Poster contest winner Will Nabyty from Knickrehm Elementary in Grand Island.



First Lady Sally Ganem, honorary chair of the ReTree Nebraska committee and fifth grade students from Elliott Elementary School in Lincoln plant a Green Mountain Maple on the lawn of the Capitol to celebrate Arbor Day 2009.



Photos courtesy of Arbor Day Foundation



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Capitol Architect  
Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue, 1869-1924

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The Capitol Sower, a quarterly newsletter published by the Office of the Capitol Commission, is available on line at [www.capitol.org](http://www.capitol.org) in the Credits and Links section. Contact the Tourism Supervisor at [<roxanne.smith@nebraska.gov>](mailto:roxanne.smith@nebraska.gov) for more information.

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## Capitol Falcon Chicks Banded



This year the Capitol's resident Peregrine Falcon pair produced four **eyas**, as the chicks are known. On June 2, 2009 Game and Parks non-game biologists banded the three week old bird. Volunteers

from Raptor Recovery took blood to check their health. Then the eyas posed briefly for photos before being returned to their parents in a specially built nest box on top of the Capitol. 