

THE CAPITOL SOWER



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CAPITOL COMMISSION | VOLUME FOUR | NUMBER ONE | FEB 2012

Law Library Renovation

As the Nebraska State Capitol was being designed in the early 1920's, architect Bertram Goodhue made specific provisions for the State Law Library. Regarding his artistic vision for the Capitol Goodhue stated, "Though everywhere monumental, no element of the practical or convenient has been sacrificed to this end. Even the tower is no mere useless ornament, for its shaft contains the glass-floored, many storied Library book stack." After construction was underway, the Nebraska Capitol Commission realized the Law Library would not need all the tower space. While the 7th floor was built to include the glass floored book stacks, other

tower floors were redesigned to serve as office space.



Book stacks on seventh floor, above, were replaced with offices on other tower floors.



officials and staff of the three branches to occupy the Capitol. Expanded programs and technology have resulted in additional support staff. Without available space in the Capitol these support functions are located in nearby office space. The relocation of the Worker's Compensation Court to a more accessible location outside the Capitol allowed the Judicial branch to consolidate operations in the Capitol. Changing technology also played a role in their decision to bring staff back into the building.



Book stacks in the library, left, were replaced with judicial branch offices.



Some law journals and publications are now available online. This has reduced the space needed for adding publications and allowed some book shelves to give way to office space.

The Judicial Branch requested a renovation of space in the Law Library to accommodate their current needs. The Office of the Capitol Commission completed this project in 2011. The renovated space is now being used by the Office of Judicial Branch Education. The State Law Library's Reading Room has become a part-time training center and book stacks flanking the Reading Room have been converted into office space for the director and staff. Once again the Capitol has proven adaptable and able to meet the needs of state government in the 21st century.

Nebraska Capitol Commission Membership

Dave Heineman

Governor
Chairman

Mike Flood

Speaker of the Legislature
Vice-Chairman

Janice Walker

Court Administrator

Vacant

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*
Matt Hansen, *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*
Rich Naber, *Custodial Leader*

GROUNDS

Mike Hoppmann,
Arborist/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*
Gloria Witherspoon,
Tourism Aide
Jamison Wyatt,
Tourism Aide

OCC AT WORK Experience and Service

In October of 2011 four Office of the Capitol Commission staff received recognition for their years of service to state government. The Capitol Commission benefits from having very

skilled experienced staff on the job. These members provide valuable information about past projects and have an understanding of procedure and the day to day operation of the building. 



*Perry Shuman,
OCC Capitol
Conservation
Supervisor, has
served Nebraska
for 15 years.*



*Mike Hoppmann,
Groundskeeper/
Arborist with
OCC, has
completed 20
years of service.*



*Steve Janssen,
Furniture
Refinisher with
the OCC, has 35
years of service.*




*Mark Tonjes, OCC
Capitol Manager,
has 35 years of
service with the
State of Nebraska.*

Preservation Award

Heritage Nebraska recognized the Nebraska State Capitol Exterior Restoration and Reroof Project with its 2011 Preservation Award. The Heritage Nebraska Preservation Award recognizes an outstanding or noteworthy historic preservation project in the state. Heritage Nebraska determined "...this year's winner was a slam dunk once the scaffolding was removed and the landscaping work begun. Years in the making and millions of dollars later, the nation's most beautiful state capitol is standing tall and proud. A true feat of historic preservation, the building was rehabilitated to original standards from the very foundation to the top of the Sower's head. The building represents a true icon for the entire state, standing as tall and proud in eastern Nebraska as historic Chimney Rock stands in the Panhandle."



Capitol Administrator Bob Ripley, center right, and OCC Architect Tom Kaspar, center left, accept the Preservation Award from Heritage Nebraska consultant Dan Worth, left and J.L. Schmidt, Heritage Nebraska President, right.

At the same ceremony Heritage Nebraska recognized Capitol Tourism Supervisor Roxanne Smith with the Preservation Educator award for "providing educational programming to students and the general public about historic preservation." 

Capitol Commission's 2012 Schedule


The Nebraska Capitol Commission has set its 2012 meeting schedule all meetings are held in Room #1507 of the Nebraska Capitol. 

- February 7, 2012 at 9:00 a.m.
- June 7, 2012 at 9:00 a.m.
- August 7, 2012 at 9:00 a.m.
- November 8, 2012 at 10:00 a.m.

CONSERVATION PROJECTS

Library Table Restoration

During the Law Library Project, the Judicial Branch requested the Office of the Capitol Commission restore the four original Stow-Davis tables in the Reading Room. These tables are constructed of walnut and are the same style as other tables originally purchased for use in the court area. However, the walnut had been bleached and tinted by the manufacturer to match the ash woodwork in the Reading Room. Prior to the 1970's, damaged table top veneer was covered with a laminate rather than being restored. Lamps were also installed on the tables at this time. Furniture conservation staff inspection revealed the tables could be restored using the Office of the Capitol Commission's conservation approach. OCC's highly skilled staff were able to reverse these modifications and restore the tables to their former appearance.

To accomplish this the tables were disassembled and the plastic laminate removed using heat and leverage. Staff replaced and reglued missing and loose veneer discovered underneath the laminate and plugged lamp holes. Their biggest challenge was to determine how best to match the special finish. A series of experiments resulted in a multi-stepped process which first stained and then pigmented the table tops. A final application of several coats of blonde shellac was then rubbed out using wax and steel wool. The table's apron and base were protected during this process and then cleaned with water and naphtha. Abraded edges of the table's feet were repaired, in-painted and sealed with blonde shellac. The restored tables were returned to their new classroom setting in the Reading Room. Quarter inch plate glass was placed on the table tops for protection. Following a similar conservation approach to furniture restoration, OCC staff will in the future begin restoration of the chairs in the Reading Room. 



Left, the removed laminate rests on a table in the Carpenter shop as the table top, back of the room, awaits the next step in its restoration. Below, a table top with veneer repaired.

Below, shop staff smooths the repaired veneer on the table top with an orbital sander. Once the surface was repaired stain and finish were applied.



Below, the restored finish accentuates the beautiful wood grain in the table top. Quarter inch plate glass is used to protect all table tops in the Capitol.



Before and after staff restoration of table legs and feet to original condition, below.



The restored library tables returned to service.



Preparing for a New Use

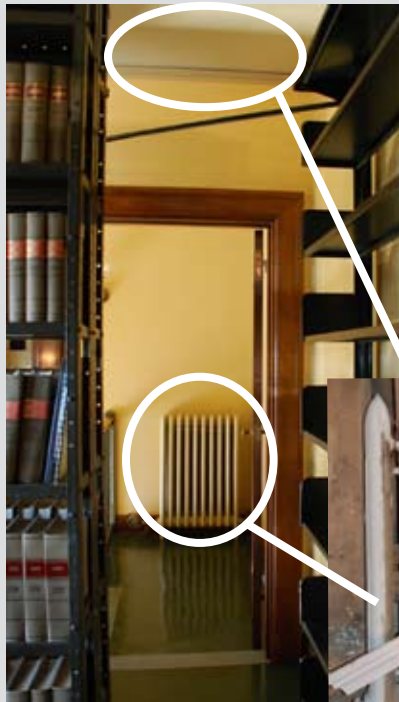
Teamwork gets it done

Shops work together to update library space.

The Nebraska State Library is one of a handful of Capitol spaces which have remained relatively untouched since the Capitol was completed in 1932. When Office of the Capitol Commission staff began the Law Library Project they encountered original finishes and conditions which had served for 80 years. The project required a coordinated effort by Capitol Commission personnel to bring the library space up to current standards for office use while honoring the original finishes which had served so well.

To start the project, OCC architects created new drawings which laid out office space and located mechanical and electrical improvements. After books and bookshelves were relocated, OCC shop staff removed all the doors, blinds, furniture, and base trim. These wooden components were taken to the carpenter's shop for restoration. The mason on staff was then called in to provide new conduit

routes for electrical outlets, lighting, phone and data lines. Maintenance staff removed radiators for repair and repainting. The Capitol's electrician



OCC preservation staff investigated the original color scheme for the library stack space. Using the radiator's back side, which had not been over-painted, and uncovering original colors on picture molding, staff determined the original accent color. Using standard color swatches found compatible colors. The radiators, picture molding, walls, and ceilings were repainted back to the architects original color scheme, as shown above.




Two new outlets were located in bookshelves and are unnoticed except when in use, left.

wired the new circuits offices

required. He also rewired Capitol original light fixtures with new compatible wire. With the upgraded infrastructure in place, the mason returned for plaster repair.


While the upgrades were being handled in the stacks, the doors, door trim, slate bases and thresholds were carefully cleaned. Staff used minimally invasive cleaning techniques to remove only the soiling. Finish was reapplied only where needed, and the trim hand rubbed with wax before being returned to service. To finish the modified stack space some new trim was manufactured in house to match existing trim. Windows in the project area were cleaned and reglazed. OCC shop staff restored the existing blinds and fabricated new blinds for the windows where needed. OCC's Hardware Conservator worked from existing blind hardware to fabricate the additional brackets needed to hang the new blinds.

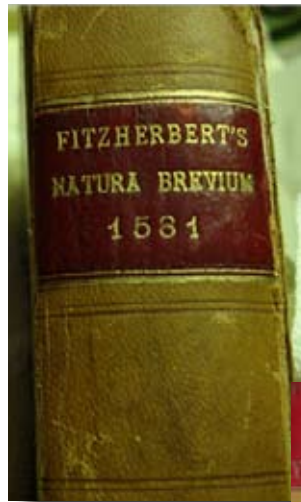
While the infrastructure in the Library Reading Room was upgraded during the project. Special care was taken to protect the original linoleum floor as new circuits were added to accommodate the video training equipment. Custodial staff worked very hard to restore the finish on the linoleum floor, bringing it back to its original beauty.

The result of this coordinated effort is modern office space which meets the needs of staff. The Office of the Capitol Commission balances the needs of office staff with its mission to preserve the architectural integrity of the Nebraska State Capitol. Where possible Capitol original finishes and furnishings are restored and returned to service. 

BEHIND THE SCENES

Law Library Collection

The Nebraska State Library was founded in 1855 following the creation of Nebraska Territory with the Nebraska-Kansas Act of 1954. The United States Congress sent Nebraska \$5,000.00 to furnish and purchase books for the new library. At that time, law books were frequently acquired from other libraries. Auctions and sales of attorney's estates provided many of the early volumes which are still held in the library. The Library's Collection has unusual and varied volumes which document the evolution of modern American law from historic British common law. These reference books help establish the legal precedence of Nebraska's laws. The Library has a complete set of Nebraska Legislative Journals back to 1855, a copy of every bill introduced by the Legislature since 1893, as well as a full set of Nebraska Statutes. The Nebraska State Library is a Depository Library for federal documents such as the Federal Register, the Code of Federal Regulations, Federal Statutes, and the U.S. Reports, opinions of the United States Supreme Court. 

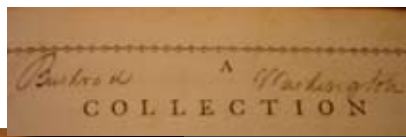


The oldest book in the collection, left, is a 1581 edition of Anthony Fitzherbert's 1534 *Natura Brevium*, which documented British common law. The lawmakers of the British colonies in America would have drawn from such texts as they created early American law. The collection contains law books from the original 13 colonies. Massachusetts example, 1692-1702, below.



The Nebraska Supreme Court Administrator's Office provided the images used in this article. Please go to <http://www.supremecourt.ne.gov/> for additional information.

Right, labels from both the Territorial and State Libraries indicate this volume traveled from Omaha to Lincoln upon statehood and the subsequent relocation of the capital city.




One book of early American law from the General Assembly of Virginia was previously owned by George Washington's nephew, Bushrod Washington. His signature appears at the top of the title page, left and above.

Renovation Includes Recycling

Renovating the State Law Library required changing the use and function of some library space. Historically, a library relied on books and other publications for their services. With the introduction of the computer, libraries have changed. The State Law Library no longer receives paper copies of some law journals, providing access to these publications via the internet. The library renovation included an inventory of publications and the disposal of outdated and duplicate materials. Printed material no longer of value was recycled.

The Office of the Capitol Commission provides

recycling services to all agencies and staff in the building. Whether for a major renovation project, a change in elected official or daily office use, recycling bins and barrels are available for staff. Capitol staff make the requests and OCC staff deliver and pick up the recycling containers. This year the Office of the Capitol Commission recycled 18,245 pounds of cardboard, 116,520 pounds of office paper, 24,000 pounds of newspaper, 5,600 pounds of magazines, and 10,200 pounds of mixed paper. Staff also recycled 2,150 pounds of steel cans, 1,790 pounds of plastic, 2,725 pounds of aluminum and 300 pounds of glass. 

WHAT'S OLD IS NEW

Hidden From View

Capitol Architect Bertram Goodhue's use of historic and modern building techniques to create beautiful rooms in the Capitol is evident in the State Library's Reading Room. The Reading Room appears to be a limestone box with a walnut beamed ceiling and three large windows in one wall. Such masonry construction would be unstable if not for the steel beams holding the structure together, steel beams hidden behind masonry during construction. With seasonal changes causing expansion and contraction of masonry and steel, cracks soon



Damaged plaster reveals a hint of color and what might be a decorative finish.

appeared in the walls. These cracks were hidden with plaster and paint. But the movement in the walls did not stop.

Noticing bits of gold and color in the cracked plaster on the wall, Office of the Capitol Commission staff suspected there was a decorative finish hidden beneath the paint. But other restoration work in the Capitol took precedence. Once OCC hired a full time archivist to investigate



Research in the Capitol Collection by the Capitol Archivist uncovered the original stencil macquette for the decorative walls in the Law Library's Reading Room.

and organize the collections a discovery was made--the original stencil pattern for the decoration of the Reading Room wall. In the mid 1990's with this newly discovered information in hand, OCC hired a conservator to investigate. His work revealed the hidden beauty of the original wall finish.

The recent renovation of the library stack rooms provided the opportunity for OCC to investigate the conditions which contributed to the plaster damage. Contractors removed plaster to uncover the hidden structural beams which had contributed to the cracking plaster. Engineering consultants developed a solution to stabilize the beams with slotted plates, while allowing limited seasonal movement. OCC will

continue to monitor the walls to determine the success of the repairs. If successful in the long run, and the plaster wall is stabilized, these repairs will lay the ground work for future restoration. If resources become available in the future, the Office of the Capitol Commission will be able to reference the original stencil macquette, as future restoration uncovers the hidden beauty of the Nebraska State Library's Reading Room.



Original decoration uncovered, above.



Steel beam uncovered, above. Slotted plate added for stability, below.



Plaster repair, above, covering the stabilized wall support beam will be monitored to gauge success of repair.

CAPITOL EVENTS

Photovoice Project: A Journey

February 6-10, 2012

Behavioral Health Education Center of Nebraska and National Alliance on Mental Health-Nebraska sponsored Participatory Action Research Project photo display in 1st floor rotunda.

Abraham Lincoln's Birthday Vigil

February 12, 2012

The Grand Army of the Republic and Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War will stand vigil at the West Plaza Lincoln Memorial from 7:00 a.m. until noon.

Build Nebraska Awards

February 13- 17, 2012

The Associated General Contractors-Nebraska Building Chapter will showcase of 2011 award winners in a 1st floor Rotunda display.

History of Credit Unions

February 13- 17, 2012

The Nebraska Credit Union League will have a 1st floor Rotunda display.

President's Day

February 20, 2012

The Nebraska State Capitol will be open for hourly guided tours between 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Music Education Week

February 27 - March 2, 2012

The Nebraska Music Educators host 2nd floor rotunda concerts. The 12:00 p.m. and 12:30 p.m. performances feature choirs and bands from schools across the state.

Draw Your Dreams Art Display

February 27 - March 2, 2012

The winners of the State Treasurer's 529 College Savings Plan poster contest will be in the 1st floor Rotunda.

March Gambling Awareness Month

March 5-8, 2012

Creating Family Choices will have an educational display addressing problem gambling in the 1st floor Rotunda.

Brain Injury Awareness Month

March 5-9, 2012

The Brain Injury Association of Nebraska will have a display in the 1st floor rotunda.

Youth Art Month Art Show

March 11-25, 2012

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

No Limits Youth Rally

March 21, 2012

No Limits will sponsor Kick Butts Day youth rally on the North Plaza of the Capitol from 12:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Youth Art Month Celebration

March 24, 2012

The Nebraska Art Teachers Association will honor the state art contest winners in the 2nd Floor Rotunda of the Capitol at 2:00 p.m.

March is Social Work Month

March 26- 30, 2012

The Nebraska Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers will have a display in the 1st floor Rotunda.

World Autism Day Rally

April 1, 2012

The Autism Family Network will rally at dusk on the West Plaza of the Capitol.

Call Before You Dig Month

April 10 - 13, 2010

The One-Call Board, the Nebraska Rural Electric and Telecommunications and Natural Gas Associations will have a display in the 1st floor Rotunda.

Nebraska Holocaust Commemoration

April 15, 2012

The Jewish Federation sponsors this annual event in the 2nd Floor Rotunda of the Capitol at 2:00 p.m.

National Crime Victims Rights Week

April 23 - 27, 2012

The Nebraska Crime Commission will have a display in the 1st floor Rotunda.

Worker Memorial Day Vigil

April 28, 2012

United Support Memorial for Workplace Fatalities sponsored vigil on the North Plaza of the Capitol from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m.

ALS in the Heartland Display

April 30-May 10, 2012

Display in the 1st floor Rotunda in conjunction with ALS Awareness Month

Mayor's Run

May 5, 2012


The Lincoln Track Club will sponsor this one mile fun run for students around the Capitol's exterior beginning at 7:30 a.m.

National Peace Officers Week

May 11-18, 2012

The Nebraska State Patrol will honor fallen peace officers in a 1st floor Rotunda display.

The Governor will sign Proclamations at 10:30 a.m. in the Warner Chamber on February 15, March 14, April 11, May 16 and June 13. For proclamation information please contact Sarah in the Lt. Governor's Office at (402)471-2256.

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 p.m., except at noon. Saturday and Holidays from 10:00 am 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, 1869-1924

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SPIRIT OF THE PRAIRIE

BY
ELIZABETH
DOLAN



The Capitol Sower, published by the Office of the Capitol Commission, is available on line 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 property of the Office of the Capitol Commission.

Elizabeth Dolan, a noted Lincoln muralist, painted *The Spirit of the Prairie* to fill the interior arched niche above the entrance to the Nebraska State Law Library. The mural was painted on site by Dolan who donated her time painting the mural and asked that the State pay for only the paint and canvas. Other murals by Dolan are located at The University of Nebraska State Museum of Natural History, including the diorama

backdrops for the fossil displays and the portraits of Erwin Barbour, Samuel Avery and Mr. and Mrs. John Morrill in the museum. The Capitol's Dolan may be seen when Law Library is open, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Women's t-shirts featuring the Dolan mural are available in the Landmark Store at the Capitol. Call (402) 471-2062 for information. 