



Arkansas House Newsletter

June 2, 2014

House Restoration Begins

RESTORATION PROJECT BEGINS IN HOUSE CHAMBER

LITTLE ROCK, Arkansas (June 2, 2014) –

When legislators began meeting in the current House Chamber for the first time back in 1911, electric lighting was still a new concept. There was no audio system to help members hear testimony from the floor. And the furniture made its way from the Old State House in a wagon less than 24 hours before session began.

Needless to say over the last century, there have been many upgrades. And although House leadership continues to upgrade technology for transparency and efficiency, they also strive to keep the integrity of the once richly decorated space. Starting Monday, June 2nd construction crews will begin an extensive historic restoration project in the House Chamber.

The \$1 million restoration will include restoring cracked pieces of stained glass, restoring plaster in the ceiling that has received water damage, and restoring the House Chamber Chandelier. Clements and Associates will be the architect of the project. Austin Construction is the general contractor.

A historic paint analysis has been conducted to return the chamber to its original colors. One of the preliminary proposals stated, “The richness and visual character of the various glaze finished on the architectural plaster created a visual variety and depth that the current finishes only hint at.”

Facts About The House Chamber

The Arkansas State Capitol was constructed between 1899 and 1915. The original construction cost was not to exceed \$1 million. After two architects, two general contractors, six Capitol Commissions and three governors, the completed Capitol cost almost \$2.3 million.

In 1911, the 38th General Assembly convened in the unfinished building for their first session at the new State Capitol.

The stained glass and drapes were added in 1914 to reduce glare and temper the chamber's acoustics.

The columns and pilasters in the chamber are finished with a faux marble art form known as scagliola, a technique which uses gypsum, glue, pigment, and marble dust.

The gilded columns and other features were restored in 2009.

The House will post pictures of the progress on its Facebook page www.facebook.com/arkansashouse and on Twitter @arkansashouse.