



Statue just the icing on Statehouse cake

Renovation: Underground parking, visitors center, updated offices are in the plan, too

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With \$55 million in state-backed bonds sold to pay for the first-phase of the Statehouse restoration and renovation project, the undertaking is on schedule.

The first phase includes the restoration of the east wing and the construction of an underground parking garage and visitors center beneath the north grounds.

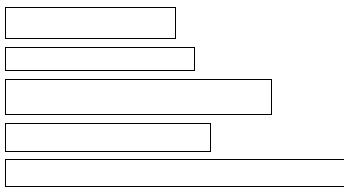
"We did slow down for about a month with the restoration of the east wing,"said Statehouse architect Barry Greis. "We wanted the excavating to be slowed down so we could review our methods to make sure everything was going smoothly."



Renovations at the Statehouse include an underground parking garage and visitors center. This view is from the north side of the building.

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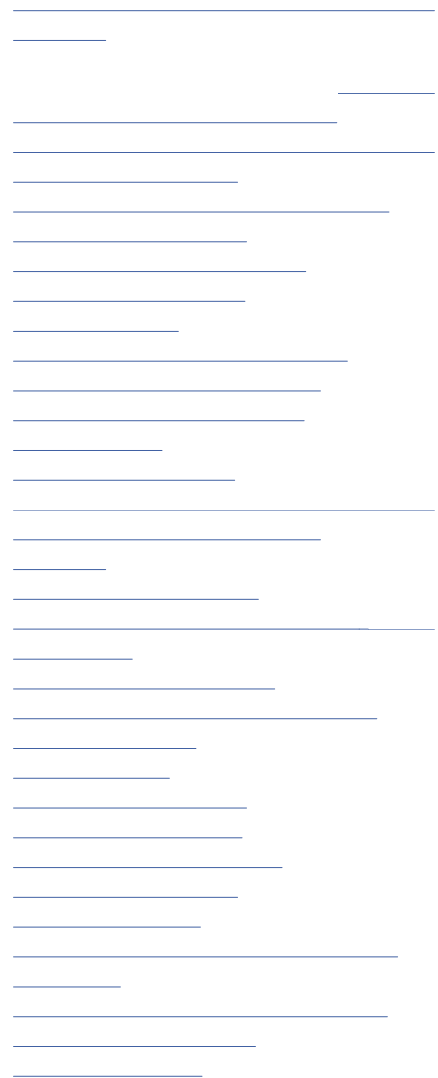
The restoration project is scheduled over the next eight years. There may be some delay with the

endeavor as a result of budget issues.

Construction of the parking garage, however, has not been delayed and Greis expects it will open spring 2003. The parking garage will have 550 spaces, 200 of which will be designated for visitors.

Greis said historically, the Statehouse was never meant to have parking around it. When it was suggested to a committee to construct an underground parking garage, the idea seemed ideal.

"There never could be enough parking near the



Statehouse,"Greis said.

The construction temporarily forced some legislators to park on the street and reduced the number of visitor spaces in the vicinity of the Statehouse during the 2002 legislative session.

Those parking inconveniences may be considered minor, however, once workers and artisans begin renovating the interior of the Statehouse's east wing. That work will displace the governor and his staff for months. Senate leaders also will be forced to move out of their offices.

Plans for the eight-year, \$135 million renovation project call for many Statehouse offices to be restored to the way they looked in 1917, the last time the building received a comprehensive face-lift. Technology will be updated, but the color schemes and furniture will take the rooms back to that period.



Workers stand on scaffolding 300 feet above the ground and guide in a metal ring carried by a 450-foot-tall crane to be placed in the Capitol dome to prepare it for the placement of the 20-foot-tall "Ad

The basement, which houses steam pipes and storage bins, will become the main working area of the Capitol by creating offices for the Legislature's permanent staff and the media along with the visitor's center, which will receive people as they enter the building from the underground parking garage.

Though it will be several years before the visitor's center will be operational, part of it will be constructed with the parking garage. Once completed, the visitor's center will include classrooms, meeting rooms and a cafeteria.

"We expect the center to triple the number of visitors we have at the Capitol,"said Greis. "It's pretty exciting when you think about that."

Construction also has continued on the dome of the Capitol as workers prepare it for the 20-foot, 6,000-pound sculpture and supporting structure known called Ad Astra. The statue of the Kaw warrior will be placed on top of the dome Oct. 7.

"It's coming along well,"said state architect Thaine Hoffman. "The platform for the statue should be completed in time."

Hoffman said he has received some negative phone calls about placing the statue on top of the dome, but said legislators decided to do this in 1988.

"It's unfortunate that the economy is on hard times and it may not be a good time for it,"he said. "But it was ready to go now and I think it

Astra"statue will be a great addition."

that will be
hoisted into
place on
Oct. 7.

Hoffman also said he thinks the sculpture of the Kanza Indian is more appropriate than what was selected in 1903 -- the Roman goddess of fertility and agriculture, Ceres.

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Statehouse

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Location: 300 S.W. 10th.

Investment: The budget is \$135 million for the restoration and renovation project and about \$700,000 for the dome work and placement of

"Ad Astra," a sculpture of a Kanza Indian created by Richard Bergen.

Scope: The restoration and renovation project will include an underground parking garage and visitors center. The visitor's center will include classrooms, conference rooms and a dining facility.

New jobs: Unknown at this time.

Bottom line: With continual lack of parking around the Statehouse, the underground parking garage should alleviate some of the problems. The addition of an extensive visitor's area could triple the number of people who tour the Capitol, based on similar renovations at Statehouses in Ohio and Texas.