

Eaves of construction

Posted: Friday, August 7, 2015 11:27 am

Roof restoration began Monday on the venerable Keokuk Union Depot.

“I am excited that a portion of the roof restoration project has begun,” said Janet Smith, president of the Keokuk Union Depot Foundation. “I look forward to further progress on restoring this magnificent building as the depot approaches its 125th anniversary on July 1, 2016.”

Workers with Restoric LLC, a Chicago-based historic preservation consulting firm, are taking apart the eaves around the building’s waiting room.

Keokuk native Neal Vogel, who is the key man at Restoric, is project manager for the restoration of the chimney and the eaves, soffits, decorative brackets and copper gutters on the upriver end of the depot.

Work is expected to be completed this fall.

Despite construction, the depot is in use as a community event center and will continue to be available during and after the restoration.

“The depot will look a little messy for a couple of weeks, but the deconstruction of the waiting room eaves is giving us an opportunity to inspect the structure around the upriver end of the roof, which will help with the overall roof restoration project,” Smith said.

Grant award

A recent State Historical Society of Iowa award of a \$56,600 Historical Resource Development Program grant is earmarked for this portion of the depot restoration.

The HRDP grant-funded project is just a part of the larger \$1 million roof restoration for which the Keokuk Union Depot Foundation received a Jeffris Family Foundation two-for-one challenge grant of \$333,000.



Depot headway

Employees with Restoric LLC are working this week on the Keokuk Union Depot roof restoration project by taking apart the eaves around the former train station’s waiting room.

The Jeffris Family Foundation, based in Janesville, Wis., is dedicated to the historic preservation of significant architectural structures in small towns in the Midwest.

The \$113,200 cost of the chimney, eave and gutter project will be funded by the \$56,600 HRDP grant, \$52,600 from matching funds contributed to KUDF for the roof restoration project during the Depot 125 Capital Campaign, and earlier grants of \$1,500 from the Tom E. Dailey Foundation and \$2,500 from BNSF Foundation.

Through July 31, KUDF has received \$425,505 from approximately 200 donors toward the \$667,000 Jeffris match.

“The support of the State of Iowa, the Jeffris Family Foundation, and the community has been tremendous,” Smith said.

Contributions to the roof restoration project may be made to the Keokuk Union Depot Foundation, P.O. Box 463, Keokuk, IA 52632.

About the depot project

The Keokuk Union Depot, built in 1891, was originally topped by a graceful red clay tile roof of decorative ridge and hip tiles, dormers and hip pinnacles, and a tall corbelled chimney.

The nationally renowned architectural firm of Burnham & Root of Chicago designed the roofline to rise above the limestone bluff and be viewed from afar whether traveling on roads, rails or river.

Substantially altered circa 1960, the entire roof must be replaced to preserve the building and to restore it to its original design.

The chimney was partially dismantled and lowered, probably at the same time the red clay tiles and upper hip roof were removed.

Historic photo documentation proves that the original stack was still standing in 1947 but was lowered by 1962.

The HRDP project will increase the height of the chimney by approximately 25 feet and restore the upriver eaves, soffits and gutters that surround the original waiting room.

For further information, visit the Depot’s web sites: www.keokukuniondepot.org and www.depot125.org.