

# Stained-glass restoration underway at Capitol

**By Bob Mercer**  
Capitol Correspondent

The \$2.7 million renovation of the state Capitol's 199 panels of antique stained glass began Monday, as the first pieces were carefully lifted from the beautiful center dome and lowered one at a time in a special protective crate to the rotunda floor 96 feet below.

The project will encompass much more than the rotunda, however. It is scheduled to take about 14 months and be completed by Oct. 1, 2014.

The target is that everything is back in place and looking as good as new or better for the 125th anniversary of statehood on Nov. 2, 2014.

Conrad Schmitt Studios from New Berlin, WI, is leading the project. All of the glass will be transported to the studios near Milwaukee to be cleaned and repaired as necessary, while the soft lead frames will be replaced with stronger ones less likely to sag.

The glass has been in place since 1909 and there aren't any records regarding the firm that did the original work or how it was done, according to Mike Mueller, an official for the state Bureau of Administration.

Mueller and state Commissioner of Administration Paul

Kinsman briefed the Legislature's Executive Board about the project Monday.

Kinsman said a goal is to install a new lighting system that will better show the glasswork. The old lighting system burned out and wasn't replaced.

The first half of the work will focus on the rotunda glass. The second half of the project will start after the 2014 session of the Legislature concludes March 31. Altogether there are 4,400 square feet of stained glass to be removed, redone and reinstalled.

The post-March phase of the work involves the stained glass ceilings of the House and Senate chambers on the third floor, as well as the barrel vault above part of the Capitol's third floor above the grand staircase.

Colored panels of special plywood will be installed temporarily in each opening while the glass panels are out.

All of the legislators' 105 desks and other furniture will be removed from the two chambers for up to six months next year while the work is performed on the House and Senate ceilings, according to Jim Fry, director for the Legislative Research Council.

Fry said a replacement plan for worn carpet in the House and Senate chambers will be put on hold until



Workers began removing panels of stained glass from the Capitol rotunda Monday as part of a 14-month, \$2.7 million project that will also remove, clean and renovate the stained glass in the roofs of the House and Senate chambers and the third-floor barrel over the grand staircase.

(Bob Mercer/Capitol Correspondent)

after the ceiling work is done.

Scaffolding will be installed for the House and Senate work, while a temporary floor will be

constructed above the grand staircase to perform the barrel vault work. The dome panels in the rotunda are being

transported by a winch and rope system, because the panels can be lifted out by workers on the hidden

walkway between the inner glass structure and the actual outer dome.

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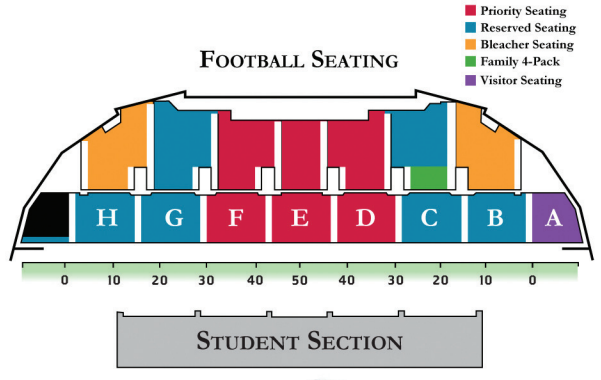
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