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Gov. Pritzker announces \$15 million preservation investment at historic Old State Capitol in Springfield

Site will be closed to public while work is underway

SPRINGFIELD – The Old State Capitol State Historic Site in Springfield is receiving long overdue attention thanks to a \$15.1 million preservation investment made possible by Governor JB Pritzker’s bipartisan Rebuild Illinois capital plan.

Years of deferred maintenance are being addressed both inside and outside of the historic site in the heart of downtown Springfield. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) manages the site, and the Illinois Capital Development Board (CDB) is overseeing the work. The site is now closed to the public and will remain so for the duration of the project.

“The Old State Capitol is one of the most revered historic sites in Illinois,” **Governor Pritzker said**. “I’m proud that our administration is investing in the preservation of the site to ensure future generations can connect to this place and to the important lessons in history that are shared here.”

The scope of work provides for removing and replacing the historic site roof, repairing damaged plaster, replacing wood flooring on the main and upper levels, basement waterproofing, restoring the perimeter fence, and upgrading one hydraulic and two traction elevators. In addition, the project includes remodeling and expanding the existing public restrooms, replacing the fire alarm system, and replacing plumbing systems. Furthermore, the project includes funding for the abatement of asbestos-containing materials.

This is the second phase of an ongoing preservation project at the site. The first phase focused on restoration of the building’s drum (the structure that supports the dome). The total investment from both phases is \$17.6 million.

“The Old State Capitol is the heart of the city. Not only does it host daily guided tours, it’s also the site of such activities as naturalization ceremonies, History Comes Alive programs and holiday festivities,” said **IDNR site superintendent Justin Blandford**. “This investment is critical to our ability to address deferred maintenance as well as safety upgrades to ensure world-class preservation and visitor experience.”

The Old State Capitol, a reconstruction of Illinois' statehouse from 1840 to 1876, is the building in which John Jones and Frances Gage worked to expand the meaning of freedom and where Abraham Lincoln worked as a lawyer before the Supreme Court and delivered his famous "House Divided" speech in 1858.

Recently, the Old State Capitol unveiled a new historical marker to commemorate the campaign announcements of Barack Obama in 2007 and 2008, and the National Park Service added the site to its National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom list. The Old State Capitol is a National Historic Landmark and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

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