

Herschler, Capitol design work to be completed by year's end, officials say

By Trevor Brown
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CHEYENNE—State officials are targeting the end of the 2015 legislative session to begin major work on the planned renovation of the State Capitol.

Mel Muldrow told business leaders on Friday that the plan is to finish the final design work on the Capitol and related Herschler Building renovation project this year.

Muldrow is administrator of the state's Construction Management Division. That agency is part of the Department of Administration and Information.

"Our intent after the (2015) session is to start moving people out of the Capitol," he said told the Greater Cheyenne Chamber of Commerce's monthly luncheon. "Hopefully by 2016 we'll be well into construction, and we hope to be finished with the project in the spring of 2017."

Lawmakers passed a bill earlier in the year that commits up to \$259 million for what is being called the "Capitol Square" project. The centerpiece of that is the long-awaited renovation of the State Capitol.

The National Historic Landmark, which was commissioned in 1886, last saw a facelift in 1980. A team of consultants that spent much of last year studying the building found safety and structural problems that they say must be addressed sooner rather than later.

Those include the need to overhaul or modernize the heating, cooling, plumbing, fire suppression and smoke filtration systems.

The consultants also found that parts of the building's stone exterior need repair as do leaking

At a glance

State officials plan to begin major construction work on the State Capitol after the end of the 2015 legislative session, the local Chamber of Commerce was told on Friday. The renovation of the Capitol and surrounding properties is expected to take at least two years.

skylights, hail damage to the roof and dome and other issues.

The project also calls for the renovation and expansion of the adjacent Herschler Building.

This includes expanding and overhauling the underground connector between the two buildings and putting up a four-story addition to building's north side.

That is designed to create legislative meeting rooms and office space for state workers in Cheyenne.

Muldrow said the state has to wait until the final design work is done and a contractor is selected before many of the plans, including the timeline, are finalized.

But he said the working plan is to move workers into parts of the Herschler Building and elsewhere when the construction takes place on the Capitol.

This likely will take occur over two legislative sessions. So lawmakers also will likely end up using parts of the Herschler Building for a temporary meeting place for the Legislature.

Dean Fausset, director of the Department of Administration, and Senate President Tony Ross, R-Cheyenne, also spoke about why the project is needed.

Fausset said weather

damage alone over the years has required many of the fixes to the Capitol.

"Due to hail storms, there has been significant hail damage (there)," he added. "It actually penetrated the dome and went all the way through the gold leaf in our Capitol."

Ross added that the lack of modern smoke- and fire-suppression systems leaves the building vulnerable to a destructive and possibly deadly fire.

"The State Capitol is a tinderbox waiting to go up in smoke," he said. "There are life-safety problems: There is no smoke protection, there are no sprinkler systems, and there are no suitable evacuations in the event of a fire."

Ross said lawmakers will not have to pay the \$259 million at once. That is because they have stashed away some \$100 million for the Capitol and related projects.

And to make up the rest, they are looking to spend \$37.5 million in general fund money for each of the next four years.

Muldrow said it is possible that the state will not need all of that. He said the \$259 million includes \$20 million in contingency funds.

The bill to approve the funding also creates an oversight committee that will make many of the design and procedural decisions. That group will be made up of Gov. Matt Mead and top lawmakers.

Ross said the state wants to be sure it makes the right decisions so lawmakers will not have to revisit the problems in the near future.

"This building has lasted 128 years," he said. "It is our goal that it lasts another 128."

Expert: Kids' hands-on work trumps exams

By Seneca Flowers
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CHEYENNE—National Education Association members need to get boots on the ground and tell people about the education accomplishments they have made in students' lives.

That was the message of NEA vice president Lily Eskelsen Garcia, who said those should include accomplishments that cannot be measured on a standardized test.

Eskelsen Garcia spoke Friday to the 82nd Delegate Assembly of the Wyoming Education Association at Little America Hotel and Resort. She told the delegates they need to propagate the value of students having hands-on experience, as opposed to them remembering standardized tests in order to meet Common Core standards.

Common Core standards are a voluntary set of education standards designed to ensure a student's graduation, proper college preparation or workforce preparation. They are being adopted by a list of states across the country, though their status in Wyoming is currently unclear.

The charismatic speaker said she thought the Common Core standards are great for students, but the standardized testing approach does not allow for actual classroom learning through experience in many areas.

The current testing approach is turning schools into factories making a consistent product measured by a standardized test, she added.

Eskelsen Garcia said she has many favorite Common Core standards. One example she gave was a language arts standard requiring students to be able to analyze persuasive speakers and summarize the claims by reason and evidence.

She said if she still had a classroom, her students would watch a current debate and analyze it and discuss it.

She said that type of first-person participation would allow for in-depth knowledge. But she also sees many other standards measured by tests that she does not think are applicable.

"Most of the really critical-thinking, creative problem-solving standards defy a multiple choice test," she said.

If the Common Core required teachers to achieve education goals without forcing them to teach a certain way, teachers would be able to engage in more effective student learning, rather than just administering a standard multiple choice test based on a specific Common Core textbook. She said in critical thinking, a standardized test will not work.

"Who cares what one kid ranks against another kid, against a norm," Eskelsen Garcia said.

"We want to know what skills they have. So all the norm reference tests should be in the Ripley's 'I can't be-

lieve we ever did this' museum."

She added that educators should not teach creative, critical and collaborative exercises with a timeline script.

She said the current test preparation environment exists because of misinformation spread by opponents trying to make public schools look inefficient. According to Eskelsen Garcia, these opponents of public schools are funded by corporate for-profit charter schools.

"We are up against people who own media dynasties," she said.

Eskelsen Garcia said the 3 million-member NEA's secret weapons

"Who cares what one kid ranks against another kid, against a norm. We want to know what skills they have."

Lily Eskelsen Garcia
NEA vice president

were comprised of the power of their passionate hearts. She called upon the members of the NEA to spread word of their accomplishments so the

educators' successes could be promoted and acknowledged. She said that is the best way to fight against misinformation.

Eskelsen Garcia began her education career as a lunch lady and a kindergarten aide. She said her vast education experience has taught her that real stories matter when trying to persuade people of the value of public education, and that was what she wanted the NEA members to do.

"Go. Fight. Win," she said as the crowd got to its feet.

The WEA delegate assembly ends today.

Cheyenne businessman submits Republican bid for secretary of state

Ed Murray of Cheyenne filed paperwork with the state this week to form a candidate committee for the secretary of state's race.

The committee allows candidates to begin collecting campaign donations.

Murray is running as a Republican.

A representative with Murray's campaign said there will be additional information about his election plans early next week.

Bridge tips D6



Aries, what's in store for you? D6

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As We Worship

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First Baptist Church 1800 E. Pershing Blvd. 632-9334	St. Andrews Anglican Church 3325 McCann 778-7709
First Church of Christ Scientist 3306 Kelley Drive 638-6932	Saints Constantine & Helen Greek Orthodox Church 501 W. 27th St. 635-5929
Restoration Fellowship 522 Capitol Ave. 635-3194	Zion Congregational Church 600 E. 7th St. 632-4309
SonRise Church of the Nazarene 2811 E. 13th St. 634-6679	First Congregational Pershing & Forest Dr. 632-9389
Cheyenne Vineyard 15th & Thomes (Historic Asher Wy. Bldg.) 287-2077	Yellowstone Baptist Church (SBC) 9204 Yellowstone Rd. 631-9596
Faith United Methodist 522 E. 6th St. 638-3184	Meadowbrooke Church 3161 Omaha Rd. 778-8709
St. Peter's Church (Anglican) 252 Dell Range Blvd. 635-6868	River of Life Fellowship 635-8578
Seventh Day Adventist Church Bethesda Center of Evangelism 1517 Walnut Drive 638-9585	Allen Chapel AME Church 917 W. 21st St. 632-1489
Grace United Methodist 2950 Spruce Dr. 634-7472	Holy Apostles Orthodox Christian Church of Cheyenne 421 E. 4th St. 638-2999
	Cheyenne Friends (Quakers) cheyennefriends@gmail.com 222-8172

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9:25am Sunday School For All Ages
10:30am Rite II Choral Eucharist
Nursery and Children's Chapel

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