

# CCCRA Press Release

February 2018

## Historic Courthouse Restoration

By Doug Canup, Guest Writer

The sign outside of the Clay County Historic Courthouse reads, “Construction – Do Not Enter”, as it has since October of 2017. With a strong financial commitment from an individual donor, Clay County Communities Revitalization Association (CCCRA), moved forward with renovation of the interior of the historic courthouse. Work began in earnest with the signing of a contract with Penland Builders in October. As the General Contractor, Robert Penland is responsible for the interior restoration completion.

As with most buildings over 100 years old, issues arise during renovation that cannot be readily seen before the start of construction. After removing the ceiling on the first floor in order to install electrical, heating and air service, it was discovered that the existing second story floor joists, although rough sawn lumber, were not in the best of shape due to areas of dampness, termite damage and dry rot. So, a change order was issued to replace the joists with adequately reinforced floor/ceiling beams. The ceiling will be replaced with replicated wood to match the historical ceiling.

As work moved to the upper floor, the ceiling in the courtroom also had to be removed to inspect the ceiling structure, which resulted in finding large wooden beams that had sagged in a few places. According to Penland, “I want to do this correctly so that this beautiful courthouse will be here for decades to come. So, we need to address this issue as soon as possible.” Thus, Brian Campbell, a structural engineer and Tony Gaddis, sales representative, both from Builder’s First Source, were brought in to discuss possible solutions to the issue.

In the picture provided, Contractor Robert Penland; Paul Price, Chair Courthouse Committee; and Rob Tiger, Board Director, consult with Gaddis and Campbell on a viable solution. (Photo redacted)

It was decided that while the historic beams will not be removed, the sagging beams will be reinforced and the ceiling joists will be replaced with light-weight steel beams to preserve the structural integrity of the building. When the replicated ceiling is installed, these modifications will not be seen.

While working on the courtroom area, it was also realized that the subfloor needed replacing. Therefore, the original floor was taken up and stored. It will be sanded and will be refinished and re-installed.

Other work has continually progressed, with electrical and plumbing rough-ins, heating and air installation, and door framing. In addition, the elevator tower has been completed with the elevator to be installed within the next few weeks.

Bob Hanson, President of CCCRA said, “We are making every effort to restore the courthouse as it was historically. However, in doing so, we still need to be safety conscious and make sure the structural integrity of the building is sound. With the reinforcing and replacing of some items, this building will be stronger than it ever was and should last us another 100 years.”

This important work is on track to be completed in the third quarter of 2018. If you would like to donate to the courthouse project to help complete the renovation and maintain it for the future, you can write your check to CCCRA and mail it to P. O. Box 1533, Hayesville, NC 28904. Clay County Communities Revitalization Association (CCCRA) is qualified as a charitable organization under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions to CCCRA are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.