



Cathy Kruzic
Kruzic Communications
Ph: 303-320-6849
cathy@kruzic.com

Kansas State Capitol Restored to Its Glory

TOPEKA, KANSAS – Kansas government work never stopped inside the [Kansas State Capitol](#) even as the multi-million dollar restoration work was taking place in, out and all around the majestic building. Kansas Day, January 29, 2014 celebrated 153 years of statehood with a dedication ceremony of the newly restored building.

Now, visitors enjoy the fruits of the labor of the past 14 years of basement-to-dome construction. The new ground level visitor center is a welcome addition offering tours, history, maps and more. Even those who once were familiar with the building will find it very helpful to stop by and get re-familiarized to the many changes.

Nearly 95% of the Capitol's original interior features were restored, from paint stenciling on walls and ceilings to the uncovering of murals that had been painted over in years past. The exterior native Kansas limestone required considerable repair and replacement.

But, the most outstanding feature first noticeable is the brightly gleaming copper dome topped with Ad Astra Per Aspera (Latin for "To the Stars Through Difficulties"), a sculpture of a Kansa Indian warrior poised to shoot an arrow to the North Star. Workers replaced the old copper dome that was heavily coated with a green patina. The copper shine is estimated to last 40 to 50 years before it, too, might begin to turn green due to the atmosphere.

The most recent and final step of the restoration project for many visitors is the re-opening of the inside steps to the very top of the Capitol dome. Tours resumed in February 2014. After taking the elevator to the fifth floor there are then 296 steps to the top of the outer dome. The tour pace is relatively relaxed, with resting points at all the levels.

The dome of the Kansas State Capitol mimics that of the U.S. Capitol, making it unique. The Kansas Capitol building is already on the National Register of Historic Places but a Maryland-based consultant hired to assess Topeka's historic preservation plan believes it should be considered for National Historic Landmark status.

The project, carried out by Treanor Architects and JE Dunn Construction included updates to infrastructure, interiors, exteriors, the addition of office space, a new 550 space underground parking and a new visitor center.

The Capitol is open for visitors on Monday through Friday from 8 am to 5 pm and on

Saturday from 8 am to 1 pm. Public and group tours are conducted by the Kansas Historical Society Monday through Friday. Reservations for tours are highly recommended and can be made <http://www.kshs.org/p/reserve-a-historic-tour-of-the-capitol/15844> and by calling 785-296-3966. The Capitol Store, operated by the Kansas Historical Foundation, is open Monday through Friday from 9 am to 5 pm.

Photos: Attached

For more information, visit www.TravelKS.com, or call 785-296-2009. Find Kansas on Facebook at www.facebook.com/TravelKS and on Twitter at @TravelKS.

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