

Courthouse roof needs repairs

BY LISA KUCHARSKI
Staff Reporter

After a weekend away from the office in early May, Pat Shoush was flooded with work on Monday morning when she found her desk and cabinets soaked in water.

Heavy rain at the end of April clogged the Adair County Courthouse gutters, leaked in through the walls and sat on the ceiling tiles above the County Recorder's office. During the weekend, the tiles bowed and broke, releasing large amounts of rainwater that had accumulated in a corner of the office.

Shoush, Adair County recorder of deeds, said the office became a difficult place to work in because of the clean-up required and the smell that the rain water left behind. Shoush said the Circuit Clerk office has had problems with leaks in the past, but the smell was never as bad as this.

"It was such a stench with that water that had been sitting in there for who knows how long," Shoush said. "It was terrible, just terrible. People who would come in here would comment about it."

Throughout the primary three-month clean-up of the office, Shoush said the Recorder's office stayed open because no other room was available for the work that needed to be done. She said one woman suffered from sinus and headache problems because of the mold build up.

The quick-fix for the office included having the wall and ceiling tiles

repainted and sealed and having the carpets cleaned and treated. Shoush said the clean-up process still is in progress, but for the most part, the situation is under control. She said that on moist days they can still smell the odor.

Shoush said the carpet company the courthouse hired suggested that all the flooring and wall plaster be taken out and replaced, but the county did not have room in its budget for such a fix. She said putting money into an old building doesn't seem like a high priority to a lot of people, but building a new one would cost even more. Shoush said the courthouse has not been maintained as well as it should have been because of more immediate needs in the county such as road repair, so the courthouse repairs kept getting put off.

"Eventually it all catches up, and I think we're kind of at that point," Shoush said. "Unfortunately, it's at a bad time economically."

Shoush said she asked for repairs to the Recorder's office to be part of the budget from the Commissioner's Office as a building maintenance fund.

County Commissioner Mark Thompson said he took interest in the courthouse repair project. He said water leaks have been an ongoing problem for many years and that he has compiled a list of other necessary repairs and changes.

Thompson said a major cause for leakage was poor roofing that was done approximately seven years ago. The flashing, which is the weather

protection on the joints in roofs, was not effectively installed, and water easily seeped through and down the walls of the building. Because of this, water constantly got into the courthouse attic where many documents and historic items were stored.

"It's almost embarrassing to place buckets in the attic and let [water] drip in those buckets for seven years," Thompson said.

The commissioner's office contracted with a roof repair company in the Kirksville area to fix the flashing and leaks for approximately \$8,000. Thompson said this stopped the leaks, but the previous water damage has slowly caused deterioration in the courthouse.

Thompson said an official from the Missouri Department of Health did tests on the building in 2010 and found mold present everywhere, which explained some health issues of staff in the offices. Thompson said the inspector did not find any immediate major issues with the building.

Thompson said the electrical system is outdated and needs to be replaced and that new heating and cooling systems need to be installed. For heating, he said the courthouse currently uses two old and inefficient boilers that cost a lot of money in routine repairs and maintenance.

For cooling, approximately 25 window air conditioning units are used to keep the whole building cool in the summer, but they are not very effective and the noise they make causes problems in the court-



Lisa Kucharski/Index
The roof of the courthouse endured damage after heavy rains in May, repairs will take years to finish.

room hearings. Thompson said he hopes to get central heating and air conditioning systems installed in the courthouse.

Thompson said there is not enough money in the budget to pay for all of these repairs, but the county is working with a grant writer to get a grant for heating and AC systems. The grant application is currently in the preliminary stages and is currently undetermined.

Thompson said repairs will take

years to finish, or even to start. He said the time frame for repairs depends on the funding the courthouse receives. Thompson said his intent is to keep the building structurally sound and a healthy place to be in.

"It's a beautiful building," Thompson said. "It's my intent to make this structurally sound again and aesthetically beautiful for all the people, including the Truman State University students that come into Kirksville. We're very proud of this structure."

Health Department construction close to completion

BY LISA KUCHARSKI
Staff Reporter

Construction on the addition of more than 3,000 square feet to the east end of the Adair County Health Department is almost finished.

AE Solutions was contracted and began construction in June 2009. The project completion date was originally set for January 2010, but construction is 11 months behind. The project is expected to be completed on budget.

Subcontractor Jim Rogers came to work for AE Solutions in October. Rogers said the general contractor did not

have the funds for the supplies needed, so he was asked to come in and finish the job. Rogers said the entire construction project was estimated at approximately \$362,000.

Rogers said many projects were left unfinished, and nothing had been worked on in a while. Rogers said he hung the doors, installed the necessary hardware on the inside and completed the concrete work and landscaping outside, which had not even been started.

"I came in to finish up all the loose ends," Rogers said.

Jim LeBaron, Adair County Health Department adminis-

trator, said the goal is to finish the project this month. He said the contractor initially was having difficulties bringing resources and subcontractors to the project, but fortunately a lot of work has been done in the last 30 days. LeBaron said that pouring the concrete was an important project to finish before winter, and it was completed last week.

"I am pleased that we got that hurdle out of the way," LeBaron said.

He said the outdoor construction includes heated sidewalks, landscaping and a small expansion to the parking lot.

The building expansion features an additional clinic entrance and waiting room. LeBaron said the new entrance allows the clinic to separate the children's services from the family planning and senior citizen services. A reception area for staff was added to allow them to interact with patients coming in through the new entrance.

The second floor of the addition features a conference room. The city of Kirksville inspected the second floor addition at the end of August and issued a temporary certificate of occupancy to allow the health department to use

the space. Once construction is complete, another inspection will take place and a final occupancy certificate can be issued. LeBaron said the health department plans to use this area for educational purposes.

"We have not really had a great area to be able to bring the public in for education and for classes like we're doing now," LeBaron said. "What we do is prevention here, and public health education. It's so nice to have a space in our building that's dedicated for our public to come in."

The room is currently being used for a new program called "Staying on Your Feet,"

an exercise class for people who want to improve their balance.

Along with education, LeBaron said another important reason for adding the entrance and waiting room was to have a separate area for their clients. LeBaron said that during certain times of the year, especially flu season, the waiting room is crowded with people receiving flu shots.

LeBaron said this problem became very evident during the H1N1 outbreak. With the new and separate area, LeBaron said the health department can administer the shots more efficiently.



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