



By Jan Rahn
Managing Editor

With the unexpected arrival of willing individuals, the project to bring the Perkins County Museum back to life inched forward recently.

Youth from the Wind and Water Student Ministries of WestWay Christian Church in Scottsbluff made Grant their destination for a project as part of their "Coldwater" mission.

The youth and their sponsors spent two days at the museum in Grant stripping wallpaper. "It was like stepping back in time," said Brenda Styskal, Perkins County Historical Society president.

Styskal said there were several layers of wallpaper, with one of the rooms being stripped of seven layers.

The 11 kids and their three sponsors randomly chose Grant for a mission project, not knowing ahead of time what awaited them.

They were directed to the museum through local Pastor Vince Carrig who contacted Styskal. Although they were here only a short time, their help is greatly appreciated.

The historical society is working toward the museum's restoration to its former condition through the help of volunteer labor and funds.

Problems for the 108-year-old structure began the latter part of 2006 when an assessment of water damage required a new basement.

It was moved off its damaged foundation toward the end of 2006 and remained on beams north of its original site until being put back the first week of June 2007.

This summer, D&D Construction donated labor to rebuild two sets of exterior steps so access could be gained to the museum again, with the county paying for the supplies.

Water/sewer is restored, and the power will be on again. Styskal said neighbors were very kind in letting the workers share their utilities.

Getting the porch fixed up is a major focus, along with painting, finishing the inside walls, repairing sprinklers, replacing sidewalks and landscaping, not to mention cleaning, freshening and replacing the antiques, clothing, photographs and artifacts that make the entire two-story structure one big historical display.

"We have enough talent and enough providers in this county to bring the porch back to life," said Styskal.

Local businesses have donated paint and building supplies.

"We've got a lot of work ahead of us," said Styskal, optimistic that at least the prep work to be ready for landscaping next spring will be done yet this fall.

Because there is no heat/air conditioning (which were destroyed when the basement flooded) the empty building will sit through another winter.

Styskal said volunteer help is needed and very much appreciated, but the project's accomplishment depends on the schedule of each helper.

"It has been a hectic summer working around everyone's schedule to meet our goals," said

Styskal.

The reason the project falls to the responsibility of the historical society members and volunteers is because the insurance company refused a claim and a subsequent lawsuit against the insurance company was unsuccessful, said Styskal.

“The insurance company says it’s not insured and never should have been insured,” she said, even though the county paid premiums. “It baffles me,” she said.

Anyone’s assistance to work on the project so the museum can be reopened is appreciated, she said. Those who can’t provide labor can donate their time in other ways, give money to support the project, or provide refreshments for the workers.

Anyone who would be willing to donate in some way to the restoration project of the Perkins County Museum may contact Styskal at 352-4977 or 352-4698.

Other officers and members of the historical society include Vice President Delores Swan, Treasurer Robbin Cornelius, Dolores Sexson, Arlene Kurkowski and Bev Norman.