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\$1 million courthouse overhaul underway

Wayne White / Managing Editor / July 3, 2008

It was a groundbreaking of sorts, but no ground was broken. Instead, area bankers, county commissioners, and contractors involved in funding and initiating renovation of the Osage County Courthouse, gathered Monday in celebration of the upcoming project.



Included in the project will be roof replacement and installation of four rooftop heating and air conditioning units at the courthouse; also installation of interior storm windows, lighting upgrades, occupancy sensors and water-saving low flow faucets. Other county-owned buildings will also undergo energy-efficiency renovations.

On the steps of the courthouse, Carl Meyer, chairman of the Osage County Commission, said, "It's a project that probably we're lucky to get this far with our heating system ... because it's the original system in the courthouse."

Gathered for a ceremony to commemorate the beginning of renovations at the Osage County Courthouse were, front row, from left—county counselor Delton Gilliland, county commissioners William Prescott and Carl Meyer, Steven Niemack, Lyndon State Bank, Keven Ward, Trane, Marcia Henderson, Citizens State Bank, Ryan Freed, Kansas Energy Office, back row—John Fowler, First State Bank, Nathan Whitney, Trane, Rick Bryan, Bank of Osage City, county commissioner Larry Woodson, Shari Weber, Community Bankers Association of Kansas, and Kent Needham, First Security Bank

He noted cooperation between all those involved made the project possible.

"We're glad to have all the participants," Meyer said, "the banks participating for financing; the Kansas Energy Office who did a study of it, we're glad we selected Trane."

The Kansas State Energy Office administers the Facility Conservation Improvement Program (FCIP), which is designed to fund projects by reallocating funds currently being spent on utilities. Trane is the energy contractor chosen to engineer the project.

"We're looking toward going forward with this conservation program," Meyer said.

Afterward, Meyer said the project could not have gotten underway without cooperation and assistance from his fellow commissioners, county counselor Delton Gilliland, county officials and courthouse personnel. He said the upcoming renovations will create some inconvenience, but the results will ensure future use of the courthouse and benefit all who work there.

Speaking for the energy contractor was Keven Ward, Trane account manager. "Trane is honored and pleased to have worked with the [Kansas State Historical Society], the Kansas Energy Office, the county, as well as the local consortium of banks, to make this project a reality," Ward said. "We look forward to being a part of the ongoing success of Osage County."

Ryan Freed, of the Kansas Energy Office, congratulated Osage County for preparing for the future by taking

advantage of the FCIP.

He said the project “helps a historic building step into the new generation – it’s a sustainable building now. I think it’s incredible that the local community has made this project a truly local project. The state’s very proud to see work like that happen. And when we see communities innovate like this, it’s really a model for what the [FCIP] should be, and what we hope other communities will do in the future. You guys should be very proud of yourselves.”

Steven Niemack, of Lyndon State Bank, said he was pleased the county sought financing from local banks.

“We’ve drawn all the county banks together, those who showed an interest, to coordinate the financing for this, to show we have a vested interest in this county, not just our own communities, but the county courthouse and the county government as a whole,” Niemack said. “It shows that even though we’re friendly competitors, we can really rally together and put together a package like this that benefits the county. It’s going to be an awesome project for the courthouse.”

Lyndon State Bank served as the lead bank in financing the project. Other banks participating are Citizens State Bank of Lyndon, Bank of Osage City, First State Bank of Burlingame, State Bank of Carbondale, and First Security Bank of Overbrook. The total loan amount was \$1,104,462 with an interest rate of 4.125 percent and a term of 10 years. Each bank loaned an equal amount for the project.

Ward said the project is expected to begin within two weeks at the county’s peripheral buildings included in the project, such as the health department, sheriff’s office and road and bridge department. While those projects are being conducted, materials and supplies will be delivered and contractors scheduled for the major work to be done at the courthouse.

If the project goes as planned, courthouse personnel should be able to enjoy the new heating system by the time cool weather arrives in the fall.