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Depot group has \$227K of match

Keokuk Union Depot Foundation mounts fundraising campaign to replace roof of historic riverfront structure

BY MEGAN McNEILL

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The Keokuk Union Depot Foundation and Commission on Thursday evening invited the community to help "raise the roof" for the historic structure on Keokuk's riverfront.

Forty to 50 people attended the event to learn about the Depot 125 capital campaign to raise a two-for-one match to a \$333,000 grant from the Jeffris Family Foundation, which will allow the depot foundation to put a new roof on the building. The match of \$667,000 must be raised by Sept. 30, 2017, according to depot foundation President Janet Smith.

However, in honor of the circa-1891 depot's 125th anniversary, "I am hoping that on July 1, 2016, we will be able to celebrate mightily what we have raised in donations and pledges," Smith said.



Smith

She told the audience that more than \$227,000 has been pledged or donated so far.

After the matching funds have been raised, a contractor can begin the million-dollar task of setting red clay tile and raising the central tower of the roof to its original height. A new roof will go a long way toward ensuring the depot can serve the community for many years to come, according to Smith.

"The goal of restoration is for the most efficient use as a community center," she said, adding that the depot already is available to rent for a variety of events such as meetings, reunions, concerts and dinners.



ABOVE: Neal Vogel, left, owner of Restoric LLC in Chicago and Keokuk native, and Bob Woodburn of the Keokuk Union Depot Foundation speak about the depot's historic structure report Thursday. **RIGHT:** Vogel's company supplied a rendering of the restored depot.

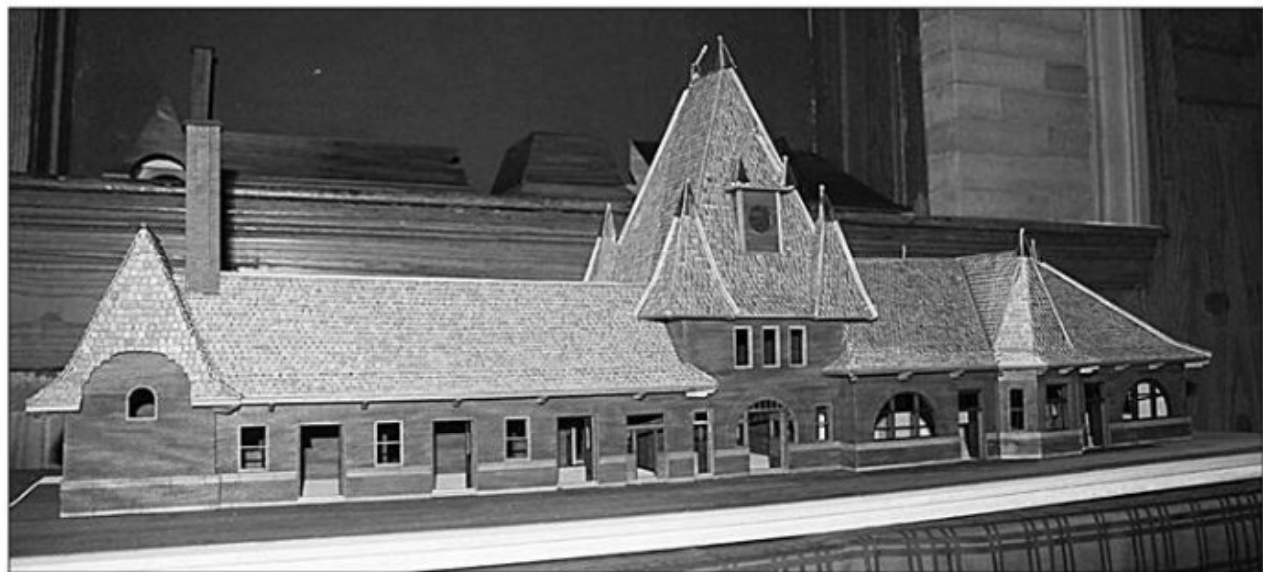


As with other depot-related projects, no tax dollars will be used to finish the roof of the city-owned structure.

Neal Vogel, a Keokuk native who's the principal owner of Restoric LLC in

Chicago, spoke enthusiastically about his involvement with the depot restoration project.

DEPOT: Neal Vogel also compiled a historic structure report for the depot



MEGAN McNEILL / DAILY GATE CITY

Neal Vogel, a Keokuk native and principle owner of Restoric LLC in Chicago, is responsible for the creation of this scale model of the restored Keokuk Union Depot. It and other artifacts were on display Thursday at a fundraising campaign kickoff at the depot.

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“This town has molded me and my career for almost 28 years,” Vogel said.

He’s brought several of his classes from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago to study the depot’s architecture. One of his students, Christen Sundquist, used the depot as the topic of her master’s thesis and was responsible for putting the building back on the National Register of Historic Places.

Vogel compiled for the depot a historic structure report, a

lengthy document detailing the building’s historical and architectural significance.

The report was edited by Richard Leonard, volunteer and director of the depot foundation, and submitted to the Jeffris Family Foundation as part of the grant application.

Tom Jeffris, president of the Jeffris Family Foundation, emailed Smith to congratulate Vogel and the depot foundation for providing one of the best historic structure reports he’d seen in 20 years.

DEPOT DAYS

During the campaign kickoff, Keokuk Mayor Tom Marion read a proclamation declaring Saturday through Friday, Sept. 19, as Depot Days.

A series of open houses during the coming week will allow the community to tour the depot and learn more about the capital campaign.

The first open house is from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, and the public is invited to return to the depot for a Carol Montag concert at 8 p.m. See Wednesday’s Daily Gate City for more information

about the concert.

Additional open houses are from 1 to 4 p.m. Sunday, 9 a.m. to noon Tuesday, 4 to 7 p.m. Thursday and 9 a.m. to noon Sept. 19.

From 5:30 to 6 p.m. during the Thursday open house, depot representatives will share plans for further restoration following the roof project.

“We will do a marvelous job of restoring to Keokuk a treasure that we all need to know we have,” Smith said.

For more information, go to www.keokukuniondepot.org or www.depot125.org.