

PRESS RELEASE
KEOKUK UNION DEPOT
June 18, 2014

KEOKUK, IOWA—The Jeffris Family Foundation of Janesville, Wisconsin has awarded a grant of \$333,000 toward restoration of the roof of the architecturally noteworthy 123-year-old Keokuk Union Depot. The Jeffris Family Foundation focuses on the preservation and restoration of structures of significant historic and architectural value in small towns in the Midwest.

This grant is a challenge grant designed to stimulate local contributions for the roof project. To earn the Jeffris grant the Keokuk Union Depot Foundation will first have to raise a 2-for-1 match of \$667,000 by September 30, 2017.

The Keokuk Union Depot Foundation and Keokuk Union Depot Commission are planning to restore the Keokuk Union Depot to its original design, modernize the heating, plumbing and wiring, and improve the currently unused space. They jointly commissioned an extensive professional evaluation of the building and the costs involved in its restoration, known as a Historic Structure Report. The first step is the restoration of the Depot's roof.

The estimated cost of the roof restoration project is just under \$1 Million, including chimney and eave reconstruction that must be completed during this phase. The roof will be restored to its original beauty with red clay tiles, including restoring all of the ornamental details of the flowing roofline: the field, hip, and ridge tiles; the corner turrets and clock dormers; and copper gutters, leaders, pinnacles and finials. The central tower and chimney will be restored to their original height and details.

The original roof line and clay tile roofing are the most significant and crucial features to restore the elegant aesthetic massing of the Depot. The Keokuk Union Depot is one of the few remaining examples of John Wellborn Root's celebrated Romanesque Revival style of public architecture, a style pioneered by Henry Hobson Richardson of Boston. Keokuk is privileged to be among the few communities in the Midwest still to possess such a significant edifice designed by the renowned Chicago architectural firm of Burnham & Root, creators of the famed Chicago "White City" for the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893, and demonstrating the style and skill of John Wellborn Root himself.

The Keokuk Union Depot is recognized as architecturally significant by state and national historians. It is considered to be one of the best remaining examples in Iowa of Root's skill as a designer of not only office buildings — such as the Rookery and the Monadnock buildings in Chicago — but also of railroad stations of the period. The Depot is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Through the roof restoration phase, the Depot will be used solely as an event center. This use began in 2013 after volunteers completed cleaning and repairs to make the building usable, following the City's acquisition of the Depot in 2011. Restoring the roof will make it possible to confidently continue and expand the event center usage without concern for structural problems caused by water leaks. It will also make the Depot a much more desirable venue and spur further economic development of Keokuk's valuable riverfront.

For more information about the Depot, please visit www.keokukuniondepot.org.