

State of Idaho
Department of Administration
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News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Restoration, Underground Wing Additions for Idaho's State Capitol Moves Forward Following Approval by Idaho Legislature

Restoration of Idaho's State Capitol building will continue in earnest following the 2007 Legislature session next spring, with early planning calling for completion of the project prior to the return of lawmakers to Boise for the beginning of the 2010 Legislative Session.

The Idaho Legislature with the final Senate approval on March 15 passed House Concurrent Resolution 47 restating the Legislature's support for preservation and restoration of the Idaho Statehouse. Lawmakers appropriated a total of \$74 million for restoration costs; and \$39.5 million for construction of two-story, underground additions to each side of the building, including placement of elevators in each end.

Idaho Governor Dirk Kempthorne made restoration of the Capitol a top priority in his 2006 State of the State Address, citing escalating construction costs and the essential need to move forward with the project, initially planned for completion in 2005, but put on hold due to state budget shortfalls in 2002.

The underground wings will provide a combined 100,000 square feet of office and hearing room space. Design considerations meet national historic guidelines and retain the recently restored east and west stairs/grand entries, and overall visual impact of Idaho's Statehouse.

Idaho's Capitol, completed in 1920, does not allow for reconfiguration or expansion of hearing rooms which are extremely overcrowded. A Legislative Restoration Task Force studied various addition proposals, opting for a concept similar to the facilities at the Texas State Capitol following a tour there last summer.

"The passage of HCR47 represents a historical milestone for the State of Idaho and a significant accomplishment by Governor Dirk Kempthorne and the 58th Idaho Legislature," said Pam Ahrens, Director of the Department of Administration, which oversees the restoration. "Not only will this effort require the dedicated expertise of our public works team, but all Idahoans will be impacted in the Idaho Capitol Commission's many community outreach projects, or by witnessing this unique and historic project unfold," she added.

Plans are in place to accommodate the 2008 and 2009 Legislative Sessions in the former Ada County Courthouse building located adjacent to the Capitol. This county facility was acquired by the state several years ago and has large courtrooms that could accommodate legislative needs. Offices will be temporarily relocated to nearby state buildings and from other leased sources if needed.

Costs of the restoration will be paid for by extra cigarette taxes the Idaho Legislature made permanent in the 2005 Session.