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NEWS RELEASE

July 8, 2009

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MAIN HALL AT UM GETS A FACE-LIFT

MISSOULA —

One of the most beloved buildings in Western Montana will undergo restoration this summer and fall.

The bells on Main Hall at The University of Montana fell silent this week as campus prepares for renovations on the clock tower and roof, set to begin by July 21.

In a \$1.4 million state- and university-funded project, construction crews will replace the roof, make masonry repairs and build a web of iron structural supports inside the tower for seismic reinforcement.

The goal of the project is to make changes while maintaining the legendary look of the University's cornerstone. Original construction on Main Hall, designed by celebrated Missoula architect A.J. Gibson, began upon the founding of UM in 1893.

UM architect and project manager Jerry Ballas said that this is the first major reconstruction project on the building.

UM will replace two layers of wood shingles – the most recent dating from the 1970s – with shingles made from recycled rubber products that look like weathered wood shakes.

The high-tech shingles are similar to those used for renovations at the Daly Mansion in Hamilton and on Old Main at Montana State University in Bozeman.

Masonry crews plan to tackle brick deterioration on the clock tower and refinish parts of the granite entryway. New structural supports will brace the interior of the tower from its top to the second floor.

UM accepted a bid from Quality Construction for the renovations. The Missoula-based company also built the recent Washington-Grizzly Stadium expansion and the Adams Center.

Work on Main Hall is expected to be finished in November.

Bob Durringer, vice president for administration and finance, pointed out the high level of craftsmanship, design and planning for the project. He also emphasized the importance of UM's collaboration with the state to refurbish Main Hall.

"The University of Montana is grateful to Tom O'Connell and his staff at the Department of Architecture and Engineering in Helena for their help in putting the funding together for this project," he said.

For more information, call Ballas at 406-243-5923 or e-mail jerry.ballas@mso.umt.edu.

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