

Fun Facts for Tours

Four major points for the restoration were: Preservation, Restoration, Rehabilitation, and Expansion.

Much of the restoration is not visible to the eye. It involved safety, fire, electrical and HVAC upgrades. Included smoke and fire detection, sprinkler systems, improved exterior lighting, emergency power generator, replaced sewer pipes, replaced hot water system, exiting from basement, vertical circulation cores from the basement to the legislative chambers, provided safer access to roof domes, added hardware, accessible restrooms and accessible elevators.

Things you can see are restored and refinished windows, repaired marble flooring, repaired decorative plaster, restored wood floors, refinished wood doors and restored hardware, replaced and refurbished light fixtures.

May 8th, 1891 President Benjamin Harrison planted a water oak tree on the grounds.

May 28th, 1903 President Theodore Roosevelt planted a maple tree on the grounds.

Idaho has a sea port!! The Port of Lewiston is the farthest inland port on the west coast of the U.S. It is 465 miles upriver from the Pacific Ocean.

In 1928 Idaho was the 1st state to feature a graphic on a license plate. It was the Idaho Potato.

Idaho's Capitol is one of the "greenest" in the nation; meaning one of the smallest carbon footprints.

Idaho is called the "Gem state" because almost every gem has been found in Idaho at one point.

The renovations were funded by cigarette taxes.

The glow of lights on the Senate dome shows off the restored, curved original glass.

The central section of the Capitol was started in 1905 and completed in 1912. The east and west wings were begun in 1919 and finished in 1920.

Idaho is one of only two places in the world for star garnets and the only place for a six-point star garnet to be found. The other location is India.

Plywood from the restoration was donated and reused by Habitat for Humanity all over the country.

Prison laborers transported the sandstone from Table Rock Quarry located behind the Old Idaho State Pen.

A dozen layers of paint hid most of the architectural details in the Capitol.

There are only three contractors in the world who can do the scagliola treatment.

Grey marble on the floors is from Alaska. The green marble on the walls is from Vermont. The red marble on the floor is from the State of Georgia, and the black marble on the floor and on the “bench” in JFAC is from Italy.

Original green marble quarry has been out of business for 20 years. So, we bought their parking barriers which were made from the same green marble.

Mosaic of state seal is 9,750 tiles that were hand laid and leveled onto concrete floors.

Marble was used for its reflective surfaces. This helped to bring light, openness and airiness into the Capitol.

President Abraham Lincoln signed the act creating the Idaho territory in 1863. The Territorial Capitol moved to Boise in 1865.

Idaho became the 43rd state in 1890. President Benjamin Harrison was in office at that time.

The first Capitol Building Commission was created in 1905.

Design, acquisition of materials and construction of the Capitol took the span of 15 years.

Construction of the Senate and House wings went from 1919-1920.

Sandstone blocks weighing up to 10 tons were transported by Idaho State Penitentiary convicts from the state owned Table Rock quarry.

The scagliola pillars were constructed by an Italian family who traveled to Idaho from New York. In 1976 the pillars were repaired by drilling holes and injecting a liquid adhesive.

The 60-foot high pillars are adorned with Corinthian capitals with acanthus leaves carved into them. Doric and Ionic columns are also in the building, and each type represents a different time period in Greek architecture.

The first woman was elected to the Idaho Legislature in 1898.

Interesting Facts from the Kids Website

The Capitol's foundation rests on river rock 15 feet below ground.

There are 763 doors and 339 windows.

Idaho's dome has 22 windows or "lunettes."

Around some of the windows, the puffy looking fruit are pomegranates.

The tops of the Corinthian columns outside were blocks of solid sandstone that were hand-carved by craftsman who used ladders to get up to them, and they were carved in place.

Over the main doorway are "bay laurel leaves" to signify winning.

Blocks around the base of the Capitol are shaped like logs to pay tribute to Idaho's pioneers.

Emma Green signed the seal with her initials so they wouldn't know she was a female.

The man and woman are the same height to signify in Idaho both men and women are equal.

Her white robes symbolize justice.

The tree symbolizes the Timber Industry.

Gold was discovered in Idaho in 1860 on the Nez Perce Reservation.

William Wallace was the first governor of the Idaho Territory.

The Civil War was going on when Idaho became a territory.

The 1st governor of the state was George L. Shoup.

There were 88,548 people in the state in 1890.

In 1990 there were 161,772 people in the state.

In 2010 there were 1,567,582 people living in Idaho.

Garden Level

Vault doors are original to the building.

Standing in the Rotunda you can see a full city block.

At the end of the skylights turn around and look up...you can see the 5'7" eagle on top of the Capitol.

First Floor

Steel columns are under the Scagliola.

On the east side is the Treasurer's Office—they still use a vault original to the building from 1912 called a "Cannon-ball Safe."

List of the LSO offices and what they do: bill research, draft legislation, budget analysis, financial compliance audits and tech support for the legislature.

The Compass Rose was designed as a "Symbolic Sundial" to symbolize Idaho's abundance of natural resources and its major industries. It was designed and donated by Gyn Jansen van Beek.

"The Miner" statue is back at Bunker Hill Mining Company in Northern Idaho who had originally lent the statue to the Capitol.

Elevator outside of Reference Library used by the first Idaho Supreme Court justices to get to the court room on the 3rd floor (now JFAC).

Second Floor

The Desk in the Governor's Ceremonial office has been used since by every governor since 1919.

The official copy of the state seal is located in the Secretary of State's office.

Pay attention to the wood and wood furniture in the building. 500 pieces of it are original to the Capitol building. Do you think you can pick them out?

Third Floor

During the renovation they removed the ceiling over the South side stairs from the Third to Fourth floors to get back to the original design, and let more light into the Capitol building.

Our red and blue is a replica of the House and Senate colors in U.S. Capitol.

JFAC (Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee) meets in the former Idaho Supreme Court (1912-1970)

Fourth Floor

The painted concrete floors mimic colors and styles on the other floors.

The Barrel Ceiling in Statuary Hall was covered with a drop ceiling since the 1960s.