



## Visitors awed by \$321,000 transformation of Jackson County Tower Building's second floor; Space will be a multi-office customer service area

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When the brass gates opened revealing the Jackson County Tower Building's newly renovated second floor, some visitors remarked that they nearly tripped up the stairs as their gaze glued to the ornate plaster ceiling.

After two years of work to restore the area to its historic luster, the county held a grand opening Friday to showcase the space.

"This is a work of art," said Mike Jones, a member of the county Road Commission. "It's beautiful. It really is."

County facilities staff worked to restore the floor as closely as possible to its original appearance when the tower building, 120 W. Michigan Ave., opened in 1929 as a bank.

Drop ceiling panels were removed to reveal the ornate painted plaster ceiling, which went through extensive repair. Carpets were peeled back to uncover marble floors and three-tiered chandeliers were installed that were replicas of the room's original light fixtures.



Staircase leading up to the renovated second floor of the Jackson County Tower Building

Much of the work on the \$321,000 project was done by county staff.

"I was always able to envision it, but when it happened, it was even better than I thought it would be," Ric Scheele, the county's director of fleet and facilities operations, said of the completion of the project.

The former bank lobby and county board chambers will become a service area that will house the county Equalization Department, Treasurer's Office and clerk and register of deeds staff.

The goal was to maintain the historic integrity of the building, but create a modern workspace, said county board Chairman Steve Shotwell.



The service area is expected to be fully functional and re-opened to the public by Aug. 1, officials said.

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Stained glass windows surround the second floor that will be a customer service area.