

Miller County Courthouse ready for Phase Two of refurbishment

TEXARKANA, Ark. — What started last year as a state historical grant financing for the Miller County Courthouse will be continuing this year, according to county officials.

Roughly \$270,000 of an overall \$500,000 Arkansas State Historical Preservation Program grant which the county received last year will be used this year for a Phase Two effort to historically refurbish the vintage 1939 courthouse's first floor roof and fifth floor roof (the building's top floor roof covering the old Miller County jail).

Last year's Phase One effort involved spending roughly \$220,000 of grant funds on refurbishing the courthouse's third floor roof. This year's effort will focus on historically preserving the first floor roof as well as the roof of courthouse's original 108-inmate capacity jail, which held prisoners between 1939 and 1985. The jail also held inmates between 1991 and 2002, when county officials re-opened and re-used the jail before building their new correctional center in the 2300 block of East Street in December of 2002.

Miller County Judge's Office Administrative Assistant Carla Jenkins said the county is presently receiving bids from private firms seeking to perform the work, adding that the bid could be awarded early next month.

Miller County Judge Cathy Harrison said work on Phase Two during the next few months will be largely contingent on the weather.

Besides the vintage floor and roof restoration, work is also slated to start on replacing the courthouse's perimeter concrete sidewalk. This project is being financed by a 2020 Arkansas State Highway Department grant of \$92,000, which the county received this past November.

The grant, for which the county will supply a 10% match, will be used to hire a private contractor to perform the sidewalk replacement and repairs around the courthouse's exterior — a project that will also be started and completed as weather permits, Harrison said.