

# 'IT'S FUN TO SAVE HISTORY'



PHOTOS PROVIDED

Volunteers work to put up the new bell tower on the last remaining one-room schoolhouse in Liverpool Township.

## Liverpool schoolhouse restoration continues

**Jack Kopanski**  
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LIVERPOOL TWP. — Residents now are closer than ever to having a fully functional location to view and learn more about historic artifacts from some of the original schools in Liverpool Township.

After receiving a grant from the state and funding from the township, outside renovation of Liverpool's only remaining one-room schoolhouse is complete. In total, the township received \$37,500 in 2019 with \$25,000 coming from the grant and another \$12,500 coming from local matching funds.

The restoration of the building, which was built in 1885 and sits at the corner of Center and Station roads, is expected to cost about \$75,000 to \$80,000 when all is said and done, according to township Trustee Paul Schaefer.

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The exterior renovation of the one-room schoolhouse in Liverpool Township recently was completed thanks to help from a state grant and assistance from the township.



PHOTO PROVIDED

Volunteers work to put up the new bell tower on the last remaining one-room schoolhouse in Liverpool Township.

## HISTORY

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Township trustees used the grant to stabilize the schoolhouse, repair windows, add a new chimney, put two new doors each with a small overhang roof, install metal roofing and new gutters and give the outside a fresh coat of paint. When the time came to begin renovations, it ended up being a much bigger job than initially anticipated. With the floors and the base of the building rotting away and collapsing, the building itself had to be lifted to replace the sills and reset it on the new foundation.

"Several years ago the floor had collapsed and we took the floor out and we assessed what was left of the underneath," Schaefer said. "The sills and the very base it was sitting on were all crumbling and rotting. It went from, maybe, just a little job of maybe putting the floor in to, 'Oh, now we gotta fix this thing really big.'"

Most recently, a historically-accurate bell tower was added to the top front of the building. The bell was donated to Schaefer by a friend who felt it necessary that the remodeled schoolhouse have a bell tower.

"He's a historic architect but he's retired and he lives in the area," Schaefer said. "I consulted him a long time ago about this thing and he said, 'That's gotta have a bell tower on it.' Back in the fall he called me and said, 'Well, I bought a

bell so now you've gotta have a bell tower.' He donated it and I said, 'Alright, I guess we'll have a bell tower.'"

Next up comes the interior renovations. The plan is to add in a potbellied stove, gas heating, insulation, electricity, lighting, hardwood floor, wainscoting and repair the plaster repair and re-paint it.

Schaefer said he hopes to begin the interior work in the spring when it gets warmer and have it done by the summer. At that point, it will be filled with historical school artifacts for all to see and, eventually, the plan is to move the building to one of the township's parks and make it part of a historical village.

As a trustee, Schaefer has always felt an obligation to preserve historic buildings in the township. That, combined with his affinity for history and historical artifacts, made it a no-brainer for him to spearhead the project.

"I've always been involved in the township buildings," Schaefer said. "My dad was a trustee years before me and he was instrumental in getting our depot moved down to town and redoing our town hall and the other buildings. I guess I kind of inherited that care from him. I've always been fascinated by old buildings."

He hasn't been able to do it by himself, however. Schaefer credited Rod Knight of the township's historical society for helping to spread the word about the project and secure the grant money.

"I don't do much other than see where I can help and one

way I can help is, hopefully, get a little publicity and raise a little more money," Knight said. "The Historical Society has raised a little over \$4,000 over the last several years from contributions. That is now in the hands of trustees and Paul to make a big dent of fixing up the inside."

Alongside the grant and thousands of dollars in donations, Schaefer said the community has come out en masse to support the project with in-kind donations.

This is nothing new to Schaefer, though. In his time as a trustee, Schaefer said there has never been a project he's undertaken that the community has said "no" to.

"It's wonderful. We've got a close-knit town," Schaefer said. "It's saving a piece of our township's history. It's the last one-room schoolhouse that the township constructed that's left. There's still names on the blackboard and these are all kids (now) in their late 30s and early 40s. It's fun to save history. It's what I do."

Those interested in donating can do so either at the Liverpool Township Historical Society, PO Box 399, Valley City, Ohio 44280 or by contacting Schaefer at (330) 635-1023.

"The more (money) we get, the more we can do," Knight said. "The outside has been fixed up but there's all this work to do on the inside. We would like to see if there are more contributions out there to help that along."

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