



ALLEGHENY COUNTY

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Fitzgerald Announces Project To Replace Courthouse Roof Has Begun

PITTSBURGH – County Executive Rich Fitzgerald announced today that work on the county’s 130-year-old courthouse roof has begun. The \$10 million project is being led by Cuddy Roofing Company Inc., a Scalo-owned company. The project is part of a master restoration plan to improve the courthouse’s infrastructure while also preserving its unique, historical features. The county aims to protect its significant investment for future generations to use and appreciate.

“We’re improving and investing in this wonderful, historic, beautiful building for our residents,” said Fitzgerald. “Whether it’s kids coming in for the holiday choral season seeing the building for the first time, the wedding and receptions that are now being held in our courthouse, or whatever reason people may find themselves in the building, we want our residents to feel good about the building that they own.”

The first phase of the master roof restoration plan, which also includes masonry repointing of the building’s three towers, is expected to be completed by early Spring 2019. It will then be followed by a second phase to replace the entire remaining roof.

During both phases, approximately 450,000 original terra cotta clay roof tiles will be removed. Those tiles will be replicated using the same material and the exact standards of quality and sizing by Ludowici Tile of New Lexington, Ohio. The finished product will have a distinctly brighter coloration, as the existing roof was blackened by deposits from the Pittsburgh region’s industrial past.

The new tiles will be delivered to the courthouse only on weekends to minimize the impact on traffic. They then will be installed according to the National Park Service’s Historic Preservation Standards and Guidelines.

Replacing the courthouse roof will be a challenging endeavor. The building has a height of 100 feet from the ground to the gutter and another 60 feet from the gutter to the peak of the roof, which slopes at a 60-degree angle.

“We’re excited by this challenge. The roof tiles are 130 years old and the building is smack in the middle of downtown, making access difficult,” said Cuddy Roofing Company Inc. President Chaz McNulty. “This is a once in a lifetime career opportunity. We’re going to work safely and be smart, while also doing this important work to protect a historic landmark.”

The project also includes installation of new ¾-inch plywood and a continuous waterproofing membrane as well as fabrication and installation of new copper gutters, downspouts, valleys, and flashing. Additionally, modern lightning protection will be added to the roof assembly to further protect the National Historic Landmark building.

“This historic courthouse project is such an important part of the work we do to take care and preserve our heritage assets,” said William D. McKain CPA, County Manager. “We take very seriously that we, in county government, are the custodians of the capital assets that are entrusted to our care by our residents. We need to be good stewards of those assets – and this work will maintain the roof of this facility for generations to come.”

The courthouse, the first building of note on Grant Street, was originally designed in 1883 by Boston architect Henry Hobson Richardson and was built between 1884-1888. Its features the classic symmetry of Renaissance-style architecture, including Syrian arches, Byzantine capitals, late French Gothic dormer windows, and the French Renaissance roof that is being replaced.

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