

Gold for Capitol Dome Restoration Headed to Italy

Share in the Care Colorado Blog | March 6, 2013 by mchichester



As part of the State Capitol restoration project, Share in the Care Colorado announces that Colorado gold mined from the Cripple Creek and Victor area is headed to Italy for its transformation into gold leaf that eventually will cover the State Capitol dome. The refining and application of the gold leaf marks a major milestone in the dome restoration project.

The gold was donated to the state by **AngloGold Ashanti and Cripple Creek &**

Victor Gold Mining Company (CC&V) as part of the Capitol dome restoration project. The gold doré bullion (an alloy of gold and silver) displayed September 2011 originally weighed more than 60 pounds and contained an estimated 600+ ounces of gold and 300+ ounces of silver. Up to 75 ounces of 24 karat gold, valued at approximately \$120,000, was mined, refined and held especially for the project.

"It was Colorado gold that originally covered the Capitol over a hundred years ago," said State Architect Larry Friedberg. "We are especially pleased that AngloGold Ashanti shares our respect for the building's history and continues its legacy by once again donating the gold from the same Colorado source more than a century later."

Sixty-five ounces of the pure metal will be sent to Florence, Italy, where it will be rolled into 1/8,000 millimeter tissue-thin sheets of gold leaf that are 3 1/8" square. The leaf will then be applied to a copper base plate and ultimately to the dome structure. Project managers estimate it will require approximately 140,000 sheets of the leaf to gild the dome, applied at a rate of 50 to 100 square feet per day when this phase of the project starts in the summer 2013. The unused portion of the donated gold will remain with the State for use on the dome at a later date should the gold leaf require future replacement or repair.

The restoration work on the dome has been hidden behind scaffolding and a white scrim for more than a year. It is a common misperception that the dome is constructed out of stone. The majority of the structure visible from outside the building actually is made of cast iron. Crews at the dome have already finished restoration and repairs to the cast iron surrounding the exterior observation deck – the same location where damage in 2006 helped galvanize the effort to restore the aging cast iron dome.

The State has taken great measures to ensure it preserves the historical integrity of the building during the restoration. Whenever possible, broken or damaged pieces of the cast iron were repaired, and only replaced as a last resort.

The first two levels of scaffolding and scrim have protected work on the observation deck and lower portion of the dome. The next level of scaffolding and scrim is expected to go up before the gold leaf is applied in summer 2013, and will shroud the entire dome – top to bottom – until the project’s completion in late 2014.

“Participating in this initiative aligns with AngloGold Ashanti and CC&V’s values in that safety is number one and the community and society in which we operate will be better off for having been there,” said Ron Largent, Executive Vice President of AngloGold Ashanti’s Americas Operations. “The donation of gold from CC&V has been mined by employees dedicated to safety and environmental stewardship. They all take pride in knowing they played a significant role in the restoration of the capitol dome.”

In 2010, the Colorado General Assembly began the process of diverting funds from the State Historical Fund (SHF) in order to repair the structure. This resulted in cutting the grant-making capacity of SHF 50-60%, affecting local, regional and statewide sustainability activities to other significant historic sites across the state. Colorado Preservation, Inc., a nonprofit organization founded in 1984 to promote historic preservation by providing information, education, training, expertise and advocacy, is the statewide, nonprofit historic preservation organization serving as the fiscal agent to accept public and corporate donations for the repair of the dome. These donations help offset the impact to the grant-making capacity of the SHF.

The State Architects Office is an office of the Colorado Department of Personnel & Administration, which provides quality services to enhance state government success. From human resources to central services, procurement to payment, administrative courts to financial reporting, DPA is working together to serve Colorado.