Bee Ballroom Notes and Observations:

Meeting on site, July 7th, 2009 with Bill Greguras and associate.

The Ballroom is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It was built of poured in place concrete and is 12 sided. A vestibule projects at the front and a small projection at the rear were part of the original construction. The primary room has a dome shaped roof providing a clear space across the full width.

Beyond the domed room exists another 12 feet (approximately) of structure around the entire perimeter. This space provides for such amenities as the original stage, serving kitchen and ticket booths. Sometime after construction, men's and women's toilets were added in part of this space. The 12 foot extension to the domed room was originally constructed with a flat roof, which has been overbuilt with a pitch roof now covered with shingles in the same manner as the dome itself.

There is a basement under the stage and crawl space under the rest of the Ballroom. Currently it is heated with ceiling mounted space heaters (2) but there is no air conditioning. In the center of the dome is a large exhaust fan mounted in a "rain hood" for weather protection. The perimeter of the structure has windows, 2 per side (approximately 20) except at the ticket booth locations. When the exhaust fan is running, plenty of outside air is drawn in through these windows. Ceiling fans were added to help circulate the air. They were place fairly high in the structure presumably to avoid damage when the space is used as a basketball court.

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There is a perimeter duct system which has never been used. It was designed to deliver air at the center of each of the twelve sides of the dome room. It is visible at the west side of the stage.

Flanking the intended location of the air distribution points are wall sconces intended to create up light. It is not known if they still function.

The structure was assessed by Davis Design and their report of July 25th, 2005 is available for review. This assessment did not provide information regarding the condition of the mechanical, electrical of plumbing systems serving the Ballroom. The State Historical Society has visited the structure recently and provided advice regarding any potential renovation work. The Nebraska Energy Office has been contacted and has informed the Village they believe a renovation project focused on energy improvements would be eligible for the Stimulus Money available via that Office. They have also informed them Stimulus Money will likely be available in September via grant applications and that those applications will likely be in the same or similar format as the Community Development Block Grant application.

Goals for this project:

The Village of Bee has the Ballroom available for rent however without air conditioning it is seldom if ever used in the summer. They would like to be able to air condition the structure so that it could be utilized year round.

They were advised by Davis Design in 2005 that they should maintain heat in the structure throughout the year to minimize deterioration of the structure. They would like to install a more efficient means of maintaining heat when it is not occupied as currently the Village budget cannot afford this expense.

They were advised by the Nebraska State Historical Society to maintain the historic ceiling. This eliminates any possibility of insulating the ceiling. The Village installed new shingles in the not too distant past, so while adding insulation above the roof structure may be possible, they would like to get more useful life out of their investment.

The immediate goal for this project is to have a plan showing how Stimulus Money could be used to make the desired improvements in the Ballroom. There needs to be consensus for the plan by the Village and all interested parties so that it will be ready for submission in September.

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