

# Courthouse Facilities Improvement Authority

Winter/Spring 2015  
Volume 3, Issue 1

## 12<sup>th</sup> Cycle Grants Awarded



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The mission of the WVCFA is to preserve the history and invest in the future of our county courthouses. How is that mission accomplished?

Daily, all fifty-five county assessors, circuit clerks, county clerks, magistrates and sheriffs' offices collect fees. A portion of certain fees collected have been designated by WV State Code to be deposited into the Courthouse Facilities Improvement Fund (CFIF).

For example, when the county clerk issues a marriage license, \$10 of the total fee is deposited at the state level into the CFIF. Another example would be when the Sheriff issues a license to carry a concealed deadly weapon, \$15.00 from the total fee collected from each person who obtains a license is deposited into the CFIF. The Legislature felt that by working together, we could accomplish more. They implemented a small fee structure. Individually considered, the fees do not make a

large impact, but by combining them together on a statewide level, we have accomplished great things!

Each year the fees are totaled and awarded by the CFIA Board of Directors in the form of grants. Our goal is that all fifty-five counties are applicants for grant funding. Unfortunately, all counties will not be funded, but if the county does not apply, then the opportunity is lost for that county until the next year.

This year, 43 counties applied for funding. The Authority was able to fund 23 of those projects. The total amount awarded was \$2,116,519. The maximum individual award per county was \$100,000.

For a complete listing of those counties receiving 12<sup>th</sup> Cycle Grant funding, please check our web-site at [www.cfia.wv.gov](http://www.cfia.wv.gov).

### Grant Coordinator Spotlight!

Carrie Clendening Hill is the Legislative Liaison and Grant Coordinator for the Kanawha County Commission. She has been employed by the Commission since August 2007. She manages \$2 to \$3 million in grant funds each year.

She has received and administered grants from the U.S. Department of Energy, U.S. Department of Justice, WV Department of Homeland

Security, WV Department of Military Affairs and Public Safety, WV Division of Justice and Community Service and WV Courthouse Facilities Improvement Authority.

Carrie's most recent CFIA grant was awarded to restore the failing courtroom ceiling in the main courthouse.

She is married to Sean Hill and has a 6 year old daughter, Caroline.



**CFIA Director Presented Plaque from Monroe Co. Commissioner Clyde Gum, Jr. and County Clerk Donnie Evans**



**Grant Management:**

**Quarterly Progress Reports should be Descriptive.**

**Reports are due on the 20<sup>th</sup> of the Month following each quarter.**

**Reimbursement Requests can only be reimbursed at the 80% level.**

**The county can only apply for reimbursement three times during the life of each grant.**

**Proper Courthouse Storage**

As storage needs at West Virginia county courthouses continue to increase, it is common for areas that once served another function to be repurposed as archival or storage areas. Unfortunately, in many cases these spaces were not designed to accommodate the load (or weight) of the stored materials. Improper file/record storage can damage the courthouse, and place building occupants in danger. The storage capacity for a courthouse facility can vary greatly throughout the building based on the type of construction, and the layout of the supporting structure. Current building codes dictate loading for an "office" type area at 50 pounds per square foot (psf), while attic areas and other non-office areas may be designed for 30 psf or less. Storage areas, in contrast, would be designed to support loads of 125-250 psf. It is easy to see the hazard of repurposing an office or attic space as an archival or storage area!

When storing paper-based materials, exceeding the 30-50 psf capacity of the floor/ceiling structure is easily achieved when multiple boxes are stacked on top of each other. Typical paper-based materials weigh approximately 35 pounds per cubic foot (pcf). Therefore, stacking boxes higher than 1.5 feet would exceed the 50 psf capacity. The height can be increased, somewhat, if more aisles and open space are incorporated into the area. In summary, many areas of a courthouse facility may not be adequate to be used as a storage type area. To determine if an area is useable for storage, a structural engineer should be consulted in order to determine the suitability of a floor for storage, or what modifications would be required to permit storage. While our courthouse structures often seem robust, there are many examples of damage that have occurred due to improper storage. Planning ahead will keep both your records and your citizens safe. ----ZMM Architects and Engineers

**Cabell County Refurbishes Bell Tower**

The Cabell County Commission applied for and received CFIA funding to refurbish their gorgeous and unique bell tower that sits atop the courthouse in Huntington, WV. Cabell County was awarded \$100,000 to help them complete the project that totaled nearly \$300,000. The cupola has been restored. The 2,400 lb. bell is being displayed on the courthouse lawn for safety and maintenance.



**COURTHOUSE CLOCK TOWER BELL**

THE BELL WAS CAST BY MENEELY BELL COMPANY, TROY, NEW YORK AND SHIPPED TO CABELL COUNTY, WV, ON MAY 18, 1901, WEIGHING 1,506 POUNDS WITHOUT FITTINGS. DUE TO DETERIORATION OF THE CUPOLA WHICH HOUSED THE BELL, IT WAS REMOVED FROM THE TOP OF THE COURTHOUSE ON JULY 9, 2014 AFTER HAVING BEEN THERE FOR OVER 113 YEARS

GRANT FUNDS PROVIDED BY: WV COURTHOUSE FACILITIES IMPROVEMENT AUTHORITY  
 CONTRACTOR: ANGELINA STONE & MARBLE  
 COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR: CHRIS TATUM  
 PROJECT COORDINATOR: TIM KEATON

CABELL COUNTY COMMISSIONERS:  
 NANCY CARTMILL, PRESIDENT

## Courthouse Accessibility

When President Bush signed into law the Americans with Disabilities Act--the world's first comprehensive civil rights law for people with disabilities--in front of 3,000 people on the White House lawn on July 26, 1990, the event represented an historical benchmark and a milestone in America's commitment to full and equal opportunity for all of its citizens.

The President's emphatic directive on that day--"Let the shameful walls of exclusion finally come tumbling down"--neatly encapsulated the simple yet long overdue message of the ADA: that 43 million Americans with disabilities are full-fledged citizens and as such are entitled to legal protections that ensure them equal opportunity and access to the mainstream of American life.

Enactment of the ADA reflects deeply held American ideals which treasure the contributions which individuals can make when free from arbitrary, unjust, or outmoded societal attitudes and practices that prevent the realization of their potential. The ADA reflects a recognition that the surest path to America's continued vitality, strength and vibrancy is through the full realization of the contributions of all of its' citizens.

The courthouses in our State are some of the most beautiful and architecturally attractive in the nation. However, many are woefully inadequate and inaccessible to disabled individuals. To wit, Steve Canterbury (WV Supreme Court) sent out four young West Virginia collegians to assess the accessibility of West Virginia courthouses. If you would like to view your county's courthouse results, please contact Melissa at the CFIA office via email: [Melissa.smith@wvcfia.com](mailto:Melissa.smith@wvcfia.com).

An inaccessible courthouse prevents individuals with disabilities from seeking justice and all West Virginia citizens should be entitled to seek justice. With that in mind, we ask that you review the survey results for your county courthouse and take steps to ensure that all the citizens of your county can have access to the courthouse.

It is important to note that there is a strong potential civil liability for any county's failure to follow the ADA and make courthouses accessible to all. In addition to claims for damages by handicapped individuals, under the ADA and the West Virginia Human Rights Act, attorney's fees and costs can also be awarded. For this reason, in addition to the matters articulated above, we believe that timely action on this issue is imperative.



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Duane J. Ruggier II, an equity member with the law firm of Pullin, Fowler & Flanagan PLLC, practices extensively in the areas of corporate defense, insurance defense, and defense of governmental entities. Mr. Ruggier is a member of the West Virginia, American, and Kanawha County Bar Associations, the First Baptist Church of Hurricane, and the Defense Trial Counsel. He is also a proud father and active in his community.



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Melissa Garretson Smith,  
Executive Director

Joseph M. Alongi, Board  
Chairman

## Director's Brief

The past year has been a busy one for the Courthouse Facilities Improvement Authority. The State of WV has been implementing a new financial, payroll and purchasing system referred to as OASIS. This new system offers many advantages over the old ones maintained by the State. One that counties can take advantage of is Vista. Vista allows counties to maintain their address with the State and track payments that may be coming to you from a state agency. You can sign up for this service from the State Auditor's website: [www.wvsao.gov](http://www.wvsao.gov).

This issue of our newsletter focuses on two very important areas of facility management. Accessibility and storage weights are both areas that need improved in most courthouses in West Virginia. Both of these areas were highlighted in the courthouse facilities needs assessments that we provided to each county a few years ago. We hope that you are using the needs assessments as a guide to prioritizing

courthouse projects. The assessment found accessibility lacking in most courthouses except Morgan and the needs assessment team found lots of questionable storage solutions. A few counties are even storing heavy boxes on top of domed ceilings in courthouses. That type of ceiling was not engineered to support any type of weight and poses a threat to those who inhabit the courthouse. A basement would be the better choice for storage, though, many times, our courthouse basements are wet. Finding solutions can be a challenge.

The Legislature is in town. Although, the make-up of the House and Senate have changed, the general structure of meetings and the bill process remains the same. I encourage you to be an active participant in the legislative process. The legislative website is very user friendly: [www.legis.state.wv.us](http://www.legis.state.wv.us).

I'll be back in touch soon about 13<sup>th</sup> cycle funding deadlines.  
-Melissa

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