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## Neenah to fix up clock tower; Contractors donate services

Restoration will cost \$195,000; donations sought

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NEENAH — The Common Council on Wednesday awarded a series of contracts to restore the Neenah clock tower to its original glory.

Project manager James Perras said he hopes the \$195,000 restoration will have "the clock ticking and the bell tolling" in time for the Neenah Community Christmas Event on Dec. 6.

"I feel a tremendous momentum for this project," said Perras, vice president of Consolidated Construction Co. Inc. of Appleton.

The four-sided clock tower has been a Neenah landmark for more than a century. It was built as part of the 1888 City Hall designed by architect William Waters of Oshkosh. Everything but the clock tower was razed in 1975.

The restoration will remove the broken mechanical clock and install an electronic clock with illuminated faces. It also will install an electronically controlled striker for the bell at the top of the tower.

The brick that fills ground-level archways will be removed, and the brick that fills the upper-level windows will be replaced with translucent glass.

Perras said interior lights would create an evening glow that would reflect back to a bygone era when the clock tower was a functional part of the community.

A small landscaped plaza will be created around the base of the clock tower, and the original mechanical clock will be displayed among the archways.

"It will be like a little museum," Perras said. "It will be an opportunity to celebrate the history of the clock tower."

Mayor George Scherck said he is eager for the restoration. "It will be spectacular," he said.

The city has \$22,000 in tax money set aside for the project, and the council budgeted another \$173,000 this year with the expectation that the money would be raised privately.

Scherck said \$72,000 in cash has been received to date.

Tom Martin, whose mother, the late Ann Martin, helped save the clock tower from demolition 33 years ago, is the chairman of the fundraising campaign.

"Our goal is to involve as many citizens as possible in the fundraising effort, making it a truly community-based project," Martin said. "However, our hope is that a corporation or individual will step forward with a major contribution to fund the new clock, restoration of the bell or the creation of the public plaza."

Scherck said nine contractors have provided in-kind donations totaling \$49,600 to help keep the project within budget. They are Consolidated Construction, Community Living Solutions, Gries Architectural Group Inc., Showcase Concrete Inc., Tri City Glass & Door, Davis Painting & Decorating Inc., Kuehl Electric Inc. and Werner Electric Supply Co.

