

YOUR Serving the communities
of York County

NEIGHBORS



Where, Oh Where?/E2
Calendar/E2
Births/E3

Thursday, April 13, 2006

Portland Press Herald

SECTION E



The Brick Store Museum in Kennebunk has received \$100,000 to launch a capital campaign for repairs to the museum's buildings, some of which are close to 200 years old. Staff photos by Gregory Rec

Museum ready for repairs

Fundraising effort will provide money for major work to historic buildings.

By ELBERT AULL
Staff Writer

KENNEBUNK — A local museum recently banked its first major donation toward a series of repairs at its aging buildings on Main Street.

The Brick Store Museum is launching its first capital campaign in more than a decade, a \$1.5 million drive Executive Director Tracy Baetz said will pay for major structural renovations to the 19th-century buildings.

"We're ... really at a critical stage in their history now," Baetz said of the buildings.

Last week, the campaign got its first contribution when Kennebunk Savings Bank Foundation announced a \$100,000 donation to the regional history museum.

Over the next several months, Baetz said the museum will host a number of fund-raising events. The capital campaign coincides with the museum's 70th anniversary, she said.

"It's definitely strategic timing," Baetz said.

Located in Kennebunk's National Register Historic District, the museum was begun in 1936 by Edith Cleaves Barry, whose grandfather, William Lord, built the dry goods store on Main Street that is the centerpiece of the museum.

Its collection features paintings, furniture, artifacts and documents that preserve the maritime heritage of the town and region. The museum also supports a library



Some of the repairs needed at the Brick Store Museum are new support beams for the second floor collection storage areas, including the one photographed here. Floors are sagging and also can't bear heavy loads in some areas.

and an extensive archive of written materials, such as diaries, photographs, newspaper and commercial publications that are valued by historical researchers and scholars.

Museum officials commissioned an engineering study in 2004 that recommended repairs at its four buildings on Main Street, built between 1810 and 1860.

Baetz said the study pointed out the need for foundation improvements, brick work, roof repairs, new basement columns, and a few extra second-floor support beams.

"This work will really fortify the structures themselves," she said. "Anybody who's done any work with old homes and buildings knows about these (problems) —

damp basements, drainage, roofing."

Before the museum opened, previous owners knocked out walls on the second floor that served as structural support.

Most of the museum's second-floor space is used for storage, but Baetz said she hopes to open some of the area up to the public after the floors are straightened.

"This will help us successfully utilize the buildings to their full potential," she said.

Construction, which will take place in phases, is scheduled to begin in January and last until 2008. Baetz said the museum, which recently became a year-round operation and attracts about 5,000 visitors a year, will

stay open during the renovations.

The campaign will also help pay for an endowment that provides funds for staff development and public programs.

The "Connecting Generations" campaign is still in its quiet phase, when officials solicit large donors. Baetz said the fund-raising drive will enter its public phase June 20 at the museum's annual meeting.

The museum will likely solicit donations at its 70th-anniversary celebration July 1, when it will offer a commemorative postage cancellation, Baetz said.

Staff Writer Elbert Aull can be contacted at 324-4888 or at: eaull@pressherald.com