

Glen Leslie Church renovations underway



By Kirsten Goruk

Published on: May 16, 2013 | Last Updated: May 16, 2013 12:49 PM EDT



Work is underway to restore the Glen Leslie Church to its former and safer glory.

Restorations on the church, a designated Alberta Historical Resource, have been in the works for a couple of years. The project is a partnership between the Glen Leslie Preservation Group and the County of Grande Prairie, with the support of the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation.

“It was built in 1915, so there’s not too many buildings around that are left from that long ago; it’s almost 100 years,” said County Councillor Harold Bulford.

“It’s stood the test of time; it’s a fairly decent building for being that old. It’s going to take a little bit of work to get it back to stand the test of time, but it’s weathered the storm pretty good.”

Construction has already begun on the church and work will probably plug along until the end of the year. In addition to some roof work, crews also have to tackle upgrading the church’s foundation.

“They started a couple of weeks ago to get the building ready. They have to move it off the foundation and then they’re going to redo the foundation and a couple of the bottom logs and move it back on,” Bulford said.

Back in the day the church served as a school house and community centre, among other things. The cemetery, which had its first burial in 1914, services a large area in the county. Wanda Zenner, president of the Glen Leslie Preservation Group said that the start of restoration is a very exciting moment for the group’s members.

“It’s been a long time coming. We as a group have been working really hard to gather donations. The community support has been really wonderful,” Zenner said.

The current estimated cost for the work is about \$90,000, although that could go up depending on the issues that might arise as the work is completed. All of the money for the construction is being raised through fundraising efforts and grant applications and those efforts are far from over, as the group is still looking for more support.

While work is being completed, people are encouraged to stay away from the actual site and to exercise caution when driving near the construction area.

“It’s probably best if they stay out of there. There’s going to be some cranes and stuff there. They’ll need quite a bit of room to move it around there,” Bulford said.

Once the church is back in its usual spot, everyone is encouraged to drop by and visit the historical site.

“It’s a pretty good landmark, with the cemetery being there. I think once it gets fixed up they’ll probably even have some weddings and stuff in there, like small weddings,” Bulford said.

“It’s a neat building, but it’s just getting kind of unsafe to be in there right now.”

The Glen Leslie Church is located about 20 km east of Grande Prairie on Highway 43 and then about 3 km south of Range Road 40.

kirsten.goruk@sunmedia.ca

Twitter: @DHTKirsten