

August 31, 2017

Bakery project gets USDA grant



The Rise Up Bakery in Barre receives a big infusion of labor from the ReSource Youth Build program and new funding with a federal grant as they renovate the historic bakery. From left are Youth Build Manager Jesse Greig, students Michael Deedham, Matt Bailey and Hunter Larrabee, and project coordinator Carolyn Shapiro. JEB WALLACE-BRODEUR / STAFF PHOTO

BARRE — A Barre bakery project is one step closer to completion with receipt of a \$30,000 federal grant.

But “We still need the dough” remains a truth for Carolyn Shapiro, project director of the Rise Up Bakery on Granite Street. She estimates the project still needs up to \$80,000 to clear “one more financial hurdle” to pay for electricity, plumbing and a handicapped accessible entrance. Shapiro hopes to complete the project and open the doors to the bakery in September 2018.

The project involves the restoration of the historic bakery building connected with the cooperative store in the basement of the nearby Socialist Labor Party Hall. Built in 1913, its wood-fired oven provided Italian and French baked goods for the community of granite workers in the first decades of the 20th century.

The flood of 1927 damaged or destroyed much of the building’s interior, which has since served as a storage shed for nearby granite companies.

The Barre Historical Society saved the bakery from demolition and acquired the building in 2004. When Shapiro became involved with the labor hall, a plan to save the bakery emerged. A former teacher of American history and community education programs at U-32 High School, she saw it as an opportunity

to combine her interests in education and social history with a project to restore the bakery and involve schools and work-training programs.

Money was needed and Shapiro launched a Kickstarter campaign in 2015 that raised \$25,000 to begin the restoration. Shapiro joined forces with the nearby ReStore Youth Build program to provide labor and vocational training for high school students looking to develop practical skills and earn high school diplomas and postsecondary education credits.

Meanwhile, fundraising continued with successful grant proposals and donation drives that attracted a \$50,000 preservation grant for the bakery from the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board. Other funding included \$10,000 from The Bay and Paul Foundations to repoint exterior brick walls, \$2,000 from National Life Group's foundation program, an anonymous \$2,500 grant, \$2,500 from The Patrick Foundation, and \$2,500 from the Vermont Community Foundation.

The latest funding just announced, from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development Grant Program, will pay for equipment like mixers and sinks, plus the work on building the brick oven that will be the centerpiece of programs involving culinary arts students from local schools and nutrition programs at Capstone Community Action in Barre.

Jesse Greig, ReStore YouthBuild's program manager, said the bakery is a perfect fit for his trainees to work on a project that will benefit the whole community.

"The bakery project is part of the revitalization of Barre over the last few years ... and our training programs, including Youth- Build, which have moved into Barre," Greig said. "The Barre bakery is a great addition to the community, taking a historic building that used to supply food for the granite workers and the community."

Shapiro was equally excited about the prospects for reviving a historic Barre landmark that will embrace education and learning in local schools.

"I initiated contact with YouthBuild because I wanted a lot of young people to be involved in the project," Shapiro said. "It gives them a sense of history, a sense of purpose, and helps to bring the community back together."

Shapiro said money raised to date had already allowed for repairs to the roof, repointing brickwork, interior renovations, replacing windows, restoring wainscoting, and building a new entrance and porch. Ongoing work includes U- 32 students building tables from wood provided by an East Montpelier resident that was milled by forester Paul Cate.

"The last big piece is connecting the dots: We've got the building, the equipment and now we need the electrical, the sewage and the mechanicals. So, that's what we're raising money for, with the idea that we can have a grand opening in September 2018," Shapiro added.

On Wednesday, Greig and Shapiro gathered with some of the ReStore Youth- Build students involved in the project to review ongoing interior work.

Michael Needham, 16, of Barre, said he was excited to be working on a historic project to benefit the community.

"I think it will be great to have youth get involved to bring back a piece of history," said Needham.

“I think it’s going to provide a lot of opportunity for people to learn how to cook with a wood stove,” said Matt Bailey, 16, also of Barre. “It’s going to be pretty cool because every day we’ll be able to smell fresh bread (being baked).”

Hunter Larrabee, 16, of Williamstown, added, “I feel like it’s going to bring back a tradition that’s slowly dying out.”

For more information about the project, contact Carolyn Shapiro at 522- 0431 or email carolyn@energybalance.us.

Rising up

Granite Street bakery hopes to be cooking on Labor Day

The Times Argus | January 12, 2018

BY DAVID DELCORE
STAFF WRITER



Workers install bricks on the dome of a bread oven Thursday as efforts continue to resurrect the bakery by the Old Labor Hall in Barre. From left are oven expert Dan Wing, of Corinth, master builder Jeremiah Church of Boreal Heat, Carolyn Shapiro, chairwoman of the bakery project, and Jamie Duggan from the State Division for Historic Preservation. JEB WALLACE-BRODEUR / STAFF PHOTO

BARRE — You can't bake bread without dough.

Carolyn Shapiro prepares to cut a brick Thursday while working on the new oven for the Rise Up Bakery in Barre. JEB WALLACE-BRODEUR / STAFF PHOTO

While Carolyn Shapiro will tell you the Rise Up Bakery is still about \$70,000 shy of being fully functional, don't bet against its ovens cranking out a few loaves by Labor Day.

That's the new goal for an old brick structure that was built behind the Old Labor Hall on Granite Street in 1913 and housed



the Union Cooperative Bakery until the day it closed in 1940. Guttered, sold and used as storage space for decades, the building was acquired at auction by two members of the Barre Historical Society in 2004 and has been a pet project spearheaded by Shapiro since 2015.

A successful Kickstarter campaign, several grants and a lot of work later, Shapiro can almost taste the bread that could soon be baked in the building thanks to work that was done this week. Though it isn't quite finished, the core of a wood-fired brick oven was assembled by a crew led by master oven builder and Morrisville native Jeremiah Church. Though Church moved to Oregon with his business, Boreal Heat, two years ago, he was back in Vermont this week for a five-day project that is scheduled to be finished today.

There are still doors and a chimney to be added, but as soon as that work is done, Church said the new oven will be capable of comfortably producing 150 loaves — in “five bakes” — during a single firing. The oven that Church built with the helping hands of volunteers, like Montpelier resident Jamie Duggan and Daniel Wing of Corinth, will be finished long before the final phase of fundraising needed to pay for the last leg of the project.

The bakery building, which is on the National Register of Historic Places, doesn't have any electricity or mechanical systems, will need to be hooked into municipal sewer line located a parking lot away, and must be made accessible in order to serve as a tourist attraction and teaching facility. The hope is to attract a part-time baker while making the facility available for culinary programs offered by the Central Vermont Career Center, Capstone Community Action and possibly the New England Culinary Institute.

“We're getting there,” Shapiro said, noting the latest round of work is being financed through a \$30,000 grant obtained through USDA Rural Development. The federal funding is paying for most of the equipment, including the brick oven, a mixer, sinks and seven maple tables being built by students in Dave Bazis' shop class at U-32 Middle and High School. Shapiro said she'll have no trouble spending the money by the June deadline and has already applied for other grants — some from organizations like the Bay & Paul Foundations that have funded earlier phases of the project, and others that haven't.

There is a sense of urgency because Shapiro would like work to be finished and the bakery fully functional by September. That's because the Vermont Humanities Council has chosen “Bread and Roses, Too” by Katherine Paterson as its Vermont Reads book this year. Paterson is an award-winning children's author who lives in Barre Town, and the title and the subject of her book have Shapiro eager to fire up the oven come Labor Day.

The novel tells the story of the 1912 “Bread and Roses” strike in the Lawrence, Massachusetts, textile mills through the eyes of an Italian-American girl and a runaway boy. Though the book is a piece of historical fiction, the fact that Barre hosted the children of striking textile workers at the time is one of the reasons the Old Labor Hall earned its designation as a National Labor Landmark.

Though the bakery out back wasn't built until a year after the strike, Shapiro would like to put some bread into a community celebration of “Bread and Roses”. “I'd really like to be able to bake bread for that,” she said. “I've got good people lined up and ready to go.”

The oven will be ready when Shapiro gets the “dough” she needs.

Aug. 31, 2018

Rising up: Old Labor Hall celebrates historic milestones



Andy Shapiro (holding a historical photograph of the original bakery) leads a tour of the soon-to-open Rise Up Bakery next to the Old Labor Hall in Barre on Monday.

Josh Kuckens/Staff Photo



Elias Carpenter, 9, and Sarah Capron, of Northfield, construct paper roses as part of Labor Day celebrations on Monday at the Old Labor Hall in Barre.

Josh Kuckens/Staff Photo



Andy Shapiro leads a tour of the Rise Up Bakery located next to the Old Labor Hall in Barre on Monday.

Josh Kuckens/Staff Photo

By STEPHEN MILLS
STAFF WRITER

BARRE – Rising to the occasion was an apt response to Labor Day at The Old Labor Hall on Monday.

The historic landmark was the center of a dynamic duo of community celebrations that included a review of the hall's historic role in accepting children seeking safety and sanctuary from the 1912 "Bread and Roses" strike in Lawrence, Massachusetts. Events to mark the event and Labor Day included readings from "Bread and Roses Too," a book about the strike and flight of children to Barre by local celebrated children's author Katherine Paterson. Companion events included children's activities, and "Solidarity Forever – Songs of Union and Labor," a musical presentation by educator and musician Mark Greenberg.

But it was also a milestone moment to celebrate the revival of the nearby Rise Up Bakery, marking the close of a three-year project to rebuild and reignite the brick-oven bakery, formerly called the Union Cooperative Store Bakery.

A labor of love, the project has relied on countless hours of work and willing hands, and federal, state and local funding, as well as a Kickstarter campaign to complete the \$275,000 project to revive and reopen the bakery, built in 1913 and closed in 1940.

"If we can raise another \$10,000 to complete the project, we will be in heaven," said project coordinator Carolyn Shapiro.

Shapiro has led a concerted community campaign to fire up the bakery again with the help of YouthBuild and other local students, who helped with putting on a new roof, as well as repointing brickwork for the building and the oven. Experts also pitched in to recreate the classic brick oven, and bake bread the old-fashioned way.

The fruits of their labor were on display Monday with the first batch of bread on display during tours of the bakery. It was the first time bread had been baked in that space in more than 70 years. Shapiro endured the adulation of many who spoke highly of her tireless efforts, and she in turn praised the many people who helped her.

A lively discussion ensued, with details emerging about the metamorphosis of the building into a second life.

One visitor revealed that the original bread paddles were found in the attic when the building was reopened. Another visitor said he had heard that the original bread pans were thought to still be at a nearby granite shed. The bricks from the old oven, after it was dismantled, ended up being used as the foundation for a new floor of the building when it was converted into a storage shed after the bakery closed in 1940. Salvaged bricks from the Old Labor Hall were used to build the new brick oven.

On hand were some of the key players in rebuilding the oven, including Daniel Wing, of Corinth, who co-wrote a 1999 book, "The Bread Builders," about the brick oven technology. He also crafted tools on the ends of long poles, including a poker and a rake, to adjust the burning logs and remove ash, and a scuffle, a wet-cloth mop used to wipe fine ash off the bottom of the oven.

Jamie Duggan, who helped build the core of the oven, got involved as an extension of his work with the Division of Historic Preservation to save historic buildings like the bakery. A few of the students who had taken part in the oven construction with Duggan were on hand Monday to show off their handiwork to family and friends.

On the baking end of the project, significant help came from nearly a dozen central Vermont baking businesses, offering expertise and advice on the finer points of baking sourdough bread that was a staple of the Italian community that grew up around the granite industry.

Dave Dickson, of Woodbelly Pizza, in Montpelier, baked the bakery's first batch of bread Monday, and some visitors during the tour were lucky enough to receive some of the loaves.

Organizers hope to attract a part-time baker to help use the bakery as a training school for culinary arts students from Central Vermont Career Center Bake Shop, Capstone Community Kitchen Academy Program and New England Culinary Institute.

The last stage in the project will involve connecting a sewer line to the building, and hooking up water and some electrical services to make the building code-compliant and safe for staff, students and visitors.

"The comment from the fire department was, 'Looks great, when's the pizza party!'" quipped Wing.

stephen.mills@timesargus.com