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North Branch Construction preserves history of First Congregational Church of Wolfeboro

January 23, 2014 - Front Section

North Branch Construction continues work on schedule and on budget at the historic First Congregational Church of Wolfeboro. Foundations and structural steel are complete and framing began shortly after Thanksgiving. The building is expected to be fully enclosed this month.

A Christmas tree was put in place in a "topping out" ceremony to celebrate the last steel beam placed at the top of the building. The tree was lit at the beginning of December in celebration of the holiday season.

North Branch has taken great precaution to carefully remove many historic elements from the church so that they may be displayed and put to use in the new sanctuary. The church's stained glass windows and curved pews were placed in storage, where they will remain until it is time to reinstall them into the new sanctuary. The church bell was lowered before demolition and will be placed on display in a structure in front of the church. Design of the structure by the project's architect - G-V-V Architects of Burlington, VT - should be completed soon. Additionally, the church's original organ was removed and particular pieces were kept for memorabilia and nostalgia purposes, with the remaining parts going to McNeely Organ Company of Connecticut to be reused in organs being renovated around the world. A new digital hybrid Rodgers organ has been purchased from M. Steinert and Sons of Boston and will be installed before the church reopens.

The century-old cornerstone of the church displaying the original 1912 date of construction was removed during demolition. A new stone will be prepared to bear a 2014 inscription representing the current work being performed that is expected to be complete next spring. Both stones will be installed on either side of the new entryway to the church in commemoration of the building's original construction as well as its new growth and development.

The new sanctuary will welcome church-goers with a heated walkway at the entrance. Sound and lighting quality will be improved, and the building as a whole will be much more energy efficient due to the upgrading of heating, insulation, and the membrane of the new structure.

North Branch is happy to be back in Wolfeboro after recently completing the award-winning phased \$43 million additions and renovations to the Kingswood Regional High School, Middle School, and Technical Center. The historic renovation of the Wolfeboro Inn was also completed by North Branch Construction in 2009. Design for the First Congregational Church of Wolfeboro project is by G-V-V Architects located in Burlington, VT.

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