

ILLINOIS STATE CAPITOL

Pictured (from top):  
Senate Chamber — North wing, third floor  
House Chamber — South wing, third floor  
Old Supreme Courtroom — Room 212  
Governor’s Office — Room 207  
Lieutenant Governor’s Office — Room 214  
Secretary of State’s Office — Room 213  
Comptroller’s Office — Room 201  
Treasurer’s Office — Room 219

The Illinois Legislature authorized construction of the State Capitol Building in 1867. It is Illinois’ sixth Capitol Building and the second located in Springfield. The original design for the building was created by Chicago architect John C. Cochrane, who formed a partnership with Alfred H. Piquenard. A railroad line from the Toledo, Wabash and Western was built to encircle the Capitol and provide easy access for building materials. The project was delayed by Piquenard’s death in 1876 and halted by a lack of funds in 1877. The project continued in 1884 with new funds and a fresh perspective from architect W.W. Boyington, who also designed Chicago’s Water Tower building.

Despite the start of construction of the Capitol, Chicago almost became Illinois’ fourth capital city. The General Assembly planned to convene its fall 1871 session there until the Great Chicago Fire occurred on October 8-9. Instead, Springfield remained the capital city, and on Jan. 3, 1877, the General Assembly convened its first session in the new building. The project was completed in 1888 at a cost of \$4.3 million, and a balance of \$6.35 was returned to the state treasury.

First floor, Rotunda — statue

Sculpted by Julia Bracken, a statue in the center of the first-floor rotunda represents the welcoming of people to the Columbian Exposition in 1893.

First floor, north corridor — paintings

- Starved Rock on the Illinois River near Ottawa
- Fort Chartres on the Mississippi River near Prairie du Rocher
- Ulysses S. Grant taking command at Cairo in 1861

First floor, south corridor — paintings

- Fort Dearborn at the mouth of the Chicago River
- Future Governor Edward Coles freeing his slaves
- Abraham Lincoln and others stuck on the dam at New Salem
- Rendering of the village of New Salem, 1831-1838
- French explorers Marquette and Joliet at an Indian village on the Des Plaines River in 1673
- Portraits of 12 U.S. Presidents (discovered and restored in 2008)

First floor, east corridor — ceiling murals

- Charity — Holding a horn-of-plenty
- Faith — Woman of religion holding a cross
- Hope — Classic woman seated with an anchor looking out to sea

First floor — paintings commissioned by former Governor Jim Edgar

- Transforming the Prairie, Economic Development
- Clinic on Constructive Contribution — Enrico Fermi explains the world’s first controlled nuclear reaction

Second floor — art and sculptures

- Governor’s Reception Area — Art, Literature, Peace and War
- Hall of Governors — Portraits of previous Governors
- Old Supreme Court, Room 212 — Currently a Senate committee room. The Supreme Court moved across the street in 1908. The Goddess of Justice represents that true justice cannot be bought.
- Statues of famous state legislators:
  - John Wood, 12th Governor and founder of Quincy, Illinois
  - Abraham Lincoln, nicknamed “Honest Abe”
  - Stephen Douglas, nicknamed “The Little Giant”
  - Adelbert H. Roberts, first African-American Illinois Senator
  - Richard J. Barr, State Senator for 48 years
  - Richard J. Daley, Mayor of Chicago
  - Lottie Holman O’Neill, first female State Representative
  - David Shanahan, State Representative for 42 years
- George Washington Portrait — Donated to the state by Mr. and Mrs. August C. Meyer, Sr., Champaign, Illinois

Third floor — artwork and sculptures

- Plaster Relief Panels — Frieze by Springfield artist J. Nicolai represents early Illinois history, from the Native Americans through the Lincoln-Douglas debates.
- Statues of prominent people in Illinois history:
  - Ninian Edwards, territorial Governor, third Governor of Illinois
  - Shadrach Bond, first Governor of Illinois, 1818
  - Sidney Breeze, former Illinois Supreme Court Justice
  - Ulysses S. Grant, former U.S. President, Civil War general
  - Lyman Trumbull, former U.S. Senator
  - John A. Logan, former U.S. Senator
  - William R. Morrison, soldier, State Representative and U.S. Congressman
  - Edward Coles, second Governor of Illinois
- A 20’x40’ mural depicts a peace treaty with George Rogers Clark and Native Americans at Fort Kaskaskia in 1778. German immigrant Gustave A. Fuchs of Chicago was paid \$2,000 for the painting in 1886.
- Painted plaster on the north balcony depicts the migration of Native Americans driven from their homeland as the sun sets in the west. The south balcony depicts homesteaders moving onto their land.

Third floor — Rotunda view

The top of the Rotunda has a stained glass representation of the State Seal with 9,000 pieces of glass. It shows the archaic spelling of the word “sovereignty” by the original artist.

- From the first floor to the dome is 361 feet, and to the flag is 405 feet, 74 feet higher than the U.S. Capitol dome in Washington, D.C.
- The 24 columns supporting the dome are made of brick and encased in imitation marble.

Fourth floor — portraits and murals

- House Gallery, South Wing — Illinois has 118 State Representatives. A portrait of Stephen A. Douglas represents the Democrats and a portrait of Abraham Lincoln represents the Republicans. Both were painted for \$1,000 each. The chandeliers are Czechoslovakian crystal, 17.5 feet long and weigh 750 pounds each.
- Senate Committee Room 400 — In 1884, this room was dedicated by General William Tecumseh Sherman to display the Illinois Civil War battle flags. The murals on the wall are of Abraham Lincoln, Ulysses S. Grant and a Civil War soldier. (This room is not on the scheduled tour.)
- Senate Gallery, North Wing — Illinois has 59 state Senators. Portraits of six former Senate Presidents are hung in the gallery. The 12 chandeliers are Austrian crystal. Gallery seating is open to the public. The jury-like boxes are press seats.
- Murals — The 30’x18’ murals represent industry, agriculture and commerce in Illinois.



1855Governor's Executive Mansion built

1867Legislature authorizes sixth Capitol Building

1877Legislature meets in new Capitol Building

1888Capitol Building construction completed

1908Supreme Court Building completed

1923Centennial Building dedicated

1934Asenal Building burns; replaced in 1937 by the Armory

1938Archives Building completed

1955Staton Building completed

1963Illinois State Museum completed

1972Attorney General's Building dedicated

1988Capitol Building centennial and end of 20 years of renovation

1990Illinois State Library building opened

1992Centennial Building reopened

1995Archives Building renamed the Michael J. Howlett Building

2003State Library Building renamed the Margaret Cross Norton Building

2006House and Senate Chambers receive major renovation

2012Capitol renovations completed

Left to right: Stained glass state seal in Capitol Rotunda; First State House in Kaskaskia; Capitol Building in Vandalia; Old State Capitol in Springfield; Early construction of current Capitol Building; Capitol's original cornerstone discovered in 1944.

Capitol Complex Timeline:

SECRETARY OF STATE

Jesse White

*Jesse White*

As Secretary of State, one of my responsibilities is to preserve and maintain the Capitol Complex, including this unique building dating back to its groundbreaking in 1868. I hope you will take the opportunity to enjoy the unique architecture, spectacular artwork and the many statues in the Capitol Building and on the Capitol grounds. Many great Illinoisans are honored here for their unwavering commitment to help make Illinois what it is today — a great place to live, work and raise a family. Enjoy your visit to the Illinois State Capitol.

WEST

HOUSE GALLERY

HOUSE CHAMBER

HOUSE GALLERY

SOUTH

GOVERNOR – 207

SECRETARY OF STATE – 213

1ST FLOOR

2ND FLOOR

3RD FLOOR

4TH FLOOR

EAST

SENATE CHAMBER

SENATE GALLERY

COMPTROLLER – 201

PUBLIC BANK

INFORMATION

TREASURER – 219

OLD SUPREME COURT – 212

LT. GOVERNOR – 214

PRESS ROOM

WHEELCHAIR RAMP

State Capitol facts and trivia

— Illinois has had six Capitol Buildings — one in Kaskaskia, three in Vandalia and two in Springfield.

— The total cost of the current Capitol was \$4,315,591.

— The design is in the shape of a Greek Cross.

— Materials: outer walls, limestone from Joliet and Lemont, IL; north and east portico pillars, granite; grand staircase, second-floor columns and floors, domestic and imported multi-colored marbles; constructed of 750,000 cubic feet of cut stone; 20 million bricks; 1.4 million pounds of wrought iron; and 3.4 million pounds of cast iron.

— The Capitol's dome foundation is 92.5 feet in diameter, and its 17-foot-thick limestone walls are based on solid rock 25.5 feet below the grade line. The foundation for the outer walls varies from 11 to 16 feet below the grade line. Walls are 9 feet thick up to the first floor.

— Dimensions: east-west, 268 feet; north-south, 379 feet; dome height, 361 feet; from the ground to the top of the flag is 405 feet.

— There are 110 steps from the first floor to the fourth-floor gallery.


— When the Capitol first opened, the dome was illuminated with 144 gas jets. The carbon emitted from the gas jets made the dome black and invisible. It was cleaned in 1986 after 100 years.

— Every doorknob in the building is imprinted with the state seal.

— Shelby Cullom was the first Governor to work in the new State Capitol in 1877.

— President Barack Obama served as a State Senator in the State Capitol from 1997 to 2004.

WELCOME TO THE ILLINOIS STATE CAPITOL



JESSE WHITE

SECRETARY OF STATE

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State Capitol hours and free guided tours

— Required check-in with Capitol Police/security officers at each entrance.

— Request a tour at the Information Desk — tours begin in the Capitol Rotunda.

— Weekdays: 8 a.m.-4 p.m., tours every half hour (no tours from noon to 1 p.m.).

— Weekends: 9 a.m.-3 p.m., tours every hour (no tours from noon to 1 p.m.).

— Closed: Thanksgiving and the Friday after, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Day, Easter Sunday.

— Group tours of 15 or more by appointment only. Tours may be booked online at visit-springfieldillinois.com or by calling 217-789-2360.

— Visitors not allowed beyond the first floor on weekends and after 4 p.m. on weekdays, unless the legislature is in session.

— Capitol tours include the House and Senate galleries, Governor's reception area, Hall of Governors and Old Supreme Courtroom.

— Public restrooms available on each floor.

— ATM services available on second floor, north corridor, Mon.-Fri.

— EMT available for medical emergencies in Room 305.

Visitor's Center and parking

— Visitor's Center is one block west of the Capitol. Open Mon.-Fri., 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; closed 12-1 p.m. for lunch; closed weekends.

— Limited free parking; entrance to parking lot is off Edwards Street.

— Picnic tables and restrooms available.

Constitutional offices, House and Senate galleries

— Governor — 207 Capitol

— Lieutenant Governor — 214 Capitol

— Attorney General — 500 S. Second St.

— Secretary of State — 213 Capitol

— Comptroller — 201 Capitol

— Treasurer — 219 Capitol

— House — fourth floor, south wing

— Senate — fourth floor, north wing

— Legislature in session January through May; veto session two weeks in the fall.

Access for persons with disabilities

— Wheelchairs available for tours on a first-come, first-served basis.

— Elevators have control panels in Braille.

— Entrances: South, West (Ramps located where steps and curbs may be obstacles.)

— Parking: Four spaces in Visitor's Center parking lot, one block west of Capitol.

— Accessible restrooms on each floor.

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