

A worker finishes installing a chandelier in the Persian Terrace room of the Hotel Syracuse last week. A June fundraiser for the Onondaga Historical Association will be the first big event in the renovated hotel. (Photos by Rick Moriarty / rmoriarty@syracuse.com)



HAIL and FAREWELL

OHA fundraiser will send off Hotel Syracuse, welcome Marriott Syracuse Downtown

By Rick Moriarty
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A fundraiser for the Onondaga Historical Association on June 4 will be the first opportunity for people to stay at the Hotel Syracuse after the 92-year-old building's \$70 million renovation.

The "Forever Hotel Syracuse" fundraiser also will be the last major event at which the Hotel Syracuse name will still officially apply to the building. On July 4, the historic hotel will become the Marriott Syracuse Downtown.

"It's kind of the last opportunity to say farewell to the Hotel Syracuse, which has meant so much to the community," said Gregg Tripoli, executive director of the Historical Association.

Association officials had planned to hold the event on April 23, but the date has been switched to June 4 because the hotel will not be

ready until then.

The association has been working closely with Riley on the restoration. It has provided him with hundreds of historical photographs, as well as the original architectural plans for the building. Riley has been using them to help guide the restoration because they accurately document the hotel's 1924 design.

In addition, the association is providing prints of paintings and historical photographs to be used as artwork in guest rooms and hallways. The association also is putting together a book on the hotel's history. Tripoli said a copy of the book, along with an explanation of the hotel's artwork, will be placed in every guest room.

"It will help connect guests to the hotel and the community," he said.

The hotel opened in 1924 at the southwest corner

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This chandelier, left, was returned to the Persian Terrace room. A Connecticut company spent six months restoring the fixtures.



Chandeliers are in place in the lobby, above. The Onondaga Historical Association worked with hotel owner Ed Riley to make the hotel restoration historically accurate.

This 92-year-old light fixture, left, was returned to the lobby.

PHILANTHROPY



This painting of the Erie Canal in Clinton Square is an acrylic on canvas and depicts a pre-1910 scene. It was painted by Hall Groat Sr. in the middle to late 20th century. It will be among the artwork to hang in the renovated Hotel Syracuse, soon to be the Marriott Syracuse Downtown.

(Onondaga Historical Association)

Hotel officially becomes a Marriott on July 4

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of South Warren and East Onondaga streets downtown. With its elegant ballrooms and more than 500 guest rooms, it was the grand lady of Central New York hotels for decades.

Financial problems started in the 1980s and the hotel closed in 2004. Hotel developer Ed Riley purchased it with the city's assistance in 2014 and is completing a major reconstruction of its hotel rooms and an historical restoration of its common areas, including its ballrooms.

When the hotel reopens as a full-service Marriott, it will have 261 modern rooms and will be marketed as the headquarters hotel for Onondaga County's nearby convention center.

Tripoli said the association is hoping to attract 1,200 people to the fundraiser.

The black tie event on June 4 will include three levels of dinner service:

- A sit-down dinner in the hotel's Grand Ballroom for

\$350 per person.

- Food stations in the Persian Terrace room for \$250 a person.

- A buffet in the Imperial (soon to be renamed Finger Lakes) Ballroom for \$150 a person.

Tickets will be sold to the general public starting April 4 at cnyhistory.org/hotelsyracuse. Before that, corporate sponsors will be given priority for event and room reservations.

Any rooms not reserved by sponsors will go into a "room lottery" to be held May 6. Winners will be notified by email and will have until May 17 to book a room.

There will be music and dancing in all three ballrooms rooms, and tours of the hotel will be offered during the event.

Outside the hotel, bellhops in 1920s uniforms will greet people, and there will be vintage 1920s automobiles on display on Onondaga Street.

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