Baranov Restoration Carpenter Earns Award

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Diana Gish/KMXT

The Alaska Association for Historic Preservation has recognized Don Corwin of Skagway, with an award of excellence for his window restoration work on the Baranov Museum building. Corwin recently completed a multi-year effort to preserve and restore the window units on the building. The project took a total of 12 months in Kodiak starting in 2007.

The first two summers of the project weren't the best for construction work but Corwin said that with community help, the weather was rarely a problem.

-- (Windows 1 :18 "I've been very ...or whatever.")

The work project included removing each window and window casing and trim, repairing and restoring all of the wood pieces, and rebuilding each window. No two windows on the building are exactly alike, so each unit was a custom job. Original materials were re-used whenever possible. All glass and hardware was re-used and only a fraction of the wood materials were damaged beyond salvage. Prior to re-installation, Corwin fitted all window openings with weather-proof flashing materials to prevent further moisture damage. He also fabricated wooden storm windows for each restored unit.

-- (Windows 2 :38 "Well, I can ...similar concept.")

The Baranov Museum stayed open to the public seven days a week throughout the duration of the project. Corwin worked on the building every day of the week from 8 in the morning to 6 at night. Baranov Museum director Katie Oliver praised Corwin for both his work on the building and his willingness to interact with museum guests. Corwin's skill as a carpenter is equal to his fascination with history. He said he feels very fortunate to travel around the state and to work in a field about which he feels so passionate.

(Windows 3 :55 "But its very ...what is left.")

Corwin refers to himself as an historical preservation carpenter. The historical preservation part comes from his training with the national park service in Skagway. The carpentry part ...is in his blood.

-- (Windows 4 :48 "I never planned... remodeling.")

The Erskine House was constructed in 1808 as a warehouse for the Russian-American Company's wealth of sea otter furs, also known as the Magazin, its the oldest building in Alaska and the oldest of only four remaining structures of Russian construction in the United States. It's also the only building to encompass the commercial activities of both the Russian-American Company and the Alaska Commercial Company, the two global trading enterprises that shaped the scope and direction of settlement, exploration and commerce in Alaska for 100 years.

The Baranov Museum is operated in partnership between the Kodiak Historical Society and the City of Kodiak.