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Winchester Firm Takes the Lead In Restoration of Historic Station

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The historic Vienna Train Station's face-lift will have to wait, but a Winchester firm is working to make sure the station remains in usable condition.

Roof damage caused by a series of brutal winter storms, coupled with water damage resulting from the station's low-lying location, have forced the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority to address those problems before tending to long-planned renovations.

Work crews last week replaced water-damaged roof boards and shored up the station's sagging eaves with steel L-beams.

Workers from Vintage Renovation in Winchester stood on platforms 5 feet off the ground to repair the wooden roof's underside.

"The overhangs have suffered damage over the years," said crew member Tom Halsey. "I'm assuming the storm didn't help it," he added, referring to recent heavy rains.

The station's upkeep fell victim not only to the weather, but the fickle world of federal grants.

The Vienna Town Council in October 2008 authorized Vienna Parks and Recreation Director Cathy Salgado to apply jointly with the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority for a federal transportation-enhancement grant that would help pay for renovations at the station.

Vienna officials had hoped interior, exterior and site improvements could be made at the train station, including window and roof restorations, electrical work and improved access for people with disabilities.

The Park Authority and the town each would have had to supply up to 10 percent worth of matching funds. The town's share for the project could have risen as high as \$30,000.

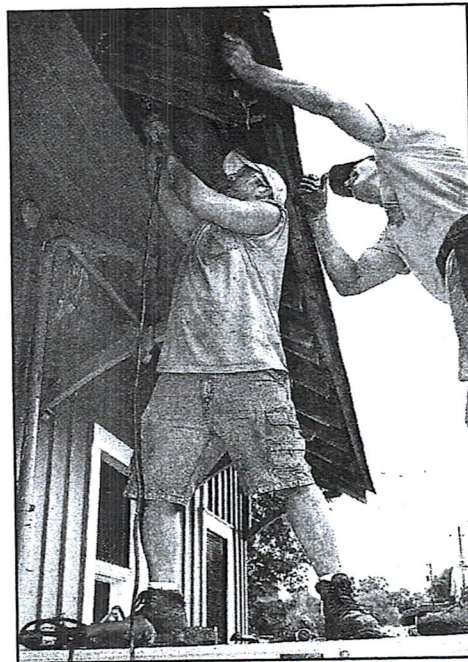
But the grant never materialized. Instead, Park Authority officials dipped into about \$100,000 set aside for renovations in order to make vital repairs.

"Some of the walls were bowing a bit from the weight of the snow," said Chris Pauley, park operations superintendent for the Park Authority.

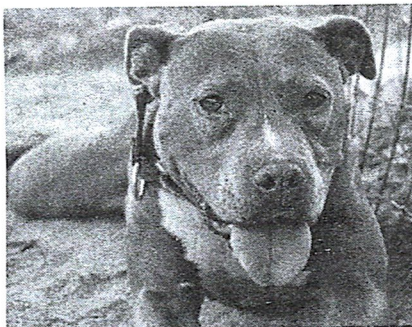
"Over the next six to eight months, we hope to do the flooring in the waiting room. There's some bowing in the floor joists, and it needs some basic carpentry," Pauley said.

The people most hampered by the station's diminished circumstances are members of the Northern Virginia Model Railroaders, who maintain an elaborate HO-scale train layout in the station.

The layout is located in the original section of the building, which was constructed in 1853 at Dominion Road and Ayr Hill Avenue, N.E. The station's waiting room and middle area, which contained the dispatcher's office and ticket-selling operations, were built in the early 1900s, said club member Bill Mims.



Weston Hollar and Nick Brown of Vintage Renovation in Winchester repair the roof overhang at the Vienna Train Station on Aug. 25. PHOTO BY BRIAN TROMPETER



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