

# Corson Block Construction Surges Ahead

The rehabilitation of the Corson Block has reached a major milestone: construction has passed the half-way point. Eastern General Contractors, Inc. of Springfield, MA, who took full advantage of this year's mild winter, has continued to keep a steady pace in the rehabilitation of the historic brick structures, originally constructed in the late 1800s and devastated by fire in 1997.

The most significant hurdle of the first half of the construction was the successful completion of the structural steel frame. The new steel superstructure was delivered by nine fully-loaded tractor trailers with minimum disturbance through the park's narrow cobblestone streets. The steel was skillfully lifted and carefully placed into position with a sixty-ton crane reaching more than eighty feet into the air.

Many local companies and suppliers continue to play a key role in the construction of this new facility. One of these companies is Integrity Mechanical Contractors Inc., who is based within the park boundaries. They are performing all the plumbing, mechanical and

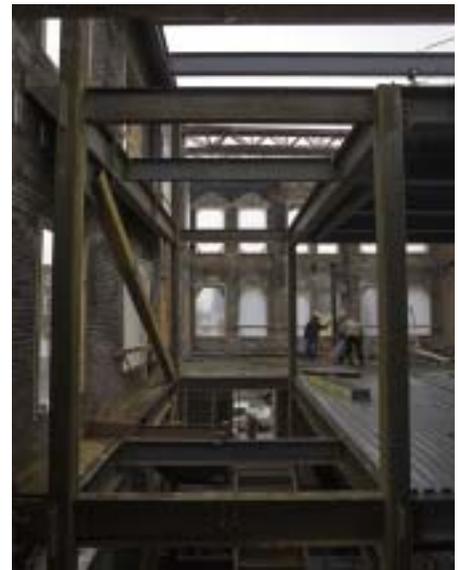
sprinkler work, and have played a big part in keeping the complex project on schedule. As work continues toward completion, local contractors and suppliers will continue to be a big part of the team Eastern General Contractors has brought together.

"Everyone involved feels a great sense of accomplishment knowing that we have more construction days behind us, rather than ahead of us," states Derek Santos, Historical Architect at New Bedford Whaling NHP. "We have such a strong team working on this project, and the quality of work has been at such a high level, that we have been really enjoying the process of building these much-needed spaces for the park, our partners, and our visitors."

The project is under the supervision of the Denver Service Center, the design and construction branch of the National Park Service. Construction is anticipated to be completed in January 2008. Look for updates on the progress of the project in future editions of the Toggle Iron.



With the interior framing removed the new foundation is ready for the steel structure.



A section of the new structural steel frame.



Manuel Marques, a carpenter for Eastern General Contractors applies a coat of primer to one of the sections of the restored cast iron storefront. The high level of craftsmanship that Manuel has brought to his work on the storefronts is one of many examples of Eastern General Contractors' team going above and beyond what is expected.

Rehabilitating the Corson Building is a key development project identified in the park's General Management Plan. The redevelopment plan includes the creation of a number of interpretive and educational spaces in the facility including a sixty-seat theater, a large multi-purpose education space, a seminar room, an archival room, and exhibition galleries. The facility will host the visiting public and provide the space for educational and interpretive programs and events.