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# The Extra

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## County council votes to begin Courthouse renovations

By John Clayton  
Editor

The Laurens County Council voted Tuesday night at its regular meeting to take the first steps toward restoring the county's most iconic building.

The Historic Laurens County Courthouse, which sits in the middle of the square in downtown Laurens, could undergo a renovation and restoration that may cost as much as \$10 million if council members vote to pursue the complete plan outlined for them by County Administrator Jon Caime and consultants from Greenville-based Craig Gaudlen Davis Architects.

Tuesday night, council voted 5-2 to approve Phase 1 of the project, which Caime said would stabilize and protect the 180-year-old building for a cost of around \$700,000. The initial phase will upgrade the fire-alarm system, mediate mold issues caused by water leaks, stop water leaks and repair other identified problems and damage where possible.

"This is a very rare asset we have here in this city," Caime said. "But if you take a close look, you'll see that this building is falling apart."

Last year, county council agreed to contract with Craig Gaudlen Davis Architects to assess the condition and needs of the historic building. Scott Simmons presented the firm's



**WORK TO DO** — Areas of the Historic Laurens County Courthouse are damaged or in disrepair. County council voted to begin a renovation project that will initially "stabilize" the building's problems.

report at Tuesday night's meeting, relaying that the condition of the building is "fair" for its age, but made it clear that there is work to be done in order to sustain the life of the courthouse.

Photos by John Clayton

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## 3 teens charged with arson

By John Clayton  
Editor

Three Laurens teenagers have been arrested and charged with arson in a fire that destroyed an abandoned house on Garlington Street Sunday evening.

The identities of the teenagers have not been released by the Laurens Police Department because they are minors. Two of the accused are 15 years old, and the third is 16.

All three have been charged with second-degree arson.


The 16-year-old is being charged as an adult. His case will be heard by a family court judge, who will decide whether or not to send it to 8th Circuit General Sessions Court.

The fire erupted around 5 p.m. Sunday and quickly engulfed the century-old structure.


Laurens Fire Chief Bill Hughes said the cause of the fire was suspicious and the Laurens Police Department was called in to investigate.

According to Laurens Police Detective Lt. J.C. Brewington,

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