



Smith Tower reopens to public after renovations



Starting Thursday, there's a new way to tour Seattle's iconic Smith Tower. KING 5's Ryan Takeo takes a look inside the city's first skyscraper.

Ryan Takeo, KING 3:33 PM, PDT August 25, 2016



(Photo: KING)

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SEATTLE -- Seattle first skyscraper reopened to the public Thursday after almost two years of renovations.

The building's new owners, Unico Properties, made seven-figure renovations to the space for a more visitor-friendly experience.

Smith Tower originally opened in 1914 and at the time was the tallest building west of the Mississippi.

But Unico Properties Vice President Scott Brucker said previous building owners focused on the view instead of telling tourists and locals about the building's unique past.



Inside Smith Tower's remodel

"It didn't have a visitor's experience and that's kind of what it's focused on this whole time," said Brucker.

The new 40-minute, self-guided tour opened to the public Thursday. It costs \$19.14 – a nod to when the building opened 102 years ago. The new building owners created interactive exhibits with the help of historians.

The Observation Deck, which is formerly known as the "Chinese Room," stands 484 feet up. It can only be accessed by one original brass Otis Company elevator car that fits seven people at a time, including the elevator operator. The renovated Observation Deck still has 360-degree views of the city. There's a new speakeasy up there now, too.



New speakeasy at Smith Tower

Brucker said previous owners focused on the building's great view but did little marketing. He said there wasn't much of a tour before, adding that security guards sold tickets at the front desk for \$7 and visitors were only given a notecard about the building's historic past.

Brucker believes the experience will give visitors a much better sense of the building's storied past.

"We really dug into the individual stories," he said. "(We) found out the really key details about the rum running that was occurring and the Prohibition-themed bar that was downstairs as a speakeasy, and we really dove into those stories to build out the visitor experience."



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