

Interesting Facts about Utah Capitol

- In **1911**, the Capitol Commission, created to oversee the design and construction of a Capitol building for Utah, contracted one of the most celebrated landscaping firms in the country – the Olmsted Brothers.
- The Utah State Capitol was designed in **1912** by architect Richard K.A. Kletting. He was also the mind behind the design of Saltair and the Salt Palace, two other well-known buildings in Utah.
- At first denied, the Capitol Commission was able to go forward with the Capitol building project a donation from the estate of multimillionaire Edward H. Harriman in **1911**.
- The Capitol was officially dedicated on October **9, 1916**.
- **The interior dome** is **165** feet above the Rotunda floor at its highest point; in the center the **95-foot** chain holds the luxurious chandelier. The **outer dome** stretches **235** feet above the ground and **150** feet above the roof line.
- The entire structure is held up by four piers, each supporting **10** million pounds.
- In **2007**, Governor Jon M. Huntsman Jr. and Lieutenant Governor Gary R. Herbert became the first executives to occupy the historic Governor's Suite restored by architectural historians and decorative painters from **2004-2008**.
- There are currently **75** desks, one for each representative, inside the House Chamber. Each representative serves for two years and represents a district of approximately **30,000** citizens.
- There are **29** desks in the Senate Chamber for every one of Utah's **29** senators. Each Senator serves a four year term while representing a constituency of about **80,000** citizens.
- The original lions that stood at the east and west entrances of the Capitol were made in **1915** by Gavin Jack. They were repaired in **1977** by local artist Ralphael Plescia. New lions were sculpted in Italian marble by Nick Fairplay in **2007**.
- The **1915** Utah Legislature directed John Willard Clawson to “paint a portraiture of the members . . . for the sum of **\$7,500**.” Clawson, a native son of considerable international reputation, was nearly **60** years old.
- The Rotunda was left unfinished for nearly **20** years until the Works Progress Administration (WPA) funded art projects for the Capitol. These impressive

- scenes from **19th** Century Utah life contain over **100** figures, many of which are more than ten feet tall.
- There are **276** marble rosette panels on the underside of the four rotunda arches inside square coffers.
 - The interior monolithic columns stand nearly **26** feet tall.
 - The base isolation system consists of **265** isolators, each weighing **5,000** pounds. During an earthquake the ground and Capitol move independently while the isolators deform, stretching sideways up to **24** inches in any direction.
 - Scientists predict the largest earthquake anticipated in Utah will be a **7.3**. Consequently, the Capitol has been isolated to meet life-safety criteria and minimize the impact of such a shake.
 - On January **4, 2008**, the renovation was complete and the Capitol was rededicated.
 - There are **14** lion's heads and **10** beehives inside the House Chamber.
 - Inside the central area of the Rotunda there are twelve paintings – four in the pendentives and eight in the drum. Many of them include the year of the scene they illustrate. The painting titled Naming of Ensign Peak **26 July 1847** is the only scene that includes month, date and year.
 - The beautiful pathway circling the Capitol Hill Complex is lined with **100s** of Yoshino cherry trees and connects major monuments around the complex.
 - The Mormon Battalion Monument stands **100** feet tall in granite and bronze. It was finished in **1927** by Gilbert Griswold and commemorates the sacrifices made by **500** Mormon pioneer volunteers who joined the U.S. Army during the Mexican War.
 - The Vietnam War Memorial lists **388** names of soldiers from Utah who died or went missing in action during the Vietnam War.
 - Martha Hughes Cannon was the **1st** woman senator in the United States elected in the first Utah state election of November **1896**.
 - Utah gathered **\$798,546** in an inheritance tax from Edward Harriman, president of the Union Pacific Railroad, just after his death. This sum helped produce the funds necessary for the building of the Capitol.
 - Excavating and grading costs for the Capitol totaled **\$99,775.86**.