

June 02, 2016

Smith Tower's 35th floor will be speakeasy, cafe

By [JOURNAL STAFF](#)



Image from Unico Properties [\[enlarge\]](#)

How do you put the crowning touch on one of Seattle's iconic buildings? If it's the Smith Tower, you start with a new general store on the ground floor and then renovate the 35th floor observatory into a Prohibition era-inspired cafe and bar.

That's what Unico Properties, owner and manager of the 1914 building, is planning in a multimillion-dollar face lift. The new spaces will open in August.

A press release from Unico says the store will sell local items and gifts, and the observatory will “hark back to Smith Tower's early 1920s roots with touches of Asian influence.”

Unico will also begin tours and exhibits in August that tell the history of the 42-story tower.

“We are committed to investing in our own backyard, and saw Smith Tower, Seattle's original skyscraper, as the perfect opportunity to preserve and energize a historic landmark in Pioneer Square,” said Unico senior asset manager Scott Brucker in the release.

Graham Baba Architects of Seattle is in charge of design for the retail and observatory spaces. Gallagher & Associates, a San Francisco-based museum planning and design firm, is creating the interactive tours and historical exhibits.

DP Inc. is the general contractor for the observatory. In a separate project, BNBuilders is the general contractor for a new amenities suite on the 22nd floor.

Columbia Hospitality of Seattle oversees visitor programs, private event sales and day-to-day visitor operations.

In January 2015, Unico paid CBRE \$74 million for the 270,000-square-foot building and the adjoining two-story Florence Building. Smith Tower was about 65 percent leased at the time and is now 85 percent leased.