Look at the Courthouse Bell this week-end.

The Starke County Courthouse tours are scheduled for Saturday, Aug. 25, from 9 am to 5 pm and Sunday, Aug. 26 from 10 am to 2 pm. during the Knox Harvest Days Festival.

Tours of the 115—year—old Starke County Courthouse have been conducted since 1994. During those 18 years, more than 5000 people have visited the eight floors and watched the clock and bell strike the hour of the day. People have climbed the 157 steps to get a bird's—eye view of the area, seeing as far as Wheatfield and Kingsbury.

The 46-inch diameter bell is one of the highlights of the tour. It weighs 1460 lbs, maybe a little more now that it has had a couple of fresh coats of paint on it. In the attached photo, one can see the old bell being reinstalled with a new beam and supports. During the restoration of the Courthouse tower, it was noted that the old bell carriage was rotting away and needed to be replaced. The new carriage was designed and pinned and bolted together like the old one. The oak lumber was furnished by Jim Chesak from San Pierre, who band-sawed the timbers to the proper dimension. It was sanded lightly, preserving the band-sawed texture. The timbers, being from a fresh-cut log, were green and not dry-cured lumber. Therefore, they were edge-beveled on all corners and ends. You may have noticed this technique on timbers in old homes or old furniture, like the main frame in a spinning wheel. By beveling the edges of timbers, the corners dry faster, which helps keep the beam from cracking or checking.

For more information on the Starke County (

http://www.starkehistory.com
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