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# Friends of Historic Woolsey 'Raise the Roof'

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Attendees gather to celebrate the new cedar roof with live music and other activities at Historic Woolsey Baptist Church.

Dylan Shoemaker



Friends of Historic Woolsey held its "Raise the Roof" celebration on May 2, which highlighted a new cedar roof placed on the Historic Woolsey Baptist Church.

"The community has been so supportive," FOHW President Jamie Lovett said.

From 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., attendees gathered for live music, face painting, and to hear from project officials. Nearby town hall was used for a silent auction where volunteers also provided refreshments.

"This is extremely exciting for the Town of Woolsey because it is another step towards revitalization," Woolsey Mayor Ron Smith said. "It gives us a place to congregate. It is going to be a linchpin to bring people together here."

Church tours showcased its historical character and current project status.

According to officials, the church originally was named Harmony Grove Missionary Baptist Church, where Dr. I.G. Woolsey served as its first pastor in 1888. It later changed its name to Woolsey Baptist Church.

To prevent confusion with the newer Woolsey Baptist Church, it is now referenced as Historic Woolsey Church. Original church members constructed the building in 1889, which had cedar shingles.

"It was really important to us to make sure that we are doing everything to authentically restore the church just like it would have looked like in 1889," Lovett added.

Lovett, in addition to other attendees are said to share an ancestral lineage with Dr. Woolsey.

While restoration plans have been in place, storm damage in recent years caused FOHW to expedite its roof restoration efforts.

Project funding reportedly came from the 1772 Foundation, Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation, Clothes Less Traveled, and Fayette County Development Authority in partnership with the town and individual donations.

"Fayette County Development Authority was proud to award a \$300,000 matching grant to the Town of Woolsey for tourism product development and the restoration of the Historic Woolsey Church," FCDA President Niki Vanderslice said. "We are excited to see what they are doing and the progress that they have made so far."

Upon completion, the town plans on utilizing the space for community events such as religious services, weddings, meetings, and more. FOHW indicated fundraising efforts remain ongoing.

"I am hoping for two to three years for the complete restoration," Lovett said. "It just depends on funding."

Commemorative shingle sponsorship opportunities are offered. For more information, visit <https://friendsofhistoricwoolsey.org/cedar-shingle-sponsorships>.

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### **Dylan Shoemaker**

Senior Reporter