

# COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

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## Historic scale returns to Boone County National Bank

By [Chelsea Bengier](#)

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A historic scale sits in the lobby of Boone County National Bank on East Broadway on Tuesday. The scale, first installed in 1917, was returned to the bank after being removed to be refurbished six months ago. ; [Yi-Chin Lee](#)

COLUMBIA — Since 1917, customers at Boone County National Bank have been weighing their kids, suitcases and dogs on a six-and-a-half foot scale in the main lobby.

Years ago, "a woman brought in her mid-sized dog on a leash, put him on the scale, wrote down the number and walked away," said Mary Wilkerson, senior vice president of marketing at the bank. "It was the funniest thing."

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The newly cleaned and refurbished antique scale stands in the lobby of Boone County National Bank on Tuesday. Walt Imhoff, owner of Imhoff Construction Inc., restored the scale and said he peeled off six layers of paint during the process.

Six months ago, crews removed the historic scale so it could be refurbished while the bank went through extensive renovations. The scale, now a gold color, was returned in August to its original home in the bank's lobby off Broadway.

"It's a historically cherished item," said Wilkerson. "It's an antique, like an old pocket watch, but still useful."

### Road to restoration

Restoring the nearly century-old scale wasn't easy. Ninety-five years of paint had to be peeled away by Walt Imhoff, owner of Imhoff Construction Inc., the company that helped renovate the bank.

"I always like taking things apart, fixing it and making it better," Imhoff said. "It (the scale) is something different; you don't see many of those anymore."

Imhoff used a photograph of the scale from 1917 to guide the restoration, but he also researched the mechanics and aesthetics of old Toledo scales to make sure everything was historically accurate.

First he removed the frame and glass. After the plaque and several other parts were taken off, he found six layers of colored paint underneath: yellow, blue, beige, grey, black and gold.

"When we started taking off paint, it was a mystery story of the different colors of each layer," Wilkerson said.

Imhoff brought the scale back to its base color by stripping the paint with chemical strippers, sandblasting it, and applying a gold auto paint that matches the scale's original hue.

Imhoff also discovered some unique historical craftsmanship that showcased the scale's age.

"All the screws and hangers were made out of brass. You don't see that anymore, now everything is metal," Imhoff said.

Instead of painting over them, Imhoff polished and clear-coated the brass so it wouldn't tarnish. He added the final touch by placing a mosaic tile on the platform.

### A weighty history

In 1917, the president of Boone County National Bank, Robert Beverly Price II, bought the scale as an amenity for his customers.

"A lot of people at the time didn't have scales at home," Imhoff said. "It was a unique service to the customer."

The Price family owned the bank from 1857 to 1974, when it was sold to Central Bank Holding.

When Robert B. Price III, architect and associate at Simon Oswald Architecture, found out that his great-great-grandfather's bank was being renovated, he wanted a hand in it.

"I have a wonderful familial connection and it was a real personal celebration for me to be able to help them renovate it," Price said. "It's a great pride."

As a child of 12, Price worked in the mail room one summer and remembers the scale being a central attraction. At that time, the scale was a creamy white, Price said.

"I would jump on the scale every time I came to the bank," Price said. "I remember it was fun to watch the scale needle go around the dial. It was wonderful."

Customers can now take their own turn on the scale.

"Refurbishing made it a more beautiful piece but it'll be used the same way as it was then — for people to step on it," Wilkerson said.

*Supervising editor is [Jacob Kirn](#).*