



Photos by Dan Williamson / Duluth News Tribune  
People watch as the new 28-foot-tall anodized bronze spire is placed at the top of the clock tower at Denfeld High School Saturday in Duluth.



The anodized bronze spire at rest in the parking lot of Denfeld High School before being raised to the top of the clock tower Saturday in Duluth.

# After lengthy repairs, Denfeld clock tower's spire replaced

**Editor's note:** This story was previously published in the News Tribune's Sunday e-edition.

By Joe Bowen

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**DULUTH** — High above West Duluth, Duluth Public Schools contractors put one of the finishing touches on a face-lift of the clock tower at Denfeld High School.

Crews on Saturday hoisted a 28-foot tall anodized bronze spire

atop the school's iconic clock tower, symbolically capping a yearslong, approximately \$950,000 renovation of the school and neighborhood landmark's exterior. Remaining work includes reroofing the tower, installing a new access hatch and ladder, repairing one of the four drive shafts that power the tower's clocks and setting the clocks to the correct time.

"It's a huge, huge

thing for the west side of Duluth, here," Kyle Linn, a project manager at Duluth-based A.W. Kuettel & Sons, which fabricated the spire, told the News Tribune.

The spire's framework is made of hot-dip galvanized steel and the exterior roofing is aluminum with a bronze finish, Linn explained. Kolb Construction erected and set up the spire, Kraemer Crane lifted it into place, and Minneapolis-

olis-based masonry contractor Inspec designed the project.

"We have a lot of guys that went to school here, a lot of employees that went through these doors as kids," Linn said, "and to come back and help out and see that on top of the tower is pretty cool."

Workers secured the spire to a waiting concrete pad with bolts coated in epoxy. It will be held in place with guy-wires for a few days

until the epoxy hardens. School district contractors have been repairing the tower for about two years.

The water diversion system on top of the tower failed, allowing water to trickle down behind the tower's brickwork during an unusual rainstorm in December 2020. When that water froze again, it loosened the tower's bricks, causing some to pop out entirely. Dis-

trict staff first noticed the problem when bricks began landing on the school's roof in January 2021. Facilities Manager Dave Spooner told the News Tribune.

It'll take about 50 years before the masonry on the outside of the tower needs to be touched up, Spooner predicted, and 100 years before it needs to be substantially worked on again.

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