

Depot Clock Tells History



Tribune photos by GARY RINGS

Brett Dawi, left, and John Castendyke install one of the four faces on the Centennial Clock Keep at Union Station. The Tampa Public Art Program commissioned the tower for \$35,000.

Union Station Tower Displays Railroad Past

By SEAN LENGELL
slengell@tampatrib.com

TAMPA — Time isn't standing still at Tampa's 91-year-old Union Station.

A freestanding 30-foot clock tower has been installed outside the downtown train depot, featuring four clock faces and images representing the city's railroad history.

The piece, called the Centennial Clock Keep, was commissioned by the Tampa Public Art Program for \$35,000.

"It's certainly one of the most complex [artworks] we've done, by design and construction," Public Art Administrator Robin Nigh said.

Designed by Rhode Island artist Bill Culbertson, the concrete structure features dozens of graphic and pictorial reliefs, including Florida railroad magnet Henry Plant, logos of passen-

ger train lines that once served Tampa, and Henry Love, Union Station's first manager.

A brick base will be installed soon.

"The whole thing is the history of the train station," Culbertson said. "I'm trying to make people happy and hopefully make something local people can be proud of."

Culbertson said he designed the ornate clock box at the top of the column to resemble the station's long-demolished watchman's tower. The tower was used as a lookout by railroad workers to direct trains.

Union Station, 601 N. Nebraska Ave., was built in 1912. The building, now an Amtrak depot, was restored in 1998 for \$2.6 million.

Reporter Janis D. Froelich contributed to this story.
Reporter Sean Lengell can be reached at (813) 259-7145.



Rhode Island artist Bill Culbertson included images of railroad magnet Henry Plant, passenger trains and the station's first manager, Henry Love.