



Four buildings part of beautification project

It takes muscle and imagination to beautify a downtown. You have to somehow get beyond the boarded up buildings and vacant lots. Sometimes you have to just put on the rose colored glasses to see beyond the obstacles and challenges of revitalization. But when the stars finally align it's magical.

With the acquisition of four buildings in the 100 block of Foster Street, the Dothan Downtown Redevelopment Authority is moving forward with a block beautification project that promotes public and private partnerships. Downtown architect Joe Donofro recently released the rendering of the four buildings on the west side of Foster Street. "The styles are in line with facades built in the early 1900's in downtown Dothan. The retail storefronts are historically correct with the introduction of decorative cornices, friezes and bands," says Donofro.

This bold move will clearly show progress downtown and will attract developers traditionally skeptical of the historic district's ability to revive itself. Donofro commented about the beautification project, saying, "Any commercial retail developer knows he has to have space ready to lease or sell in an improved condition. When the project is completed these four buildings will be a lot more attractive to tenants or buyers."

One small building on the block is already spoken for. Plans are underway to turn blight into a light filled plant and novelty shop. And across the street from the project another downtown investor is transforming a two story building into an art and gift gallery. Downtown's time has come. And it's about time.



Downtown Group has a new home

With the fate of the old Jailhouse sealed, The Downtown Group recently had to find a new home for its offices. We packed everything up and knocked on the door of the WTVY building (or Charles Woods Building.) As fate would have it Pat Dalbey, Regional Vice President of Grey Television and General Manager of WTVY Channel 4, had some space and invited The Downtown Group to set up shop on the third floor of his 285 North Foster Street location. All this is in the name of progress! With the old jail coming down along with the SEACT building the much needed parking project can be completed giving the Bank building a shot at selling to a downtown investor.



Cherie Chason (left) and Bettye Forbus are seeking \$3 million in private funds to relocate the Houston-Love Memorial Library on West Burdeshaw Street to a new location in downtown Dothan.

A bold, new vision for our library

Downtown is not a place for wimps. Just ask Bettye Forbus, Houston Love Memorial Library Director, and Cherie Chason, Chairman of the library's Board of Trustees, about what it takes to claim a space downtown. They're heading up the biggest public/private partnership ever to hit the Historic District - a new public library for Dothan's citizens located in the heart of the Historic District. Total price tag: \$18 million.

Bettye responded by saying "We've got a tough timeline. The public contribution is \$11 million and we have to come up with \$3 million dollars in private funds fast." So why fight so hard for a downtown location? "A downtown location means that both literally and physically the library is the heart of the community."

The Houston-Love Memorial Library currently serves an average of 539 people per day with 65,000 library cards issued to residents of Houston County. Cherie Chason, a volunteer, says her passion is fueled by the fact that "A public library means so much to generations in this community. I think it's time for a new building, the old building is overshadowed by modern technology. Let's stop patching and make things work. And let's build it downtown where it truly belongs and where it will truly serve the needs of the community."

So, it's ready, set, and go for newdothanlibrary.com. You can log on and get the latest information on the library project or make a contribution through PayPal. Contact Bettye Forbus at the Houston-Love Memorial Library phone number: 334-793-9767. Contributions can also be mailed to P.O. Box 1369, Dothan, Alabama 36302.

The 2007 Partnership Award was presented to Wes Chapman owner of Miracle Finance. Wes was the Snow Zone Sponsor at last year's Downtown Christmas.



The 2007 Wendell Stepp Volunteer of the Year Award was presented to Conna Minix and Shannah Mallory by Robin Rainer, President of the Downtown Group.



Paul Fripp, owner of The Bistro, received the 2007 Rehabilitation award for renovations to his restaurant and courtyard area.

Annual awards celebration held at The Bistro

The Downtown Group celebrated the Annual Meeting this year at Bistro on Foster Street. The evening was attended by the many friends and supporters of downtown revitalization.

For more photos from the Downtown Group's Annual Party, see Page 102.

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For more information about membership and sponsorship options for The Downtown Group, call (334) 793-3197 or send your inquiry to:

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