

Old Downtown Building Sees New Life

The old J.C. Penney building at 1513 Washington Street is sporting a new, improved façade, thanks to the ongoing renovation work of local contractor/developer Kevin Voysey.

Just last week, the new storefront was unveiled, as the plywood enclosure that has protected the storefront for several months was removed.

Inside, an even more dramatic transformation is taking place—one that does this great old, 1940-vintage retail building proud. I had a chance to tour the building last week with other City staff, and was very impressed with the attention to detail that is going into the interior renovation of the structure, which will soon house several new businesses.

This is exactly the kind of private investment that Two Rivers needs in its central business district, to keep it a vital, thriving, and interesting place to spend time and money.

Look for the businesses at 1513 Washington to be open in April or May of this year.

City Incubator Building Sees Change in Tenants

Two Rivers' business incubator buildings on Wentker Court, just off 14th Street, are intended to help small and start-up businesses grow and expand here in Two Rivers. The buildings provide affordable space where such operations can grow and ultimately expand to other locations within the community.

Recent activities show that this incubator space—consisting of a 20,000 square foot building and a 6,000 square foot building—is performing its intended function very well.

Earlier this month, Woodland Face Veneers moved from the 20,000 square foot incubator building at 1429A Wentker Court to 40,000 square feet of leased space in a building owned by Metal Ware on Columbus Street.

Founded by Rick Philipps in 2002, WFV got its start in the City incubator building, and has since grown to 22 employees—a great local success story!

At the Columbus Street building, Philipps will again be neighbors with Chris Rusch of Rusch Machine, whose company used to occupy the smaller, 6,000 square foot incubator building at 1429B Wentker Court. Rusch outgrew that incubator building in late 2003, and continues to grow here in Two Rivers, with 12 employees at last report.

Back at Wentker Court, Manitowoc Relay and Protector (owned by Electrica, continues to expand its production activity in the smaller incubator building. And the building just vacated by Woodland Face Veneers won't be vacant for long—GT Machine of Two Rivers will be moving in on May 1, expanding its production capacity.

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