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Community Center boosts Corwith pride

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CORWITH - Nothing says community pride like a new building dedicated after years of hard work and small town effort.

The town of Corwith marked the anniversary of 9/11, a day of tribute, stoicism and pride with an event full of hometown spirit - an open house for the new Corwith Community Center.

The center houses the city offices, library and post office.

The town also dedicated also new memorial located at the east edge of Corwith on County Road B55.

The memorial is being named in honor of the late Lee Williams, a Corwith farmer, business leader and former school board member. Williams' family donated \$2,500 to pay for the memorial.

The center will have a new kitchen and dining area for up to 70 people. Early next year, the rear of the building is going to be transformed into a space suitable for high school dances, Gourley said.

"We have returned it to its old grandeur," Corwith Mayor Jay Gourley said.

Wood floors have been installed in what used to be the old city hall. Carpet was placed in the main hall. There is a food-serving area, recreation area, bathroom and kitchen.

The renovations are being paid for by Corwith native and Arizona businessman Bill Bonnstetter.

The one-story brick community center building, formerly People's State Bank, was built in 1919 by Bonnstetter's grandfather, J.J.

Bonnstetter purchased the building two years ago with the intent of redeveloping it.

Gourley said this is just the beginning of revitalization in Corwith. The new 2,200-square-foot library and City Hall opened to the public in February.

"We're in the infancy of revitalization. We've just hit the tip of the iceberg," Gourley said.



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Plans include the possibility of turning a downtown building into a youth center, renovating the Iowa State Bank building and seeking a National Register of Historic Places designation for the community center building.

"This building is just wonderful," said Corwith City Clerk Janet Dietel. "Everyone is so thrilled with everything, especially the library.

Dietel said geo-thermal heat in the flooring is a far cry from the cold offices that housed city business this time last year.

"I don't have to sit with something covering my legs now," Dietel laughed.

Dietel said the center makes conducting everyday business in town just a little easier.

"Now, you can go to the bank, stop off at the post office and city hal, and pick up a new library book all within a few steps," she said.

"Not many communities can brag about that."

Peggy Senzarino, of the Globe Gazette, contributed to this story

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