

ROSLYN BUSINESS

Seeds of 'Roslyn Renaissance' planted at NWI Building

by Lyn Derrick
tribune@nkctribune.com

Taking on ownership of the NWI Building in Roslyn is the most ambitious and far-reaching project to date for the Roslyn Downtown Association.

Planned as the foundation of RDA's Roslyn Renaissance undertaking, purchase of the building was finalized this year when the state's 2012 capital budget included \$1.035 million for that purpose.*

Cheri Marusa of RDA championed the effort to garner funding for the project. Rep. Hans Dunshee (D-Snohomish) led the bipartisan funding effort with the support of Rep. Judy Warnick (R-Moses Lake). Dunshee also advocated for the issue in the state Senate, where it received the support of Sen. Janéa Holmquist Newbry.

Built in 1896, for years the NWI Building was 'the' place to shop for local families' food, clothing and hardware needs. The funding provided by the legislature returns the building to that cornerstone role in the community.

The NWI Building has 12,600 square feet of leasable retail space, 3,500 square feet of office space and 1,350 feet of storage space according to Kevin Kane of SHKS Architects.

With this one million plus dollars, RDA moves forward with design plans for the use of that space. Those design plans were developed in 2009, 2010 and 2011 through the University of Washington's Storefront Studio program – and with considerable input from

the community.

In just the past few months, the building's event space has been the location for affairs like "Sippin' for the Seven," a fundraiser held last March to benefit Cle Elum's Chimpanzee Sanctuary Northwest, and more recently the Roslyn-Ronald-Cle Elum Heritage Club Dinner in May.

"We loved the NWI building for Sippin' for the Seven," said CSNW Director of Outreach, Diana Goodrich. "It's a beautiful building with a rich history and the open space allows for lots of choices in set-up."

RRC Heritage Club President, Dick Watts said, "As supporters of the preservation of the community's history, in my view, there's not a more significant structure connected to Roslyn's history. It was a great place to hold our Heritage Dinner honoring Fred Krueger. It's nice to see the building restored to its key role in the community."

All along, RDA's plan was to maximize the building's potential. Last year, Storefront Studio Director and professor of architecture, Jim Nicholls said this would in turn create a focal point for local economic development and employment opportunities.

That appears to be what has happened. In the last year, businesses have sprung up both inside and outside the building, proving that the NWI Building is fulfilling its role – planting the seeds of small business development as planned. (See Business is Blooming in Roslyn.)

How have they accomplished all

of this? Marusa says an attitude of "unwavering faith and fun" helps a lot. "I surround myself with a network of optimism, commitment and perseverance," she said.

Washington State Speaker of the House, Frank Chopp points to Marusa's leadership. "Cheri is a leader and visionary," he said. "She gets things done, and she embraces others who stand with her for the common good in the business sector and in the community."

RDA President, Deborah Hoffman said they're already seeing how the reuse of this pivotal building will help create and sustain business growth for Roslyn.

"It's ironic that for now it is being used much as it was in its former life with many offerings under one roof," Hoffman said. "Only instead of selling mainly the staples of life to the miners and townfolk, we have the creative and progressive types of busi-

nesses finding a home here with offerings to locals, tourists and even the world via the Internet."

Look for more on the horizon for the NWI Building. As Marusa concluded, "We've only just begun."

*The Legislature also authorized \$80,000 of the \$300,000 already appropriated in 2011's capital budget to acquire the Sylvia House, which is part of the Roslyn Renaissance project.



SIPPIN' FOR THE SEVEN, a fundraiser for Chimpanzee Sanctuary Northwest was held at the NWI Building last March. Diana Goodrich of CSNW, says the building is beautiful and historic, with lots of options for event set-up. NKC TRIBUNE/Lyn Derrick photo - 2012