

16 businesses apply for grant funds

Written by Deb Egenberger
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Downtown revitalization options still available

Since Troy and Chivonne Daum purchased Five Star Flooring in January 2007, they've done a significant amount of work inside the building.

With drywall, paint and tender loving care, the Daums have brought the showroom of the business at 1014 Lake Ave. up to date.

The exterior needs work also, Chivonne says, but the business owners have to carefully budget money put into upgrades.

That's one reason the Daums have been such outspoken proponents of Gothenburg's downtown revitalization program .

A \$250,000 Community Development Block Grant announced in April and awarded in June will help the Daums and other Gothenburg business owners do projects that otherwise would have to wait.

Chivonne said the Five Star building is in dire need of paint and soffit work.

The couple also wants to add an awning to the front to tie into other downtown businesses with canopies.

"There's a hole for a sign out front," she said, "but there's no sign and there hasn't been for

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years.”

Total cost of the Five Star project is less than \$10,000 and matching funds from the facade and awning improvements portion of the CDBG grant will help the Daums begin work this fall or next spring.

Gothenburg city administrator Bruce Clymer said 16 applications have been received in the various areas of the CDBG grant.

“I think we will have some additional applications come in,” Clymer said. “I know there are at least a couple more businesses looking at some energy-efficiency improvements.”

Grant funds are available in four areas: Facade and awning improvements, rehabilitation for accessibility, energy efficiency and revolving loan.

No applications have come in for the revolving loan area, Clymer said. Thirteen were received for facade improvement, two for energy efficiency and one for accessibility.

GRANT APPLICATIONS	
The city has received 16 applications for CDBG grant funds for the following areas:	
Energy efficiency	2 applications
Revolving loan	0 applications
Facade and awning improvements	13 applications
Accessibility	1 application
Historic preservation	0 applications
Total grant cost	\$1,000,000
Total grant share	\$1,000,000

All requests have to be considered by the downtown revitalization committee which includes Clymer, Joyce Hudson, Jeff Kennedy, Tim Strauser, Jared Slagle, Anne Anderson, Jen Wolf and Steve Peterson.

Some must also be approved by the Nebraska Historical Society, Clymer said.

“Hopefully that won’t take long and we will see some action soon,” he said.

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There is still plenty of grant money available and applications from business owners continue to be accepted.

The grant period runs for two years. If at the end of that time there is still unused grant money, Clymer said he expects the city to look at some qualifying projects.

“We don’t want to leave any grant money sitting there,” he said.

In the meantime, Chivonne Daum is anxious to get Five Star’s project under way, as are the other 15 business owners.

“Even though it’s just an appearance thing, it shows pride and commitment in the community,” she said. “It’s nice to look down the street and see businesses that stand out because they are attractive and appealing to customers.”

A sign company will complete the awning at Five Star while company employees will do the rest of the work.

“We see it as a way to give back to the community,” she said.