

Growing pains: Chamber to move into new building

Written by Elizabeth Barrett
Friday, 18 May 2012 14:34 -



ANDERSON

After 19 years of leasing space in the Post Office, the Gothenburg Community Development office will move on.

Less than a block away, to be exact.

The office serves the Gothenburg Chamber of Commerce and the Gothenburg Improvement Company.

Once space is remodeled inside a building now owned by Chris Healey, on the northeast corner of Lake Avenue and 10th Street, the Chamber will relocate in mid to late summer, according to director Anne Anderson.

Increased visibility for the Chamber office, more space for supplies and storage and larger surroundings are the biggest reasons for the move, Anderson said.

“It will double the space we have now,” she said, “and also offer more visibility for travelers looking for information.”

Anderson said the Chamber will only rent part of the building which, once renovated, will include two offices, a reception area, work room and storage. All renters in the building will have access to a conference room and kitchen.

“The ability to have on-site storage is a plus, as well as the additional space,” she said. “We have items stored in several different places that are used for banquets, festivals and events, fundraisers and recruitment as well as important documents for the Chamber and GIC.”

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Another benefit is more room to have a larger visitors center to display information about businesses, community and the surrounding area.

Masseuse Joy Fritton now rents office space in the back of the building. There will be room for additional offices elsewhere in the spacious building.

Anderson was hired as the executive director of the Community Development Office in 2001, but worked in part-time positions for the Chamber and the Gothenburg Main Street Program, beginning in 1996.

Since then, the Chamber has added duties such as leasing the Pony Express Station, and various activities like Magic on Main Street, a beef-and-wine tasting event and more retail functions.

“More activities take more time and more space,” Anderson said.

Anderson said she thinks the Chamber can serve members better by having additional space to offer them more.

“We can have more activities within the office,” she said. “And I hope we can bring members, and prospective members, into the office to talk about the benefits of membership and outreach.”

Chamber president Jim Widdifield said the move will help make the office more of a visitor center than what it is now.

Space to help GIC recruitment will also be a benefit, Anderson noted.

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“I think it will also give us a more professional image because we’re a progressive community,” she said.

Not only will the relocation make the Chamber more visible to travelers but also to Chamber members and the community, she said.

Anderson said the move will also put the Chamber office in the downtown district and closer to events and activities, instead of on the edge like it is now.