Family life center could help church minister to city's needs

A congregation of about 200 non-traditional church goers has a big dream.

Members would like to construct a $2-million to $5- million family life center that would minister to the physical, social and spiritual needs of the community.

Preliminary plans call for a 25,000- to 35,000-square-foot building.

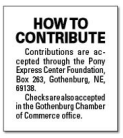
With a proposed indoor pool, the cost would probably inch up to $5 million, according to lead elder pastor of The Crossing, Eric Most of Brady.

Most said his church—that tries to reach the "unchurched"—wants a place to meet that would serve a dual purpose.

The Crossing has met at the local Senior Center for several years and would like to worship in a facility that would also benefit the community, he said.

"This isn't my idea, it's something God would like to see happen," Most said. "Economically in our area, there's an enormous economic boom that's not always going to be here."

Elder pastor Jim Mann described the endeavor as an investment in the community,



HOW TO CONTRIBUTE

Contributions are accepted through the Pony Express Center Foundation, Box 263, Gothenburg, NE, 69138.

Checks are also accepted in the Gothenburg Chamber of Commerce office.

"We want to build relationships," Mann said. "It's a genuine opportunity to meet people where they're at and let them know that God really cares about them."

In addition to an auditorium/theatre where the congregation would meet, the church is surveying community members to see what else they would like (see survey elsewhere in this issue).

"We don't want it to be just a church building," Most said, noting that a gymnasium could be in the plan as well as a social area with a snack shop and counseling services.

The elder pastor was quick to note that The Crossing doesn't intend to take members away from other churches.

"We never want to become about keeping the reached," he said. "We're more concerned about reaching the lost."

The Crossing reaches out to people who don't normally attend church, he pointed out.

About five years ago, the leadership team started talking about building a facility that met needs in Gothenburg and focused outward in building relationships.

"Whether you have faith in your life or not, I still want to be your friend," he said.

Most said several people in the community, not connected to The Crossing, seemed receptive.

The church doesn't want to go into debt in building the facility so plans to raise the money needed to build a shell, hopefully by the summer of 2013, and close it in as funds are available, he said.

Once residents have indicated in the survey what they would like in the facility by mid October, he said they'll come up with a preliminary plan and begin the fund raising process in earnest.

Why give?

Most said healthy communities are made up of healthy individuals.

"When an individuals' emotional, social, physical and spiritual needs are being met, they become healthy individuals," he explained.

A place where those needs are met benefits the community because "we become better fathers, mothers, husbands, wives, children, employers, employees, etc."

Most said the church thinks the most important component is the spiritual but even if someone has no faith at all, he or she could take advantage of the other components.

Someone getting spiritual needs met somewhere else could still take advantage of the other components, he said.

Once built, he said he hopes the community is involved by volunteering, hosting activities like road runs from the facility and more.

"The end of a great vision is God, not us," he said. "If this happens, it's not because Most is a great pastor or our church is a great church, it's because we have a gracious God who loves to

do big things."

Anne Anderson, director of the Gothenburg Chamber of Commerce, said she's excited about the prospect of such a facility.

"We've talked about this as a need for a long time and I fully support their efforts," Anderson said. "What a benefit for Gothenburg to have a such a facility and also from the economic development side in offering the potential to recruit business."

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