

HOTEL GOODWIN MARKS REBIRTH OF DOWNTOWN SITE

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BDN file photo The Vision Beloit Center will see hotel construction and renovations.

BELOIT - Beloit will welcome a new downtown hotel next year with Hendricks Commercial Properties announcing planned development of the Hotel Goodwin and Velvet Buffalo Cafe on Public Avenue.

The 34-room boutique hotel and restaurant will occupy two floors of the Vision Beloit building at 500 Public Ave. in downtown Beloit. Work on renovating the building, which was constructed in the 1923, has already started, with the hotel and restaurant set to open in May of 2018, according to Hendricks Commercial Properties CEO Rob Gerbitz.

Plans for the hotel spawned two years ago as the Vision Beloit partners - Downtown Beloit Association, Visit Beloit and Greater Beloit Economic Development Corp. - looked at what was next for the space when a fourth partner, the Greater Beloit Chamber of Commerce, relocated to the Ironworks business campus. The partners have relocated to the Eclipse Center while renovations to the office spaces and hotel construction are in progress.

The renovations will add a larger conference room and offices and redesign the layout to accommodate the hotel lobby and entryway.

The project is slated to cost \$5 million.

Occupancy levels at the 54-room Ironworks Hotel across the street have been steadily increasing, prompting Gerbitz and partners to look at a new downtown hotel option. In 2017, the Ironworks Hotel has seen over 80 percent occupancy with strong daily rates, Gerbitz added.

The choice for an adaptive reuse of the building was the leading option during the property acquisition phase, Gerbitz said.

"We love the architecture of the building and overall, it's in need of an update on the upper floors, no question," he added. "We are excited about bringing another hotel downtown."

The hotel is named for the 19th century Goodwin House, a luxury hotel that served downtown Beloit until 1904.

The property also will include two suites, a fitness center and rooftop meeting space with an outdoor terrace, according to Geronimo Hospitality Group Vice President of Lodging Jonathan Webster.

Geronimo Hospitality Group manages the Ironworks Hotel, Beloit Club, Eclipse Center, Merrill & Houston's Steak Joint, Lucy's #7 Burger Bar and Ironworks Golf Lab in Beloit while also handling properties outside of Beloit.

The new cafe will mark the third restaurant by Geronimo and "combine the decor of a turn-of-the-century European cafe with subtle contemporary nuances," according to a news release from Hendricks Commercial Properties.

The chef-driven lunch and dinner menu will focus on local farmers and artisan vendors, with the cafe centered around a stone-lined oven. The cafe also will include a wine bar and will be open daily.

The cafe will offer in-room dining and catered events in the rooftop space at Hotel Goodwin, with Webster calling the cafe a "great addition" to the Stateline Area's growing culinary scene.

"Ironworks Hotel and Hotel Goodwin will each provide unique experiences for visitors and we look forward to building on the success of the Beloit market as our downtown continues its revitalization," Webster said.

Hendricks Commercial Properties also is in the process of renovating the former Kerry Ingredients plant, 200 W. Grand Ave., into a 70-unit apartment building. Gerbitz said the Phoenix apartment building in downtown Beloit had worked well, with the new residential project to shift focus to a "Chicago industrial style," Gerbitz said.

A pedestrian bridge being built near Heritage Place, spanning the Rock River to the Ironworks business campus, will open within the next two weeks.