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## Beloit Art Center aims for bright future in downtown Beloit

By AUSTIN MONTGOMERY Staff Writer  
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The Beloit Art Center, 502 W. Grand Ave., was recently sold by the Greater Beloit Economic Development Corporation (GBEDC). The center will remain located at the space and is now owned by the Beloit Art Center Board after being leased for years from the GBEDC.

**BELOIT** — Even amidst the struggles of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Beloit Art Center sees a bright future in downtown Beloit.



The Beloit Art Center Board recently approved the purchase of the historic building at 520 E. Grand Ave. from the Greater Beloit Economic Development Corporation (GBEDC) for \$84,255, with closing expected by the end of the year, according to GBEDC President Andrew Janke.

Beloit Art Center Board President Gary Dencker said the board wanted to make the commitment to downtown after years of leasing the property that was built around 1911 and formerly housed a Bell Telephone office.

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“We’ve very much liked the location and we wanted to be in the heart of the city’s downtown,” Dencker said. “We’ve made a point to do a lot of improvements and it really fits us. There’s a lot of history behind the building and it fits our needs well.”

Those upgrades have included a new roof and expanded classroom space on the first floor of the center.

Like many organizations, the pandemic took its toll on the center as attendance dropped for monthly gallery receptions, Dencker said.

“For a while we stopped the receptions, but started them back up in August,” Dencker added.

The center has relied on rental income for its 18 studio spaces as classes have been scaled back and art sales have slowed.

Once the pandemic is under control, Dencker said the center hopes to expand classroom offerings to provide painting and drawing classes alongside the successful pottery classes already taught at the center.



“We’d really like to expand what we are doing, but we have to wait until the pandemic is over to really explore that,” Dencker said.

Featured currently in the main gallery is Clinton native Jan Crowley and Richmond, Wisconsin-based painter Lynette Redner’s works are on display in the Bell Gallery.

“We feel that this is one of the better shows that we’ve had in years and they are both quite talented,” Denker said of the current exhibitions.

The center is open from 10 a.m.—2 p.m. on Mondays; and 10 a.m.—5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday. Masks are required for entry and social distancing measures are in place to ensure patron safety.

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Austin Montgomery