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What will become of the MERCHANT'S HOTEL?

The city of Campbellsville received a wonderful new year's gift and a sizable donation in December when the old Merchant's Hotel building was given to the city. Restoration plans are already under way.

The city council accepted the donation in hopes that grant money will be available to restore the building. David Nunery, the previous owner, made the donation because he realized that restoring the hotel on his own would be nearly impossible. He and his wife acquired the hotel in 1998.

Nunery said he is happy with the city's acquisition because it means the building has a future. "My main concern is to see the building restored," he said. Nunery is not concerned with its ultimate use but does think it would work well for city offices, a tourism center, museum, or some similar public use.

"I would love for the building to be a hotel with a restaurant on the first floor to attract some of the 1 million tourists who come to Green River Lake each year," said Mayor Brenda Allen. "If that is not possible, we are thinking of adding businesses on the first floor, offices on the second floor and using the third floor as meeting rooms or a Civil War museum. The community is buzzing about the hotel, and the sense is that it will be a catalyst for other private downtown development and redevelopment."

Many downtown business people would like to see the hotel be an anchor for Campbellsville's downtown. "This will help define our Main Street as well as beautify the area," said Nunery. He hopes the restoration will have a domino effect, causing the other buildings to be restored and occupied.

The Merchant's Hotel was constructed in 1910 and operated as a hotel until 1983. It is also on the National Register of

Historic Places, which is one of the main reasons the city would like to have it operating as a hotel in the future.

"Our first priority will be attaining grant money to stabilize the building," Allen said. "We do not want the condition

of the building to get any worse than it already is." She believes any option would work for the hotel, but she knows what attracts people is entertainment, food or a combination of both.

City leaders believe every aspect of the building restoration will have a positive impact on Campbellsville, bringing jobs and tourists to the area. They envision the hotel complementing other businesses on Main Street.

"The hotel itself can be a beautiful structure if renovated properly and should be an inducement to other property owners to do likewise," said Nunery. "I think that this project and other projects downtown will create a sense of vitality and purpose for Main Street that has been missing in recent years."

As the city takes steps to plan and renovate, citizens are becoming excited about their

own roles. And while the plans for the hotel are still in the earliest stages, what's particularly encouraging are the citizen ideas and level of interest.

The city has already received many applications for Renaissance remodeling grants to help businesses with renovations. The mayor said the hotel and business renovations will follow the newly passed Design Guidelines Ordinance specifications.

"I have a vision of Main Street in downtown Campbellsville," said Allen. "There are the same street lights on every corner and brick ribbon sidewalks. This hotel could be the turning point of downtown."



Promising future for a historic Campbellsville landmark

—NEWCITIES INSTITUTE STAFF

Campbellsville at a Glance

Mayor: Brenda Allen

Population: 10,498

Location: Campbellsville is settled between the Appalachian Mountains and the Cumberland Plateau in the southeastern region of Kentucky and is approximately 85 miles from Lexington, Louisville, Bowling Green and Somerset. Taylor County is said to be heart shaped and sits in the "heart of Kentucky," geographically almost in the center of the state.

Campbellsville is the only city in Taylor County, which was named in honor of President Zachary Taylor, a native Kentuckian and general who defeated the Mexican forces at the Battle of Buena Vista (1847). The city is a Preserve America Community, a certified retirement community, and a member of the All-Kentucky City Hall of Fame. It was listed by the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce as a Certified City in 1987.

History: Campbellsville was established in 1817 and is named for the family of Andrew and Adam Campbell, two of five brothers who migrated from Augusta County, Va. Campbellsville is considered an important regional manufacturing, medical and recreational center.

Rich in history, Campbellsville has many attractions, including The Jacob Hiestand House, one of 12 German stone houses in the state. Other landmarks include The Atkinson-Griffin Log House, which served as a Confederate hospital after the Battle of Tebbs Bend (on July 4, 1863), and the Friendship School, a historic school that is now a museum.

Special Events and Attractions: Campbellsville's Fourth of July celebration draws 25,000 to the city for entertainment and fireworks. Campbellsville offers outdoor activities, including

canoeing, Green River Lake and state and local parks.

Campbellsville is also known for its cherry furniture manufacturers.

The city is home to Campbellsville University, with more than 2,000 students in undergraduate and master's level programs. The campus is located downtown. It has a unique off-site 135-acre forest, which is used for environmental education and research.

Natives of

Campbellsville: Clem Haskins grew up in Campbellsville in the 1950s and '60s. He was the first African American to attend Taylor County High School and made his reputation as an outstanding basketball player. Haskins went on to attend Western Kentucky University, where he played basketball and led his team to the NCAA Tournament. After college he played for three NBA teams. He

later coached at WKU and the University of Minnesota.

J.B. Holmes was born in Campbellsville in 1982 and began playing for the Taylor County High golf team in the third grade. He won the 2005 PGA Tour Qualifying Tournament.

For more information on Campbellsville, visit:
www.campbellsvilleky.com



Campbellsville's Fourth of July celebration is one of the state's largest.



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