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New life for Omar Baking building with interior mall campus project

by Bob Hoig

The 80,000-square-foot former Omar Baking Co. site is being redone as an interior mall campus open to multiple tenants with an emphasis on nonprofits and religious groups.

A major attraction is closeness to the Destination Midtown development and the Saddle Creek realignment project, said Ray Trimble, president of PropertyBanc and

Omaha 5 LLC, the developer.

"The idea is to bring multiple tenants together who are compatible," Trimble told MJB during an Aug. 6 open house.

Trimble and Jeff Eikmeier, vice president and commercial banker for Mutual of Omaha Bank, the lender on the project, hosted the daylong event. It drew 160 developers, contractors and prospective

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PropertyBanc's President Ray Trimble, left, with Michael Donovan, construction manager and PropertyBanc real estate agent ... Targeting nonprofits and religious groups for the multi-use site that is close to Midtown Omaha developments.

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tenants.

Michael Donovan, construction manager for the project and a PropertyBanc real estate agent, said, "We're listening as much as we are talking."

Although the focus is on nonprofits, tenants could include service organizations and a setup with a secretary-receptionist



Skylights are placed strategically. serving multiple small offices and sharing office equipment.

Douglas County Atty. Donald W. Kleine, chairman of the metropolitan violence coordinating committee, attended the open house, helping search for a property that could involve the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council and the Family Justice Center at one location.

Karen Hadley, executive director of the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council, said she was happy that Trimble and others

"had the vision" to see a need for the multiple use campus and make it happen.

Teresa M. Fitzgerald, president and CEO of Children's Respite Care Center, was checking on potential space for doing musical revues.

She said that the revue idea is a major means of fundraising for the center, whose current project is producing the musical "Ain't Misbehavin'" Aug. 20-21 at the Scoular Ballroom, 2027 Dodge St.

The Omar renovation has yet to settle on a name. An artist's sketch on display near the main entrance carried the label, "Business Arts Center."

Flanked by space for a 250-car parking area, the building is on a Metro bus line linking the campus to Midtown and Saddle Creek.

The metal and brick building has 14-foot ceilings and about 50 metal and paneled windows, 5 foot by 8. Skylights, which are



A video feature of the Omar renovation can be viewed at mbj.com in the video section.

12 by 15 foot in dimension, are placed strategically to bring light in and there is space on the lower level for storage, Trimble said.

Bid Taylor, a member of Trimble's team, said the 1923 building features warehouse-style materials, including massive steel I-beams held by rivets.

The 50 glass panels that give a signature look to the building are filled with argon gas to help cooling in summer and warming in winter.

A fire in late 2008 set back the work, which is now back on schedule, Trimble



The building has about 50 metal and paneled windows.



A fire in late 2008 affected progress.

said. Four groups have already shown interest so work could begin on partitioning for individual tenants at any time. Since everything rides on individual decisions by different organizations, there can be no set day for total completion, Donovan said.

The first tenant will be PropertyBanc itself, which is preparing to move from 13835 Industrial Road in southwest Omaha, Donovan said.

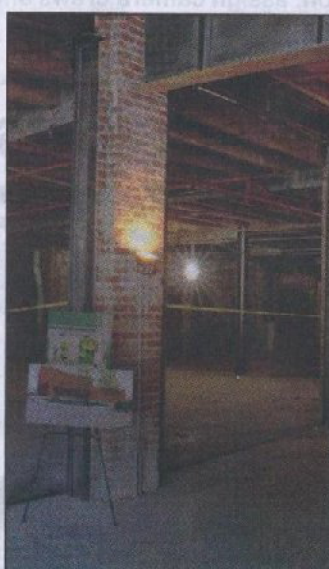
Trimble's partners are listed as Chuck and Carol Schneider, Mike Miller and Louis Rotella.



Steel I-beams held by rivets.



The 1923 building features warehouse-style materials.



Interior view of the project.



PropertyBanc's Bid Taylor.