Building inside walls of GSBa challenge.

On a scale of one to 10, the difficulty of renovating Gothenburg State Bank ranks as an 8, according to the project supervisor.

Tim Dean of Paulsen Inc. said his crew is practically rebuilding the building with the exception of the exterior walls.

“For the most part, the structure will be brand new,” he said.

Once the project is complete this December, the bank will have nearly doubled in size to 15,000 square feet.

Bank president and chair Matt Williams said the original bank was constructed in the 1890s. Several renovations later occurred. The most extensive was when bank officials bought the J.M. McDonald store property to the north and nearly doubled the bank’s size in 1979.

During the current renovation, Dean said workers took out the main support wall—constructed of solid brick—that separated two buildings once they were combined.

Although the first floor won't change much, Dean said the second floor is a different story.

In addition to renovating the upstairs, the ceiling of the first floor was removed to create an atrium with stairs and an elevator leading to the second floor.

Surrounding the atrium on the second floor will be bank offices, the Investment Service Center, a training room and customer waiting area.

Dean said they've installed a new roof upon which they replaced eight electrical panels.

To avoid the shutdown of electricity so bank business could continue as usual, he said they hooked up a second electrical service so workers could switch back and forth when needed.

"We had a few blinks but overall it was pretty seamless," Dean said.

The biggest challenge so far, he said, has been maintaining bank operations during construction.

"Mainly data and phone lines," Dean said.

Williams noted that the bank has not been closed one business day during the construction process although a handful of employees have been temporarily displaced.

Architect Dave Littrell said the design involved three separate buildings.

Littrell is president of Geller Design of Lincoln which designed the 1979 remodel project. Many headaches were avoided, he said, because the bank used the same architect.

“We did a lot of structural rehab in 1979,” Littrell said.

One of the biggest challenges, Littrell said, has been keeping the workplace safe.

Finding ways to store materials on site has also been a learning opportunity, he said.

A highlight of the design, Littrell said, is the two-story atrium which allows for the expansion of both floors without employees feeling isolated.

“It’s also user friendly to clientele,” he said.

Paulsen’s began phase one of the renovation project in December of 2009 when

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