

## Dentist to set up practice on Lake Avenue

Written by gothenburgtimes

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### Hecoxes buy Five-Star Flooring building

A Cozad native and his wife hope to have the doors of Hecox Dentistry in Gothenburg open by the end of this year.

Ashton Hecox, and his wife Sara, bought the Five-

Star Flooring building in May.

Renovation of the building, at at 1014 Lake Ave., will begin in mid September when Five-Star Flooring moves into a larger building at 915 Lake Ave.

The Hecoxes describe their business as an expansion of Cozad Dental Clinic that Ashton's father, Mike Hecox, has owned and practiced in for 30 years.

In fact, Ashton is the fourth-generation in his family to practice dentistry—a business started in Cozad almost 100 years ago by his great-, greatgrandfather Rex Hecox.

Fred Hecox took over the practice from Rex before turning it over to son Mike.

Once the Gothenburg business is operational, Ashton said his father plans to practice alongside him on a part-time basis. Ashton will travel to Cozad to practice when needed.

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Sara will manage billing and insurance and other office matters in the Gothenburg office.

She said the combination of father and son is the best of both worlds.

Ashton said he brings knowledge of new dental techniques and technology while Mike has years of dentistry experience.

The Hecoxes described Gothenburg as a great progressive community.

Both are from small towns—Sara is from Clarinda, IA (pop. 5,301)—and like living in them.

Sara said she likes how the community is attracting white-collar businesses and college graduates who have returned to Gothenburg.

Ashton, who is a 2004 graduate of Cozad High School, graduated from the University of Nebraska College of Dentistry in May, passed board exams and is now practicing with his father in Cozad.

He became interested in dentistry when some of his teeth were knocked out while playing baseball in high school.

“I think that perspective will help with my empathy for patients,” Ashton said.

Sara, who has an advertising degree from UNL, is learning the business side of the profession from Ashton’s mother, Dawn.

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While living in Lincoln, she was a financial representative for Northwest Mutual.

Ashton and Sara have bought a home and moved to Gothenburg about three weeks ago.

With a shortage of dentists in rural areas, Gothenburg Improvement Company Mike Bacon said the Hecoxes' decision to expand their dental practice to Gothenburg speaks volumes about the community, especially since dentists are being recruited by other communities.

"Young professionals see a future in Gothenburg," Bacon said. "Ashton and Sara are going to be a great addition to the community."

Earlier this year, the Hecoxes visited with Gothenburg Memorial Hospital board members about leasing space for a dental practice in the former doctor's clinic.

However Bacon said a fiscal analysis showed the hospital district would lose significant federal reimbursement by renting the space to dentists and optometrists.

Anyone wanting to schedule appointments with Ashton in Cozad, can call 308-784-2828.

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