

Growing pains mean major renovation

Written by Elizabeth Barrett
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Gothenburg State Bank to increase by two thirds.

Gothenburg State Bank has outgrown itself.

President and chairman Matt Williams said the bank and the Williams family have been committed to the community for more than 100 years and want to continue providing financial services to Gothenburg.

“We think it’s a wonderful demonstration of our long-term commitment,” Williams said.

Forty-five years ago, the bank added a drive-through and walk-in area and a second story to the building.

“But now we’ve outgrown that and our operations area. Our loans and employees have also grown,” Williams said, noting that the bank now employs about the twice the number of people it did in 1980 when the last renovation occurred.

Assets have also tripled in size, he said.

When finished, the bank’s size will increase from approximately 9,000 to 15,000 square feet.

Williams said more than 30 years ago—in 1978 and 1979—the bank doubled in size from the original structure that was built in the 1890s. To do that, the bank bought and expanded into a

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building to the north.

During phase one of the most recent project, he said an expanded drive-through and walk-up area will be constructed that will be equipped to handle the latest technology used in banks that “customers need and expect.” Bank processing operations will also be housed there.

In the meantime, a temporary building has been moved in so drive-through service and other operations will not be interrupted. When construction is finished, drive-through lanes will increase from two to a capacity for four.

“The area vacated will be torn down and rebuilt in about five months,” Williams said, noting that he hopes the phase will be completed by May.

Phase two involves the renovation of the second floor. A training room, investment services, a board room, offices and bathrooms will be located there as well as an elevator and new stairways from the first floor.

Despite the recession which has spared Nebraska somewhat, Williams said the bank has made good business decisions which makes the renovation possible.

Williams said planning for the renovation began a year ago and was done by Geller Design of Lincoln—the same firm that designed changes in 1980.

Paulsen Inc. of Cozad is the general contractor for the project with subcontractors including local business people.

All local contractors who bid on the project were selected, Williams said.

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After the renovation project was completed 30 years ago, Williams said he never envisioned the bank using all of the new space.

“Then we had one computer and wheeled it around,” he said. “Now, we have more computers than employees.”

Since then, Williams said the bank has added such services as investment banking, a myriad of different accounts and more.

Although the bank digitally stores information, he said the volume of work has grown immensely because of increased business.

During the renovation, Williams said employees will do everything they can to minimize inconvenience.

“But things are going to change and employees and customers alike will have to adapt,” he said. “Our goal is to handle our customers in the manner they’re used to being handled.”

All of the services now offered will continue through the construction phases, Williams said.

Construction began Dec. 1. Completion is expected sometime in 2010.

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