
PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

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VCDC AWARDED PRESERVATION AWARD FOR RESTORATION OF MCVICKER PLAZA

Vermillion, SD, October 24th, 2019 – The Vermillion Area Chamber & Development Company (VCDC) was awarded a Preservation Award by the Clay County Historical Society to recognize the restoration of McVicker Plaza in downtown Vermillion at a Rotary Club luncheon held in the Al Nueharth Media Center.

“There are so many people who came together to make this restoration possible that I can’t list all of them off, but I am forever grateful,” said Nate Welch, President and CEO of the VCDC. “This award, cherishing our commitment to our past, means so much to us simply because we look to our future, knowing that one day, it will be our legacy.”

McVicker Plaza has been home to the VCDC and Charlie’s, a retail store selling USD apparel and accessories since September 2018. Aside from serving as headquarters for the VCDC, McVicker Plaza also houses the CoLab, a collaborative space for entrepreneurs and professionals, and meeting rooms available for use by chamber and community members.

Over the past year, businesses such as United Way, representatives of Google as well as multiple businesses expanding in Vermillion have rented space to manage their day-to-day operations. The building has allowed the hosting of networking events for the chamber as well as South Dakota Bio and the USD Beacom School of Business. McVicker has even been toured by esteemed political figures of South Dakota, such as then Congresswoman and now Governor Kristi Noem and former South Dakota Senator Larry Pressler.

The first-floor board room and second floor conference room have been the setting of general business to strategic planning meetings, staff retreats and Board of Director meetings. Organizations such as the Vermillion Cultural Association, United Way Vermillion, SESDAC, Ribs, Rods & Rock n’ Roll, Food Pantry Board, Quam Berglin, The Bean Community Coffeehouse and various USD departments - Athletics, Marketing, Communication & Disorders, Economics, Political Science and School of Education have used these spaces to improve productivity and collaboration. Businesses and organizations alike have taken advantage of the beautifully restored and technologically equipped conference rooms and CoLab space.

Each Wednesday morning, the CoLab space hosts the UPNext Coffee Hour, the VCDC’s weekly coffee hour where community members from the Vermillion Area are able to gather together, enjoy fresh coffee and hear from guest speakers on a variety of entertaining and informative topics.

The collaborative space has allowed the VCDC and USD internship program to grow and serve the mission of the VCDC in serving its members, and has even expanded to benefit members directly. The internship program for fall 2019 currently has seven USD students assisting in accounting, event coordination, marketing and digital communications and graphic design. McVicker Plaza serves as the perfect space for these students to gain professional experience through collaborating with one another, exposure to community leaders and VCDC staff on a daily basis.

The building has seen an impressive amount of change since it was built in the mid-1880s, from housing grocery and general merchandise stores and billiards to apartments and physicians' offices. Despite the change of ownership and inhabitants of the building, the structure itself stands as a symbol of historical pride within Vermillion.

Of those that have contributed to the restoration of McVicker Plaza, Koch Hazard Architectural Firm played a key role, with Keith Thompson serving as the lead architect on the project with Puetz Construction managing the project. Jim Wilson, Chair of the Clay County Historic Preservation Commission also contributed ideas and advice in the restorative process, and he praises the work that has been done to preserve the history of McVicker Plaza.

"It is truly wonderful that the Vermillion Area Chamber & Development Company restored the front façade and the mural decorating the building. It is a wonderful addition to downtown," said Wilson. "Restoring historical buildings is always a unique and special experience, and McVicker Plaza is, without a doubt, a special building with a special history."

The Clay County Historical Society has given out four preservation awards for the third consecutive year to recognize the rehabilitation of historical sites in Vermillion. The rehabilitation of buildings can be to the interior, exterior or both. Those individuals and/or buildings receiving the awards today have been nominated by the public and chosen by the Clay County Historic Preservation Commission.

Last fall, the Clay County Historic Preservation Commission presented four awards. Previous award winners were Russ Stone and Lynn Muller, Mark Wetmore on behalf of the Spirit Mound Trust, and the First Baptist Church.

Other award recipients for 2019:

Jerry & Norma Wilson – Preservation of the Prairie and Severson Cabin on Bluff Road

Gary Marshall – Rehabilitation of a house at 220 Willow St.

Carolyn Muenster – Lifetime achievement award for buildings downtown

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