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City of Fond du Lac receives \$90,000 state grant to support redevelopment of downtown historical building

WEDC investment to help fund renovation of building into tavern, apartments

MADISON, WI. March 26, 2019 – The City of Fond du Lac is receiving a \$90,000 state grant to assist in the redevelopment of a vacant commercial building into The Livery Lofts, featuring an upscale tavern and residential lofts.

The Community Development Investment (CDI) Grant from the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) will support the renovation of the building to improve the exterior façade and support the change from a fully commercial use to a mixed-use development.

"One of WEDC's top priorities is to help communities invest in revitalizing their downtowns and enhance their business districts," said Mark R. Hogan, secretary and CEO of WEDC, the state's lead economic development organization. "The Livery Lofts project is the latest example of a positive and substantive local development happening in Fond du Lac and will serve as a foundation for future economic growth."

"The redevelopment of 18 E. Division Street into the Livery Lofts demonstrates how a public-private partnership can take a vacant building, where few people saw its true potential, and give it new life that transforms it into a beautiful building that honors the downtown's history," said Dyann Benson, community development director for the City of Fond du Lac.

The building was originally built as a livery stable in 1880, and developer Sam Meyer plans to incorporate it into the design and decor of the building. Meyer has successfully completed several other historical restoration projects in downtown Fond du Lac including the State Farm Insurance and Red Brick Inn building, the German-American Savings Bank building and the Art Districts Loft building.

The redevelopment project will require significant renovation to support the change to a mixed-use development. The Livery Lofts will feature an upscale tavern on the first floor and market rate apartments on the second floor. An existing asphalt parking lot will also be redeveloped into a new outdoor dining area for the tavern.

"I'm thankful WEDC believed enough in this revitalization project to provide funding to make it happen," said Sam Meyer. "Without the WEDC grant, this project wouldn't have happened. This project transforms a vacant, blighted commercial building into residential lofts and an entertainment venue that will add to the character of Historic Downtown Fond du Lac."

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This project looks to build off the success of another nearby historical redevelopment project, the Hotel Retlaw. Both projects will have significant impact on the character and viability of the corridor, encouraging future development and more visitors to the downtown area. The Hotel Retlaw, which plans to open this spring, was supported by a \$250,000 CDI Grant from WEDC in 2018, a project expected to create 147 jobs.

WEDC's CDI Grant Program supports community development and redevelopment efforts, primarily in downtown areas. The matching grants are awarded based on the ability of applicants to demonstrate the economic impact of the proposed project, including public and private partnership development, financial need, and use of sustainable downtown development practices.

Since the program's inception in 2013, WEDC has awarded more than \$20 million in CDI Grants to 79 communities for projects expected to generate more than \$280 million in capital investments statewide.

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About the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation

The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) leads economic development efforts for the state by advancing and maximizing opportunities in Wisconsin for businesses, communities and people to thrive in a globally competitive environment. Working with more than 600 regional and local partners, WEDC develops and delivers solutions representative of a highly responsive and coordinated economic development network. Visit wedc.org or follow WEDC on Twitter @WEDCNews to learn more.

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