

## Old hospital building to become Center for the Arts

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The former Melissa Memorial Hospital building has been sold and will soon become a home for the arts in Phillips County.

Establishing that home is a core group of five supporters of the arts: Paul and Teresa Mailander, Dennis Oliver, Dorothy Ortner and Bonnie Patterson. Calling themselves “The Core Group,” these five people joined together to take the initial steps of finding a home for the new art center by purchasing the former hospital building and adjoining property.



According to Ortner, these five people all came up with the idea for an arts center in Holyoke separately, and joined together only when they found out they all shared the same dream.

The Center for the Arts will be a place of learning, creating, thinking, experimenting and celebrating the life that comes from the arts. It will offer programming which will include the movement, visual, musical, theatre and literary arts. These classes, productions and exhibitions will be open to all ages—from the beginner to professionals who wish to expand their talents.

The Core Group said it believes the property is an ideal location for connecting the arts with Heginbotham Library, and the open garden will offer space for possible outdoor productions. It was noted the facility will be available, not only to the local county community, but eventually to the surrounding High Plains areas.

With the news that their bid was accepted by the East Phillips County Hospital District Board on Tuesday, April 7, plans are being made to retrofit the building by using alternative sources of energy, and to offer it as a “Green Building” show place in northeast Colorado.

“The Center, through its activities and its uniqueness in this part of the state, will be a source of economic development and a tourist attraction,” said group members. “We believe the Center for the Arts provides a model and motivation for community members not currently involved in promoting the arts to commit time, energy and financial resources for the well-being of the larger community.”

Plans for the property are still in the beginning stages and more information will be reported as it becomes available.