

Medical, agricultural, extension, radio and more services generated...

Written by Chris Lee

It began as a hospital in 1918, the only modern hospital within a radius of 200 miles of Holyoke according to an article in the Oct. 4, 1918 issue of the Enterprise. Today, it houses a chiropractor's offices, radio station, a massage therapy business, the Caring Pregnancy Resource Center and two tanning beds along with other offices.

The time between now and 1918, the building at 246 S. Interocean Ave. has housed many different offices and businesses including the Phillips County ASCS office, the county Extension office as well as the NRCS and FSA offices.

Opening in 1918, the \$10,000, 18-room hospital was one of a kind. According to the above mentioned article, Dr. H.L. Timmons erected the hospital and along with Dr. Parker from Statesville, S.C., were the two doctors in charge of operations.

A man by the name of Dr. Crawley also worked at the hospital with Dr. Timmons. After Dr. Timmons' death, Dr. H.C. Hill became affiliated with Dr. Crawley. Dr. Hill purchased the building after Dr. Crawley died. When Dr. Hill died the hospital became known as the Phillips County Hospital.

The hospital was used until 1965 when the then new Melissa Memorial Hospital was built at 505 S. Baxter Ave. It wasn't smooth sailing all of those years however.

In 1948, Irene Hill was looking to close the hospital down. A letter, dated Sept. 28, 1948, was sent out by city officials and members of the local hospital committee asking the public to help with a fund-raiser to purchase the building from Mrs. Hill.

The letter began by saying, "You have no doubt heard many plans for the future of the Holyoke Hospital. Mrs. Hill has definitely decided to close it in the very near future. She will have little trouble in disposing of all supplies and equipment to some hospital or clinic, and converting the building into an apartment house. Realizing our community need for the hospital, Mrs. Hill is offering it complete to us at a reasonable price."

The letter later states, "Have your check ready and make it generous because \$65,000 is a lot of money."

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Committee members and residents went right to work raising money. The letter also mentioned if the money wasn't raised it would take nearly \$150,000 to build a new hospital.

A big thermometer was erected on the corner near First National Bank so progress of the amount raised could be posted each day.

The time between Sept. 30, 1948 and Jan. 13, 1949 was spent collecting money from residents both in and around Holyoke. There were weeks where only a few hundred dollars were raised as well as weeks where nearly \$8,000 was donated. During the week of Jan. 13, 1949, the city entered into contract with Mrs. Hill to purchase the hospital for \$52,500, ending any questions about the closing of the hospital.

In 1965 the building became vacant when the new hospital was built and put into use.

In an article in the Jan. 20, 1966 issue of the Enterprise, it is mentioned the Phillips County Commissioners thought about taking over the supervision of the building with plans of remodeling it for county agency offices.

1967 ASCS Office moves into building

Renovations to the building began sometime towards the beginning of 1967 so the Phillips County Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) office could move into the location. Plans included remodeling of the main floor to house the ASCS which had been located in the basement of the courthouse. This according to an article in the Jan. 5, 1967 issue of the Enterprise.

Talk had also begun about the County Extension office moving into the building as well.

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Renovations included portions being moved, tile being laid on the floors and walls receiving paneling. Dale O'Neal Construction Co. of Holyoke was the company heading up the renovation project.

Equipment and records were moved into the building, which now held the address of 115 W. Furry St. on Saturday, March 25, 1967 and was expected to take several days. The south side of the building served as the main entrance into the ASCS office, today's entrance into Brandt Chiropractic.

An open house was held on Wednesday, April 19, 1967, roughly three and a half weeks after moving began from the courthouse to the new location which was dubbed courthouse annex.

Chiropractor purchases building

Jerry Brandt, D.C., purchased the building in 2002 from the county after it had purchased the building located at 127 E. Denver for new county offices (Extension Office).

When Brandt purchased the building, the only occupied office was the Phillips County Economic Development office. The Red Cross used one of the rooms as a storage facility while Alcoholics Anonymous held meetings in the basement of the facility and continues to do so today.

Offices on the main floor include Brandt's chiropractic rooms, the Hearing Center, KSTH Star 92.3 radio station and Theresa's Massage Therapy.

Another office on the main floor is Youth Challenge, nondenominational youth church organization. The organization also occupies a couple of rooms on the top floor used as class rooms and conference rooms.

Phillips County Arts Council uses a room upstairs to store dance costumes, according to Dr. Brandt.

The top floor also houses Dove Ministry LLC a business owned by Doug and Shari Barnard.

Also located on the top floor, The Tan Zone is owned by Brandt's wife, Debbie, and two tanning beds are used for the business.

Around a year and a half ago, the Caring Pregnancy Resource Center moved into the location and they occupy rooms on the top floor as well.

Radio station moves into location

It was exactly five years ago last month when the radio station, Star 92.3, moved into the current location. They offer sports coverage for area schools as well as an adult contemporary music genre. They occupy two offices/studios at the west end of the main floor.

Throughout the years, the offices have been maintained with new paint and furnishings.

The building has seen lots of activity since being built in 1918. Lives being saved, numerous businesses involving a wide variety of areas and people, radio announcements, backs being fixed and people trying to get a little tan are just a few. A lot of things have happened at 246 S. Interocean Ave. and only more will come in the future.