



CHEESE COUNTER AND DAIRY HERITAGE CENTER PLYMOUTH, WISCONSIN

- Community development partner
- Nontraditional financing
- Historical tax credits



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Historic Building Becomes Homage to Fromage

The stately historic building, one of Plymouth's oldest, was a whisker away from being demolished. Thanks to a partnership between the City of Plymouth, Plymouth Redevelopment Authority and the Sheboygan County Economic Development Corporation, it's now a downtown gem and tourist destination.

After a private developer abandoned the building, it stood gutted and vacant for years to the increasing dismay of residents in the community.

"This building, which was built in 1875, represents a significant historical asset in Plymouth," said Plymouth City Administrator Brian Yerges. "When it was foreclosed on by the county for back taxes, the city purchased it and saw an opportunity to work with the SCEDC to not only save the building, but to make it part of our downtown redevelopment plan as well as our Cheese Capitol of the World strategy."

The city transferred the H.C. Laack building to the SCEDC Foundation. The project received a \$300,000 grant from USDA Rural Development, \$100,000 grant from the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, \$300,000 in state historical tax credits and close to \$2 million in donations facilitated by the Lakeshore Community Foundation and the Plymouth Redevelopment Authority.

Simultaneously, the City of Plymouth had secured a trademark and logo for "Cheese Capitol of the World," an initiative to promote Plymouth's history as a leading cheese producer and enhance local and regional tourism. The Plymouth Redevelopment Authority proposed that the renovated building become the Cheese Counter and Dairy Heritage Center, a destination to learn about, buy and eat cheese products. The RDA manages the property with an option to buy the building back for a nominal fee after five years.

"Without SCEDC as our project partner, the redevelopment of 133 East Mill Street may not have happened," said Brian. "We needed a partner that understood the complexities of redevelopment and having a multi-layered financing solution. The SCEDC was supportive of our redevelopment efforts from the very beginning and helped us secure historical tax credits."

Other than the \$400,000 city loan, the property is debt-free.

"We saved an iconic building and it's been restored to its historical beauty. And because of this project, we were able to secure grant dollars to establish a downtown historical district, which opens up funding for other downtown buildings in Plymouth," said Brian. "This effort helped turn around our downtown and also helped support the redevelopment of Stayer Jr. Park."



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Brian Yerges,
City Administrator



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