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Huntley nets award for restoring historic house



Huntley has received an award for its work to restore a historic house at Route 47 and Main Street. The village spent roughly \$500,000 on the Hackett House as part of its downtown revitalization program.

Rick West | Staff Photographer



Madhu Krishnamurthy

The village of Huntley has received an award for its efforts to renovate and restore a historic house in downtown.

In 2013, the village bought the Hackett House, a two-story former hotel built circa 1890 at the southeast corner of Route 47 and Main Street, as part of its downtown revitalization effort. The building had fallen into disrepair and had structural deficiencies.

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The village spent roughly \$500,000 to purchase and rehab the property, including external and internal renovations of the 2,600-square-foot house. The work was completed in April

2015.

It earned the village the Project of the Year award for historical restoration/preservation for less than \$5 million from the American Public Works Association's Fox Valley Branch.

"It was great to get the award and to be acknowledged for the investment of preservation of a historic property," said Lisa Armour, assistant village manager. "The property is at a key location in the community. It is the gateway to downtown. It made sense to keep that property and put it to good use."

Exterior work included replacing the building shell, roofing, siding, windows, gutters, front and back porches, and adding an accessibility lift. Interior work included updating the electrical, plumbing, heating, ventilation, air conditioning systems, carpentry, painting, flooring restoration and trim work, documents show.

Around 1910, the building became known as the Hackett House, named after its owner, Emma B. Hackett. It served as a boardinghouse, and was purchased during the 1920s by the Siegrist family and was owned by them until the 1970s. The second floor was rented as apartments until 2013, village documents show.

Since the renovation, Hackett House has been occupied by the McHenry County Convention and Visitors Bureau. (http://www.visitmchenrycounty.com/about_bureau.cfm) More than 20,000 vehicles drive past it daily, village officials said.

"It's great to have that in our community and to be able to direct people to all the things that are taking place," said Armour, who added there are no other plans for the building at present.

Overall, Huntley has spent nearly \$5 million on its downtown revitalization, including streetscape improvements, renovation of Town Square, and facade improvement program, of which about half a dozen businesses have taken advantage.

"As they've seen the village invest in the downtown, they have also seen the advantage of improving the exteriors of their properties," Armour said.



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