



Facility may help revitalize downtown

Wells welcomes new city hall

March 12, 2012, Elaine Swanson, Correspondent, *Elko Daily Free Press*

WELLS — A new million dollar city hall was dedicated in downtown Wells on Feb. 21.

The grand opening was held on the fourth anniversary of the 2008 earthquake that damaged and compromised the safety of the old city hall and several other city buildings.

The nearly 9,000 square foot facility provides a secure and professional home for city services. The building houses a large council chamber that will be used for many civic meetings. There are offices for the mayor, city manager, city clerk, and billing accounts and utilities clerks. Space has been allocated for a conference room and an office for the building inspector. The Sheriff's Department is also located in the new city hall.

The city administration is very proud to say that the new city hall is debt free.

"How did we pay for it?" City Manager Jolene Supp said. "\$400,000 came from the general fund. We saved for four years to be able to build a new city hall. \$300,000 came from earthquake insurance, and \$300,000 came from operating money. I squeezed the funds out of the existing budget. Revenues have been good. The pipeliners came at the perfect time [last year]."

City residents are pleased with the big, new city hall at 525 Sixth St. Denny Stanhope is a citizen who rarely misses a city council meeting.

"The city was very conscious of cost when they planned the new city hall. They built a beautiful, practical building the community can be very proud of, and they did it without increasing property taxes on the citizens," Stanhope said.

Former Mayor Rusty Tybo led the recovery effort following the 2008 earthquake. In his remarks at the dedication, Tybo said, "I commend Mayor Kenny Huff and the city staff for their commitment and determination to build this new city hall. They persevered despite monumental roadblocks and obstacles, and they didn't settle for second best."

The Rev. Steve Gartman also spoke during the dedication.

"We remember what we went through the morning of the earthquake and during those dark days following. Tonight we celebrate how far we have come. We remember those people who aren't here now who would have been so proud and pleased tonight. Among them are: Gene Kaplan, Dorothy and Butch Elton, Ward Coates, Val Carone, Jesse Pengelly, Toni Archuletta, Dr. Smith, Phyllis Seech



and former Mayor Chuck Rigel. We welcome a new day and the new people who will come to this new city facility.”

To give a perspective on what the new city hall means to the staff and to the community, City Manager Supp said, “I have to pinch myself to believe I’m finally working here in this light and bright new building. Our offices are rooms designed to be offices with all the modern technology installed correctly. The lighting all over the building meets our needs. Community development has its own department and is not just a place where we can fit in a desk. In old city hall the conference ‘room’ was just a table set up in a wide spot in a hallway.”

Supp said the new city hall has already accomplished one mission. “There is more traffic downtown. I’m pleased to be able to step out of my office and have lunch downtown. I have many inquiries from people who are interested in developing businesses downtown. Front Street is being transfigured. Downtown is being revitalized.”

Supp said she is very pleased to have traffic at the old city hall and the adjacent city shop removed from the school zone.

“Every day we worried about the staff and the public backing out of the parking areas just as the kids were coming or going from the elementary school right next door. We are free of that serious safety issue.”

The public is invited to visit city hall during business hours of any work day. The staff delights in giving tours through the building.

“The new city hall was designed and built to last 100 years and to accommodate foreseeable future growth,” Mayor Kenny Huff said at the grand opening.