



Rowe building opens its doors to the public in downtown Flint

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By **Jean Johnson | The Flint Journal**



Ryan Garza/The Flint Journal FLINT, Michigan — The Rowe building opened its doors Tuesday, as more than 200 guests toured the site following a ribbon cutting.

The **\$22.7 million project** combined three adjacent buildings in the heart of the downtown business district, combining them into a four-story, 83,000-square-foot building on S. Saginaw Street.

"We mark another significant milestone in the redevelopment of Downtown Flint," said Tim Herman, CEO of **Genesee Regional Chamber of Commerce** and president of the **Uptown Reinvestment Corporation**. "The Rowe Building is testimony to what is possible when private, public and non-profit partners work together toward a common goal."

Rowe Professional Services Company — which occupies the second and third floor of 504 S. Saginaw St. — features open brick walls, high ceilings, and huge windows. The engineering firm has signed a 10-year lease for the headquarters, which drew approximately 100 professionals to the city.

"Those 100 plus employees will have a tremendous impact and that just can't be overstated," Flint Mayor Dayne Walling.

The surrounding business should feel the effect, he said. The project redefined downtown Flint, and depicts the future of the community.

"We're moving past the boarded-up windows, and the broken sidewalks and the neighborhoods that need repair to a place that's renovated and modern."

The project began in 2006 but faced a huge stumbling block with **the partial collapse of the building in August of 2007**.

"While the partial collapse of the building was a definite setback and very frustrating ... Rowe never lost its enthusiasm for seeing this project completed," said Rowe CEO John Matonich.

After the ceremony, Rowe and residents opened their doors to gawkers so they could see the inside of Flint's newest edition.

"This is wonderful for Flint," said Gracie Harris, of Fenton. "I love the clean lines — it's nicely done. I like that it's open and airy."

Prior to the development's completion, each of the eight fourth-floor lofts were leased. Currently 14 people occupy them.

For resident David Custer, his mind was set as soon as he saw a building rendering. He lives in one of the eight fourth floor lofts with his pug, Mona.

His 2,100-square-foot loft is stylish, with a first floor master bedroom equipped with a full bathroom, kitchen, and second full bath. Upstairs is a second bedroom, which Custer converted into an office and a balcony that overlooks the kitchen and main room with high vaulted ceilings.

Custer, who moved to the building from Goodrich Township, said that lofts like these makes downtown living accessible.

"The people in this building, we want to be in Flint," Custer said. " I hope to attend more of these types of openings."



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