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Owner of Association Executives Group Spearheads Building Restoration

Wales, Wis., — July 2007: In this age of widespread residential and commercial development, an old building may not have a chance to survive unless you find someone who believes in a renaissance.

Denise Harris saw enough potential in a building on the northeast corner of Highway 83 and Main Street in Wales that she purchased it and returned it to its former glory through a significant restoration and expansion process. Today, the 5,000-square foot facility is the home of Association Executives Group, a full service marketing agency.

“I had driven by the building for years and always had interest in the building, and always thought it was a unique architectural space,” said Harris. “When I examined the place, I knew it was perfect.”

Harris, an interior design enthusiast, went to work on transforming the two-story, 60-plus year old structure into something that would fit her taste while maintaining a piece of its history. The interior includes a combination of wood floors and carpeting, earth-tone walls, a warm, comfortable reception area, a state-of-the-art conference room and ample office space for growth. The rooms are complemented with many furnishings and art-deco pieces she purchased during the restoration process.

Harris felt it was a good idea to parlay the restoration of the existing building with an expansion to more than double the size of the original structure. The newest space was created on the east side of the building now houses three individual offices and a library on the main floor.

An upper floor includes two individual offices, a kitchen and plenty of additional space to accommodate the agency’s future growth. A basement includes enough space to store a variety of marketing materials.

“We wanted to make a unique, comfortable environment for our clients,” said Harris. “I am sort of an architectural buff and I wanted to maintain the integrity of the time this building was built in the ‘40s, and decorate it as an art-deco style with a lot of hand-made, frosted glass.”

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A unique conversation piece which has stood the test of time is a thick chunk of drywall from the original creation of the structure's bathroom. Subscribed on it were a few inscriptions from throughout the years, including one from 1946 that said, "I love you; Built the house."

Harris was so moved with finding this historic piece that she encased it and hung it on the wall which divides the original structure and the expanded office space.

The building was built in 1946 by Merl Vollmer and David Edwards, and originally used as a residence until it was sold in 1975 to a realty company, which rented out the house to couples as a temporary place to live while their own homes were in the process of being constructed.

In the late '80s, Linda Beckman and a business partner bought the home with the ideas of renovating it and opening up a hair salon. Xanadu, Too! Covered the main floor, with the rest of the building used as rental space. The business was in its 18th year when Harris inquired about leasing some space on the lower level. She admired the place so much and saw enough potential to make a purchasing offer.

"It turned out to be a good thing for both of us," said Beckman, who relocated her salon business across the street from Association Executives Group in a strip mall along Highway 83.

Located at 262 W. Main Street, Association Executives Group now occupies the first building on the left as travelers make their way into the heart of Wales. The location can also be seen on Highway 83, and provides the opportunity for the business to be a part of a very quaint area and the close-knit Town of Wales community, as well.

"The restoration and addition to the building was tastefully done and added a measure of sophistication to Main Street, which is the gateway to the downtown," said Wanda Gosa, a trustee on the board for the Village of Wales.

"I love the fact that it backs up a nature preserve," added Harris. "It brings the exposure and the convenience but also beauty and the quiet, too. It brings those two things together with the unique, architectural environment for both our employees, who are a creative staff. We are a creative company and I wanted a creative environment for our employees and for our clients."

Association Executives Group, located in Wales, Wisconsin, is a multi-disciplinary, woman-owned association management company in business in the local area for more than 20 years. The company's integrated approach provides local and national clients with cost-effective, full-service management services including event planning, financial/legal services, education and certification management, membership development, marketing support and complete web development and technology services. The agency has serviced clients in a wide range of industries including financial, education, health, security and more. To learn more about Association Executives Group, please visit www.associationeg.com.

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