



Advantage Group begins renovation of Huntington Hdqtrs.

May 19, 2008 - Long Island

The Advantage Group of Companies has begun the reconstruction and expansion of its historic corporate headquarters building in downtown Huntington.

Advantage, whose businesses include Advantage Title Agency Inc., is undertaking the renovation of the building at 410 New York Ave. and expanding it to about 34,000 square feet from 20,000 square feet. The company intends to use approximately 20,000 square feet on the two upper floors for its five businesses and lease the entire first floor.

"This is going to be a magnificent looking building," said Advantage Group president Joseph Willen. "We intend to restore this building to its former elegance, which it deserves, as it marks the southern gateway into downtown Huntington."

He added, "Our restoration and expansion of this building demonstrates Advantage's continued commitment to the community that we have always called home." Advantage Title was established 20 years ago in Huntington.

Advantage, which has expanded both its business and staff in recent years needs more space.

"We've experienced tremendous growth in the last few years and we continue to grow despite difficult market conditions," said Willen. "We not only need additional space, but also a building that reflects our success and promising outlook."

The property, completed in 1929, was originally the Hotel Huntington, a well-known gathering place for the community and the site of the Huntington High School senior prom, according to Huntington town historian Robert Hughes. The building was converted in 1951 to a branch of the Oppenheim Collins & Co. department store and it subsequently was acquired by the Aboff family. Advantage, which became a tenant in the building in 1992, bought the property from the Aboffs in 2000.

"We're trying to bring the building back to what it was," said Thomas Mojo, principal of the Greenvale-based architecture firm Mojo Stumer Associates, P.C., who designed the redevelopment. "This is going to be such an improvement over everything that is there now."

The new design includes a brick facade and limestone columns along with a two-story glass-enclosed lobby. Windows, currently bricked-over, will be restored along with the original top floor of the building, which Mojo said was removed by a prior owner. New plumbing, electrical, heating and air-conditioning systems are to be installed, along with new elevators. The renovation will include the use of sustainable materials.

Plainville-based Darren Construction is the contractor. Construction is expected to last a year.

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