

SRE, Inc. occupies historical building on northeast corner of square

Written by By Ava Barlow, Staff Writer
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May 12, 2011 - On the northwest corner of the Leonard square is a building that sits on block number 14, lot number 18 and one-half of lot 17, and was once a two story building with the first floor having 17 foot ceilings. It was built in 1918 and is now known as the SRE, Inc. building, but was originally built by The International Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF).



The IOOF built the building and held their meetings in the top floor while the ground floor was leased to a grocery store. Before the building of the IOOF building in 1918, there were two other buildings, a single story wood frame structure built in 1882 and a single story brick structure built in 1889. Records show that the First National Bank of Leonard owned the property for a time before 1918. It may have been an empty lot when they owned it, but they owned whatever was there.

The IOOF left the building in the mid-1950's, along with the north part of the Leonard Cemetery. Records then show that Homer Evans bought the building in 1957 and operated Dixie Distributing Co. in the bottom part and the top was left unused and unattended. Don Bingham bought the building in 1974 and began renovations to make the bottom floor into office spaces. Bingham made use of the high 17-foot ceiling and built a two-story portion in the front end of the building that included offices. The building was now three-story but the third story was still left unattended. Bingham rented the offices out to different individuals in town including Ed Carter for his bookkeeping services and Al Barcroft for his insurance business.

In 1986, the building became the property of Dr. James Froelich who used it for an office and clinic area for about ten years. He moved his medical office to Bonham and Dr. Fred McDonough began practicing in Leonard out of the building. Dr. McDonough followed Dr. Froelich to Bonham and Joe T. Sudderth bought the building on Dec. 17, 2002.

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Sudderth began an extensive remodeling project on the upstairs floor of the building while occupying the lower floors with his construction and real estate businesses, which he had relocated from U. S. Hwy. 69. Renovations included sandblasting the outside walls to remove cream colored paint, installing new awnings, replacing windows with replica original windows, installing a back covered patio, making three 900-square-foot one-bedroom apartments on the third floor, and installing a community laundry room. He preserved the original hardwood floors in the building, giving them a thick coat of polyurethane. He also added wiring for modern day computer and satellite television connections. On Feb. 21, 2004, Sudderth hosted a Grand Opening and Dedication of the newly renovated building.

On Sept. 26, 2007, Joe T. Sudderth sold Sudderth Real Estate to Rodger Alexander who kept the name, but shortened it into a logo, SRE, Inc. Alexander has made his mark in Leonard since owning SRE, Inc. The building is once again undergoing remodeling with the addition of four more offices in the first floor area where a storage area once was, adding a fourth apartment on the back half of the second floor, and building an inside staircase that leads to the third floor apartments, making the outside metal stairs an emergency fire escape only.