

Independence Receives \$100,000 Catalyst Grant

(Buchanan County, IA) The Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) announced July 7th that \$2.6 million in Community Catalyst Building Remediation grants have been awarded to 26 communities throughout Iowa. The Independence Leytze Building was one of those recipients, receiving a \$100,000 grant from the state.

The \$100,000 catalyst grant was designed to help create fundamental, positive change in Iowa's downtowns. It will assist with the redevelopment, remediation, or rehabilitation of buildings to stimulate economic growth and reinvestment. "Revitalization of statewide communities is particularly critical as we recover from the economic impacts of COVID-19," said IEDA and Iowa Finance Authority director Debi Durham. "The Community Catalyst program is not only about investing in our infrastructure, but it inspires further development and future growth for years to come."

The Leytze building, owned by Dominic Sparrgrove, encompasses storefronts facing both 1st Street and 2nd Ave. Sparrgrove's plans are to refurbish the outside facade of the building back to its original 1800's design. "I am a big fan of bringing historic buildings back to their original splendor," said Sparrgrove. In addition to the building's facade, he plans to remodel the upstairs with seven upper-scale apartments. The total project for this is over \$750,000. "I am really excited to get started with working on the building. I appreciate everything Independence and Buchanan County Economic Development did to help make this happen. I especially thank George Lake for writing the grant and helping organize everything," said Sparrgrove.

"The City of Independence is thrilled that Independence and the Leytze building received this grant and hope that it does exactly what its purpose is, be a catalyst for downtown development and revitalization. I am excited to see what it does for the future of the downtown. Combining this with the Independence Downtown Revitalization Plan being launched later this month, there are good things ahead for downtown Independence," commented Al Roder, City Administrator of Independence.

The Community Catalyst Building Remediation program is funded through an appropriation from the Iowa Legislature. This is the third year these grants are being made available via the IEDA and continued funding is based on annual availability.

Last fall, Iowa cities approved through a pre-application process were invited to apply. IEDA received a total of 73 applications. Scoring criteria was based on project impact, appropriateness, funding/partnerships and incorporation of sustainability/smart growth principles. Per program rules, at least 40% of the grants were awarded to cities with populations of less than 1,500. The grants will support local improvement projects such as

façade upgrades, building rehabilitations and renovations. Cities are required to provide financial and/or in-kind resources to supplement these projects.

To find out more about the Community Catalyst program, visit iowaeda.com/catalyst . If interested in applying for a catalyst grant in Buchanan County, contact Buchanan County Economic Development Director Lisa Kremer at director@growbuchanan.com or call 319-334-7497.

*source for catalyst information – IEDA press release 7-7-2020.