

The Face of Fillmore

By Sherry Shepard

Change is inevitable in the Face of Fillmore. Businesses come and go, as do other uses for buildings. It is always great to see a building used for many purposes throughout the years. Driving down Main Street and other places, it is possible to say, "This used to be an old grocery store but it is now a reality business." (Just an example.) Almost every building in town has had an identity change at some point.

Today we look at what most of us still call the Armory, although the National Guard unit moved out some time ago.

The National Guard Armory building was built in 1927 to house the 213th Charlie Battery. This group was deployed for several different reasons through its history. In the 1950's, the group was deployed to Korea to fight in the conflict there. They received the Distinguished Unit Citation for their heroic actions during battle. Fifty years later they were deployed to Deseret Chemical facility near Tooele. This was just after 9/11 when much of the country's security was beefed up. In 2007 and 2008, the 145th Charlie Battery was sent to Iraq as they were again in the summer of 2011 along with the group from Beaver.

The building underwent extensive renovations in 2010 to upgrade both the interior and exterior.

These days this building is owned by the city, leased by the county and is used for a variety of activities. I talked with the county recreation director Brendon Turner and learned that some county offices, like the recreation department and Millard County Tourism, have offices there. The basketball court is used for practices and games and other recreational activities. It is also rented out for family gatherings such as Thanksgiving dinners, weddings, family reunions, birthday parties and more. A room upstairs is used to store military memorabilia from days gone by. A large room in the back, accessed from a door on the southwest side of the building is now home to the Fillmore Community Arts Center.

I had a great visit with the Art Center's director, Doug Jolley. He is excited about the activities going on there and the promise of more, as interest increases.

The Fillmore Community Art Center began its first classes at their new location in October, 2022. I say, new location, as these classes actually began in the high school but there were so many people interested that they outgrew their location.

A tumbling class had held classes in that section of the Armory but had moved to another building, opening up the space.

Doug and others met with the county commissioners who gave their blessing for the art center and were helpful in other ways, as well. Utilities (water and electricity) costs were covered by the city and the county picked up the natural gas bill. The city also installed a sink for project clean-ups.

Several items were donated to the cause. Two kilns for use in firing pottery were donated and the city paid to make sure they were safely installed. Several donations of furniture items were made. Tables and chairs were purchased at amazingly low prices from a surplus sale. The high school put the pottery wheels they were not using in the art center for safe storage until they need them again. And the list goes on.

The first classes included a Halloween craft class, a calligraphy class and a pottery class.

Beginning on January 17, a six-week long pottery class will be taught on Tuesday's and Thursday's, both mornings and evenings.

February 22 will see a six weeks class taught by artists Courtney Lunt and Lloyd Brown.

There will be a March class in making Easter wreaths and one in June for making Fourth of July wreaths.

Summer art classes for children are in the planning stages.

As the center opened Doug and his crew were amazed as over 100 people showed up to the open house. All of those involved as board members and art instructors are volunteers.

As in any successful organization, you will find enthusiastic, talented people in charge and this is the case here. Filling out the board for the center are Fawn Hunter, Melissa Young, Adam Remkes, Doug Robison, Bonnie Smith, Cathy Wheeler and, of course, Doug Jolley, the director.

To find out what exciting things are coming up, go to Fillmore Community Arts Center on Facebook.

