Downtown Buildings, Second Floor Uses and Opportunities

Participants:
Sumter Archway Professional: Barbara Grogan
Community Members: Angie Singletary, Executive Director, Americus Downtown Development Authority
Ten Property Owners and Members of the DDA
USG Partner: Dr. Leslie Sharp, Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs and Outreach, Georgia Tech

Georgia Tech to Design Second Floor Uses and Opportunities for Sumter Co. Downtown Buildings

The Americus Downtown Development Authority (DDA) supports the downtown community and looks for opportunities to grow the merchants and make best use of available spaces. Americus is a community rich with historical structures and is also a community that is very supportive of historical preservation. With these opportunities and the desire to support growth and commerce, the DDA is eager to identify options to begin using the 2nd, 3rd, and sometimes 4th floor spaces of building located in historic downtown Americus.

In response to this request, Sumter Archway contacted Dr. Leslie Sharp in the College of Architecture at GA Tech. Dr. Sharp teaches a course geared toward preservation, reuse of space in downtown buildings, with specific emphasis on second floor and higher spaces. The idea is to identify opportunities to make such redevelopments realistic financially as well as acceptable with state and local ordinances related to safety. Additionally, the redevelopments attempt to capture and maintain the historic values of the properties.

Dr. Sharp and staff visited Americus and viewed many potential properties. The list of opportunities has been narrowed to roughly 12 structures, and a class of 36 students is committed to developing ideas, designs and sketches for reuse beginning in January 2012.