

Retail, industrial, medical, educational threads unite fabric



300 block of West Main Street

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Gaylord Story.

Today, the three-story Phoenix Building next door and the three-story addition to the Glasser Building are central features downtown.

The Phoenix, attractive from both front and rear, replaces two buildings destroyed in a 1984 fire.

While the 100 block developed first, the north side of the 300 block of Main Street was the first focus of planning in the early 1960s.

Photos were taken and compared with architectural renderings. It was this plan that was sold to the chamber of commerce committee.

In the 1970s, the First National Bank of Gaylord renovated a former restaurant building and later expanded it into a two-story Alpine edifice. Across West Main Street, Heritage Federal Savings is another example of the look.

Downtown examples of the transformation in this decade include the Hogan Building at Otsego Avenue and Main Street, unifying three existing Alpine storefronts; and The Village Square, a collection of shops at Main Street and Center Avenue, constructed from two previous buildings which had Swiss makeovers.

Also in the 1980s, Community Federal Credit Union built a Gaylord branch in the 700 block of West Main Street while the Alpine motif saturated shopping plazas and other commercial areas from downtown west to the freeway and beyond.

Government kept pace. The old black city water tower was removed and in its place at a Wisconsin Street location, is the new city water tower proclaiming Gaylord the Alpine Village.

It serves as a billboard for the hundreds of thousands of cars that pass by on the expressway.

The old city hall, located in the Municipal Building on Court Street since 1912, housed the fire department, library, city offices and an auditorium. Thought to be structurally unsound, it was razed in the 1960s and in its place is a parking lot.

Across the street was the old courthouse. Declared structurally unsound as well, it was demolished and in its place came a new Alpine-style structure including both county and city offices.

The main east-west highway is M-32. Until the early 1970s it was a two-lane road that suffered flooding and chuck holes a major part of the year. The State of Michigan, with participation by the community, widened much of the route to four and five lanes and improved the storm water system.

South Otsego Avenue and Old 27 South also was expanded to four lanes from downtown to the I-75 exit north of Otsego Lake.

In the 1980s the Old 27 / West Main route connecting the city's two exits was named Business Loop 75.

West of town on M-32 was the former Teen Chalet nightclub. The building was purchased in the 1970s by the new Diocese of Gaylord, which remodeled the structure into the office building housing headquarters for 21 counties.

When the diocese was formed in 1970, Gaylord became the smallest Roman Catholic cathedral city in the United States. In 1976 the diocese built St. Mary Cathedral.

Physicians were attracted to the community, adding to the staff at Otsego Memorial Hospital and making Otsego County one of the best medically served regions in the state.

Gaylord also is home for Beverly Home Health Care Services (formerly Provincial House), an extended care facility built in 1977. The facility can accommodate some 120 patients. Most of them are senior citizens who can no longer receive only home care.

Senior citizen housing is provided at the Alpine Alten Zimmer apartments on Grandview

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Institutions, government cooperate

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Best Western Gaylord/Raindancer

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