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NEWS - METRO-EAST NEWS - BELLEVILLE NEWS

Tuesday, Apr. 05, 2011 5 Comments

## Group hopes to raise money for west Belleville revitalization efforts

BY LAURA GIRRESCH - News-Democrat

BELLEVILLE -- The nonprofit West End Redevelopment Corp. has launched a capital campaign to help renovate its office at 9700 W. Main St. and continue its revitalization efforts.

The group, which aims to buy problem properties in the west end of the city and turn them around, is seeking immediate contributions and long-term financial commitments. They're hoping to raise \$200,000 this year.

The repairs for the office building include flooring and roof replacement, electrical and plumbing updates, and tuck-pointing of the exterior. The repairs and renovations are expected to cost \$110,000.

WERC is all volunteers, except for Executive Director Linda Havlin, who works part time. The organization hires professionals to do the rehab work.

The organization has purchased about 10 properties, mostly residential. The purchases are usually made possible through private donations, but also through grants.

The properties the organization has purchased have come from the county's public auction or from banks when the buildings are foreclosed upon. The acquired and renovated properties are then sold and the profits go toward other properties WERC

purchases.

When the office building is complete, WERC hopes to use it partly as a meeting facility for Neighborhood Watch groups and other community organizations, and also as storage for some of the rehab project tools, equipment, and materials.

Havlin said one woman in the 9500 block of West Main Street was thinking about moving until WERC renovated a house in her neighborhood.

"WERC made a difference for her, (as far as) whether she stayed in her home or moved somewhere else," Havlin said.

Those interested in donating can send checks made out to WERC to 9700 W. Main St., Belleville, IL 62223. Or donate online at [www.gotowerc.com](http://www.gotowerc.com).

Contact reporter Laura Girresch at [lgirresch@bnd.com](mailto:lgirresch@bnd.com) or 239-2507.

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