

# Home & Real Estate

## RESTORING HISTORIC PLACES

*Allen Casey — Architect And Proprietor*



*'Springfield is becoming a city with a real urban core, with a vitality and economic activity, as well as entertainment.'*

*— Architect Allen Casey*

Photo by Angela Henry

**Architect** and downtown property owner Allen Casey stands in front of his current project, the former Sterling Hotel built in 1911. When complete the Sterling will feature an upscale restaurant and office space.

**by Angela Henry**

**T**he renovation and redevelopment of downtown Springfield is a steady work in progress.

Condemned hotels are turning into luxurious lofts, sleepy storefronts are becoming upscale restaurants, and an abandoned warehouse is now a community arts center.

"Springfield is becoming a city with a real urban core, with a vitality and economic activity, as well as entertainment," said Allen Casey, principal architect in The Casey Associates at 619 S. Pickwick. "Springfield really needed that."

Casey knows first-hand about renovation projects. He is known for downtown improvements, a master renovation

plan for both the Greene County Courthouse and the Discovery Center; redesigning an existing Drury Library, and various projects outside the Springfield area.

Casey also is becoming known as a center city property owner. He and his wife Mary Lou purchased the Holland Building at 205 Park Central East in 1998 and the Sterling, located just across the street from the Holland, in 2000.

Casey and his associates finished work on the Holland in 2004, a \$2.6 million restoration project.

"We purchased the Sterling before we purchased the Holland, but because the Holland was full of tenants, we focused our attention on getting it renovated first," said Casey.

*See Casey, 18*

# Mixing Things Up Downtown

Casey, from 17

"Now that the Holland is almost full, we can go back to working on the Sterling."

The Holland, built in 1914, is

now a mixed use facility—home to the restaurant Riad, Prima Donna boutique, The Skinny Improv comedy club, office space, and a luxurious meeting room called The

Holland Room.

"The Holland was a very nice building when it was originally built, so there was a lot to work with there," Casey said.

Most of The Casey Associate's

projects are buildings constructed between 1880 and 1920, and all are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. According to the National Register's website, it is the "nation's official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation."

Listing property on the National Register has several advantages, among them: the property gains recognition of being important on a national or local level, and receives both federal tax benefits and assistance.

Both the Holland building and the Sterling are listed on the National Register of Historical Places.

Once an upscale hotel, the Sterling was built in 1911 and harbored 45 rooms. When complete, the modern-day Sterling will offer an upscale restaurant on the first floor and three floors of office space.

"There will be a roof terrace on the building, and each of the upper floors of offices are built around an open air light court that goes all the way to the top," Casey said.

"We've almost completed the front facade, except for the windows, which we will do later. We've almost got it back to looking like it originally looked."

Construction on the Sterling is expected to be complete in 10-12 months. The Casey Associates already plan to relocate to the second floor of the building upon its completion. Casey says he has a prospect interested in leasing the restaurant space on the ground level.

"We have had a great deal of suburban growth, but with downtown revitalization the city is forming an identity," Casey said.