

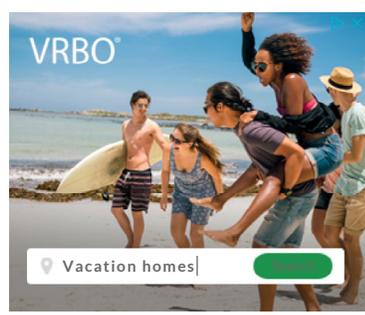
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Hoping to sell administration building, Lackawanna County advertises in New York, Philadelphia



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JEFF HORVATH, STAFF WRITER / PUBLISHED: MAY 9, 2018

Lackawanna County is turning to Philadelphia and New York to sell its current Administration Building.

The county plans to vacate the six-story structure at 200 Adams Ave. in Scranton once the former Globe store on Wyoming Avenue is ready to house government operations. Last year, officials solicited proposals from developers interested in purchasing it. After receiving only two proposals — one from Scranton-based DFM Properties and another from Allentown-

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based Jefferson-Werner LLC — the county rejected both and announced it would instead sell the building via sealed bids.

Hoping to grow the pool of potential bidders, however, the county recently advertised its request for bids for the building in both The New York Times and The Philadelphia Inquirer newspapers, along with The Times-Tribune and The Citizens' Voice. They paid between \$8,000 and \$10,000 to run classified ads twice in the four newspapers, according to county Chief of Staff Andy Wallace.

County commissioners want to get the most money possible from the sale and hope advertising in larger markets will generate more interest in the property, Wallace said.

"We also think, because of market conditions (and) because of all the good things going on downtown in the city of Scranton, that right now there is going to be more interest in purchasing this building than there was last year at this time," Wallace said, noting the county was "disappointed" more developers didn't submit proposals last year.

Both that did, DFM Properties and Jefferson-Werner, planned on putting apartments in the space. Calling those proposals "very solid," Wallace encouraged both companies to bid on the building this time around, but it's unclear if they will.

Developer Charles Jefferson of Jefferson-Werner said he's still interested in buying the Adams Avenue landmark and retrofitting it with a restaurant, retail space and about 50 apartments. Having not yet reviewed the county's request for bids, however, Jefferson could not say if he will submit one.

DFM Properties owner Don Mammano also planned to put about 50 rental units, as well as office space and an artist showcase space, in the building. He hasn't yet decided if he'll pursue the building again after the county rejected his earlier proposal.

"I was more interested in it then than I am today," Mammano said, noting he's now working on other projects.

The county will hold a building walk-through so potential bidders can see the space May 23. Lauding its location and aesthetics, Wallace called the administration building one of the nicest in the city.

"You've ... got a view of the valley, a view of the mountains, a view of the greens, a view of the city," Wallace said. "It's an absolutely, positively beautiful building, a place that people are going to want to relocate (to) and live in."

While the county would like to see the building converted into a mixed-use residential/retail space, Wallace said officials are not opposed to alternative uses.

"Whatever the highest bid is to get this property back on the tax rolls is what the county is going to consider," he said.



Original Woodstock festival site announces plans for 50th anniversary event at Bethel Woods

A 50th anniversary remembrance of the original Woodstock festival –the cultural touchstone moment that brought an estimated half-million people to a hillside in Bethel, N.Y., for a legendary three-day music festival – will be held at the original site, organizers announced Thursday. (read more)



100 Years Ago - City Council says no to firefighter's wage increase

After an hourlong meeting between city council, Mayor Alex Connell and the union representing the Scranton firefighters, council President Thomas Saville told the union, “We made it very plain at the last meeting that the wage question was closed and we absolutely refuse to open the budget again. (read more)



The county's minimum bid price for the administration building is \$1.3 million, the same amount it paid to buy the Globe building in 2016. Officials hope it sells for much more and the county reserves the right to reject all bids and retain ownership of the structure.

Meanwhile, work at the Globe is progressing on time and “relatively on budget,” Wallace said, noting the estimated total project cost is now about \$17.4 million, up from the roughly \$17 million cost officials estimated at the outset. The county still plans to vacate the administration building and relocate to the Globe by the end of the year, Wallace said.

Developers may submit sealed bids for the administration building to the Lackawanna County Controller's Office until 2 p.m. on June 15. A public bid opening will follow.

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NEW Man accused in fatal bus crash brought back to Lackawanna County

COVINGTON TWP. — A 50-year-old man accused of causing a deadly bus crash in October in Covington Twp. was returned to Lackawanna County to face charges, state police at Dunmore said. (read more)