

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Historic Department Store to Reopen as Antique Marketplace

NEGAUNEE, MI –The Lowenstein Building in downtown Negaunee was once the place to go for nearly anything from underwear to sewing notions. Built in 1916 by Joseph “Cheap Joe” Lowenstein to house both his family and his business, Lowenstein’s was a decades-long Negaunee institution. The family-run department store finally closed in the 1980’s when Leah Lowenstein, Joseph’s last surviving child, became too infirm to continue managing it.

But Lowenstein’s is about to enjoy a comeback.

Beginning this spring, the building will be taking on a new persona – as what will likely become one of the U.P.’s largest indoor antiques marketplaces. The change is being orchestrated by Jeffrey Plummer, owner of North Antiques and Vintage, and former manager of the Old Bank Building Antiques, also in downtown Negaunee. He learned of the building’s availability when he rented an upstairs room to conduct yoga classes.

“It’s the perfect place for an antique mall,” says Plummer. “First of all, it’s in Negaunee, and everyone knows this town’s a hub for antiques. But also, it’s just a cool old historic building. There’s a ton of space, and the ambiance is there.”

So far, the opportunity has attracted enough antique vendors to fill over a third of the available 6000 square feet on the main floor. Plummer expects a full house by the end of summer. “And there’s a ton more space in the building that can be opened up if we need more room,” he adds.

The Lowenstein Building itself brims with its own quaint antique qualities. Some of the historic features antique buffs will appreciate are the tin ceiling; natural light provided by a light shaft and giant skylight; and built-in three-way mirrors. The star of the show, however, is the loft-like “crow’s nest” and the wire

baskets strung on pulley-driven cables overhead. The basket system hearkens from the building's department-store origins. "It was to prevent shoplifting and embezzlement," explains Plummer, who hopes <http://ecozeal.com/blog/soft-star-shoes-%e2%80%93-the-next-best-thing-to-barefoot> to restore at least one of the baskets back to working order. "The bookkeeper – it was always a family member – would sit in the crow's nest, where they could keep an eye out on the entire store. When a purchase was made, the salesperson would send the money up in a basket, and get the change and receipt back the same way."

Lowenstein's Antique Marketplace is expected to be open for business by June 1st. Interested parties may contact Jeffrey Plummer at 906-475-6079 or visit www.wherethingscomefrom.com for more information.

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