

Work to start on new museum



Ron Rittenhouse/The Dominion Post

Visitor Julie Bryan looks at a model of one of the former General Woodworking houses that were built in the 1940s and '50s, at the Morgantown History Museum. All items in the current museum will go to the new area after it is renovated.

History to get a home on Kirk Street

FOR INFORMATION about the Morgantown History Museum, click on the link at dominionpost.com.

BY CASSIE SHANER

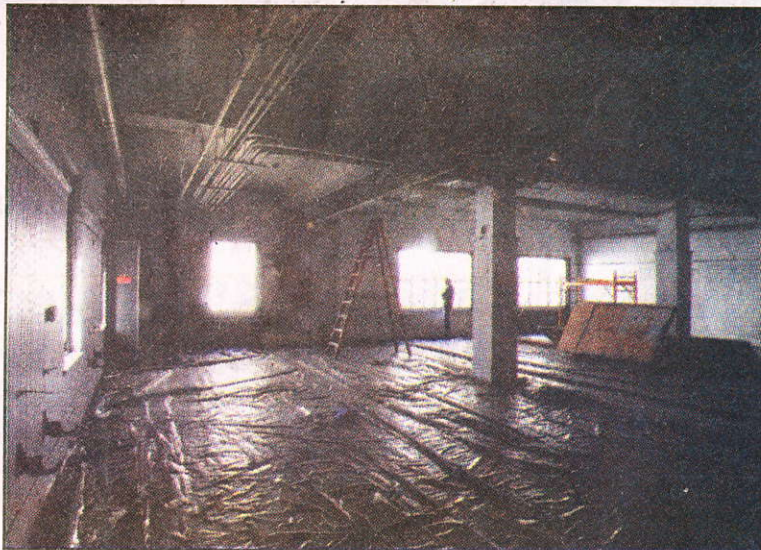
The Dominion Post

BOPARC plans to begin construction on the Morgantown History Museum's new home this month.

The nearly 5,000-square-foot facility will be located below the existing museum space behind the Monongalia Arts Center, in the basement of the 1931 addition to the old Morgantown Post Office. Its main entrance will be on Kirk Street.

The Morgantown Museum Commission has been working with local architect Michael Mills to design the facility, which will expand the museum's display space from 300 square feet to 4,500 square feet. Chairwoman Pamela Ball said the floor plan is finished. Mills met with commission members this past week to discuss the location and design of the displays.

The commission is working with BOPARC, which oversees the museum, to coordinate construction. BOPARC Director Mark Wise said \$30,000 in hotel and motel tax revenue and \$30,000 in capital funds have been set aside



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Michael Mackert, assistant coordinator of the Morgantown History Museum, looks out the windows of the museum's future location, in the basement of the Monongalia Arts Center building.

for the project, though Ball wasn't sure of the exact amount.

Along with funds raised by the museum commission, "that will get us a long way," Wise said. "We're going to be doing a lot of the work with our own crews. That will help us stretch our dollars."

Crews will begin work on the building's heating and cooling system and a handicap-accessible bathroom after demolition is finished later this month. Wise said

they'll work on the interior walls after that, depending on the availability of funds.

The commission plans to host fundraisers this winter and spring, but its members have already begun raising money by participating in various community activities.

The museum is selling \$5 coupon booklets for Elder Beer-

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man's Community Day, on Nov. 13, for instance. Ball said each booklet contains a coupon for \$10 off, among other discounts, which makes it worth the price.

"For every booklet we sell, we get to keep the \$5," Ball said. "That's a very good thing for us."

The museum is slated to move into its new home by late summer 2011, and Wise said BOPARC could allocate

additional money from next year's budget, if necessary.

Ball said the larger museum will house permanent exhibits that feature old printing equipment used in Morgantown, artifacts from Sterling Faucet and Don Knotts memorabilia. The facility will also include adjustable display space for rotating exhibits, removable pods for time line-style displays and a small library of local history books.

Michael Mackert, assistant coordinator of the

Morgantown History Museum, said about 1,400 people visit the facility each year, but he hopes the new space will help boost that number.

"Most people who come in say, 'Oh, we didn't know you existed,'" Mackert said. "We're very limited in the space we have now. ... The problem is that we're kind of in the back here and not very visible. On Kirk Street, we'll have more visibility, and hopefully more people will come in."