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## News

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### Ware Shoals Inn alive and well again

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After 30 years of vacancy, the Ware Shoals Inn again welcomed visitors Friday to the sounds of ragtime music and the breeze of the newly air-conditioned interior.

Completed in 1923 by Ware Shoals Manufacturing Co., the Inn spent almost a half-century housing overnight and long-term residents, serving as meeting and community space and offering hot meals in its public dining rooms. Friday, at the 30th anniversary of the Inn's closing, representatives of Vision Ware Shoals re-dedicated the building back to the community.

"The Ware Shoals Inn stood tall, as a beacon in this community when it opened in 1923," town councilwoman Bonnie Maxwell said during the dedication ceremony. "This was a place that was filled with life: wedding receptions, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts. The Inn was the place to be. ... In 1979, the owners determined it was no longer feasible to run the inn, and it was closed."

The building fell into a "state of disrepair," Maxwell said, as broken windows allowed the weather to cause damage, and pigeons and transients moved in. In 2007, the Ware Shoals Inn was added to the National Register of Historic Places, and renovation work physically began May 2008.

"Now we see the result of that planning," Maxwell said. "It is indeed a proud day for myself and the residents of Ware Shoals."

Vision Ware Shoals LLC, an umbrella company of Integrity Development, worked to make the building as much like the 1923 building as possible with modern convenience.

"This particular structure is really unique in that it's the first one of its kind in America. This is the first for affordable senior housing, multi-family, on the register of historic place, and it's LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design certified," Frank Warlick, Vision Ware Shoals managing director, said. "Rents are very, very affordable, and we do not expect to have any problems renting it completely."

Although interior renovations have not been fully completed — apartments will be ready for move-in within 30 days, Warlick said — the building will be used as a home for seniors. The building has 23 apartments, both one and two bedrooms, open for lease.

The renovation project was funded through the S. C. State Housing Finance and Development Authority and with \$1.5 million in tax credits for renovating the historic building to modern standards, Warlick said. Vision Ware Shoals then sold those tax credits to another company for the liquid funding required in the restoration.

"It's a good deal for them, a great deal for us, and if there is a loser in this, it's the IRS," he said with a laugh.

Other speakers during the rededication ceremony included former Ware Shoals Mayor George Rush, State Sen. Billy O'Dell and Palmetto Trust for Historic Preservation executive director Mike Bedenbaugh.

During tours of the building, Maxwell joked she might need to reserve a room for the future.

"I'm just so proud of this," she said. "So proud."

For information, visit

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