

# OUR TOWN

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## Making it look like it used to

### Community working to restore Homestead's old City Hall, Fire Station

By ROBERT L. JENSEN  
Special to the News Leader

From 1917 through the early 1970s, Homestead's old Town Hall and Fire Station at 43 N. Krome was the center of all activity in Homestead.

It was home to the police department as well as to all other municipal functions. Homesteaders paid their "light and water bills" there, went to municipal court there and appeared before the mayor, attended town and then city council meetings there, and some played cards on the back platform of the 1924 American LaFrance fire truck. Our community is in the midst of restoring the old Town Hall and Fire Station using funds from State of Florida Historic Preservation Fund and Dade County grants, and with funds given and pledged by local people. Ruth Campbell and Russ Norton have chaired the fund raising drive, which is continuing. Thus far their efforts have resulted in \$19,783.98 in cash contributions and \$24,550 in pledges. Those who have pledged but not sent in their checks should forward them to: Old City Hall Restoration Fund, 790 N. Homestead Blvd., Homestead FL 33030.

Contributors of \$250 or more will have bricks or tiles engraved with their names or names they select and made a permanent part of the restoration. Thus, contributions to this worthwhile cause will also help perpetuate the names of people past and present who have made Homestead the special place that it is.

Work on the restoration is already underway. One of the several innovations being used to conserve funds is the use of the Greater Miami Youth Service Corps to do the demolition work — that is the removal of all non-original features from the building. The youth in the program work on community projects in exchange for training, support and education.

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Another method of reducing costs is by having the City directly purchase the materials and supplies for construction and renovation. The plan calls for restoration of the second floor initially, followed by the exterior of the building and then the first floor interior. Bids will be opened on April 4 and the bid award will be on April 15, 1991.

The demolition work has shown the Town Hall to be in much better condition than was expected. The second floor ceiling has been removed and the open beam look has been returned to the large room formerly used as council chambers. The bead board wall and ceiling coverings in the former offices on the second floor are in pretty good shape and there will be no problem in having a mill duplicate the bead board.

Through innovations and the cooperation of many people, the restoration is proceeding in a cost effective and orderly manner. However, about \$100,000 is still needed to complete the project. Hopefully, individuals and organizations will come forth to assist in making up this shortfall. As an example, during the initial fund raising drive the Woman's Club of Homestead put on a chili lunch on the sidewalk in front of the old Town Hall and raised over \$1,000 for the restoration fund. In Homestead we always seem to find a way to make things work out better than they do anywhere else. Let's do it again here.



PHOTO SPECIALS TO THE NEWS LEADER

**RESTORATION** — The outside of Homestead's old Town Hall and Fire Station (above) has been retored to its old look (right). Work to restore the building's interior is underway thanks to a great community effort. Project architect Robert Barnes and Associates and Greater Miami Youth Service Corps supervisor Michael Anderson examine the original structure as demolition work continues on the inside.

