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Modesto Bee, The (CA)

**OFFICES NOW PLANNED FOR J ST. BUILDING**

**FORMER LOOMIS FLOWER SHOP IN MIDST OF \$600,000 RENOVATION**

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It's been a bank, a jewelry store and a floral shop during the past 80 years, and soon it will be home to executive offices.

The **building** at 1111 J St. is undergoing a \$600,000 **renovation** after sitting vacant for two years. The most recent tenant was Loomis Modesto Floral, which closed in 2000.

The 10,000-square-foot, three-story **building** will feature an atrium with skylights, exposed trusses that date back to the 1920s, wide hallways and 12-foot ceilings, said William **Leer**, of William **Leer** Construction.

"It's a pretty neat old **building**," **Leer** said. Built as a bank in 1920, the three-story portion of the **building** was added in the 1940s.

The basement at one time housed a jewelry shop, and extends under the sidewalk to the curb, **Leer** said. The floral shop occupied the first floor for more than 40 years, closing two years ago. The **building** has been vacant since then.

It should have tenants again in about four months, **Leer** said.

The **building** will have spaces for up to 18 offices, he said, although it will be configured so tenants can lease as much space as they want.

**Leer**, who recently renovated a 70-year-old **building** at Seventh and I streets for executive offices, said the J Street **building** will have a similar homey feel.

"We work on the colors and the feel of the offices, so when you go to work, you don't feel like you hate going there," he said.

"We are trying to clean up Modesto one **building** at a time."

The I Street **building**, named the **Leer Building**, filled up with tenants quickly, **Leer** said, indicating there is a healthy market for office space **downtown**.

"A lot of small businesses are looking for that kind of space," he said. No tenants have been signed for the J Street **building** yet, but he has had inquiries, **Leer** said.

**Leer** bought the **building** along with his daughter, Christi Carver. It will be named the **Leer-Carver** Executive Office Suite and dedicated to its architect, Stanton Elliot, who died two weeks ago, **Leer** said.

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