

Kellogg credit union takes over Gary Fields'

Elizabeth Willis • *The Enquirer* • October 15, 2010

A credit union has joined the migration downtown.

Kellogg Community Federal Credit Union is opening its eighth branch in the former Gary Fields Comedy Club at 51 W. Michigan Ave.

Chief Executive Officer Tracy Miller said the credit union had been looking for a place to expand downtown in order to follow the estimated 600 employees Kellogg Co. starts bringing downtown today.

KCFCU acquired 51 W. Michigan Ave. and its assets after Gary Fields said he went into foreclosure earlier this year.

It plans to open the branch, located across McCamly Street from the Kellogg campus, sometime before the end of the year.

"We had been searching for a place downtown," Miller said. "This is really where we wanted to be. It's a perfect location."

It will be the only credit union downtown besides Inspire Community Development Federal Credit Union, a credit union which KCFCU helped sponsor serving primarily low-income members.

"So hopefully it will offer more options to the downtown," Miller said.

KCFCU continues to have close ties with Kellogg, its original sponsor, though in 2001 it opened membership to anyone in the greater Battle Creek area and now anyone in Southwest Michigan.

About 60 percent of its members continue to be employees, relatives or retirees associated with the cereal giant, Miller said.

The credit union has exclusive ATM access in Kellogg's buildings, but wanted to offer more services to its members downtown, Miller said.

It made sense considering Kellogg is beginning today to move about 600 employees to 67 W. Michigan. The move should be complete before

Nov. 25, according to Kellogg.

KCFCU's new branch will have a 24-hour ATM and overnight deposit box on the outside of its building.

Inside, tellers will help with personal and commercial transactions. There will be a lounge area with coffee, offices and a standard security system.

With Schweitzer Construction as its general contractor, the credit union decided to build three separate offices within the portion of the building it owns.

The Hinman Co., which leases its space to Kellogg, and Western Michigan University also own portions of the building, Miller said.

The credit union will occupy the corner space below the black-and-yellow marquee in a little more than 2,000 square feet of space. It plans to lease the other two spaces, she said. One is about 3,500 square feet and the other is a bit less than 2,000 square feet.

Miller said they also plan to rewrap the lower portion of the marquee in KCFCU signage, and remove the upper portion that extends along the corner of the building.

No new employees will be hired to work the branch, Miller said. The credit union begun to hire and train additional workers at its existing branches this summer. She estimated six people will transfer to

the downtown branch.

While some businesses have had a tough time operating downtown, Miller said the credit union has been in business 70 years and has a history of investing in Battle Creek.

"And we would anticipate that here as well," she said. "We definitely see this as being a success."

It has been exciting seeing the downtown transformation plan begin to attract destination businesses such as the credit union, said Cheryl Beard, Battle Creek Unlimited's technology and marketing director. BCU has spearheaded the revitalization downtown.

"And it's great to have them downtown in one of the anchor, highly visible locations," Beard said. "We're thankful that businesses are starting to recognize and see the transformation downtown and are investing."

"It's just another positive for the downtown."

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