

By Carolyn Lee

The Imperial Republican

After housing HiTech Computer Solutions for a year, the old Imperial Hotel at the corner of 5th and Broadway Streets will be transformed into a coffee shop and youth center.

HiTech, owned by David and Jordon Darling, has moved out and is being operated from David Darling's home in Benkelman. Contact can be made by calling (877) 266-7782.

The company was originally located in space owned by Adams Lumber on Main Street. Jordon Darling purchased the hotel in Dec., 2007 and HiTech moved in.

The new move, according to David Darling, is "to cut some expenses and because of Jordon's plans."

Jordon Darling is giving the building to Lighthouse Fellowship, he said Tuesday.

The pastor of Lighthouse Fellowship, Matthew Dupiere, said the main floor will be turned into a "Starbucks" type coffee shop.

There will be free Internet, with every table having a port. There will also be a small stage for acoustic music sets during the evenings.

"Our goal is during the day having it (the coffee shop) for business people, and in the evening the kids are out of school and can do their homework on the Internet," Dupiere said.

The second story will be converted into a recreation center for youth in junior and senior high schools, with an arcade and pool and ping pong tables.

The basement will be a concert venue, Dupiere said. "I would love to get one concert per month" booked. The concerts would also be directed towards junior and senior high youths.

He said the reason for the church's involvement is, "There's nothing in this town for these kids. There are a lot of youth groups, but as far as fun, this can be a safe haven where kids can come and listen to positive Christian music and hang out."

Dupiere said funding needs to come from the public.

"I'm hoping the people in the community will see a need" for a youth center. He said funding will "start with a zero balance" as it has for the past several years with the community Kenosis Effect project, a weekend of Christian activity for youth.

"Where God guides, He provides," Dupiere added.

The coffee shop will open as soon as possible, he said, followed by the recreation center. No deadline was set, as it depends upon funding. Dupiere said the project may need a \$50,000 sprinkler system.