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WDEOC excited about Day Resource Center operations beginning in just under two months

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Leader-Telegram staff

EAU CLAIRE — Katie Hulbert said this time last year, the future of the Day Resource Center seemed uncertain. Now, the Western Dairyland Economic Opportunity Council (WDEOC) is hopeful that it will be up and running in less than two months.

“We are starting to get towards the end of our timeline,” said Hulbert, Housing and Family Services director for WDEOC. “We have flooring and ceiling left to do here. Ideally right now, [Rocket Construction] is solely focused on getting the Community Haven House side up and running, and so they’re a little bit further along than the Western Dairyland side, which is how we want that.”

Serving a dual purpose, the Day Resource Center located on 1 Better Way in downtown Eau Claire will house both the Community Haven House and office space for Western Dairyland. In addition to continuing services, additional space will also open the door to take on future programming and address community needs.

Renovations began on the 18,560-square-foot building in August of this year.

Hulbert said their aim is to be moving furniture and other items into the space by mid-December



STAFF PHOTO BY MATTHEW BAUGHMAN

The Day Resource Center is located at 1 Better Way, formerly 610 Gibson Street, in downtown Eau Claire.

and opening their services to the public by Jan. 1. The current Community Haven House’s lease ends at the start of 2026, so Hulbert said there is significance in reaching their goals by that time.

“When that lease ends, that building will not be allowed for occupancy, so if we get behind it could be detrimental and we could have a gap in services for

our folks during the day,” she said. “Especially in the winter, that’s not a good time to have that gap because of how cold it can get here in the area.”

Also with offering care for those in the community who are homeless, updating the facility is significant in addressing some ongoing quality concerns in the current building. One of which is

carpeting, which Hulbert said offers its own set of challenges and makes it difficult to clean. Additionally, the building itself is not easily accessible to people with disabilities, and has limitations of space while it has provided a temporary solution in their efforts to address homelessness.

Hulbert said, “I also feel that for the guests themselves, to have a

nicer facility to show their worth as a human being is really important as well.

“We need to show that we honor who they are as human beings and that they are worth something, because that’s going to help build their self-esteem so that they want to make changes and take those services.”

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In the new facility, members of the community facing homelessness will have access to public bathrooms and showers, washers and dryers, computers for online school and applications, information on transportation options, an outdoor patio space which still offers privacy and more. The space will also provide lunches during days the Community Table in Eau Claire is inactive.

Another big argument for the benefit of a facility like this has been to put a variety of essential resources together in one space, solving accessibility challenges.

“One thing we find very often is that our unhoused come up on the coordinated entry list and we can’t find them because they don’t have a phone and they don’t have a mailing address, so they lose out on services,” Hulbert said. “If a guest comes in and we’re looking for them, once they check in, we’ll be able to get notified that they’re here and we can hopefully get them the services that they qualify for sooner than later and folks won’t miss out on programs because we can’t find them.”



STAFF PHOTO BY MATTHEW BAUGHMAN

Hoping to open up in just under two months, Western Dairyland Economic Opportunity Council say they are getting towards the end of their construction phase with the Day Resource Center.

Work is still planned for these coming weeks, as the next event for WDEOC is the launch of their “One Better Way” capital campaign as half of their \$6.4 million goal has already been reached. Hulbert said an event on Nov. 13 will mark the public phase of that campaign to support the efforts of the Day Resource Center.

For more information on the event, visit tinyurl.com/better-wayEC.

Hulbert said there have certainly

been challenges to overcome over the past few years, but having the opening of the building in sight is an exciting thing to see.

“I think there’s so much positive energy from the community going towards this project, and to be so close to the end is rewarding,” she said.

“It’s so exciting, and I’m excited to show the folks that are less fortunate that we have a community that really does care for them and we’re trying to make a difference in their lives.”