

Frederick Rescue Mission breaks ground on two-story expansion

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The Frederick Rescue Mission broke ground Wednesday on an expansion of its downtown facilities that serve as a base to provide food and other services to those in need.

Two stories with about 6,300 square feet of space will be added to the building at 419 W. South St., according to Arnold Farlow, the mission's executive director.

The building, constructed in 1875, used to house the old Frederick County jail, and part of a brick wall that enclosed its jail yard will be torn down to accommodate the expansion, Farlow said.

A dining hall that will be able to seat about 130 people is slated for the first floor, he said.

At present, the Frederick Rescue Mission serves about 250 to 300 breakfasts and lunches a day to 120 to 150 people, but its dining room has room to seat only about 30 people, he said.

With the economic downturn, the organization has seen a jump in the number of meals it serves to those in need, from 68,000 in 2008 to 90,000 in 2009, Farlow said.

Food box handouts, which contain enough food to feed a family of four for about a week, increased from 1,761 in 2008 to more than 1,900 in 2009, he said.

"We have a wide assortment of folks that come with needs now that we haven't had before," he said, including children and families who are not just homeless or extremely low-wage working poor.

The second floor will be home to three new classrooms, including a computer lab, that can be converted into one large room, which the current building does not contain, Farlow said.

The Frederick Rescue Mission holds a yearlong drug treatment and addiction recovery program, a General Education Diploma program and a life-skills class, he said.

"We want to be able to reach out to the community, and we don't have the best tools for that right now," he said.

The cost of the project, which includes a revamping of the mission's chapel and other expenses, is about \$2.2 million, Farlow said.

So far, the organization has raised about \$1.1 million, though he hopes funding will come in as the building nears completion about a year from now.



Photo by Sam Yu

Ground was broken Wednesday for a two-story expansion building at the Frederick Rescue Mission. Speaking at the podium and gesturing toward the construction area is Jim McGillivray, board member and building program chairman.