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## National landmark available for community use

(<http://www.pioneerlocal.com/hinsdale/news/1181714,hi-immanuel-092408-s1.article>)

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By **AMY DEIS**

Hinsdale's first national landmark, Immanuel Hall, has been restored and will remain a symbol of the community-wide effort to save the 108-year-old building from demolition.

From 1 to 3 p.m. Oct. 5, the public will have the chance to tour the recently rehabbed building, which can be used for such community purposes as hosting meetings, benefits or functions for a small fee.

"There's no question it's a special property," said resident Bob Saigh, who also is a member of the Hinsdale Historical Society and a past board member.

Formerly known as Immanuel Evangelical Church, the church was built by a group of German immigrants in 1900 in a style known as carpenter Gothic. The church left in 1964; until 1998 the building was used as the headquarters of the United Church of Christ and then a Montessori school.

Several residents, the Hinsdale Historical Society and the village sought to save the building from being torn down. The village bought the property and deeded it to the historical society in 2001.

The society embarked on a \$1 million restoration process about two years ago to preserve the building's character and add a caterer's kitchen, elevator, new roof, heating ventilation and air conditioning system, and fire detectors and sprinklers, among other items, to bring the building up to code.

"The rehab was superb but took longer than we thought," Saigh said. "They wanted to keep the integrity of the building."

He added architect Charles Pipal and crew did not cut any corners on the process.

"It was made good for at least another 100 years," Saigh said. "It's that good."

The basement also now houses the Roger and Ruth Anderson Architecture Center for research and education. Sandy Williams, historical society board member, said a portion of the society's archives will be transferred to Immanuel Hall. Archive topics will be on home maintenance, green housing, interior elements, new housing and preservation.

"It's a very progressive archive and will focus on architectural assistance for the future," she said.

She said the society's program committee also will use the space to plan programs about architecture.

"Now that we have this space, there's no stopping us," Williams said.



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