

Aberdeen VFW to Close For Building Repairs

Local News

Posted by: David Haviland

Posted on : May 17, 2012 at 8:30 am

ABERDEEN, Wash. - The Aberdeen VFW made a tough decision this week, Commander Jim Daly said last night "I would [first] like to apologize to the public for very short notice on some big news with the Aberdeen VFW. After Sunday's normal operations, we are going to close our doors." Daly said safety and structural concerns over cracks in the ceiling of the 104 year old Bijou Theatre building on Heron street prompted the closure "We feel that it is prudent to close our door, do the repairs, and we hope to open again in the fall." However after an insurance claim on the damage was denied, Daly said the VFW is working with Anchor Bank to fund the costly repairs. Donations supporting their efforts can be made to the "Aberdeen VFW Building Program" at any Anchor Bank branch. We feel that it is prudent to close our door, do the repairs, and we hope to open again in the fall. - Commander Jim Daly Members will still be able to access many of the VFW's programs "most of our operations are going to continue. The Service Officer will be at Worksource able to offer his services for veterans and their families. Bingo that we have Monday and Wednesday night will move to the [Aberdeen] Eagles." Daly said after Sunday, the VFW will move their meetings to the Fourty and Eight.

A little over two years ago, members and employees of the post began to notice cracks in the ceiling in the "great hall" where the post hosts public dinners, events, and twice weekly bingo. After some investigation, it was found that some of the rafters had split and the toe-nail joints had begun to pull apart. It was believed that the damage was the result of the December 2007 wind storm, so an insurance claim was submitted. After some initial research, the insurance company sent a "forensic engineer" to evaluate the 1908 Bijou Theater building that was converted by the VFW, after the 1999 fire that destroyed their building that stood in the current parking lot next to the Kaufman Scroggs Home Furnishings store. This engineer determined that much of the damage had years of age and that some modifications had been made over the years that compromised the building structure. They denied the claim. So, the Post will receive no insurance money to repair the damage. The officers of the Post and the Auxiliary have been trying to figure out how to make the repairs since. Long time Post Quartermaster, Terry Holderman, says: "We have been watching the ceiling cracks spread and grow, with mounting safety concerns. It is now time to close, so that no one gets hurt." The 40 et 8 has graciously agreed to allow the Post and Auxiliary to hold their meetings on the first Tuesday of the month in their meeting room. The Ladies Auxiliary will meet at 6:30 p.m. and the Post membership will meet at 7:30 p.m. following the Auxiliary. The Aberdeen Eagles have agreed host the Aberdeen VFW Bingo games on Monday and Wednesday evenings. Our Service Officer will continue to meet with Veterans and their family members at WorkSource, when he returns from a medical absence and the VA Medical Services Van will continue to visit Aberdeen, Wednesday through Friday during the second week of the month, for the remainder of the year. "Most post functions will continue," says Commander Daly. "We are just sorry that we must discontinue our lounge and dinner operations." He said: "We have had several local contractors, a local architect, and an engineer in to look at the project, but have not yet developed a complete repair plan. We hope that in the next couple of weeks we can get a structural engineer to develop the plans we need to get some estimates, get

funding, and get the repair work under way. We would like to be back in operation in the fall.”
“We have been working with Anchor Bank to develop the necessary financing. The public
may even make donations in support of the Aberdeen Veterans of Foreign Wars Building Program, at
any branch of Anchor Bank,” says Quartermaster Holderman.Ladies Auxiliary President, Nell
Todd, says: “We will find it difficult to accomplish our community service projects for veterans,
their families, and the kids of Grays Harbor without a building. We always look forward to serving our
community with our Aberdeen Downtown Trick or Treat, Thanksgiving Food Baskets, Christmas
Food and Present Baskets, the Annual Fishing Derby, and much more.”Commander Daly
said: “We will also miss hosting the pool leagues and the many fundraising event that other
nonprofits hold in our facility. But we look forward to reopening and seeing all our friends again, in
our house.”