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Eau Claire's Green Tree Inn to be purchased and re-launched as a creative boutique hotel in downtown Eau Claire

Five partners to focus on music, arts, and recreation for the property's aesthetic and programming

EAU CLAIRE, WI – A team of individuals committed to the future of downtown Eau Claire have announced the purchase of the Green Tree Inn & Suites, at 516 Galloway Street, with the intention of re-launching it in late 2014 or early 2015 as a creative and unique “boutique” hotel serving the needs of an increasingly active city center. The property will continue to operate in a limited capacity under the current management until early spring at which time it will be closed and the re-design and renovation process would begin. The purchasing partners feel a move like this will fill a currently underserved niche in the local travel market and bring attention to the momentum currently taking shape in downtown Eau Claire.

Current plans include 30 modern and creative rooms across the property's two buildings, as well as interesting programming elements both inside and out focusing in the areas of music, arts, and recreation. With an overarching goal of evoking a genuine sense of place in the property, and through the unique amenities planned for the site, partners anticipate the property becoming a distinct destination loved as much by locals as by travelers. The high traffic location at the intersection of Farwell and Galloway streets, the extensive bike trail network across the street, and the Eau Claire River just a few feet further will be among the many strengths leveraged to increase Eau Claire's visibility for quality and interesting tourism experiences.

Plans for the project have been met with considerable enthusiasm locally. Among those enthusiastic is Visit Eau Claire's executive director, Linda John. John has been consulted throughout the pre-development of this project and is excited about its potential. “[These partners] are creative, talented, and highly successful business people who are living in the Eau Claire brand every day,” said John. “With their combined talents, they have incredible depth in the areas of management, marketing, technology, and creative development. I consider this to be a hotel development ‘dream team’ and Visit Eau Claire would welcome the opportunity to work with them closely as an extension of their sales/marketing force to help ensure the success of this venture.”

The core ownership and visioning team, a partnership called “Longform, LLC,” have a dynamic mix of experience related to hospitality, tourism, entertainment, media, and events and have been at work on this concept for several months. They include the following individuals, all Eau Claire residents:

- Nick Meyer, editor/publisher/owner of Volume One & The Local Store
- Stuart Sandler, web entrepreneur & typeface designer (including MisterRetro.com)
- Justin Vernon, Grammy-winning musician of Bon Iver, Volcano Choir, etc
- Zach Halmstad, co-founder of JAMF Software
- Ben Richgruber, executive director of the Eau Claire Regional Arts Council

Furthermore, this effort and vision are supported by additional like-minded investors in the community who support the change this project represents in a thriving and growing downtown.

Eau Claire's SDS Architects led a team of engineers in examining the property and despite some much-needed upgrades, have found the property to be of good quality and character, and well positioned to move forward with a bright future. Several months worth of research and expert studies on the concept and market have already been completed, and the partners are excited to now move forward with the plan. Formerly the Edwards Hotel, the property has a rich history spanning seven decades, which has included restaurants, bars, cafes, and more. A new name for the property has not yet been chosen.

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