2010s
Historic renovations continue

At a recent Progress Pottstown luncheon, borough officials expressed optimism about Pottstown’s future. The following is one of a series about where we’ve been in the last five decades.

Downtown Pottstown took a big hit in 2001 with the closing of Levitz Furniture’s headquarters at 212 High Street. The company, once one of the largest furniture chains in the country, had declared bankruptcy and merged with another company. At its peak, Levitz had employed 100 people in the downtown office.

Eleven years later, high tech manufacturer Scott Bentley bought and renovated the vacant Levitz building and moved his company from East Pikeland to the 32,000 square foot building.

Bentley said he was attracted by a walkable downtown with proximity to restaurants, the arts, the Schuylkill River Trail, and the Montgomery County Community College.

Meanwhile, another vacant furniture landmark, the former Fecera’s Furniture warehouse on Beech Street, was purchased by a non-profit housing company and renovated into 43 apartments and an arts center.

The apartments were finished earlier this month, and the arts center will open later this year.

Commentary by Thomas Hylton

PARKS AND RECREATION received a huge boost with the opening of the Colebrookdale Railroad in 2014 and the Carousel last month.

VIDEORAY, maker of underwater remotely operated vehicles, became the first major employer downtown since Levitz Furniture declared bankruptcy and closed its home office in 2001. VideoRay owner Scott Bentley bought and renovated the Levitz building in 2012, bringing 30 jobs to High Street.

TEN YEARS AFTER FECERA’S closed its offices and furniture warehouse on Beech Street, Genesis Housing Corp. and Housing Visions began a $13 million historic restoration of the four-story building into 43 apartments.

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