



The City of Hancock, founded in the 1850's by early copper explorers, is a progressive and welcoming city of 4,300 residents on the north shore of Portage Lake, and is the northernmost city in Michigan.

Hancock has beautiful summers and majestic Lake Superior brings wonderful snowy winters. Summer and winter tourism opportunities abound, and the Portage Lake Lift Bridge funnels most area tourists into the main stream of the city.

A local vibrant and diverse economy is supported by two Universities, Finlandia and Michigan Tech and two progressive business incubators, MTEC SmartZone and Finlandia. In addition, Hancock is recognized as the regional center for health care, with over 1,400 related jobs in the city.

A traditional economy combined with emerging high-tech industries broadens our economy and our appreciation for the unique area that we live in. With a strong and authentic downtown and new businesses opening, the city is poised for growth while preserving our quality of life.

Hancock also fosters and supports arts and culture which has become a strong and growing component in the downtown makeup. Downtown Hancock is home to the Community Arts Center and Finlandia University's Art & Design program. As a result, the city has become one of the leading small arts towns in the Upper Midwest. Locals and tourists can find numerous individual art exhibits and shows that take place in the city.

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HISTORIC GARTNER'S DEPARTMENT STORE BUILDING UNDER NEW OWNERSHIP

New plans for the "Gartner Center" create affordable opportunities for small businesses and a more vibrant downtown

The historic Gartner's building in Downtown Hancock was owned by the Khan Family for over 120 years. Filled with great history, the building was occupied by Gartner's Department Store for most of the last century, until it closed in 2008. Gartner's was Downtown Hancock's anchor shopping venue through decades of change and growth. The classic 50's blue art deco vitrolite glass façade still greets visitors as they drive down Quincy Street.

Last year the Khans sold Gartner's Furniture Store, the still-viable branch of Gartner's Department Store, to Mark and Gail Johnson. Shortly after the furniture store changed hands, Richard Khan presented the Johnsons with an option to purchase the department store property. "We couldn't pass up the opportunity," comments Gail Johnson. "It gave us the chance to secure inventory space in the basement and alley parking. But most important, we can help develop the property for Downtown Hancock."

24,000 square feet of space is available for rent. The main floor retail space occupies 8,000 square feet which can be divided between two or three retailers. Mark Johnson states, "While we invite all types of businesses to look at the main floor space, we encourage retail usage to enhance economic growth in Downtown Hancock."

The second and third floors offer an additional 8,000 square feet each of wide open space, providing total flexibility for businesses contemplating a move into the new "Gartner Center." Each space can be divided into any floor size or configuration to suit the needs of the business.

An affordable purchase price allows the Johnsons to offer inexpensive rent. Any businesses looking for space are encouraged to call the Johnsons right away. Inexpensive rent, private entrance and location of the Gartner Center is already catching the attention of several small businesses including a hair salon, retailer and engineering consultant.



Not only are the spaces affordable, the plans for the interior work are impressive. The Johnsons are hoping to restore the original interior wood floors and brick walls. All three floors will maintain the building's historic feel with high ceilings and original trim work, but feel updated and modern. They will also add plumbing as needed and update the façade with new windows and signage.

Hancock Mayor William Laitila anticipates growth in the shopping traffic downtown when the Gartner Center is fully occupied. "Service and retail businesses will have employees who eat downtown and shoppers at the Gartner Center can take advantage of the proximity to other businesses in the area," Laitila said.

Mark and Gail Johnson are grateful for support from many in the community, including Hancock City Manager Glenn Anderson. "Glenn, the city council and the DDA have been wonderful advocates as we pursued this development project. We hope to bring a fresh perspective to Downtown Hancock by restoring this beautiful historic building and providing opportunities for other business owners."

For information on rental availability and options, contact Jordan Johnson at 906-483-4000.