



Friday, November 20, 2009

Clemmons firm Sterling plans to turn former dairy barn into event center

The Business Journal of the Greater Triad Area - by [Laura Youngs](#) Staff writer

A event management firm is planning a major project in the Kinderton mixed-use development that would preserve an 80-year-old barn and give it new life as an event center and company headquarters.

Clemmons-based **Sterling Events** is planning to renovate a 17,200-square-foot barn, called Win-Mock Farms, off of Interstate 40 in Bermuda Run, and turn it into a corporate and social events center for business meetings, weddings and other functions.

Renovating the barn alone, not including purchasing the land, is expected to cost about \$2 million, said Andrea Bailey, Sterling's director of marketing. However, Wayne Thomas, Sterling's president, said the company is still finishing a feasibility study and is awaiting final construction cost estimates for the entire project.

He said that bank financing is in place, and barring any major problems with costs, it's a "98 percent done deal."

Thomas said plans call for the 10,000-square-foot first floor of the barn — built in the 1920s by former **RJ Reynolds Tobacco** President S. Clay Williams — to be turned into roughly eight to 10 conference rooms that could each hold 15 to 20 people. There would also be two banquet rooms holding 60 to 70 people each.

The second floor, a hay loft, which has 35- to 40-foot Gothic arch ceilings, will be turned into a banquet and meeting hall that could be used for functions such as business events and wedding receptions.

Sterling manages and runs corporate events at other venues in North Carolina and throughout the country, though Thomas said this project would be its first physical event center. He said that running events at other unique and historical venues, such as castles and mansions, throughout the country gave him the sense that the Win-Mock barn was a good site for its own center.

"We saw such unique architecture and so much potential," he said. "We have not found another barn anywhere ... that was constructed this way with the unique, Gothic, vaulted ceiling. We know that it's going to be an incredibly beautiful venue."

He said the renovations would keep the structure intact, but it would need additions such as insulation and wood floors, as well as wireless Internet, heating and air systems and an elevator.

Thomas said two terraces also would be added on the east and west sides of the barn, with one holding about 200 people and the other between 75 and 100.

Additionally, a 2,000-square-foot granary would have 12,000 square feet added to it, and Sterling would move from Clemmons and use it as a new company headquarters, Bailey said. One other building, a 2,000-square-foot milk processing facility, would be turned into staff offices and a bride room for weddings. Silos might be used for freight elevators and possibly a cistern, Thomas said.

He said the company is planning to close on the purchase of the five-acre tract of land and barn in December, though a price is still being negotiated with **Hillsdale Group** LLC. Hillsdale is the developer behind Kinderton, the planned, 300-acre mixed-use development just west of the Forsyth/Davie county line.

It's hoped construction would start in first quarter 2010 and the center would be open by March 2011.

Ellen Moore, broker at **Coldwell Banker Commercial Triad** in Winston-Salem who is marketing the project, said a new 86-room Hampton Inn hotel, set to open nearby in May, will provide places for guests to stay. Though it will have conference space, she said, it will be much smaller than the Sterling's.

While there is convention and meeting space in Winston-Salem about 20 minutes away, a project such as Win-Mock is unique and will likely attract guests wanting something different, said Ron Stephens, director of marketing for the Twin City Quarter in Winston-Salem, which includes the Marriott Hotel, Embassy Suites and the **M.C. Benton Convention Center**. He is not involved with the project.

"Anytime you add something like that into the inventory, it just gives the community move flavor," he said. "It's not something you can find in every city."

Sterling Events

President: Wayne Thomas

Address: 3802-B Clemmons Road, Clemmons 27102



Laura Youngs

A former dairy barn in Bermuda Run may find new life as an events center. Clemmons-based Sterling Events is planning to renovate the 17,200-square-foot barn and turn it into a corporate and social events center for business meetings, weddings and other functions.

[View Larger](#)

Phone: (800) 777-8741
Web site: www.sterlingeventsco.com

Reach Laura Youngs at (336) 370-2913 or lyoungs@bizjournals.com.

All contents of this site © American City Business Journals Inc. All rights reserved.