

Crim's proposed move to Land Bank Center in '07 'cool for the city'

FLINT

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FLINT - Saginaw Street already boasts the start and finish for the Crim. Now it'll be the Crim's home, as well.

The Crim Fitness Foundation, the organization that puts on the popular annual Crim Festival of Races, is buying almost 4,000 square feet of space in the Land Bank Center and will move there early in 2007.

A news conference formally announcing the move was planned for this morning outside the building, 452 S. Saginaw St. It comes only a few weeks before the 30th anniversary of the 10-mile road race that features world-class runners and attracts thousands of participants.

"We'll be steps from the starting line," race director Deb Kiertzner said. "It'll be cool for the city and for the Crim to have a presence on Saginaw Street."

The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation is financing the purchase and renovation with a \$285,000 one-year grant. The new space - which will be two floors and front Saginaw Street - will be used to accommodate the health and fitness organization's growing programs, sell Crim and fitness-related products and eventually house the Crim Hall of Fame.

"The partnership between the Crim and the Land Bank will strengthen both organizations, as well as contribute to the redevelopment of downtown Flint," William S. White, Mott Foundation president and chief executive officer, in a statement.

Daniel T. Kildee, chairman of the Genesee County Land Bank, which owns the building and also is headquartered inside, said the Crim's presence on Saginaw Street will help create a more active and attractive downtown atmosphere. He also said it's a good example of how several small downtown projects have helped build more momentum for success.

"They've evolved into a significant community asset," he said. "It's an ideal location. It makes our building more valuable."

The outside facade will feature a large backlit blue sign bearing the organization's name. Inside, the Crim's 10 year-round employees, seasonal workers and an army of volunteers will have three times the space than in current offices in the nearby Mott Foundation Building. The Crim offices face E. First Street in that building.

Crim CEO Gerry Myers said the visible presence on Saginaw will be "huge" as the Crim continues to evolve from an organization purely focused on a 10-mile race for charity in 1977 to one that now also promotes

QUICK TAKE

The Crim move

- The Crim Fitness Foundation will move into the Land Bank Center in early 2007.
- A ribbon-cutting ceremony for the headquarters is planned for Aug. 23 that will include artist renderings for the planned space and the traditional kick-off news conference for race week activities.

year-round community health and fitness. The Crim's adult-training program is one of the largest of its type in the country, while more than 10,000 children participate in youth programs.

"It's a great story of how this community has come together," Myers said. "It's not like they're upper-class elites. It's truly a people's organization, and all these entities are coming to support it."

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