

# ROOMS WITH A VIEW



PROGRESS/Mark Raeber

Jerry Weldon of Christone Enterprises drills a hole for electrical wiring in one of the three apartments the company is creating on the second floor of a West First Street building it is renovating.

## Business owners, civic leaders hope upstairs apartments will breathe new life into downtown

**By Mark Raeber**  
PROGRESS STAFF WRITER

**B**usiness, civic and government leaders in O'Fallon envision a thriving downtown that will give residents a greater sense of community.

To bring that vision about, in addition to a good mix of merchants, they say the city needs to do a better job of renovating its

older downtown buildings to provide more second story residential spaces.

"If you think about it, the only community in this area that has a genuine downtown, other than Lebanon and Belleville, is O'Fallon," said Frank Miles of preservation-based Main Street O'Fallon. "I think it is what makes O'Fallon unique."

Main Street has taken on the mission of restoring the city's

downtown and preserving its historic buildings. A big part of that mission calls for developing second story residential spaces.

"The ultimate goal is to bring back downtown and make it vibrant again," Miles said. "With that we will get people living downtown and we will strengthen the downtown area."

Ned Drolet, a downtown busi-

### DOWNTOWN REVIVAL

■ Paul Seibert lived a good life above a downtown business.

■ The city is eager to aid renovation of downtown buildings as long as safety comes first.

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