

Talisman repair

costs climb

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Ellis and backers remain committed to project to reopen iconic resort

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It will take another \$15 million to complete renovations to the Talisman Mountain Springs Inn, said owner Brian Ellis.

That's in addition to the \$6 million he and his partners have already poured into the iconic resort.

"We're working with several partners on that right now," he said.

The challenge from the time Ellis bought the resort in the spring of 2014 was that nothing in the three

buildings was up to code -- everything from electricity and plumbing to drywall and fire protection standards were out of date and had to be replaced.

In effect Ellis was reconstructing the buildings from the inside out.

He now says he would have been better to demolish the old structures and start from scratch.

"It would have been cheaper to tear the whole thing down and just build back up again," he said, noting that it's a great idea to keep the character of the original buildings, "but it comes with too much of a price."

But even with the additional financial backing Ellis won't predict when the resort will open to the public. He said it's just disappointing to people when his latest predic-

tion doesn't happen.

The renovations to the conference centre are going well, nearing the finishing touches of applying wallpaper.

Ellis said wallpaper is making a comeback in the hospitality industry.

"It's a really good product... and it sets a tone to a room, it gives it a little more character. You're in the country here but you still want to feel special," he said.

The main building will house conference rooms, dining rooms, an event room and kitchen.

Despite the massive renovations Ellis has tried to keep as much character of the iconic buildings.

Event rooms will have waffle ceilings which consist of a series

of sunken panels in the shape of a square, rectangle, or octagon in the ceiling with a tin plate finish and plenty of crown moulding.

A feature of the renovation is opening the rooms to outdoor lighting with spacious windows.

"You want the outdoors inside... this million dollar view," said Ellis.

Work on the outdoor dining areas will begin when the weather warms up.

A new service area has been installed to serve dinners in the ballroom. Food from the kitchen will be brought to the service area where it will be plated before being served.

"It's really important to have a prep room and we're right across

from the elevator so we can bring everything up here without disturbing anybody else," said Ellis.

As well the whole resort will be wheelchair accessible.

Ellis expects as many as 200 local residents will be employed once the facility is running.

The ballroom, which in the past had been quite dark, has been transformed into a bright spacious room for conferences, weddings and other family events.

Ellis said part of the expense has been to make each of the rooms in the main building and the 64 rooms next door in the hotel soundproof. Original construction lacked any insulation or sound proofing between the interior walls.

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Wants to open features at same time

TALISMAN from A1

"It was like being in somebody's bedroom . . . now when the doors are closed the rooms will be virtually soundproof. All the ceilings have been insulated. It keeps the sound in instead of coming out," he said.

Plans now include a 12-acre vineyard to the west of the spa.

"We want to eventually produce our own wines. We're a micro climate here, we can do that," Ellis said.

More work needs to be done on the golf course, which opened last year with a new club house.

Also planned is a swimming pool at the back of the conference centre near the outdoor dining areas.

The resort will have its own firefighting capabilities. A building is being renovated to store



DON CROSBY/FOR THE SUN TIMES

Brian Ellis in one of the conference rooms at Talisman Mountain Springs Inn.

a fire truck. Ellis said the local fire chief has offered to train volunteers on the basics of firefighting.

A series of stone walls with water features will create a backdrop at the foot of the hill at the rear of the conference centre.

The latest plans include developing the spa services to open at the same time as the rest of the resort.

The spa facilities, with outdoor hot pools, will include rooms for such things as massage and other services along with a restaurant and a bar.

"The whole idea is to get everything open at once, get everything going and move along fast, because the spa will draw people," said Ellis, who expects the spa alone in the first year to bring in 50,000 visitors.

"They're going to eat here, stay over night, fill my rooms, fill the bed and breakfasts of the area," said Ellis.