

**I**magine the Centerville Square without the Continental Hotel - just several empty lots greeting downtown visitors. Jack Williams, former mayor of Centerville and before that, city building inspector, says it almost happened. Faced with years of neglect, the historic and beautiful structure was being condemned by the city. The roof was collapsing, windows were broken and there were even animals living in the building.

Williams said in a 2000 Daily lowegian article that at the time, he believed there was no way the millions

of dollars needed to save the hotel could be raised. Then in 1996, Exline native Morgan Cline stepped in. Cline had founded and then sold the largest pharmaceutical advertising company in the world. Upon return visits to his home area, he became worried about the future of the Centerville Square. Southern Iowa is filled with town squares that now mostly just live on as pictures on old postcards.

Victorian home that had once belonged to a good friend - Edwina Fenton.

*From there the the projects followed:*

Continental Holdings Corporation  
This was the first commercial project. While the hotel still honors its original intent to be an apartment building for the retired that packages housekeeping, meals, maintenance and transportation it also operates a fine dining restaurant and bar. In addition it also rents Executive Suites from just one night up to

# Cline Industries: Focal Points of Appanoose County



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After buying the old hotel, he spared no effort in restoring it to its past grandeur - as best proven by visiting the spacious lobby and restaurant in person.

Now imagine Exline without the Exline Old Country Store & Antique Exchange. Before 2003, it was beyond the memories of most residents of the small town, when there had last been a retail business in the tiny town of under 200 people. With the completion of the county's largest convenience store - which also serves food and sells antiques, the main street is once again busy with the coming and going of residents.

These are two of the more obvious projects, but the list of Morgan's endeavors is much longer. Besides the historic landmarks he has saved and renovated, his efforts have added 130 jobs to the area.

It all began with the restoration of a Maple Street

months at a time to visiting professionals.

*Continental Annex Corporation*  
This company was formed immediately after the Continental Hotel. It was created as an entity to hold the ownership of the Annex building which is behind the Continental Hotel while it was being restored and turned into condominiums. When the condos didn't sell Morgan changed them into apartments connecting them once again to the Continental Hotel. Now known as The Continental Mews, the apartments remain full with very rare vacancies.

*The Shoppes at Bradley Hall*  
Once the home of DC Bradley now transformed into 10,000 feet of unheard of specialty shop delight. Over 60 vendors with the best the world has to offer displayed in a wonderfully stimulating way.

**Morgan Cline**



## *The Columns*

This property was originally built by AE Wooden and is one of the older homes in the town. It is now a galleria of uniquely affordable gifts, jewelry, home decorating and other constantly changing retail product.

## *The Hy-Vee Building*

Most know it as the Spurgeon building as its last long time occupant was Spurgeon's Department Store. Now it is home to Your Square Deal Maytag to the south and has space available for retail rental to the north.

The upstairs was completely restored into seven artist-style lofts.

Most people don't know that the location of the Maytag store is the original location of The Supply Store, destined to become the first Hy-Vee Supermarket. There is a replica of the location at Hy-Vee's home office on Westown Parkway in Des Moines. This is the location that Hy-Vee introduced shopping carts.

## *A Catered Affair at The Beck Mansion*

This property was created and built by Governor Francis Drake for his daughter as a wedding present.

It was most notably owned by Bob and Charlotte Beck who were dear friends of Morgan's. He purchased it and restored it to save it from poor care and inevitable destruction and to honor his long time friends. Now

it is a catering/bed and breakfast combination allowing for events while at the same time providing three well appointed bedrooms with private baths to those that rent the estate. Prices are incredibly low in an effort to keep it affordable for those who want to take advantage of this beautifully restored piece of history. Few know that it was bid and built at the same time as the Drake Public Library and by the same contractor.

## *The Continental at St. Joseph's*

After recognizing the number of seniors that were forced to choose between moving to another community or premature admittance to nursing homes, Morgan built this 47,000 square foot assisted living to preserve our population, keep families close together and to provide them with amenities they wouldn't be able to get for the same amount of money elsewhere. The Continental at St. Joseph's offers larger apartments and more common space per tenant than most other communities its size in the country and especially compared to like facilities in other communities our size. There is room for between 48 and 52 tenants.

## *The Exline Old Country Store and Antique Exchange*

This is a business you have to see to believe. In