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## Latino agency buys 2 buildings

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*Posted: Jan. 31, 2008*

The Council for the Spanish Speaking announced Thursday that it has purchased the landmark Acapulco Restaurant and Lounge at S. 6th St. and National Ave. and acquired a three-story facility at S. 22nd and Mitchell streets.

The Acapulco dates to the late 19th century and was for decades a popular spot for Mexican music and dancing, weddings and *quinciñeras*. It sits on a prime corner on the city's south side. Donna Van Ruth has owned the Acapulco, which closed last year.

The council, commonly called the Spanish Center, bought the property for \$350,000, said Tony Baez, president and chief executive officer.

The 14,000-square-foot building needs considerable work, especially on the second and third floors of the restaurant, which have been vacant for years, he said. That space and the lounge will be gutted, he said.

Baez said the center has been working with architect Norman Barrientos to keep the facade, including its Spanish-style arched windows. Efforts will be made to tie it into the center's headquarters at 614 W. National Ave. next door, he said.

The center hopes to create a conference facility open to business and community groups for meetings and workshops, he said. A technology center and other social services will be expanded there because the current headquarters is cramped for space, Baez said. A language school, adult education and other programs could be housed there, he said.

The center also has acquired a three-story former nursing home at 1615 S. 22nd St. from a donor who wishes to remain anonymous, Baez said. The building, assessed at \$1.9 million, will be used for programs, he said.

The center is the city's oldest Latino social service agency. It operates five Guadalupe Head Start programs, Loyola Academy High School, housing for seniors, immigrant counseling and other services.

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From the Feb. 1, 2008 editions of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel  
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