

Reime's unveils post-disaster look

By [Joe Leicht](#)

It wasn't a grand opening or even a grand re-opening.

The business community's celebration of Reime's Jewelers in Waterloo on Thursday was more of recognition of a downtown institution that endured after a potentially crippling blow.

Business at the nearly 40-year-old jeweler soldiered on after a motorist drove through the front of the shop during county fair week in July.

"I had been at the doctors and I drove up about 15 minutes after it happened," Harriet Reime, owner of the shop, said. "I saw yellow tape all over and wondered what in the world happened."

Sandy Wittenauer, an employee, was working when the car crashed in the shop.

"It was like a bomb went off," Wittenauer said. "You almost didn't realize what happened, then there was dust everywhere."

The shop is on the street level of a centennial building owned by the Waterloo Masonic Lodge.

"It didn't shut us down," Reime said. "We had to board up the front of the store and open the side door to customers. I can't say we didn't lose some business, though. I think people assumed we were closed."

Reime said she-and eventually the Masons-had a hard time finding a contractor to rebuild the store front.

"We called lots of local contractors, but they only do houses," Reime said. "I guess this was what you call specialized work."

"The Masons were really great to us. They gave us a lot of say in how it was done."

"Now that it's done, we have a roomier store. That's what everyone seems to think."

Heimbürger Construction of Millstadt handled the project.