

President Marien Ngouabi

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Courthouse Fix-Up Proposal Dropped

Conservationists and historians would love to see the county's old Cooper Street courthouse saved from destruction.

But no one wants to put up the \$350,000 to \$400,000 it will take to buy the building and renovate it, a local group of businessmen announced today.

Philips Patton, a local attorney who headed a group of investors who tried to turn the

1894 building into something useful, said the group will let a six-months option expire today.

"We just haven't been able to close any project for the building," Patton said. He added: "I hope the county doesn't have to tear it down."

That's exactly what the county planned to do before Patton and his group took out a \$3000 option to buy the building for \$95,700.

Two More U.S. Planes Downed

SAIGON (AP) — Enemy gunners shot down two more U.S. Air Force planes over Laos and four Army helicopters over South Vietnam, the U.S. Command announced today. Three men were killed, two are missing and two were wounded.

The two planes, an F4 Phantom jet and an A1 Skyraider, were shot down Thursday and Saturday over the northern part of the Laotian panhandle while operating against North Vietnamese forces along the Ho Chi Minh Trail to South Vietnam.

One of the Phantom's two crewmen was rescued, but the other and the pilot of the Skyraider are missing.

Patton said the businessmen expected to spend about \$150,000 to bring the old brick structure up to present building codes and to install some sort of business operation there.

The first shock they got was that architects and engineers said it would cost more like \$250,000 to \$300,000.

Still, Patton's group didn't give up. They went to outsiders with more money. They consulted banks, department stores, a savings and loan association, a trade-fair group, and others.

The result? "We couldn't get anyone to go ahead," said Patton.

Patton believes there is a way to make the building useful. He adds wistfully that any business now can go to the county directly and make another offer but he doesn't think it will happen.