

Hall to open doors again

A true gem of the wider Springston community is set to reopen next month.

After years of hard work from a dedicated team of passionate locals, the Springston South Memorial Hall has been returned to its former glory. The building suffered extensive damage during the Canterbury earthquakes, but the community-owned facility was never going to be lost, and now Mayor Kelvin Coe will officially cut the ribbon on November 10.

The front of the hall and toilet blocks slumped significantly in the



Familiar sight: The hall has been the heart of the Springston South community since it was constructed near the Wakaipa School in 1923.

quakes, and had to be stabilised with a new concrete foundation. The facade has been reconstructed as a perfect replica of the original, while the toilets have been fully modernised. Inside, the timber interior continues to reflect a beautiful sense of character from a past generation.

The hall has been the heart of the Springston South community since it was constructed near the Wakaipa

School in 1923. At the time, locals in Springston South were unimpressed that they had raised a lot of money for a Springston Hall, only for it to be built in the heart of Springston, so they raised the funds for a facility of their own.

David Tyson has lived in the area for most of his life and spent more than three decades as president of the hall committee. He has seen many a good night in the hall, and



Front feature: The front of the hall has been restored to its former glory.

says that in its heyday, people would come from all over the district. He fondly remembers when dances were held on full moons to enable everyone to have the best light possible as they returned home by foot or on horse.

Barry Powell also has great memories of the party held at the venue on the night the end of World War II was declared.

It was the first time he had ever

eaten pineapple, after one resident managed to keep a can unopened right through the war.

"I'd never had it before, because of all the rationing that went on through the war years," he said.

It may not see another war, but the Springston South Hall now has every chance of making it to a possible centenary in 2023.

Its re-opening will take place on November 10 at 2pm.

Hall fit for community service again

The resurrection of the Springston South Memorial Hall is a good example of how the combination of a passionate and energetic community and the commitment of an insurance company can pay dividends.

The hall suffered extensive damage in the earthquakes, and like so many iconic buildings, it wasn't until there was a danger of losing it that its place in the heart of the community became more evident. This is when the community stepped in to raise enough money to make its resurrection a reality.

The building has now been refurbished and its doors will be officially opened by Mayor Kelvin Coe on November 10.

Its front area and toilets have been stabilised with a new concrete foundation and the facade recreated, while the restored timber interior echoes the festivities and atmosphere of a bygone era.

Insurer Vero is delighted with the way things have worked out.



Building confidence: Jimmy Higgins, Vero's executive general manager, Earthquake Programme.

"The completed reinstatement of the hall is a great outcome for the community. We're very pleased that, after three years, it is once again available for weddings and other social functions," says Jimmy



Reinstatement: The interior of the hall recalls the festivities and functions of long ago.

Higgins, Vero executive general manager, Earthquake Programme.

"Working with the community and our customers is important to Vero – we want to continue to build trust and confidence . . .

"As we continue to gain momentum in Christchurch, we hope to complete more projects like this.

"We anticipate that by the end of 2014, all Vero customers will have a

resolution for their claims.

"They will know and understand what is happening with their claims, with contracts to begin construction well under way," he says.

"At Vero, we have a clear view of how we're going to deal with the properties we're reinstating.

"We have some very senior and experienced staff dealing with customers on a face-to-face basis, and we're able to deliver the solutions they want.

"We're happy to continue the relationship we have with the hall committee and Vero is proud to continue providing insurance for the hall."

● Vero is the second largest general insurer in New Zealand, belonging to the Suncorp Group.

● It has been managing almost 30,000 earthquake claims in Christchurch.

● It has paid out approximately \$2.8 billion already.

● It has settled 76 per cent of commercial and 54 per cent of personal earthquake claims.