

Local/Living

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Boca temple rises above tribulations

By Sandra Servais
Assistant City Editor

17 Nid Torah directors meet with creditors and NCNB Bank officials this week to assure the continuation of the \$4.5 million temple.

"With their assistance, we're confident the temple will survive," said Lew Lipman, a member of the board of trustees.

The Conservative Jewish congregation's problems began last year after

members agreed to build a new 1,600-seat temple at 621 SW 18th St. When they failed to attract the needed increase in membership, the temple went into default.

Lipman said temple officials will ask their creditors to lower the temple's payments on \$500,000 worth of debt and ask the bank to lower its interest rate and extend its payments on the mortgage until its membership can be expanded.

"The single highest priority will be

a massive membership drive," Lipman said. "If we can increase our membership by 30 or 40 percent, we will be in the clear."

The temple's membership currently consists of 420 families with hopes of growing to 600 by next year, he said.

On Friday, the temple cleared its hardest hurdle and surprised even the most experienced fund-raiser when officials deposited the \$1 million necessary to forestall foreclosure on the mortgage.

"I spoke to a couple of professional fund-raisers before the meeting," Lipman said, referring to the night of Feb. 15 when the congregation pledged its support for the temple, "and they said we'd be lucky if we raised \$400,000.

"We shocked everyone in the field, including the bank," he said.

The temple has also taken measures to restructure its governing board.

Turn to Temple page 6C

Temple

From page 1C

Currently, a 14-member board of trustees handles all the temple's activities.

But a 12-member board of directors, made up of businessmen, will take over the financial

aspects of running the temple, said Lipman, who will probably serve as chairman of the board of directors. The board of trustees will then be solely responsible for the social and religious activities of the temple.

William Forster, who will replace Jeff Deutch, will take over as president of the congregation in March, he said.