

Developing Our Community

A look at Central Ohio's growth in 2004 and planned development for 2005

Brewery District: Porch lights instead of bar lights

Retail construction
revitalizes Pickerington

Tides are turning in Grandview Heights

The Short North
opened its "Cap" and
popped the cork on
residential
development

Wave of retail expected to flood Whitehall's corridors



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Developing Our Community

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Developing Our Community

A supplement to

THE DAILY REPORTER

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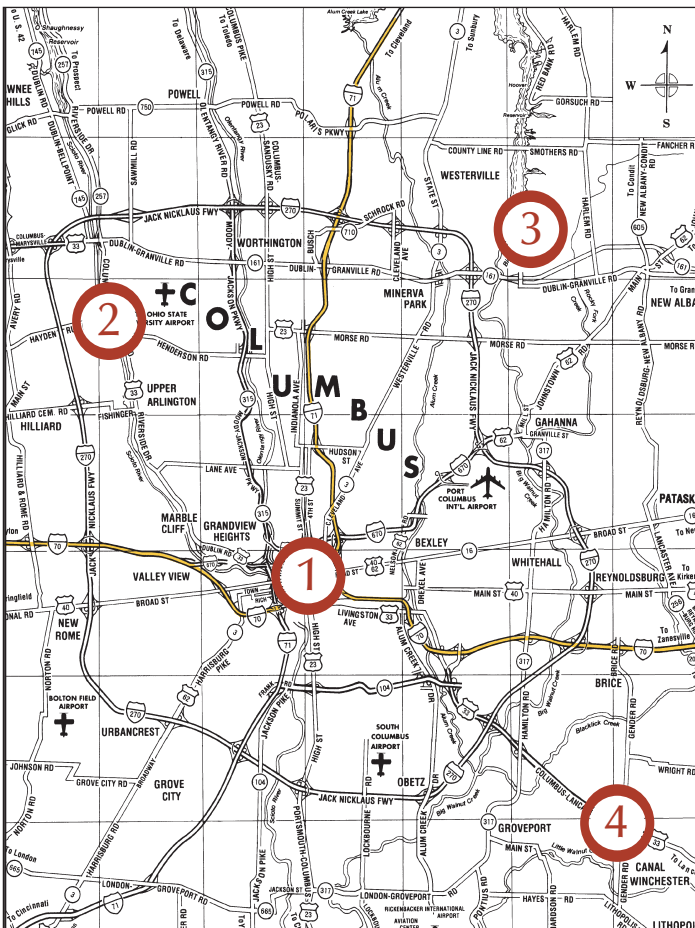
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Cover photos by Sean Casey

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We have divided the community into various sectors so that we can provide in-depth coverage of our major communities in the area. These sectors are:

1. Columbus
2. Northwestern Franklin County
3. Northeastern Franklin County
4. Southern Franklin County
5. Select communities of contiguous counties



Columbus

Downtown Columbus

Heart of Central Ohio pumping strong

By SEAN CASEY
Daily Reporter Staff Writer

Columbus is bringing businesses and residential communities back to its downtown area.

Aided by the resurgence of neighboring districts and aggressive tax-abatement programs, the number of downtown residences has skyrocketed, while office vacancy rates have retreated from historic highs over the past few quarters.

In 2002, city officials launched sister programs that would provide breaks on property tax assessments to downtown developers. The breaks were intended to jumpstart a stagnant housing market and combat a decline in office occupancy brought on by the recent recession.

The sister programs have since reinvigorated the heart of Central Ohio, especially in regard to residential development, which has already had a significant impact on the area.

Since the launch of the program, though, approximately 3,500 units have been completed, approved or proposed throughout the downtown area, as well as in the Brewery District, Italian Village and Victorian Village. Nearly 700 additional units are under construction now.

The program will continue throughout the coming years as the city attempts to create 10,000 new units and bring 15,000 new residents downtown by the city's bicentennial in 2012 — the goals established by Columbus Mayor Michael Coleman upon launching the initiative.

Laura Gardner, director of marketing for developer Long & Wilcox, said the demand for these units has been quite strong, adding that many projects are selling at rapid rates and some complexes already are sold out.

At the Long & Wilcox developments — the completed

Of all the development that went on in 2004 in the downtown area, this is the most encouraging, McLaughlin noted.

The permanent downtown population stability will create demand for goods and services that largely are unavailable in the area currently, he said.

The increased number of residents will also drive the downtown economy after 5 p.m., when most downtown workers pile into their cars to commute out of the city, he added.

The concentration of people downtown also will create a more vibrant environment, and by default it will make the city streets safer, he said.

Not only will the ongoing development immediately benefit downtown Columbus, but the revitalization is essential to the entire Central Ohio area.

McLaughlin said it absolutely is vital that the city encourages residential and economic growth within the downtown area because it truly is the epicenter of the whole region's health.

"Why is revitalizing our urban centers important?" McLaughlin asked rhetorically. "It really isn't rocket science. There isn't a vibrant metro marketplace in the country that doesn't have as its core a vibrant urban center," he said.

To that end even the heart of downtown Columbus is getting a shot in the arm. Real estate developer Casto

is converting the vacant buildings at the northeast corner of Broad and High streets into 8 on the Square, a mixed-use project overlooking Capital Square with 23 luxury condominium units and 48,000 square feet of retail and office space. The project will also include a permanent scrolling ticker-tape video display system.

"You can't be a successful suburb of nowhere," McLaughlin added, referencing a quote previously made by Coleman.

The urban revitalization effort will receive a large boost if the downtown office market continues to improve.

According to Grubb & Ellis/Adena Realty Advisors' market forecast, vacancy rates for Columbus office buildings will decline about 1 percent to around 18 percent by the end of 2005, with positive net absorption throughout the year.

The shrinking rate signals optimism of a continued recovery from the recent recession, which left nearly one-quarter of all the area's office space empty and gave Columbus one of the highest rates in the nation just a few quarters ago.

"It seems the market has stabilized somewhat," said Kim Begley, marketing and research manager for Adena.

An ongoing absorption of space, especially in the Class A sector, will tighten supply and keep rental rates stagnant through the first half of the year, with a slight decrease in tenant

leasing incentives later on, the company forecasted.

The improvements would follow a year in which the city had a nearly 4 percent increase in office occupancy.

The recent recession had a significant impact on Central Ohio, causing layoffs and closing the doors to many offices, especially within the area's high concentration of business-to-business service companies.

Despite the cutbacks in employment, construction of new office space in Columbus continued at the onset of the recession, eventually leaving the city with nearly one-quarter of its office space empty.

Yet, since its creation in 2002, the Columbus Downtown Office Initiative has resulted in an estimated 1,500 jobs added to the downtown area, McLaughlin said.

This program promises a 50 percent rebate on the income taxes that the city takes in from their employees for businesses that bring a minimum of 10 jobs downtown. This and other tax incentives, coupled with occupancy costs comparable to those in the suburbs, has been a key factor in the downtown area's rebound, McLaughlin added.

The city also has put forth efforts to make the area more convenient and physically attractive in an attempt to lure more businesses into downtown office spaces, McLaughlin said. ~



"In just a few years, we have more than doubled the housing stock, and we hear from developers every day," said Bob McLaughlin, downtown development director for Columbus. "It has really exceeded our expectations."

McLaughlin said before the city's current downtown-housing initiative, the area had about 2,500 residential units, the newest of which were constructed nearly 40 years prior.


Parkview at Goodale Park, the under-construction Brunson and the forthcoming Lafayette Lofts — response has been strong from young professionals as well as empty nesters seeking proximity to activity centers, Gardner said.

Additionally, she said, the impact of the downtown residential development is beginning to materialize.

"It's starting to pick up; traffic and pedestrian traffic down there is picking up," she said.

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Arena District growing with new housing, office space

By NATHAN KRAFT
For The Daily Reporter

Despite a National Hockey League lockout that kept the 2004-2005 season on ice, development in the Arena District this past year continued at a fury.

Nationwide Realty Investors developed five major projects in 2004, including residential and office space, a 1,400-car parking garage and a state of the art medical facility.

In total, 515,000-square-feet of real estate were under development this year.

"In terms of square footage, this is the fastest we've grown since the Arena," said Brian J. Ellis, president and chief operating officer of Nationwide Realty Investors.

"We've added a major anchor tenant for a new office building and response to our residential offerings is exceeding expectations."

The opening of the 325 John H. McConnell Boulevard building in November 2004 is a testament to the market's demand, he said. The seven-story, 165,000-square-foot office building located at 325 John H. McConnell Blvd. is anchored by the local offices of law firm Jones Day, which occupy 90,000 square feet of the space.

The new Arena District Athletic Club is located on the first level. The 10,000-square-foot workout facility caters to those who live and work in and around the Arena District. Amenities include attached parking, fitness classes and cardio equipment with individual built-in cable television screens.

"We wanted to create a well-designed work-out facility that offers high levels of personal service and convenience for our tenants, residents and neighbors," said Ellis. "But beyond being a great place to work out, this is a community center for socializing and networking."

The residential component of the Arena District's master plan also fell into place last year with the opening of the Arena Crossing Apartments and groundbreaking of Burnham Square condominiums. These residential developments — and the 450 residents expected to call them home — will give the Arena District additional after-hours traffic to create around-the-clock activity.

With 252 units, Arena Crossing is the largest residential apartment project ever built in downtown Columbus. Burnham Square, named for architect and urban planner Daniel Burnham, features 98 luxury condominiums.

The Eye Center of Columbus will debut in the Arena District this May, bringing some of the region's best ophthalmologists together in a state-of-the-art vision care center. The 120,000-square-foot facility will house physician offices, a laser center, an outpatient surgery center, education and conference rooms and optical-related retail space.

While the building is being developed by Nationwide Realty Investors, the Eye Center will be owned and operated by its physician owners, making it the first owner-occupied building in the Arena District.

North Bank Park, the newest public green space in the downtown area, also opens this May. The 12-acre park wraps along the Scioto River, just south of Spring Street and the neighboring Arena District. The most remarkable feature of the new park is a glass-enclosed pavilion with downtown skyline views, available to rent for private functions.

The park also includes bike paths connecting it to the Olentangy Greenway Trail, the ribbon of bike path running from Worthington through downtown along the Olentangy and Scioto rivers.

While last year's construction schedule was ambitious, development in the area is far from over.

Future plans include approximately 150 additional condominium units along Spring Street, directly south of the Burnham Square condominium units being developed now. ~


Nathan Kraft is a senior marketing coordinator with Nationwide Realty Investments.

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Cap brings energy to Short North



Not only has the Short North opened its “Cap” in the past year, but it has popped the cork on residential development as well.

By SEAN CASEY
Daily Reporter Staff Writer

In October 2004, the long-anticipated Cap at Union Station, the crowning jewel of the city’s uptown revitalization plan, officially opened its doors, establishing a pedestrian bridge across the void that for years stood between the Short North and downtown Columbus.

The open-air plaza that offers retail and dining options among columns and arches reminiscent of the city’s former central rail station creates a vibrant urban setting along the High Street Corridor that will help attract businesses, residents and dollars to the area, according to Jack Lucks, the project’s developer.

“What we are creating is a 20-hour-a-day, living, breathing environment that you can’t find in the suburbs,” Lucks said.

Although it is the cornerstone of the Short North’s revitalization efforts, the nation’s first retail center built over a federal highway is just the tip of the iceberg.

According to Tim Wagner, executive director for the Short North Special Improvement District, the area also is undergoing a major expansion in residential development, which will create greater energy and foot traffic along High Street.

Since March 2004, two new condo projects — Short North Condominiums at High Street and Hubbard Avenue and Parkview at Goodale Park on Park and Poplar streets — have opened, bringing a total of 48 residential units to the area. Also, in July 2004 four renovated apartments came online at 682 N. Pearl St.

There are a number of residential projects in the pipeline that will open up more than 200 additional units in the neighborhood while patching up the remaining gaps in the Short North’s High Street Corridor during the next few years.

The newest addition to this list came in February when Yukon Plaza Ltd., an affiliate of Plaza Properties Inc., proposed a mixed-use renovation of the Yukon Building, the former site of Functional Furnishings Inc. at 601-615 N. High St.

The project would include 10,000 square feet of retail space on the first floor and 28 condo units — 14 each on the second and third floors of the building.

Also in February, the Wood Cos. and Lahoti Properties announced efforts to add 45 condominium units and more than 12,000 square feet of retail space to the Short North through the renovations of two buildings in close proximity to each other.

The Wood Cos. purchased the former Winders Motor Sales Co. building at 777 N. High St. in December for \$1.97 million and now intends to create up to five storefronts in half of the structure’s 24,000 square feet of space.

Mark Wood, the companies’ vice president, said the renovation project will result in a building that much more resembles the original “handsome” design of the old Chevrolet dealership, which was constructed in 1924, than the very industrial appearance the property has now.

See Short North, Page 16



Brewery District: Porch lights instead of bar lights

By SEAN CASEY
Daily Reporter Staff Writer

Many blockbuster developments are taking root in the Brewery District this year, as the area transforms from entertainment destination to urban neighborhood.

Once the city’s nightlife hotspot, Columbus’ largest historic district has rebranded itself as a 24-hour community, one in which residents can live and work, as well as play, according to Jim Tinker, executive director of the Brewery District Association.

“The frat party is over, but the cocktail party is underway,” Tinker said.

The first step of this metamorphosis took place last year with the opening of Brewer’s Yard Apartments on Front Street. The complex’s 317 luxury units are 96 percent occupied, and more than one-half of them are filled by tenants who relocated to the burgeoning residential community from out of state, Tinker said.

These new district residents soon will have some even newer neighbors.

Some of Brewer’s Gate, a five-building, 35-unit condo community just south of Brewer’s Yard on Front Street, is now under roof, and ground has broken on Liberty Place, an apartment complex that will house 314 luxury units on Short Street.

Construction also has begun on the Treetops at German Village, a housing project that incorporates two older homes just north of Whittier Street on High Street with some new-builds to create an 11-unit residential development.

Condominium development is also planned, but not yet approved, for Bank and Front streets, according to Tinker.

Many businesses in the district occupy residential structures, Tinker said. Although this helps create a strong business environment with 35,000 employees and an office occupancy rate of 95 percent, it also contributes to a commercial sector that slows down after 5 p.m. Moving more people instead of businesses into homes will help reverse this dynamic, he said.

“Residential development is really important for an area because it provides a built-in audience for area businesses,” Tinker said.

See Brewery District, Page 16



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Community investment

German Village officials pursue relationships with neighboring communities as residents enhance homes



By SEAN CASEY
Daily Reporter Staff Writer

Throughout 2005, German Village residents will continue to invest within the community while the district leadership focuses on enhancing relationships with adjacent neighborhoods.

According to Katharine Moore, executive director of the German Village Society, the German Village Commission has received a large number of applications for home alterations this past year, with much of the work scheduled to take place this spring.

The flurry of submissions evidences a swelling in home investment, which ultimately results in higher levels of community pride, civic involvement and property maintenance, she said.

The infusion of money into the neighborhood has bolstered property values and encouraged increased homeownership in the area, as the investment is creating a highly desirable environment for homebuyers, she said.

"We have had a strong real estate sales year, with a number of million-dollar homes being sold in the past year," Moore said.

The strong housing market also has helped attract some new retail ventures to the area, she said.

Recently, three new businesses have announced plans to open German Village storefronts.

Bowen & Co., a garden supply shop, will open on City Park Avenue. Retailer T. David Collections is moving into a location on Third Street, and an E-Bay/consignment shop is

opening on Thurman Avenue, she said.

"When we have businesses coming in, it shows us that we are maintaining economic viability," Moore said.

The district also hopes to protect investment in the area through a long-range plan for Third Street that would protect the brick roadway and sidewalk, street trees and stone curbs that give the German Village its unique ambience.

Moore said the city of Columbus had funds earmarked for the project this year, but the harsh winter left many major streets with potholes and other damage that has caused city officials to rearrange street-repair priorities. The funding is no longer guaranteed, but German Village officials will continue to advocate the project, she said.

Developments within neighboring districts also have focused the German Village Society's attention on the enhancement of a corridor other than Third Street, Moore said.

As plans forge ahead for the redevelopment of the Whittier Peninsula and the revitalization of the Brewery District, the stretch of Whittier Street that runs through German Village will become an increasingly important connector, she said.

"We've always been kind of a north-south neighborhood, but as area begins to change ... we need to make sure we're looking west as well," she said.

German Village is in the planning stages of a program that would analyze traffic flow on Whittier Street and recommend updates to design guidelines for the corridor, Moore said. ~

Massive Gateway, housing projects fuel University District redevelopment

By SEAN CASEY
Daily Reporter Staff Writer

Some of Central Ohio's largest and most impacting redevelopment initiatives are completely transforming the University District this year.

"A lot of things that have been developing over the past few years are coming to fruition," said Steve Sterrett, spokesman for Campus Partners for Community Urban Redevelopment, the nonprofit entity leading revitalization efforts in the area.

The most visible stage of evolution in the neighborhood surrounding the Ohio State University is the completion of the South Campus Gateway project.

After nearly a decade of planning and more than \$150 million in investment, the Gateway officially will open this fall with a 50,000-square-foot bookstore, 82,000 square feet in office space, a cinema, 190 apartments and a 1,200-car parking garage.

Campus Partners formed in 1995 with the goal of bringing commercial vitality and a high quality of life back to a section of town that had become blighted by abandoned, decaying buildings and criminal activity.

Although the group has achieved significant progress toward its goal through a number of other redevelopment initiatives, the massive Gateway project is the cornerstone on which the future prosperity of the stretch of High Street between OSU and uptown Columbus will be focused for years to come.

"It will be a real catalyst for future economic development on High Street," Sterrett said.

Because of its importance to the area, the city is taking steps to maximize accessibility to Gateway. The city already has installed left-hand turn lanes at the intersection of High Street and Lane Avenue on the north side of OSU. In August, both Chittenden and East 11th avenues, the streets that frame the heart of Gateway at High Street, will be converted from one-way to two-way streets, further facilitating travel to the destination, he said.

Plans also are proposed to designate East 11th Avenue as a signature street and outfit the corridor with an inviting streetscape within the next few years, Sterrett said.

While the Gateway is intended to enhance the campus environment for students and area businesses, nearby the largest housing-renovation effort in the United States is improving the quality of life for district residents.

The project, led by the Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing, is an \$85 million low-income housing initiative designed to create more than 1,000 renovated apartments and townhouses in more than 200 buildings in seven urban Columbus neighborhoods.

Five hundred of these units are in the Weinland Park neighborhood in the University District, which has the highest concentration of Section 8 housing in the city.

Illicit activity and previous managers' negligence in maintaining the units have created an annual tenant

turnover rate of 50 percent in the neighborhood, Sterrett said.

This dynamic has contributed to transient and criminal elements in the area. By renovating and more actively managing the properties in the neighborhood, Community Properties of Ohio, OCCH's management-services division, hopes to foster a more stable population that should help develop a safer neighborhood and a more effective school system, he said.

The area's renovated residential units will be accompanied by a new structure for Weinland Park Elementary School. The school, which was torn down this past winter, will open the doors to its new facilities and an adjoining community recreation center in Fall 2006.

See University District, Page 16





Victorian Village-Harrison West

Development raises housing demand in near north

By SEAN CASEY
Daily Reporter Staff Writer

Near north Columbus mail carriers beware: Area routes are getting a lot longer.

Much like other neighborhoods near downtown Columbus, the near north communities of Victorian Village and Harrison West are experiencing a significant jump in residential development.

In recent years, the two neighborhoods known for their historic homes have had increasing interest in area housing as property renovation and the development of adjacent neighborhoods — the Short North, the Arena District and the Ohio State University campus — encouraged more residents to settle there, according to Rob Pettit, president of the Victorian Village Society.

“Victorian Village has transitioned over the past 20 years from being a not so desirable area to an area that is desirable,” he said.

As development of these areas continues and investment within Victorian Village and Harrison West grows, demand is pushed even higher, creating a market for new homes in the region, he said.

Since March 2004, three residential projects have opened in Victorian Village, bringing a total of 72 new units to the area, and now the district has another 16 units under construction, 89 units waiting to break ground and a 28-unit project under review by the village commission.

There also is a single-family house being built on Neil Avenue just north of Third Avenue, Pettit said.

“It’s great to see the interest in Victorian Village continue to grow,” he said. “Our goal is to increase homeownership in the neighborhood, and this is all positive activity.”

In neighboring Harrison West, a large residential project also is in the pipeline.

Last summer, Wagenbrenner Realty demolished the old A.C. Humko plant where First Avenue dead-ends at the Olentangy River to make way for Harrison Park, a 16-acre, 271-unit housing initiative.

The project incorporates as many as 200 apartments, 60 condominiums and 10 single-family homes, as well as a

community center and a four-acre riverfront park, both of which will be open to the public.

Developer Mark Wagenbrenner said his company is bullish about the demand for urban living because of nationwide trends in the housing market.

“People are staying single longer, and they want to live near active urban centers, ... so they are flocking to in-fill housing,” he said. “And on the backside, people are living longer so they are looking for places to live that offer convenience.”

Suburban sprawl also is contributing to this flattening of the housing curve, in that the entry-level home communities are now farther away from urban centers than ever before, he said. Likewise, quieter communities on the outskirts of those suburbs that have historically attracted retiring residents are even farther removed from the central city, he added.

“Now your are looking at a 50-minute commute at the beginning of your career and an hour-and-a-half commute near retirement. People have less time now, and they do not want to spend too much of it in their cars,” Wagenbrenner said. “What we are capturing here is a lifestyle change.”

The company hopes to have occupancy in Harrison Park’s first phase, the project’s freestanding homes, this October. Construction on the apartment phase is scheduled to begin this summer, and Wagenbrenner said he expects the entire project to reach its final stages in the fall of 2006.

Planning also is underway on a few other residential developments near the large Harrison Park project, according to David Butler, president of the Harrison West Society.

In addition to Harrison Park development and trends in the housing market, Butler said area development has benefited from its close proximity to other exciting neighborhoods, as well as a steady influx of young professionals hailing from nearby OSU who are enticed by urban-community living. ~

Clintonville rebounding

with revitalization of commercial center, primary corridor

By SEAN CASEY
Daily Reporter Staff Writer

Less than two years after the decay of its main commercial center, Clintonville has a series of redevelopment projects underway throughout the area and is poised to be stronger than ever economically.

“It’s been a year of ribbon-cuttings in Clintonville,” said Ernie Hartong, president of the Clintonville Area Chamber of Commerce.

All of those shorn ribbons foreshadow a future that is envisioned much brighter than would have seemed possible just a few years ago.

In the autumn of 2003, the retail anchors of the Graceland Shopping Center began closing their doors, which caused some other long-time tenants of the plaza to relocate their operations and eventually brought desolation to what had for years been the commercial epicenter of the area. Much of Graceland, which is located near High Street and Morse Road, has since been demolished.

Now though, Clintonville is well on the way to recovery thanks to the rapid redevelopment of the shopping center.

This past winter The Kroger Co. opened a new, upscale store in a 100,000-square-foot space that former rival Big Bear occupied at Graceland before its parent company declared bankruptcy in 2003.

The grocery/retail store has helped Graceland regain a significant amount of customer traffic, Hartong said. And when discount retailer Target Brands Inc. christens a 125,000-square-foot store this summer, shoppers are sure to come flooding back, which will also be of great benefit to the smaller businesses in the area, he said.

“It will bring a whole new life to the Graceland area,” Hartong said.

This wave of revitalization is not isolated within the re-emerging

shopping center. Developers have patched holes in the High Street Corridor, linking the storefronts of the southern part of Clintonville, which exude a small-town charm, with the massive Graceland plaza in the north.

According to Paul Love, an area Realtor and long-time member of the Clintonville Chamber, in the past year developers have completed four new buildings in the corridor that now house chain retailers and independent businesses alike.

“I really feel we’ve come a long way,” he said.

Love said the area also will prosper from the streetscape improvement project now underway that will transform the entire stretch of the High Street Corridor of Clintonville, an initiative he has championed for more than 14 years.

The \$3.4 million project, which began last summer, will update the corridor through the installation of new curbs and sidewalks, mast-arm traffic signals and foliage along High Street between Torrence Road and Arcadia Avenue.

The city also plans to repave this stretch of High Street. The east side of High Street from Arcadia Avenue to Weber Road already has received the updates, and city officials hope to have the entire project completed by early fall.

Love said the improvements are necessary because the corridor generally represents visitors’ first impressions of the area.

By creating a more pedestrian-friendly environment, Clintonville officials hope to create more commercial opportunities in the corridor, benefiting neighborhood merchants and residents alike, while also protecting property values, he said.

Hartong said previous projects and promises of improvements have helped lure more than 20 new businesses to the corridor during the last year.

See Clintonville, Page 14

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Eastside

New designation a sign of area's continuing growth

By JEREMY HOLDEN
Daily Reporter Staff Writer

A new neighborhood designation on the city's eastside is the latest sign marking continued success renovating the area east of downtown and west of Bexley.

A consortium of neighborhoods including the King-Lincoln district, Old Town East and now NoBo, the east side of Columbus has been a target of redevelopment efforts for several years, and progress is beginning to take form.

In addition to renovations to the Franklin Park Conservatory, a central point of the district, a housing development on Taylor Avenue and a new housing deal north of Broad — the newly designated NoBo district — should help to alter the housing makeup, and a Central Ohio Transit Authority building recently broke ground, noted Kathleen Bailey, president of the Near East Area Commission.

The North of Broad development is a Homeport development, created in collaboration with Stenson Powell, with sales through Coldwell Banker King Thompspon. It is comprised of 31 new and residential homes, centered at the intersections of Long and 21st streets.

"It's close to cultural landmarks, the Eldon W. Ward Branch of the YMCA, the Mansion Day School, shopping, transportation and even the Franklin Park Conservatory. We are really excited to be a part of this incredible community," said Craig Murphy, director of Homeport.

A sales office for the housing development is at the Lincoln Theater on East Long Street, the recipient of redevelopment efforts in recent years, efforts which will continue, Bailey noted. ~

Clintonville

Continued from Page 13

In addition to high profile commercial and infrastructure projects underway in Clintonville, the area has a host of noteworthy residential developments in the works.

This past year, the first-ever condominiums in Clintonville went on the market.

Merely a stone's throw from Clintonville's riverfront park system, all 12 two-story units at the corner of Delhi and Milton avenues were contracted in just 20 days, Love said.

Encouraged by the market's response, developers now are in the process of constructing six new condo units next door to the Delhi community, he said.

Also, Olentangy Village, a residential complex on the southern end of Clintonville, has converted 74 townhomes into condominiums that will be available beginning this spring, according to Molly Carlson, general manager.

She said Olentangy Village also is developing a three-story building in the 2800 block of North High Street that will provide 14 loft apartments and 6,500 square feet of retail space.

Carlson said ground will break soon, with its completion expected by winter. ~



Italian Village Historic district to see more housing units

By JEREMY HOLDEN
Daily Reporter Staff Writer

With the recent addition of a 100-unit condominium complex, the Italian Village neighborhood northeast of the city's downtown, comprised of 1,200 housing units in total, might seem an unlikely place for additional single-family homes in coming years, but developers see more in store for the community.

Joe Armeni, one of the neighborhood's prime developers, said he expects between 10 and 20 new housing units in the neighborhood each year for the next several years, not including the long-awaited Jeffrey Place development.

Armeni's company, New Victorians Inc., broke ground recently on the Residence of Italian Village, an 11-unit development consisting of single-family homes priced from \$319,000. The three-story, single-family units mark a different approach to downtown development, but one Armeni said was needed in a part of town better know for condos.

For several years, downtown housing spectators have awaited the Jeffrey Place development, a residential community planned for the neighborhood's eastern tip.

"That's a pretty big piece of the puzzle," said Mike Jentes, president of the Italian Village Commission.

That big puzzle piece could begin to take shape of its own in 2005, as residents could begin moving into housing units by the end of the summer, according to Lark Recchie, a spokeswoman for National Community Builders, the project's developer.

The project, which involves 41.5 acres between First Avenue and Interstate 670, east of Fourth Street, will bring housing to a former industrial site along the neighborhood's eastern border. After several years of planning and delays, above ground improvements to the site will be seen this year, with residents moving into the first 11 units as early as late summer, Recchie said.

"A sense of excitement is an understatement," she said.

With Jeffrey Place to the east, a newly-thriving downtown to the south and development expected to continue down High Street from the south campus Gateway project, the future could be painted in bright tones by the artists calling Italian Village home, but to longtime residents, it's the other neighborhoods in debt to the village for fostering development.

Irrespective of downtown housing plans, the Gateway or even the big puzzle piece to the east, Italian Village over the years has shown itself to be an anchor for the downtown housing market, Armeni said.

In addition to new housing units, new parks also are in the works for the neighborhood, with park space part of the Jeffrey Place project, and a new park planned along Hubbard Avenue, Jentes said.

The single-family housing, while contributing to the continued strength of the neighborhood in the overall housing market, could alter slightly the neighborhood's makeup, upping the number of owners. According to Jentes, the neighborhood consists of 70 percent renters.

"I don't think we're ever not going to be a rental community. I was president of the neighborhood society as a renter," he said. ~

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University District

Continued from Page 11

The school will include an onsite lab for OSU’s College of Human Ecology early childhood development program, which will function as a preschool, Sterrett said.

There also are plans to redevelop abandoned industrial sites nearby. Those areas also contribute to criminal and drug activity, as well as unsanitary conditions.

Of the 18 buildings targeted for redevelopment in Weinland Park, five are completed, five are under-construction, and work will begin on the remaining eight structures this year.

In addition to these two large-scale projects, Pasquale Grado, executive director of the University District Business Association, said a

multitude of storefronts have opened in the area throughout the past year, which has helped spread the revitalization efforts throughout the neighborhood.

One of most-notable of these projects is the redevelopment of a long-abandoned bank branch office at the northwest corner at the intersection of High Street and Fifth Avenue.

Project developer Don DeVere of DeVere LLC said the bank is being transformed into a mixed-use space that will feature 4,500 square feet of commercial space on the ground level and eight one-bedroom apartments on the second and third floors. Interior remodeling is underway, and DeVere said he expects site completion in late summer.

Additionally, the Newport, the longest-running rock and roll club in the United States, recently updated its

facilities, and the galleries of the Wexner Center for the Arts at OSU will be reopening this spring after its renovation is completed.

“There are a variety of attractions here, and we’re excited that the environment resulting from the redevelopment is going to appeal to a wide variety of people,” he said.

Looking ahead, the next step in the University District’s revitalization may be a streetscape improvement project that would install a median on High Street between Lane and 11th avenues and reconnect some streets in the area to High Street.

According to Steve Volkmann, OSU’s landscape architect, the university has drafted recommendations for the long-range improvement plan, which is now available for public comment. Once the plan is finalized, the university will search for project funding, he said. ~

Brewery District

Continued from Page 9

To accommodate the influx of new residents, The Kroger Co. will build an upscale grocery store behind Claddagh Irish Pub on Front Street. Tinker said in mid-March that he expects ground to break on the 66,000-square-foot store soon.

He added that the presence of the store itself should provide a huge boost to the area’s business environment. “When Kroger comes online, we think that will really open the floodgates for retail development,” he said.

To help foster these revitalization efforts, the Brewery District Association formed a

committee last year to identify capital improvement projects that would benefit the neighborhood.

The association intends to work with the city on a High Street improvement plan that would implement some of these changes, with the initial negotiations to take place this year, Tinker said.

Additionally, the committee’s recommendations lay the foundation for an updated comprehensive plan, which is now in the works, he said.

Even though there are a number of exciting developments sprouting up throughout the district, these projects might get overshadowed by the biggest revitalization project in the area, the rehabilitation of the Whittier Peninsula.

The 160-acre stretch of land along the Scioto River, which is currently the site of the city’s vehicle impound lot and an old Lazarus warehouse, will be converted into 55 acres of residential and retail development, as well as an 80-acre park with a nature preserve.

In February, the city of Columbus and the Franklin County Metropolitan Park District received a \$742,500 grant from the Clean Ohio Assistance Fund to prepare the 12.6-acre Lazarus property for the project.

The money will be used for asbestos removal, demolition and soil remediation, which is the first phase of the overall redevelopment of the Whittier Peninsula. ~

Short North

Continued from Page 8

Window frames since covered up with tiles will be removed to facilitate 18-foot-high windows, and the retail spaces will be designed to take advantage of lofted, second-floor space. These two features are remarkably rare in Columbus and should create an attractive retail environment, he said.

“We think it’s really going to be the neatest space around,” Wood said. “It will really have a big-city feel to it unlike any other space here in town.”

He said the space also will have a 50-car parking lot, which helps to attract consumers who live outside the neighborhood, as well as local residents.

He said the Wood Cos. is in talks with potential tenants and plans to house a restaurant on the first floor.

Medical offices currently occupying the rear half of the building will remain, he said.

Some primary demolition work has begun, and Wood said occupancy will begin this summer.

The company occupying this space will have a nearby customer base when Lahoti completes its renovation of the former Sofa Express building one-half block north at 849 N. High St.

The company, which recently completed construction of retail storefronts and 20 condos located at 765-771 N. High St. and has seven condos under construction on Buttles Avenue across from Goodale Park, intends to create 45 condo units in the old furniture store.

The units will be located above the retail space the company has for the first floor of the building.

Wood said that together these two

developments will fully develop the west side of the corridor all the way north to Second Avenue.

“Our development, which should be some of the most exciting retail space in the Short North, and re-development of the Sofa Express site one-half block north of our building will transform over 280 linear feet of High Street frontage from boarded-up and vacant storefronts into a new hub of retail, restaurant and residential activity,” he said.

The development in the Short North is not all going to be bricks and mortar, though. Wagner said, a campaign is beginning this spring to raise funds for the construction of pocket parks that will provide more greenspace throughout the neighborhood. The money also will be used for streetscape improvements, he said. ~

Northwestern
Franklin County

No longer in flood plain

Tides are turning in
Grandview Heights

By SEAN CASEY
Daily Reporter Staff Writer

In its first year outside the floodplain, the city of Grandview Heights has had a wave of development rolling through town.

For years, the Federal Emergency Management Agency had designated Grandview Heights as part of the Olentangy River’s floodplain, which warded off new development because businesses were required to pay costly flood-insurance premiums.

FEMA updated its maps in Spring 2004, and in a rare move, the agency expunged parts of the city from its list of high-risk areas.

No longer stifled by the prohibitive insurance costs, the city has attracted a series of projects that can help the commercial and office sectors of Grandview Heights rebound, according to Pat Bowman, the city’s director of administration and development.

“It certainly has picked up over the past year, and we’re extremely optimistic about the future,” Bowman said.

The greatest source of Bowman’s optimism is the metamorphosis of the city’s two main corridors, which the updated flood map has enabled.

The first signs of change emerged



a few months ago when the furniture store Global Living opened its doors at 855 Grandview Ave. inside an existing two-building warehouse complex. Global Living Real Estate LLC purchased the buildings in 2003 and has since renovated the three-floor, 110,000-square-foot facility to house retail, office and warehouse space.

Global Living, which previously was located in a 15,000-square-foot

space on Goodale Boulevard, has moved into 57,000 square feet of streetside showroom and office space in the rehabilitated building. Other companies have shown interest in the remaining space within the Global campus, and the development has helped bring some vitality back to the area, Bowman said.

See Grandview, Page 22

Hilliard attracts new offices, retail

By SEAN CASEY
Daily Reporter Staff Writer

The city of Hilliard, which has for years been primarily a bedroom community, has switched its focus from residential growth to commercial development.

“It’s a complete turnaround,” said David Meeks, Hilliard’s economic development director.

He said that under the leadership of Mayor Don Schonhardt, the city has committed to attracting more commercial development than ever before by updating municipal functions to expedite the approval process and by offering aggressive tax-incentive packages.

The city also has invested millions of dollars to create two new roadways that open up hundreds of acres of city land for commercial and office outgrowth, he said.

Bedroom community ready for a change

“I think, over the years, we missed a lot of opportunities because we didn’t have the roads here,” Meeks said, adding that tax incentives are generally not enough to attract businesses in the absence of adequate infrastructure.

The first of these projects has been the development of Trueman Boulevard, a five-lane connector running from Cemetery Road and Fishinger Boulevard to Davidson Road.

This new artery, which opened in February, provides access to 60 acres of developable land in addition to the 73,000-square-foot Hilliard Office Preserve, the former corporate campus of Red Roof Inns on Davidson Road. Aggressive development initiatives have helped secure leases for nearly half of the office space at the Hilliard Office Preserve, which is being created by local developer Equity.

Through its efforts, Hilliard also has secured the construction of a new BWM Financial Services complex within the city. The 220,000-square-foot building will cover 18 acres and house 820 jobs when it opens in the first quarter of 2006, Meeks said.

Construction has begun on the other roadway, Britton Parkway, which is an extension of Emerald Parkway south of Tuttle Crossing Boulevard to Hayden Run Road.

The project will open up more than 300 acres of development-friendly land, he added. The city rezoned the land to allow for between 1.5 million and 2 million square feet of office space along Interstate 270.

Duke Construction is now in the process of developing part of the site, he said.

These projects are the most-

noteworthy results of Hilliard’s operational shifts, but Meeks said there are numerous development projects the city’s zoning and approval changes have fostered.

At the onset of the year, a number of new storefronts opened on Main Street near the Heritage Golf Club, including a 20,000-square-foot World Gym and the new Hilliard West Regional Office of HER Real Living Inc., which houses more than 70 associates.

Construction also is underway on the Darby Town Center, a 30,000-square-foot retail development on Cosgray Road, and just a few hundred yards away 10,000 square feet more of retail space is also in the pipeline, Meeks said.

Developers also are busy along Main Street, where the city has approved the redevelopment of an old funeral home for 20,000 square feet of mixed-use space, and along Cemetary Road where Retail Ventures Inc. recently opened 7,000 square feet of commercial space.

“I think you are going to see a lot coming out of Hilliard this year,” Meeks said.

Even though commercial development is the order of the day in Hilliard, residential growth will continue throughout 2005, as build-out of existing communities proceeds, Meeks said.

In 2004, the city awarded about 200 residential-construction permits, nearly half of what it had in recent years, but Hilliard’s housing market remains solid, he said, adding that the city still has a lot of land available for home construction. ~

By SEAN CASEY
Daily Reporter Staff Writer

Throughout the rest of 2005, Upper Arlington’s skyline will swell, as the build-out of last year’s record volume of construction projects continues.

According to Upper Arlington Development Director Dean Sivinski, \$84.4 million in construction came online in 2004, which represents the city’s largest annual dollar volume ever.

A large portion of those construction dollars is earmarked for the redevelopment of the First Community Village campus and the Wellington School.

First Community Village, a retirement and assisted-living complex, is in the midst of a three- to five-year plan to remake its entire 29.4-acre campus along Riverside Drive. Sivinski said the city approved the demolition permits necessary to the project in December, and renovation efforts should continue throughout the rest of the year.

The city also has approved the planning and zoning for the redevelopment of the Wellington School at the corner of Reed and Fishinger roads. The project, estimated to cost between \$25 million and \$30 million, would provide a new 55,000-square-foot school building, complete with a two-story theater and new athletic facilities.

Sivinski said the project is ready to begin, but it is currently being held up by an appeal filed by a neighborhood group opposed to the school’s reconstruction. The appeal is awaiting judgement in the Franklin County Court of Common Pleas. If the court denies the appeal, ground should break this year, he said.

While the Wellington project hangs in the air, work on another city redevelopment initiative is nearing completion.

Hastings Pool, which has undergone a \$4 million reconstruction, is scheduled to open its doors Memorial Day weekend. The renovated aquatic facility features a 25-foot waterslide, a lazy river and a “wow factor” that Upper Arlington residents are sure to enjoy, Sivinski said.

Also this year, build-out will continue at Avia, another senior-living community, as developers transform old office buildings on Northwest Professional Parkway into 24 new residential units.

Likewise, the next phase of the successful Arlington Falls project is

Upper Arlington

Commercial, municipal build-out fuel community’s growth

underway. Construction on the second of five buildings offering 12,000 square feet of office-condo space each has begun and development of the project will continue throughout the year.

The first building in the complex was finished last year and is now 90 percent occupied, Sivinski said.

In the next few months, construction also is slated to begin on a three-story, 57,000-square-foot office building at 1460 W. Lane Ave that will house The Ohio State University’s Office of Development.

Developers also will push forth with two new mixed-use projects this year.

Located along Tremont Road, Town Center at Kingsdale will provide between 30 and 50 high-density, mid-rise luxury condos, as well as 20,000

square feet of office and commercial space, Sivinski said.

A sister project, Town Center Place is planned to offer 20 additional condominium units and flats.

Sivinski said attracting these types of projects to Upper Arlington are increasingly important because land in the first-tier suburb is at a premium and higher-density developments enhance efficiency in land-use while creating traditional walkable communities.

Looking beyond 2005, he said, the city is negotiating with Clinton Township on the annexation of a four-acre stretch of Lane Avenue between OSU and Upper Arlington. The deal would enable Upper Arlington to control any future redevelopment of the land, he said. ~





Northland Community

Revitalization of depressed retail hub running ahead of schedule

The Northland Alliance is campaigning for the establishment of a Special Improvement District in the area. If the area business owners approve the creation of a SID, they will use a self-imposed assessment to fund upkeep and cleaning initiatives.

By SEAN CASEY
Daily Reporter Staff Writer

The death of its main retail hub in Fall 2002 dealt a major blow to the Northland Community, but a rapidly progressing recovery effort already has pumped some life back into the area.

By the turn of the century, the Northland Mall, the long-standing commercial anchor of the Morse Road Corridor was facing the impact of a sluggish economy and a decreasing level of popularity, which led to declining sales and increasing vacancy rates. The emergence of upscale shopping centers in the nearby Polaris and Easton areas compounded these tribulations and eventually helped bring about the decision to close the mall in October 2002.

Fourteen months later, Columbus City Council voted to tear down the idle structure, and last winter the mall was razed, opening the nearly 1 million square feet of space it sat on to redevelopment.

The former mall site is now designated as the heart of a revitalization project that will incorporate a community center with retail shops, restaurants, upscale residential units and greenspace under the banner of Northland Park.

The project is not slated for completion until 2013, but some of its foundation is already taking shape, and development is ahead of schedule, according to Odis Jones,

managing director and chief executive officer of Columbus Urban Growth Corp.

Columbus Urban Growth and Northland Associates LLC are leading the redevelopment initiative in the area.

"We've got about 20 percent of the parcels on the 84-acre site sold," Jones said. These new additions to the area will include Telhio Credit Union Inc. and a Taco Bell restaurant. Jones added that he expects some more big strides toward the fulfillment of the revitalization plan to be taken this year.

The redevelopment project almost took a giant step backward a few months ago though when Retail Ventures Inc. decided not to relocate corporate operations to the old mall site after spending millions of dollars to renovate the former Lazarus department store building.

Yet in the months since, the company has subleased the three-story, 325,000-square-foot building to the Ohio Department of Taxation, which will use it for office space and bring approximately 1,000 jobs to the Northland area when it begins operations there this spring.

These workers will join the nearly 650 employees that Huntington Bancshares Inc. has had in the neighborhood since it reopened operations at a loan-processing office at the corner of Morse Road and Cleveland Avenue in August.

Huntington officials said the aging facilities of that office location had created a less-than-desirable work environment, which caused them to start investigating other options. But, enticed by capital improvement projects the city of Columbus is funding in the area, including roadway rehabilitation, Huntington decided to reinvest in its existing building.

The bank now has an impressive 165,000-square-foot modern office space that has allowed it to retain hundreds of employees in the Northland area and bring in hundreds of additional employees from an office the bank operates in the Crosswoods area.

See Northland, Page 22

Faced with a 98 percent build-out, the city of Worthington has turned its development efforts inward and has a number of promising projects in the works.

According to Paul Feldman, the assistant city manager and economic director of development for Worthington, the recent recession imposed some hard times on all areas of Central Ohio, but aided by the revitalization of key industrial and commercial areas, Worthington is well-positioned to make a turn around.

One of the primary sources of Feldman's optimism is the rehabilitation of the city's industrial space.

In the past year, Worthington has breathed some life into this sector by attracting new clients to its North Point distribution center, which had been empty since a warehouse operation left a few years ago.

The city's industrial sector also could get a huge boost this year when leasing begins on the rehabilitated space in the Huntley Road Corridor.

For years, the 7000 block of Huntley Road had been home to a super-abrasives plant operated by General Electric Co., but it now sits idle. Connecticut-based investment banking company Little John and Co. has purchased the property and is renovating the facilities and improving on-site parking. Feldman said the updated space has sparked much interest among potential tenants.

The old Worthington Foods Inc. manufacturing plant on Proprietors Road closed in January, but recently was purchased by The Robert Weiler Co., a local development company.

Kellogg purchased the local company in 1999 and closed the 143,000-square-foot facility to consolidate operations with another Kellogg plant in Zanesville, Ohio.

At the time of Weiler's purchase in late March, the company was undecided about the fate of the property.

In addition to maximizing the revitalization of old industrial sites, an area with little greenfield space left must enhance and promote its strength in order to maintain economic vibrancy, he said.

For Worthington, that strength is its emblematic character. To ensure Worthington maintains its distinctive small-town atmosphere and its sense of community throughout its revitalization efforts the city is drafting a new comprehensive development plan.

"When we talk about development or redevelopment, one of the guiding principles has to be, 'Keep Worthington Worthington,'" Feldman said.

Chris Hermann, senior associate with Myers Schmalenberger Inc., said the comprehensive strategy would create the broad conceptual picture of the city for generations to come. Myers Schmalenberger is the planning and urban design firm acting as a consultant on the plan.

Among top priorities are the enhancement of the High Street Corridor through Old Worthington and the addition of different types of residential products, including units that cater to young professionals and older residents without children in the home.

The plan also establishes recommendations for the redevelopment of the large tracts of real estate surrounding the Ohio State University's Harding Hospital and the United Methodist Children's Home in case those properties are sold in the future.

Hermann said he expects the city to vote on a final version of the plan by this summer. ≈

Development efforts turn inward

Enhancing town character, revitalizing industrial sector key to Worthington's economic vibrancy

By SEAN CASEY
Daily Reporter Staff Writer



Dublin
Continued from Page 23

Development will also continue in the massive Ballantrae community, which opened as the Central Ohio Parade of Homes site in 2002. Located on 640 acres surrounding the Golf Club of Dublin, Ballantrae eventually will include 1,000 condos, villas and single-family homes.

According to Diane Moon, an advisor with Ballantrae, more than 150 units were purchased last year, pushing the total number of homes under contract to 415. The community is developing so fast that Ballantrae, originally planned as an eight- to 10-

Northland
Continued from Page 20

Jones said the city has a number of additional improvement projects in the area, including the construction of a new road that will run east to west from Retail Ventures Avenue to Tamarack Court, which will be funded by a bond package approved by the voters in November.

As a priority in his “21st Century City” initiative, Columbus Mayor Michael Coleman said, the city will continue to help foster the rapidly progressing revitalization of the Northland area.

“Northland is seeing an economic development spurt that is virtually unmatched in any neighborhood in America,” Coleman said at the opening

Grandview
Continue from Page 17

Plans also are afoot to convert an old building at 987-999 Goodale Blvd. into renovated commercial space that will also house a mixture of storage, showroom and office space. New locations of Columbus Prescription Pharmacies Inc. and The Mobility Store, a company that offers motorized wheelchairs, will take some of that space.

The revitalization of the corridor will continue with the conversion of two structures at 1398 and 1408 Goodale Blvd., in which developers are generating rehabbed office space, in addition to 14,000 square feet of new space. Bowman said.

The city also is encouraging the redevelopment of the corporate offices of Big Bear grocery stores which went bankrupt in 2003, leaving the campus vacant.

year project, is now expected to be completed by 2008 or 2009, she said.

Looking ahead, though, Dublin’s housing development may soon be playing second banana to major commercial development. Gunderman said Ohio Health is prospecting the development of a new hospital on land on the north side of the U.S. Route 33-Avery Road interchange. When it would come online is not known, but the submission of a development proposal is expected this year, he said.

The new hospital would spark a wave of construction throughout the surrounding neighborhoods, some of which already is starting to show, he said.

Gunderman said a complex

of the renovated Huntington Bank facility.

“Where just a few years ago there was little hope left in the community, today we are seeing our promises made into reality.”

To help bring about that reality, the city is investing millions of dollars to widen Morse Road from Indianola Avenue to Cleveland Avenue, remove service roads and create a pedestrian-friendly environment throughout the corridor by constructing sidewalks and crosswalks, according to David Hull, executive director of the Northland Alliance.

The improvements are intended to facilitate street access to businesses and bolster consumer traffic in the corridor, he said. The first phase of the project, which will enhance Morse Road from Indianola Avenue to Karl

Bowman said the Big Bear operations occupied 60 of the 100 acres in the development, but now the city is assembling the land with intentions to lure mixed-use developments to the site.

He said Grandview will continue to focus on attracting new businesses, especially innovative firms, to the fresh spaces along Goodale Boulevard, which would build on the city’s initiative to create a “creative corridor.”

Despite all of the positive activity in Grandview Heights’ commercial and office markets, though, the city may continue to struggle if the region maintains a high vacancy rate, he said.

The older spaces in Grandview Heights, a first-tier suburb of Columbus, once had the advantage of lower-priced lease agreements over newer buildings in the Dublin, Polaris and Easton areas. The soft office market brought on by the recent recession has mitigated that edge,

featuring office and commercial space is under construction near the intersections of Post and Avery roads. The campus already has three bank branch offices and two restaurants approved for tenancy by the city, he said.

Dublin also is reviewing a possible deal with a developer, in which the city would trade the land at the corner of Bridge and High streets to allow for the construction of new retail space, Gunderman said.

Also on the city’s development docket is a proposed shopping center for the southeastern corner of the Riverside Drive and state Route 161 intersection. Gunderman said this project currently is up for consideration before the city. ≈

Road, has begun, with completion expected in late 2006.

The second phase, which will improve the corridor from Karl Road east to Cleveland Avenue, is scheduled for completion in late 2008 or early 2009, Hull said.

In order to protect these investments, the Northland Alliance is campaigning for the establishment of a Special Improvement District in the area, Hull said. If the area business owners approve the creation of a SID, they will use a self-imposed assessment to fund upkeep and cleaning initiatives that the city is unable to tend to, such as landscape maintenance and garbage detail.

“The value of those improvements will be largely forfeited if the grass grows over the curb and there is trash blowing everywhere,” Hull said. ≈

though, and tenants often can secure rents comparable to those found in Grandview at the newer facilities which also have modern suburban amenities, Bowman said.

With signs of economic recovery and a re-tightening of the market appearing in Central Ohio, Bowman said he hopes a re-established price advantage, renovated spaces and the character of the Grandview Heights will boost development around the city.

A commercial recovery would complement the city’s continuously strong residential market, in which properties have appreciated by an average of 8 percent per year for the past decade, he said.

“As our economic development fortunes rise, our housing market will stay right with it,” he said, adding that nearly all in-fill lots in city neighborhoods are being built on. ≈

Residential construction still booming in Dublin

By SEAN CASEY
Daily Reporter Staff Writer

Despite the added costs associated with recently imposed building guidelines, new home construction will keep the city of Dublin buzzing with activity this year.

In December, the city’s updated residential appearance standards, which include requirements for homebuilders to incorporate four-sided architecture, minimize garage door visibility and finish foundations with masonry in new builds, took effect.

According to Leesa Browand, development review specialist for the city’s planning division, the standards help ensure that the character of Dublin’s neighborhoods is protected.

Area homebuilders have said the code will add some cost to the construction process, but, according to Browand, response among builders has been positive so far.

Apparently, the builders were not sugarcoating their responses.

Large residential communities constituted a huge portion of Dublin’s development last year, and the continued build-out of these projects will fuel development throughout 2005, said Gary Gunderman, assistant planning director for the city.

One these large projects taking shape is the Tartan West community, which will feature more than 380 condominiums, villas and club-homes, as well as 50 single-family residences. This subdivision, located on 250 acres west of the Tartan Fields and Muirfield Village golf club communities, has some homes under construction, and much of the community’s basic infrastructure will continue to develop this year, Gunderman said.

He added that there are also some subdivisions along Hyland-Croy Road that also are progressing successfully.

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Northeastern Franklin County

Demolition, reconstruction about to begin in Gahanna



By SEAN CASEY
Daily Reporter Staff Writer

After years of planning, the city of Gahanna's ambitious Creekside project finally will start taking shape in 2005.

According to William Murdock, the city's senior planner, demolition of existing buildings along Creekside Park on downtown Gahanna's Mill Street soon will begin and reconstruction of the site should start later this year.

When the project is completed, in late 2006 or early 2007, Gahanna will have redeveloped approximately 25 percent of its downtown area with a 250,000-square-foot mixed-use project that includes retail and office space as well as between 40 and 60 condominiums.

"Basically, we are recreating the heart of Gahanna," Murdock said.

Creekside is intended to pump life back into downtown Gahanna by offering a variety of retail and nightlife destinations amongst neo-traditional architecture and waterfront vistas.

The project, which is costing the city and developers a combined \$40 million, also incorporates an attached 400-car parking garage as well as an extension of the actual creek and park.

Gerry Bird, president of the Bird Houk Collaborative, the project's designer, said Creekside also will rebrand downtown Gahanna, an area that failed to maintain a distinctive identity as the town grew.

"The idea is to try to bring character to downtown that is recognizable and has a sense of place, but to preserve the natural characteristics of the downtown, its natural elements, and to be consistent and respectful of it at the same time," Bird said.

In addition to the Creekside Project, Gahanna has a number of significant development initiatives entering the pipeline for 2005.

Gahanna Development Director Sadicka White said the city will be widening Hamilton Road from U.S. Route 62 to a point just south of Morse Road.

The augmentation of the roadway will improve traffic flow and alleviate rush-hour congestion, she said.

The city also has attracted tenants to big-box retail spaces left vacant in the past few years.

The Kroger Co. has plans to redevelop 100,000 square feet in the Hunter's Ridge Shopping Center that Kmart abandoned during its restructuring.

Similarly, Marshalls soon will be moving into another big-box space in the Stoneridge Plaza that was occupied by Big Bear Grocery Stores before their closing last year.

Gahanna also has had success in industrial development, White said.

Amerigraph, a large commercial print company, recently opened a new 300,000 square foot operation off East Gate Road, and Floyd Bell, a hi-tech electronics manufacturer is moving from Grandview to Gahanna, which will bring about 80 jobs to the area, White said.

Looking ahead at potential development in Gahanna, White said a developer has proposed the annexation of 40 acres off Clark State and Reynoldsburg-New Albany roads.

The site would be used to create traditional neighborhood development, featuring a mix of residential, office, and commercial space, she said. ~

New Albany combines old, new in town square revitalization

By SEAN CASEY
Daily Reporter Staff Writer

The village of New Albany, an area characterized by its sprawling suburban subdivisions, is now incorporating traditional development principles into new-build projects.

According to Village Administrator Joe Stefanov, New Albany is nearing completion on its village center renovation project, which has linked schools, homes, storefronts and new greenspaces in a pedestrian-friendly environment.

Village officials hoped the recreation of a traditional small-town infrastructure would bring more foot traffic to the area and encourage more private redevelopment along Main and High streets in the center of town, he said.

It seems the investment is already making returns.

M/I Homes Inc. has the first phase of its Windsor development under construction just north of the village center, Stefanov said. At build-out the project will have 372 homes incorporated into a 73-acre, traditional neighborhood development that makes use of alleyways and rear-load garages in order to create a densely populated community that is within walking distance of the village center, he said.

Similarly, The New Albany Co. is in the initial stages of construction on its Keswick community. The project, which fronts Market Square, will bring an additional 95 Georgetown-style condominiums to the center of town, he said.

These are just two in a series of other TND-style developments starting to take shape in the area, he said.

Residents in these communities will have easy access to the neighborhood's public schools, as well as the greenspaces and retail outlets found in the village center, he said.

Soon, they also will be in

close proximity to a new performing arts center. Stefanov said the construction of the 750-seat auditorium would begin in 2006.

Stefanov said the city will break ground on a new service garage later this year. The facility, which will be adjacent to Bevelheimer Park, is planned to accommodate the village's expected build-out, he said.

Chris Hermann, senior associate with Myers Schmalenberger Inc., the urban design firm that consulted with the village on this development initiative, said New Albany has an advantage in creating these types of environments in new-build projects rather than encouraging redevelopment years down the line.

These traditional neighborhood development principles, which promote more compact, walkable communities, allow the village to create a vibrant urban core while providing for adequate parking that is also screened from the street, he said.

"When starting from scratch, you can get it so it feels right," Hermann said.

In addition to the push for urban-style development, the village continues to have strong construction activity in its suburban subdivisions, including the New Albany Links golf community, which will be growing by 23 single-family homes this year.

New Albany has long enjoyed this strong residential market, but now it also is experiencing an increase in commercial development thanks to the area's new surgical hospital. When the facility opened on Smith's Mill Road in late 2003 it created a spike in demand for medical office space, Stefanov said.

The village now has a number of projects underway that will fill this void, including a new campus nearing completion next to the medical facility.

The project being developed by Canini and Pellecchia Inc. features five buildings each offering 8,000-square-foot office-condo space. ~



City, university, seminary join forces to revitalize Bexley's main corridor

By SEAN CASEY
Daily Reporter Staff Writer

An agreement forged last year between the city of Bexley and its two bastions of higher learning already is returning huge dividends.

Bexley Development Director Dan Lorek said in 2004 the city, Capital University and Trinity Lutheran Seminary jointly adopted a master plan intended to revitalize the heart of the city — the Main Street Corridor.

“We’re building our shared visions of the future,” Lorek said. “Pretty much right now, the potential is in place for Main Street Bexley. (There are) six to eight projects happening in Bexley in the next two years.”

In 2001, the city updated its design guidelines, relaxing zoning standards regulating parking, density and building setback. Lorek said the city instituted the changes to encourage high-density, mixed-use development, an increasingly important initiative for the city because it is a first-tier suburb and is nearing 100 percent build-out.

The city began offering tax-abatement packages the next year, and in 2004 it created a Tax Increment Financing district to fund improvements in the corridor.

Then, in accordance with Bexley’s Southwest Master Plan, the two institutions agreed to sell properties they held along Main Street to private developers with hopes of creating an economically vibrant gateway to the city.

The result of these efforts is now making an impact on the city’s primary artery. Developers have broken ground on One Dawson Place, a five-story, \$5 million project that will incorporate seven luxury condominiums on the upper floors and 1,000 square feet of retail on the ground level. The project, which is located near the intersection of Dawson and Main streets, is Bexley’s first tax-abated development.

It is scheduled for completion in late 2005 or early 2006.

Construction also has begun on the city’s tax-incentivized project, Bexley Gateway Plaza. This \$25 million, mixed-use project is being built on two acres of land, at the intersection of Parkview Avenue and Main Street, that developer Plaza Properties LLC purchased from Trinity, Lorek said.

Likewise, Capital is in the negotiating process with a developer regarding the transfer of a parcel across Main Street from the Gateway Plaza, he said.

A fourth project, a new 10,000-square-foot retail center planned for the central section of the corridor is in the review process, but Lorek said he anticipates a ground breaking this summer.

Two additional mixed-use projects, estimated at between \$2 million and \$3 million each, also are in development at the intersection of Roosevelt Avenue and Main Street.

“When you add it all up, Main Street Bexley has about \$40 million of development breaking ground, being proposed or on the drawing board for 2005, 2006 and into 2007,” Lorek said.

He added that Capital has instituted a \$40 million campus development plan, which should promote growth and economic activity in the area for the next five to 10 years. ~



Wave of retail expected to flood Whitehall’s corridors

By ALEX MAKSIMOVIC
For The Daily Reporter

New retail still leads redevelopment efforts in Whitehall. The Main Street, Broad Street and Hamilton Road commercial corridors continue to attract retail development.

Joining the new CVS Pharmacy and Walgreen Drug Store are BMW Motorcycles of Columbus, Staples and a new Target store.

Target officials expect the store to generate about \$30 million a year in sales. Wal-Mart has submitted construction plans for a new 204,000-square-foot store on Main Street. The \$20 million investment is expected to revitalize that section of Whitehall’s commercial district.

The David J. Glimcher Co. will build a 14,000-square-foot retail center across from the Wal-Mart site and a local nameplate developer is preparing development plans for city design review of a 42,000-square-foot retail center.

Yum! Brands Inc. has purchased property on Main Street and will build a new Long John Silvers/A&W Root Beer restaurant.

New retail development is only part of the story, though. Whitehall is attracting investment from the health-care industry as well.

The Veterans Administration will break ground on a new \$90 million dollar multi-story clinic later this summer, and a new 30,000-square-foot medical facility currently is in the schematic design phase.

Whitehall has also secured \$450,000 dollars in state assistance for infrastructure improvements at the Hyland Industrial/Office Park on Poth Road. The 20-acre site, featuring a fiber optic loop, is now available for build-to-suit or land purchase by new or expanding companies. This project creates more acreage and additional investment opportunities in the Whitehall industrial zone. ~

Alex Maksimovic is deputy for administration and development for the city of Whitehall.

Westerville turns attention to booming office market

By SEAN CASEY
Daily Reporter Staff Writer

Already Columbus’ most populated suburb, the city of Westerville is now focusing its development efforts on a booming office market.

According to Westerville Planning Administrator Rich Kight, over the past few years, the city has added more than 1 million square feet of Class A office space, which is rapidly being snatched up by commercial tenants.

In the past year alone, 478,000 square feet of new office space either opened or received approval for construction, Kight said.

Most of this development has sprouted up in the Westar Center of Business on the city’s northeast side. Located along Cleveland Avenue and Africa Road near Polaris Parkway, this 1,000-acre office park is the site of a construction frenzy.

Lured by a desirable location, financial incentive packages, including real property tax abatements, and the city’s \$30 million investment in improvements to the local roadway network, several developers have launched large-scale developments in the area, Kight said.

Westar is essentially the epicenter of the office-space boom in Westerville and is the location of 364,000 square feet, or 76 percent, of the city’s total office development in the past year.

Among the new tenants in the Westar development is Progressive Medical. The company, which started a decade ago with just five employees in a small office on Schrock Road, now occupies 75,000 square feet of new space.

Throughout the balance of 2005, Kight said, developers will continue the build-out of the Westar campus, which will include a large mixed-use project planned for the north side of Polaris Parkway.

Developing company The Daimler Group Inc., which already has two 140,000-square-foot buildings at Westar, has been approved for the construction of two more five-story, 145,000-square-foot office buildings, Kight said. Adjacent to the new offices will be 110,000 square feet of retail space and a 92-unit condominium complex.

The area near Westar, which Kight said is essentially the last of the undeveloped land within Westerville’s borders, also is the site of two new residential projects that already have broken ground, M/I Homes Inc.’s Millstone and Millstone Creek communities.

The Millstone development will be a community of 169 single-family homes at the intersection of Spring and Grinstone roads.

Situated close by, near the intersection of Spring and Maxtown roads, Millstone Creek is planned as a TND, or traditional neighborhood development, Kight said.

This community will be comprised of 136 homes and utilize smaller lots and alleyways to create a more urban environment.

The two developments will add a combined 305 residential units to Westerville, which Kight said is a fairly large augmentation for the city.

In addition to these single-family home communities, Kight said the city has approved two other condominium communities. The Epcon Group is constructing 108 units on 26 acres at its Canterbury Woods development, and Romanelli & Hughes Building Co. plans to build 74 units in its Villas at Northstar community on Worthington Road.

Although it is driving growth in Westerville, the massive new-build efforts on the city’s outskirts are not the only developments of significance. Westerville also is pushing forth the revitalization of its urban core.

For starters, the city has approved the development of a new CVS Pharmacy at Walnut and State streets, as well as an Old Bag of Nails restaurant at Main and State streets in uptown Westerville.

City officials also have pushed for the 10,000-square-foot expansion of the library, Kight said.

The continued growth of Otterbein College also is contributing to the revitalization efforts. The college has started the redevelopment of its football stadium, and it has submitted plans for the construction of a new dormitory, Kight said.

Otterbein also has received approval from the city to convert an old nursing into another new boarding house.

This project may very well be a foreshadowing of development to come in Westerville, Kight said. The city anticipates more reuse of older buildings throughout the central city.

And as this redevelopment emerges in Westerville’s southern gateway, the South State Street Corridor, the city is embarking on an effort to re-image the area, he said. In order to evoke a more pedestrian-friendly atmosphere in an area indicative of suburban commercial development, Westerville recently adopted a master plan for the corridor, which encourages developers to pull buildings closer to the street and position parking lots at the side or rear of the structures, he said.

The plan also regulates signage, calls for standardized landscaping, advocates fewer curb cuts along South State Street, and promotes alternative traffic routes to corridor businesses through the use of existing roads, Kight said.

The new zoning regulations will help extend the inviting environment of Old Town Westerville down through the South State Street commercial district, he said. ~





Reynoldsburg revels in retail rewards

By SEAN CASEY
Daily Reporter Staff Writer

Capitalizing on its close proximity to major highways and the construction of new health-care facilities, Reynoldsburg has attracted a number of developments that will bring in more than 1,000 jobs to the city.

According to John Brandt, the city's development director, apparel company Victoria's Secret has relocated its electronic order fulfillment center from Easton to a facility in Reynoldsburg previously occupied by retailer Lane Bryant.

Brandt said the \$40 million to \$70 million renovation of the plant will begin this year. When it reaches full working capacity, it will utilize about 900 employees, bringing a big boost to city income tax revenue.

City coffers also will fatten soon when the new combined facility of the Ohio Department of Health and the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency opens its doors.

The two-story, 77,000-square-foot laboratory, now under construction will bring about 100 employees with a combined \$5 million payroll to Reynoldsburg.

The health department and Ohio EPA had to find new locations for their respective pathology

and environmental research after the agencies' current joint location on the Ohio State University's west campus was designated for other functions.

The city also is benefiting from the expansion of two other major health-care facilities, Mount Carmel East Hospital and the Ohio State University Medical Center, both on Main Street.

In addition to the jobs created at the facilities themselves, their development has sparked a steady increase in new medical office construction, Brandt said. There are a number of small-office users moving in throughout the areas surrounding the medical centers, he explained.

Employment conditions in Reynoldsburg also are being enhanced by a series of retail developments, including the first phase of Taylor Park, a 55,000-square-foot project on the west side of state Route 256 at Interstate 70. The site, which is anchored by Staples and H.H. Gregg Appliances Inc., is under construction, Brandt said.

Structural steel is up on a new 65,000-square-foot Kroger Co. grocery store at Main Street and Taylor Road, as well as on Wesley Ridge, a 120-unit senior-living complex, Brandt said. These projects should open this year.

Brandt said Reynoldsburg is further promoting economic growth through a revitalization project that is creating more pedestrian-friendly environments along the city's Main Street, Brice Road and Livingston Avenue corridors.

The city is burying utility lines, installing decorative streetlights and laying brick-accented sidewalks in an effort to increase business activity, as well as the value of and demand for property in the corridors, Brandt said.

Phase one of the seven-year project, which transformed the stretch of Main Street between Brice Road and Rose Hill Drive, is complete, and the next stage, which will move down Main Street from Rose Hill Drive to the city's limits, will commence this spring. ~

Southern Franklin County



By SEAN CASEY
Daily Reporter Staff Writer

Canal Winchester has grown remarkably fast over the past few years, as hundreds of Central Ohio families have built homes in the community that offers the feel of a village as well as easy accessibility to the big city.

Now, however, construction activity in the village of Canal Winchester is becoming more balanced, according to Development Director Bruce Langner.

The residential growth in the area has created a local consumer market in Canal Winchester, which has encouraged increased commercial development in the area, he said.

Much of the activity is centralized in the Gender Road Corridor.

In March 2004, Wal-Mart opened a 203,622-square-foot Supercenter in the Waterloo Crossing Shopping Center on Gender Road, which made the area a shopping destination and further lured businesses to settle in the village.

The move has helped attract other big-name anchors, including The Home Depot, which is constructing a store just up the road in the Winchester Square Plaza, Langner said.

The Ohio Department of Transportation's plan to remove intersections from U.S. Route 33 to allow for faster traffic also has opened the door to development in Canal Winchester, he said.

Mount Carmel Hospital and the Fairfield Medical Center have bought 55 acres near the U.S. 33 and Diley Road interchange, which opened in October 2004, for the possible construction of a new hospital, Langner said.

Although the partnership is still conducting feasibility studies on the area, developers already are showing interest in neighboring parcels for the construction of medical offices, he said.

The improved transportation infrastructure in the village also is fostering its burgeoning industrial sector.

Canal Pointe, the village's own industrial park, already has attracted a number of businesses, mostly small distribution companies, to the area, and some companies have inquired about the park's 60 still-undeveloped acres, 43 of which lie within the Foreign Trade Zone surrounding Rickenbacker International Airport.

Just north of Canal Pointe another industrial park is taking shape. Dublin

Construction activity becoming more balanced in Canal Winchester

Building Systems has purchased 56 acres and is completing construction on a 22,000-square-foot spec building. Loveland Excavating of Columbus Inc. also has broken ground on industrial space there, Langner said.

And, of course, there will be plenty of residential development in Canal Winchester this year, he said.

Canal Cove, a community of 241 single-family units, already is under construction, and the village has approved plans for Cherry Landing, a traditional neighborhood development of 180 single-family homes near downtown.

Canal Winchester is adding multi-family residential to its landscape as well. Four or five condominium developments are in the pipeline, including the Villas at Charleston Lake, a 115-unit community that is now under construction, Langner said. ~

Residential, infrastructure development attracts retailers to Grove City

By CHARLES W. BOSO
For the Daily Reporter

Grove City continues to move forward with development at the southern edge of Franklin County. With easy access to the outer belt, and being the southern gateway to metropolitan Columbus via Interstate 71, Grove City is ripe for all strata of development — residential, retail, service and industrial.

More than 1,200 new permits for single-family homes have been issued by Grove City in the past five years, with the average value of a new home increasing 29 percent in that same time period. The new Pinnacle Club development includes executive-style homes and condos supported by a Lanny Wadkins-designed golf course and community center.

Grove City also offers retail and restaurant opportunities for companies looking to serve the more than 30,000 residents as well as people in Pickaway and Madison counties who travel for services not available in their smaller communities. Retail growth also will draw shoppers from populations currently served by facilities near Westland Mall.

National players such as Home Depot, Wal-Mart and Staples already have taken advantage of this opportunity by setting up shop in the new Parkway Centre on Stringtown Road, east of I-71. This also is a hot spot for restaurant development. Roosters soon will be joined by O’Charley’s, Red Robin, Longhorn Steakhouse and Chipotle restaurants.

Easy access to highways has also made Grove City attractive to the hotel industry. The seven-story Drury Inn will add 180 rooms and conference space at the I-71 and Stringtown Road interchange, which currently hosts hotels by Hilton, Best Western, LaQuinta and Cross County Inn.

For those who do not enjoy the bustle of Stringtown Road, the old-time charm of the Town Center offers a different experience. Ample parking allows shoppers to stop and wander down Broadway enjoying the small independent shops and restaurants that line the street. This heart of the city also is home to many community events such as arts festivals, free summer concerts and farmers markets. In addition to the opportunities currently available in this corridor, five more acres will be open for redevelopment this spring.

Development is not limited to newcomers. FedEx, an important player in the community for 15 years, recently completed a 100,000-square-foot expansion. Bob Evans opened a new restaurant, and other businesses similarly plan to recommit to the community with updated or new facilities. In 2004, more than three dozen businesses began or expanded operations in Grove City.

Better services, more jobs and a better quality of life are generated by evolving business, infrastructure and services.

The 25,000-square foot health center facility planned by Mount Carmel will join a similar Ohio Health facility and various smaller doctors’ offices in addressing the health of citizens.

The city is continuing to work on transportation plans to bolster development. The city is adding new and expanding existing roadways, as well as actively seeking a solution to congestion at the state Route 665 and I-71 interchange.

A vibrant slate of parks and recreation facilities and programs, including a community water park and senior center, as well as offerings by a local YMCA and the Grove City Kids Association, keep citizens of all ages entertained and involved. ~

Charles W. Boso is the development director for the city of Grove City.



Groveport: a booming logistics hub on the move

By SEAN CASEY
Daily Reporter Staff Writer

The emergence of Groveport as an international distribution hub has sparked a massive industrial outgrowth and has enabled the city to pump money into community-development projects.

In recent years, the nearby Rickenbacker International Airport has grown into a major cargo-shipping center that has attracted many warehousing and shipping operations to the surrounding area, according to Jeff Green, development director for the city of Groveport.

“This whole area around here has evolved into a logistics hub,” Green said, adding that the city expects millions of square feet in industrial space to be developed this year.

Much of that growth is happening in the 92-acre Groveport Commerce Center being developed by Duke Realty Corp.

This year, Kubota Tractor Corp. and the McGraw-Hill Cos. are each establishing warehousing and shipping operations at the industrial park, which will take up nearly 1 million square feet of space, Green said.

Also, real estate development company Opus North is nearing completion on a new spec building within its Opus Business Center at Rickenbacker.

Green added that Lauth Property Group is interested in developing a 75-acre site near the intersection of Pontius and Hayes roads. The site would provide two new structures with nearly 1 million square feet of combined industrial space.

The city has generated millions of dollars in tax revenue through these developments, and it has reinvested the money into projects intended to enhance quality of life in Groveport, Green said.

Recently, the city has constructed a 67,000-square-foot community recreation center as well as a 450,000-gallon aquatic center, and it has purchased The Willows golf course for public use.

The community investment will continue with the development of a mixed-use project in the downtown area intended to increase business activity while cultivating a distinct town center, he said.

Groveport City Council will hear proposals for the project this spring.

Green said new developments proposed near the airport could be fairly catalytic in encouraging more construction in Groveport, thus bringing in more revenue for the city.

The Columbus Regional Airport Authority, which operates Rickenbacker as well as Port Columbus International Airport and Bolton Airfield, is in the early stages of the development of 1,000 acres near the complex.

According to officials, 715 acres south of the airport and 285 acres abutting it on the west offer prime opportunities for distribution and light assembly companies, industries that have flocked to the area over the past decade as the airport has evolved into an important shipping hub.

David Whitaker, vice president of business development and communications for CRAA, said this latest development



could add as much as 12 million square feet of building space to the area, which would equate to a 50 percent increase over the 24 million square feet already present in the area.

The advent of Rickenbacker as a business center also has motivated rail company Norfolk Southern Corp. to establish an intermodal yard near the airport in which freight can be transferred between trucks and railcars.

The company intends to move intermodal operations from its Discovery Park facility on Alum Creek Drive to a 300-acre lot adjacent to the airport.

Whitaker said the project is proceeding well, adding that the airport currently is conducting an environmental review for the rail yard.

The relocation would expedite the transportation and shipping process, which ultimately should entice more distributors and manufacturers to establish operations near Rickenbacker, he said.

In addition to the continued industrial growth, the area around Groveport also is the site of a massive project, one that is designed to address the needs of existing development.

Last fall, tunneling began on the first phase of the Big Walnut Augmentation - Rickenbacker Sanitary Interceptor, a \$220 million project that will help prevent sewage runoff from entering Central Ohio rivers.

The pipe, which will range between 14 feet and 12 feet in diameter, will serve as a storage system for sewage so overflow into the Southerly Waste Water Treatment Plant does not runoff into the river.

The waste exceeding Southerly’s processing capacity will be stored within the wide pipeline until the plant is able to handle the load, Whitaker said.

In the initial phase, the new line will be laid for nearly four miles beginning at Southerly and heading east to Alum Creek Drive and the northern entrance of Rickenbacker International Airport, according to Jim Joyce, president and chief executive officer of H.R. Gray & Associates Inc., the project’s construction-management company.

The city estimates Phase 1 of the project could cost as much as \$150 million, a majority of which is provided through the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency Loan Fund.

The second phase of the pipeline will run north along Alum Creek Drive to a point about 2,000 feet south of Interstate 270 on the city’s south side, Joyce said.

The entire project is scheduled for completion in 2008. ~

Retail construction revitalizes Pickerington

By SUSAN CROTTY
For The Daily Reporter

The city of Pickerington saw an upturn in the pace of nonresidential development in 2004. Thirty new businesses committed to locating in the city of Pickerington, and 12 existing Pickerington businesses committed to expanding or relocating within the city. More than \$11 million was invested in new construction or renovation of existing buildings, and more than 190,000 square feet of new space was built.

Kohl's Corp. opened a new 96,000-square-foot department store on state Route 256, which enjoyed sales exceeding expectations during its debut. A 47,000-square-foot retail center, anchored by a 26,000-square-foot Drug Mart was completed in 2004 and is 100 percent leased.

Construction of the Shoppes on the Parkway, two 8,000-square-foot retail buildings, was completed this year, and the buildings kicked off development of the Creek Bend Business Park. Construction began on a 17,000-square-foot building in the park in late 2004, which will be completed in 2005.

ReMax Champions Realtors began construction on a 15,000-square-foot office building on state Route 204. The building is expected to be completed in 2005, and additional office space adjacent to ReMax will be developed

in the future. At Hunter's Run shopping center, an additional 24,000 square feet of retail space was approved, and construction is expected in 2005.

Donley Concrete Cutting & Drilling Co., a thriving Pickerington business, is building a new 8,600-square-foot office and warehousing facility in the Olde Pickerington Village.

Grissini Market & Cafe, also located in the original village, expanded its dining area to accommodate more guests. Another successful Pickerington business, Resale Furniture, relocated from the state Route 256 Corridor to a 3,240 square-foot-building, which they are

renovating, in the Olde Pickerington Village.

In 2005, additional new development is expected at Windmill Ponds, which has several acres of vacant ground still available for office development. More than five acres of ground on Refugee Road also is scheduled for development in the near future.

With the completion of Freedom Way north of state Route 204, more than 18 acres of ground will be developed, with construction on commercial buildings expected in 2005.

Susan Crotty is the development director for the city of Pickerington.



Select Communities of Contiguous Counties

Small-town character thrives in rapidly-growing Powell

By SEAN CASEY
Daily Reporter Staff Writer

The city of Powell is launching efforts to ensure its small-town atmosphere is not eroded by its massive growth spurts.

David Betz, the city's development director, said the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission projects Central Ohio to swell in population by nearly 500,000 in the next few decades. An increasing number of those flocking to the growing region are choosing to settle in Powell because of its highly rated-school system, responsive public service sector and overall wholesome atmosphere, he said.

"Powell is very popular because of the residential-based community that it is," Betz said. "It's a good place to come home to after work and raise a family."

Since 1992, when Betz joined the staff at Powell City Hall, the community has grown from 2,800 to more than 10,000, with additional units entering the pipeline constantly, he said.

Last year, the city granted 265 residential construction permits, and Betz said he expects a similar number to be awarded this year.

The burgeoning Golf Village area that surrounds the Kinsale Golf and Fitness Club in Powell is propelling much of that growth.

The city annexed the area a few years ago, and since then



nearly a dozen home-building companies have purchased lots in the surrounding subdivisions. More than 1,200 residential units are projected for the area.

In addition to Trio's development, Betz said, two subdivisions in the Village area are adding 140 homes, with one of the subdivisions planning for a future phase that will provide another 70 units.

In other areas of Powell, three subdivisions that will add another 59, 40 and 30 units, respectively, are in the development process. The city also has approved plans for 30 condominium units in the downtown area, as well as plans for two condo communities that will provide a combined 120 units, Betz said.

See Powell, Page 34

Commercial, municipal and residential development is flourishing in Newark, particularly on the west and north sides.

In the coming months, the city’s primary commercial district, located along North 21st Street, will witness the addition of a Bob Evans Restaurant, an Aldi grocery store and already has slowed due to volume — exceeding more than 30,000 cars on some days.

Two banks, First Federal and Ohio Heritage, will build branch offices along North 21st Street — one located a quarter of a mile north of the DeBartolo projects and the other a quarter of a mile south.

Lower cost of living drives Newark development

By MELANIE MCINTYRE
Daily Reporter Staff Writer

a Home Depot, which is expected to reach completion in July, said Brian Morehead, Newark city engineer.

DeBartolo Property Group LLC is behind the projects, which are replacing an old drive-in movie theatre, out of business for 20 to 25 years.

The city of Newark is excited about the increased development in this area, but not so enthusiastic about the pick-up in traffic that those businesses inevitably will bring to the four-lane roadway, Morehead said. Traffic in the area

Southgate Corp., a Newark-based real estate development company, has proposed constructing an office building on West Main Street, Morehead said. It likely will house the company’s offices, as well as provide space for lease.

The Newark Police Department, which currently operates from City Hall’s basement, soon will have a new home, according to Morehead. New headquarters are being built one block south of City Hall, and the department will relocate in May. The

site of the new police station, a rundown warehouse that stood unused for 40 years, had been an eyesore for some time.

Another municipal development in the works is the expansion of Licking Memorial Hospital’s emergency room. The new wing, to be built over a former parking lot, will provide approximately 100 feet more space in length and 150 feet in width.

Finally, three subdivisions are under construction in north Newark: Planter’s Ridge, located along Horns Hill Road and consisting of 250 lots; Timcyn Woods, consisting of 87 lots located off Kelly Lane, near Horns Hill Road; and the Village at Glen Ridge, comprised of 325 units along Mount Vernon Road.

Also, an 85-unit condominium development called Reddington Village will be built along Reddington Road in west Newark.

Though he did not know the going rate for homes in the Village at Glen Ridge or for Reddington Village condos, Morehead estimated the cost of housing in the other residential developments to be between \$180,000 and \$200,000.

The city has experienced considerable population growth within the last 10 years, spurring residential development, he added. This consistent growth has been perpetuated in part by residents deciding to work in Franklin County, but live in Newark, Morehead said. They favor Newark’s comparatively lower cost of living, affordable housing and public schools. ~

Powell

Continued from Page 33

The units these six developments will add to the city outnumber Powell’s total population of 300 in the 1970s.

The city has fostered the residential growth, but a dilemma arises in maintaining high-quality public services and the aura of a small town among a rapidly increasing population.

“That’s a challenge we face every day,” Betz said.

The key to meeting this challenge is utilizing the comprehensive development plan the city adopted in 1995 and making the necessary updates as the needs and demands of the population change, he said.

City officials keep pace with public necessities and desires through consistent analysis and the distribution of surveys to Powell residents, he said. Through the frequent solicitation of public input, the city becomes aware of

residents’ concerns and can decipher ways to reconcile them with city policy.

Administering the master development plan with flexibility has enabled the city to retain the quality of its neighborhoods and services in the face of a population explosion, he said.

Conversely, Powell effectively utilizes inflexibility as well.

For example, despite exponential residential expansion in the area, the city and its residents have staunchly guarded the municipal landscape from the infringement of large-scale commercial development.

The rapidly growing area with a healthy median income holds demography that is the object of many big-box retailers’ desires, he said. Yet, the city has stuck to its guns and has prohibited the opening of retail centers that do not meet Powell’s zoning regulations.

To further protect the town’s character, Betz said, the city is currently drafting a downtown-revitalization plan,

and is the process of creating a Tax Incremental Financing district to fund nearly \$4 million in capital improvements for the downtown area. The improvement projects will focus on the restoration of the area’s streetscape, he said.

Downtown Powell also will have some significant development projects taking shape throughout 2005, he said.

Construction will begin this year on 50 South Liberty, two buildings with 34,000 square feet of office and commercial space.

Plans also are underway for Traditions of Powell, a mixed-use development that will bring 40 condominiums and office space downtown.

Additionally, on the outskirts of town, construction is wrapping up on Recreation Outlets’ new facility on West Olentangy Street, and Powell United Methodist Church has begun erecting its new sanctuary on East Olentangy Street, Betz said. ~

New U.S. 33 bypass turning Lancaster into development hotbed

By SEAN CASEY
Daily Reporter Staff Writer

An improved highway system has rebranded the city of Lancaster as an attractive region for development.

This fall, the U.S. Route 33 Bypass will reach completion, which will shave an hour of travel time from a trip between Columbus to Interstate 77, according to Lancaster Development Director Mike Pettit.

“Basically, our transportation to major interests is improving substantially,” Pettit said. “It creates us as a corridor.”

U.S. 33 runs through the heart of Lancaster, but the \$150 million bypass allows travelers to remain on the freeway and proceed without the hindrances of traffic signals and reduced speed limits.

The project, which also opens the city to tourism from the south, is expected to encourage a number of expansion and relocation efforts among industrial and retail businesses, he said.

The new highway, which is now open from the north to U.S. Route 22, already has had a positive impact on development.

In the past year, developers completed the second phase of build-out at the Rockmill Industrial Park, located off U.S. 33 near Collins and Lithopolis roads. The park, which is home to operations for Anchor Hocking Distribution and Crown Cork and Seal, now incorporates 345 acres with 2.2 million square feet of buildings, with future expansion possibilities of up to 625 acres.

At the same time, the city opened its own 22-acre industrial park within Rockmill that offers smaller users an opportunity to access the amenities that the development offers.

Both parks are starting to fill up, employment has grown to nearly 700 within them, and developers are planning the construction of even more “spec” buildings, Pettit said.

Lancaster also is courting four industrial companies that would each bring about 100 jobs to the area, he said.

Similarly, the roadway construction has touched off a spike in commercial development, Pettit said, adding that the city is negotiating with retail developers on an 80-acre parcel that is now more desirable because of the enhanced transportation infrastructure.

In addition to the surge in the industrial and retail sectors, Lancaster is fostering a significant growth spurt in its residential development.

“We also continue to see a huge influx of new housing, condominium and single-family, spread out over the city,” said Pettit, who also serves as superintendent for Lancaster Natural Gas.

Easier accessibility has opened the high quality of life found in Lancaster to a greater number of Central Ohio families, he said.

In each of the past two years, Lancaster has awarded about 350 residential-construction permits, and Pettit said he expects another strong year in 2005.

To keep pace with the needs of an expanding populace, the Fairfield Medical Center has launched a development program intended to enhance its facilities.

Pettit said the medical center recently cut the ribbon on a new 64,000-square-foot wing and a \$26 million parking garage. Fairfield Medical Center also has started construction on a 50,000-square-foot medical office building that will house more than 100 employment opportunities.

With strong rates of development prevalent in all sectors of Lancaster, “it’s a very positive growth community,” Pettit said. ~



Development keeping pace with London's lifestyle, infrastructure

By SEAN CASEY
Daily Reporter Staff Writer

Although it has become an increasingly popular destination for Greater Columbus expatriates in recent years, development in the city of London has not outpaced municipal capacities.

According to London Mayor David Eades, the city has attracted a growing number of residents who are searching for an easier-paced lifestyle than the one found within Columbus and its surrounding areas.

"We've been getting flight from the Columbus suburbs for some time now," Eades said.

Over the past five years, the city has grown by between 120 and 150 homes annually, and Eades estimates another 100 homes will be built this year. Most of this construction will be continued build-out in the Chevington Place and Amherst Meadows communities, he said.

The building activity in the once-sleepy town does not rival the exponential growth found in some Central Ohio areas, but it has been more than London is used to.

Eades said London has welcomed the steady pace of development because it resulted in a wave of new commercial ventures within the city and, best of all, it has not outpaced the capacities of the city's infrastructure.

"As we are growing slowly, and that's not all that bad, we aren't faced with the same crunches some areas are when they explode," he said.

The city's road and utility networks are handling the increased loads quite comfortably, he added.

London's infrastructure also has been able to meet the heads of its burgeoning commercial districts, he said.

In January 2004, Wal-Mart cut the ribbon on a 197,000-square-foot Supercenter on state Route 42, the city's main thoroughfare. Ever since, a multitude of retailers and restaurants has opened their doors in the nearby Eagleton Shopping Center, making the area an even more enticing destination for consumers.

Additionally, London's downtown is enjoying a resurgence, thanks to a revitalization plan through which the city has renovated the streetscape and encouraged investment in that area.

Since adopting the plan four years ago, the city has drastically decreased downtown vacancies by more than 30 percent.

Eades said the city is also counting a couple of industrial companies but added that London will remain focused on its current growth strategy.

"We're in a slower pattern and a steady pattern," he said. ~

Residential market driving Delaware's commercial growth

The rapidly growing population in the area has created a market for retail developers who are attracted to the area because it offers quality road and rail access, as well as cheap, available land.

By SEAN CASEY
Daily Reporter Staff Writer

There is no stopping it; it is not even slowing down.

The city of Delaware, one of the fastest growing areas in the United States is anticipating another enormous year of development in 2005.

"We have roughly 5,600 homes in the pipeline, and we're negotiating with developers on annexing 1,800 acres that represent about another 4,500 homes," said Vince Papsidero, director of planning and community development for Delaware.

He added that there is interest in developing a couple thousand more acres for housing subdivisions.

This level of residential growth is nothing new in Delaware. What is changing, however, is the types of homes being built in the area.

For years, entry-level homes had comprised a significant portion of the housing stock in Delaware, but recent efforts have attracted more "move-up" options to the city.

Last year, the city implemented new design standards to encourage the construction of higher-end homes, which it hopes will diversify Delaware's housing stock and protect property values. The updated zoning regulations also are intended to bolster the city's ability to retain families desiring to upgrade to another home.

"We knew that as families grew, and wanted to make a larger investment, they were moving out of the community," Papsidero said. "Families invest in communities, and once they leave, that investment is lost. We want to give families the choice to stay."

The city's efforts seem to be paying off.

"There is now about a 50-50 split between entry-level and move-up housing," he said.

There will be even more high-end units available in Delaware this spring once homebuilders complete their entries for this year's Parade of Homes, an annual event presented by the Building Industry Association of Central Ohio in which builders showcase their finest work.

This year's Parade participants are constructing 22 new homes within the Glenross Golf Community, a burgeoning 309-acre golf community on the north and south sides of Cheshire Road.

Glenross is evolving from the former Tanglewood Golf Course in the city's "southern gateway" district. The course was purchased by Vince Romanelli of Romanelli & Hughes Building Co., who has hired Jodie Kinney of Kinney Golf Course Design to redevelop the new public course that will serve as the centerpiece of the community.

The community eventually will include a combined 618 single-family homes, patio homes and condominiums, Romanelli said. It also will incorporate a community clubhouse and an outdoor swimming pool.



The rapidly growing population in the area has created a market for retail developers who are attracted to the area because it offers quality road and rail access, as well as cheap, available land, Papsidero said.

According to Papsidero, the city has approved a 200,000-square-foot retail center for a parcel at U.S. Route 23 and Cheshire Road on the south end of town. Planning is also underway for a 600,000-square-foot commercial development near the U.S. Route 36-state Route 37 interchange.

Papsidero said this project would incorporate a Traditional Neighborhood Development that would include nearly 400 residential units, priced at differing levels. This project currently is in the zoning process, he said.

These kinds of walkable, mixed-use projects have become a priority for Delaware, which is encouraging their growth through development guidelines adopted last year.

Papsidero said the city is promoting such plans because they offer more efficient use of land and infrastructure and lower operating costs than traditional subdivisions. TND communities also are desirable because they create a mix of different types of people and levels of income within an area and replicate the character of older neighborhoods in new-build projects, he said.

The exponential residential growth has created greater demand for health-care services as well. In order to address these needs, Delaware City Council has approved the annexation of 263 acres between Cheshire and Peachblow roads east of U.S. 23 for the development of a new Grady Hospital location.

Papsidero said 100 acres would be used to construct the full-service medical center, while the balance of the land would be earmarked for a mix of office and residential development. ~

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New roads lead to commercial development in Marysville



By LINDSEY NOCK
Daily Reporter Staff Writer

The city of Marysville, perhaps best known as American Honda Motor Co.'s Central Ohio home, will be expanding its horizons with new retail space and commercial development, as well as several housing developments and apartment communities in 2005.

Developers have laid new infrastructure, which made available 120 acres of land for retail and service-oriented business development. Located south of Delaware Avenue and west of U.S. Route 33, the Marysville Land Development Co. is scheduled to complete the new shopping complex early in 2005.

The land, which stretches more than a mile between Delaware Avenue and Industrial Parkway, will be home to Honda Mall. It is scheduled to open in 2005 and will include Honda auto and motorcycle dealerships, a Wal-Mart Supercenter, a Home Depot and other retailers. Nearly 1,000 jobs are expected to be created from the development.

The city of Marysville and the Marysville Exempted Village School District agreed to create a Tax Increment Financing district to assist with infrastructure improvements to the area, Coleman's Crossing Boulevard.

The Marysville Chamber of Commerce estimates that the project will generate nearly \$48 million in income, sales and property tax over the next 30 years. The tax revenue will

benefit Union County, Union County Board of Mental Retardation/Developmental Disabilities, Union County Health Department, Marysville Exempted Village School District and the city of Marysville.

The city also is preparing to build the Marysville Training and Community Center, a 44,000- to 50,000-square-foot training facility, that will be built by the Ohio Army National Guard.

The facility will become part of the Union County YMCA, located on Charles Lane. The new training facility will include classrooms, a drill room, kitchen and offices. The TACC will be constructed along the new Coleman's Crossing Boulevard and is scheduled for completion in 2006 or 2007.

The city has several residential communities in progress for 2005. Scott Farms, will be developed by M/I Schottenstein Homes Inc. and will divide approximately 72.8 acres into 216 lots.

Also under construction is the Woods at Mill Valley North, which will divide 305 acres into 781 lots and will include commercial development as well as a school. The community will be developed by Dominion Homes Inc. and is currently in progress.

Also slated to be built this year is condominium community Village at Timber Lakes, which will include 98 lots on 40.25 acres and several apartment complexes. ~



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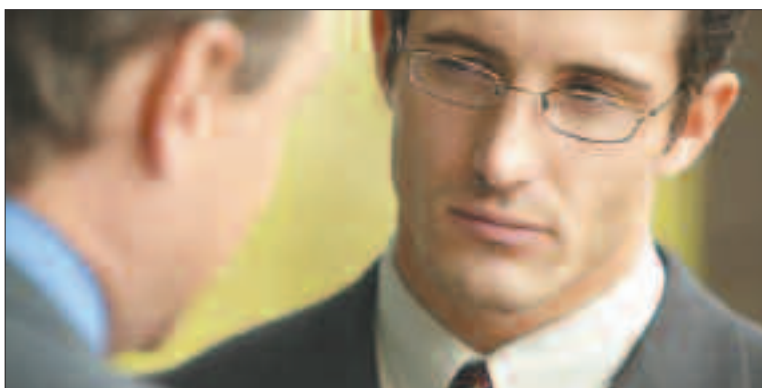
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