

# PRESS & GUIDE

## Groundbreaking set for east downtown project

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After a number of delays and extensions, it looks like the redevelopment of the Montgomery Ward site at Michigan Avenue and Schaefer in downtown East Dearborn, known as Dearborn Town Center, will finally commence.

That's because a groundbreaking ceremony for the project has been scheduled by developer REDICO Holdings, LLC, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. April 29 at the Arab American National Museum, 13624 Michigan Ave. Light hors d'oeuvres and refreshments will be served at the event, which will commemorate the spring start of a project that will bring an Oakwood Healthcare Systems/Midwest Medical Center facility, along with mixed-use commercial sites to East Dearborn.

The groundbreaking ceremony will follow at the actual site of the project and will feature Dearborn Mayor Jack O'Reilly, Oakwood Healthcare, Inc. CEO Brian Connolly, Midwest Health CEO and President Dr. Mark Saffer, and REDICO President, CEO and COO Dale Watchowski.

Planned are three new structures totaling 275,000 square feet with a 168,000 square foot medical office building, a retail/office building, and a six-level parking deck. The \$68 million project is expected to create 206 new jobs and retain 300 more.

Participants in the proposed project include REDICO, Dearborn-based Midwest Health Center and Oakwood Healthcare System. The project is made possible with support from the city of Dearborn, the Dearborn Brownfield Redevelopment Authority, the Downriver Area Brownfield Consortium, East Dearborn Downtown Development Authority, and the State of Michigan.

Senior housing may become a part of the project, as well, once the credit market improves.

City officials glad to see project move forward

City of Dearborn Director of Economic & Community Development Barry Murray last month said he is pleased the joint venture hasn't hit any speed bumps recently, as the project, in the last year, has hit a number of snags.

"Everything is right on track. The closing is set for May 1 and construction is slated to begin shortly after that," Murray said. "(REDICO) brought some of their people in to look at the commercial portion of the job, so it's good to see this job continue."

Murray said Southfield-based REDICO, a large development company, has had to put several other projects on hold due to economic conditions, adding the Dearborn Town Center project is one of few still being worked on.

Murray added that other Dearborn projects, such as proposed student housing and Dearborn Village Partners are awaiting the turnaround of the credit markets before getting back into discussions about the prospect of those projects.

If the construction phase of the \$60 million Ward's redevelopment project, slated to take up about \$40 million for the medical facility portion, does not begin in May and the project falls through, the city will get the

remaining \$1.75 million it is owed and keep the property, Dearborn Mayor Jack O'Reilly said in December after the Dearborn City Council approved a change moving the closing date on the project to May 1.

The \$3.35 million the city is set to capture for the sale of the property will come, according to O'Reilly. The city received \$1 million in December and \$250,000 payments in February and March, with one to come this month. The remaining funds will come in a balloon payment, Murray said. O'Reilly added the city could then sell the property for less than that \$3.35 million price tag and still come out ahead.

Officials said the move is a good one for all parties involved. The amendment, which pushed the anticipated completion date of the project back from June 2010 to December 2010, allowed the city to remove some old gas tanks that sit near the "old garage, Dearborn City Council President Tom Tafelski said. The partial payments coming in, the council president said, will allow the city to get the funds from the sale of the property on the city tax rolls.

Murray on March 9 said those payments have come in on time each month.

For more on this story, see future issues of the press & Guide.