

REAL ESTATE NEWS SUMMARY

Rochester, NY 2nd Quarter 2008 Vol. 16 Issue 2

Economic & Business

PAETEC – PAETEC Holding Corp. saw a lot of changes and growth in 2007 including a merger with US LEC Corp, which enabled them to go public, the purchase of an Iowa company, that gave them one of the nation's largest fiber-optic networks, the announcement of a new corporate headquarters in downtown Rochester, and growth of both finances and workforce. 2008 is expected to be similarly busy, starting off with acquiring McLeodUSA of Iowa, giving PAETEC a presence in many Midwestern and Western states that it lacked previously. (2/29) The new corporate headquarters of PAETEC Holding Corp. will consist of 2 buildings where the Midtown complex once sat. The taller of the 2 buildings will rise slightly above One Xerox Square and will house parts of the telecommunications company, retail space, and a public observation deck at the top. The second building will be 5-stories, connected to the tower by an atrium, and would also have corporate offices, as well as fitness and daycare centers. Construction could be finished by late 2011 or early 2012. The design plans are expected to begin later in the year, but an architect has not yet been hired. PAETEC has a national work force of 4,000; 1,500 of which will be located within these new structures. (4/4)

Harris RF Communication – Harris RF Communication is expected to add 50 engineering positions by early summer. Many of the new hires will be for the Rochester location. Harris' economic boom is largely in response to their military radios. The Air Force ordered \$42.5 million of their tactical radios. (3/14)

Iberdrola - Iberdrola is in negotiations with the state Public Service Commission on the purchase of Energy East Corp., the parent of RG&E and NYS Electric & Gas. Sen. Charles Schumer has recommended a specific plan regarding the deal that would include a trust fund of at least \$ billion to offset potential rate increases, and a performance assurance plan to provide for fines for any service failures. Additionally, Schumer wants Iberdrola to be required to develop aggressive alternative energy resources, such as wind, which is a forte of the Spanish company, and repower RG&E's Russell power plant in Greece, which RG&E has already committed to do. The PSC is closely reviewing and considering Schumer's recommendations. (2/29) The \$4.5 billion deal for Iberdrola to purchase Energy East Corp. has been rejected by New York State Electric and Gas. Issues cited for the decision were service reliability, the future of the Russell Station power plant in Greece and Iberdrola's potential takeover status in Europe. Judge Rafeal Epstein will hear the evidence and recommend a five member Public Service Commission, whom will have the final say in New York. Iberdrola and Energy East would like to finalize the deal during the first half of 2008. (3/14) The Chairman of Iberdrola, the Spanish energy giant that was negotiating a possible \$4.5 billion purchase of Energy East Corp., states that conditions imposed by the NY Public Service Commission may cause the company to reconsider. If the bid is dropped, the company will look for other growth opportunities in the US. Iberdrola has taken several steps already to gain New York's approval, and PSC states that they are just working to protect the interest of ratepayers. PSC has yet to schedule it's next steps in its consideration of the deal. (4/16)

Rochester-Toronto Ferry - The cities of Rochester and Toronto advertised an invitation for private operators to potentially take over the failed ferry service, without public subsidy. If there is no qualified applicant, the city will look to end it's \$250,000 a year lease with Toronto Port Authority, and consider the port for other uses. (3/6) Rochester has settled with Maplestar Development Co. for \$400,000 to end the \$1/yr, 40/yr lease to regain control of the city's ferry terminal. The \$400,000 is compensation for improvements that Maplestar made to the terminal, less depreciation and money owed to the city for utilities and maintenance. The agreement still requires approval from the City Council, but will finally allow the city to move forward with designs for alternative uses of the property. There is still an unresolved \$250,000/yr lease between the city and the Toronto Port Authority. (4/24)

COMIDA – The County of Monroe Industrial Development Agency has approved \$460,000 in tax incentives for 4 projects, which will help to create about 50 jobs and replace two vacant houses in the city with a new medical complex. These projects are expected to generate about \$1.5 million in revenue over 10 years. Weldrite will receive \$9,600 in sales tax exemptions for the purchase of equipment. Weldrite is expected to add 35 employees by the end of the year. 1255 Portland LLC will receive \$400,000 in property tax abatements over 10 years. 1255 Portland LLC plans on building a 21,000 sq. ft. medical office building on Portland Avenue, costing over \$3 million. AP Plumbing will receive about \$36,000 in sales tax exemptions. M/E Engineering PC will receive \$16,000, also in sales tax exemptions. (3/21)

Midtown Plaza - Governor Patterson visited Rochester to reiterate his dedication to the \$1 billion Upstate Revitalization Fund. Rochester stands to receive \$50 million to help with the demolishing of Midtown Plaza, as well as \$50 million for the University of Rochester's plan to build a translational science center. (3/21)

Housing Market - Although the median prices for houses fell by 8.2% to \$192,900, the purchases of homes in the United States has increased by almost 3% in the month of February according to the National Association of Realtors. The Rochester market showed signs of a slowdown during February. (3/25)

Nixon Peabody - An international law firm with a large office in Rochester, Nixon Peabody, has opened an office in Shanghai, China. The new office positions the firm to help area businesses compete in the world's largest marketplace, China. This is Nixon Peabody's first office in Asia, and it will be staffed on a rotation between 2 lead partners, offering services such as structuring investments, resolving trade disputes, and protecting intellectual property rights. The NYS Bar Association acknowledges a growing need for US legal services in China as more American companies are seeking business there. (3/25)

JPMorgan Chase & Co. - Chase, the areas largest employer in the banking industry is eliminating its home equity loan process center at Chase Square in downtown Rochester, resulting in the cut of 300 jobs. This change is brought on by a drop in housing prices in many parts of the country, preventing many people from considering the equity market. The cutback, scheduled to take place by the end of October, will leave about 650 Chase employees in the Rochester area. This is the first major impact that the national housing trends have had on the Rochester area, because housing prices here have remained steady. (3/27)

Area Employment - The state Department of Labor stated that the Rochester region's unemployment rate is up to 5.7 percent in February, from 5.5 in January. Previously Rochester employment had been doing better than the rest of the state and nation, now the opposite is true. In February, the jobless rate nationally was 4.8 percent. (3/28)

Eastman Kodak Co. - The CEO of Kodak, Antonio Perez, received a \$3.3 million bonus for 2007, due to exceeding company expectations, and hitting goals including cutting admin costs, generating more than \$200 million in net cash, and wrapping up the company's four-year restructuring. The bonus was over and above his \$1.1 million salary. Kodak's President, Philip J. Faraci, received a bonus of more than \$1 million, atop his 2007 salary of \$606,000. Both bonuses came from the company's Non-Equity Incentive Plan Compensation, known as EXCEL. (4/3)

State Budget - New York state will be spending millions of dollars on Rochester projects in the near future. The approved \$121.7 billion 2008-09 state budget includes an Upstate Revitalization Fund of \$700 million. Included in this fund are \$55 million for the Midtown demolition, and \$50 million for UR's Clinical and Translational Science Institute. The agreement between Rochester and the state is that Albany will cover up to \$65 million of the Midtown costs if the project goes over \$55 million. PAETEC is expected to spend around \$100 million on its headquarters there. Money for the UR will be toward a 150,000 sq.ft. building with labs and offices for commercializing medical research. UR expects to cover costs of about \$6 million. The state budget increases fees and taxes overall by \$1.5 billion, providing record spending on education. The budget is actually about \$1.1 billion less than what had been proposed by former Gov. Spitzer, but Gov. Paterson is concerned that the spending increases may set up deficits in future years. (4/10)

RenSquare - Planners of the \$230 million public works endeavor, Renaissance Square, have been called upon by Sen. Schumer to make a final decision on whether the project will move forward by Jan. 31, 2009. The deadline that they had announced previously was April 2009, but Schumer has moved that up so that he can reallocate the funds if the project is not a go. If the new deadline isn't met, the project risks losing \$19 million in funding. In addition, Schumer is also requiring a financial operating plan, and greater transparency in decisions about the project. (4/15) After thoughts about walking away from Renaissance Square altogether, Monroe County Executive, Maggie Brooks, has decided to move ahead with the project. She was reconsidering based on faltering public opinion, and delays in the process, but has decided to continue mainly due to the potential of what would happen to the downtown block of E. Main St between St. Paul and N. Clinton if the project were abandoned. Four new design concepts were released for public inspection, each one using cheaper material and a simpler design than the originals, to stay within the \$230 million budget, and each including a 2,800 seat theater, a bus station, and an MCC campus. (4/24)

Home Building - In the Rochester region in 2007, the number of building permits issued for new houses or residential developments was barely half of what it was in 2006. Although our area is not seeing as sharp a decline as the U.S., it is the lowest since the 1991 recession. We should see a bottoming in 2008, but not really any improvement until late 2009 or early 2010. According to census figures, US single-family home-building permits peaked in Feb 2006, and have been sliding since then, however, in the Rochester region, the peak came in May 2004, with the decrease probably due to substantial job cuts at Eastman Kodak Co. While the ongoing housing decline is most likely due to national economic woes, recovery, both nationally and locally is not in sight. (4/16)

Fortune 500 - For the second straight year, Wal-Mart Stores Inc. has topped the Fortune 500 list, over Exxon Mobil Corp. Local companies on the 2008 list include Eastman Kodak (No. 238), Corning (417), Constellation Brands (459), and Xerox, Rochester 4th largest employer, but with headquarters in CT, ranked 144. (4/22)

Rochester Population - Reports from the Census Bureau show that the population losses that the Rochester metropolitan area has seen since 2004 have begun to decline. The area's largest population decline was .38 percent from 2004 to 2005. There was a decline of .19 percent from 2005 to 2006, and that decline decreased to .05 percent from 2006 to 2007. It appears that the negative population growth in our area may have stabilized. (4/28)

Building Permits - Building permits for single-family houses in Monroe County have been steadily declining since 2003, with 2007 reflecting an 18-yr low. Local homebuilders say that the market is simply stabilizing after a weighty inventory build-up, but for now, supply is meeting demand. For a few years we were building at record rates, without any population increases, now we are maintaining. General news of a recession is affecting everyone's attitudes and takes some of the eagerness out of purchasing, even though the subprime market is not an influence on our area. Many families have opted to build an addition or finish an extra room or basement, instead of purchasing a new home. Rochester has always been a very steady paced community, but decline will often be based on perception. (4/28)

Paychex - Penfield-based Paychex Inc. reported that fiscal third-quarter profit was up 13 percent over the same period last year, net income for the quarter was \$142.5 million, and per-share earnings rose from 33 to 39 cents. Although quarterly revenue was up 10 percent, the company cautions that a weakening economy is making it more difficult to gain new accounts. (4/27)

Office

Penfield – The Penfield Planning Board is reviewing details for the proposed expansion of Linden Hills Office Park. Nightingale Properties LLC owns the Linden Ave. property and has been working with COMIDA to add a new office building, parking garage, and convert an existing manufacturing facility to office. According to opponents, the proposal poses harm to the nearby Corbett's Glen Nature Park, and the planning board is waiting for more details on the project. (3/6)

Retail

Henrietta – Rush-Henrietta planning board has approved the demolition of an outdated plaza on E. Henrietta Rd. which housed Apollo Restaurant, a laundromat, tax office, and computer repair shop. Developer Joe Merlo is planning a 30,000 sq.ft. retail and office building, called Marketview Commons, in it's place. There are no set tenants at this time, but the current tenants will have the option of moving into the new building. A date for ground breaking is not set, but target timeframe is mid-April to early May. (2/20)

Park Point at RIT - Wilmorite Inc. revealed several of the 10 tenants that will occupy the new Park Point, a project formerly known as College Town, which will be opening in August at the corner of Jefferson Rd and John St. Tenants include Barnes & Noble, which will be the new RIT campus bookstore, Abbott's Frozen Custard, Gallery Salon Too, 7 Day's Convenience Store, and Lovin' Cup restaurant & café, as well as 300 furnished apartments, available not only to RIT students and staff, but to the community, as well. (2/27) In the search for businesses to occupy Park Point, RIT students, faculty, and staff were asked about the type of restaurants and retail that they wanted for the \$72 million mixed use development. Currently the retail portion of the project is 95 percent leased, and the apartments are 90 percent. Additional retail tenants are King David's Restaurant, Paradiso Pizza, Tiger's Sport Bar, and Wok With You. Additionally there is a 13,000 sq.ft. outparcel that has not yet been marketed. (3/30)

Midtown – Due to Paetec moving in, retail stores at Midtown received notice from the city giving them 90 days to vacate, but that financial assistance would be provided if they were to relocate within a 50-mile radius. Several of the

vendors have had many customers request that they stay in the area, and they plan to do just that. (2/28) As of July, downtown will lose its last department store when Peebles closes with Midtown, and takes up a new store in Canandaigua by late August. Peebles opened its Midtown store in 1996. Two smaller Midtown tenants, Fauna's Gifts and Whelpley & Paul Opticians are moving into the Alliance Building, not far from Midtown. Two-thirds of the remaining Midtown tenants are looking to relocate, while one in four is likely to close. (4/8)

Canandaigua - Main Street retail area is welcoming new tenants. Flowers by Stella will be closing their Main street location, RV&E Bike and Skate will take over. Pulp Nouveau Comix will extend their business to a Main street location. Rose Corner Bakery sold their shop earlier this year. In place of the bakery, plans are being discussed for a German style restaurant. (3/6)

Price Rite - Price Rite opened their Dewey and Driving Park location on Sunday. Price Rite invested \$3 million in the former Wegmans. The company may be opening a second location in the University/Culver area. If approved, the store would open by the end of the year. (3/10)

Oak Hill Commons - The proposed 20,000 square foot office and retail center, referred to as the Oak Hill Commons is concerning some residents, due to the potential traffic increase and neighborhood disruption. The proposed plaza will be constructed near the intersection of Clover and Monroe Avenue. It will consist of 5 buildings for offices and small retail stores. Buckingham Properties received Town Board approval to rezone the site from residential to commercial in January. The results of the developmental review should be available in two weeks to be evaluated by the Planning Board. (3/10)

Wegmans - The new 100,000 sq. ft. Wegmans on Calkins road will be complete in the next few months, however, the fate of the old 57,000 sq. ft. building is still undecided. Considering that the Tanning Bed which is still operating from the old Wegmans plaza, Wegmans is unsure if they will sell or lease the building. (3/12)

Canandaigua - Two years ago COR Development Co. purchased the Towne Center on Routes 5 & 20, the site of an old Chase-Pitkin, for \$4.2 million. Bed, Bath & Beyond is currently the only established tenant in the 100,000 sq.ft. plaza, on 9 acres, PetCo is in the planning stages, and recently Michaels arts and crafts retail chain has applied for a building permit with the city to join at this site. (3/14)

Greece - Three development companies are working with the town to move forward in the demolition of about two dozen former homes on W Ridge Rd. between Elmgrove and Manitou. The DiMarco Group owns 67 acres near Kohl's, which it also owns, and is proposing to build additional retail in the place of about 5 vacant houses. Benderson Development and Farash Corp. own 125 acres across the street, and are proposing senior housing, offices, and various retail including Wal-Mart, in place of about 20 vacant houses. Both the town and the developers would like to see these "eyesores" come down; however the development proposals are still in the middle of environmental review, and there is no specific time line for when any progress will be made. (3/15) Town officials have threatened court action against Benderson Dev., Farash Corp., and The DiMarco Group if the nearly two dozen boarded-up houses along the south side of W Ridge Rd between Manitou and Elmgrove are not razed within a reasonable timeframe. The developers are all in agreement that demolition will begin within the next few weeks, and state that they were just waiting for the weather to break. Both potential developments, Southwestern Commons by Benderson/Farash and Hampton Ridge Center by DiMarco, are on hold pending rezoning requests with the Town Board. (4/17)

Pittsford - Nicole Wegman, of the Wegmans grocery store chain, received approval from the State Liquor Authority on her application to open a liquor store at Pittsford Plaza. The new 45,000 sq.ft. store, Century Pittsford Wines, will open later in the month in the former Cohoes department store site. Features of the new store will be a reading center, wireless access and computer kiosks, as well as wine tastings and seminars. Wegman states that this will not be the start of a Wegman-owned liquor outlet chain. (4/3) Century Pittsford Wines celebrated it's grand opening in Pittsford Plaza, which is double the size of the old location in Greece and showcases a variety of NY and Finger Lakes wines. The store is owned by Nicole Wegman, but independent from the Wegmans grocery store chain, and other family members in the liquor business include Gail Tobin, Danny Wegman's sister, who runs Whitehouse Liquor in Brighton and Chris O'Donnell, Nicole's brother-in-law, who is in the process of applying to take over the former Greece location of Century. (4/30)

Webster - The former Chase-Pitkin at 900 Holt Rd will become New York's first location of Hobby Lobby, an arts, crafts and home décor chain based out of Oklahoma City. Renovations on the 66,000 sq.ft. building will begin in May, for a potential opening in September or October. Two or three more Hobby Lobby stores are planned for the Rochester area, and possibly one in Buffalo. (4/3)

Rite Aid - The dominant drugstore chain in the Rochester region, with more than three dozen locations, Rite Aid has signed an exclusive arrangement with Fujifilm USA. Stores have become the dominant site for photo printing, with

numbers of prints coming out of retail locations expected to hit 12.5 billion by 2012. Kodak, with more than 85,000 photo kiosks worldwide remains the industry leader. (4/11)

Wal-Mart - A lawsuit brought by the group Residents Against Wal-Mart stating that the Greece Town Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals did not adequately scrutinize plans for a Wal-Mart to go into Northgate Plaza on Dewey Ave, was dismissed by the State Supreme court. The community group is concerned about increased traffic, environmental impact, and neighborhood character, but the court is convinced that the Boards acted with due diligence. Property owners, Widewaters Group, is prepared to move forward with a 146,000 sq.ft. superstore and 4,000 sq.ft. McDonald's in the 1953 plaza that has been largely vacant for several years. (4/16) The lawsuit brought by local citizen's group, Residents Against Wal-Mart, has been thrown out by a Monroe County judge. The judge recommended that the group work with Wal-Mart management on finalization of the development plans, but the group states that they are not done, and may consider an appeal of the decision. (4/17)

Industrial

RG&E – In a settlement with the state, Rochester Gas & Electric will pay \$700,000 and shut down the polluting Russell power station in Greece. Closure and demolition of the old plant should take place in May, and the plant will be replaced with a cleaner electricity generating plant, within the next 5 years. \$500,000 of the settlement will be used for energy efficiency or pollution reduction projects in the Rochester area and surrounding counties, the remainder goes to the state DEC as a civil penalty for not meeting environmental standards. (2/21)

Tyco - Tyco Electronics Corp. is closing its Brighton facility by the end of June, and moving it's manufacturing operation to Asia, leaving 41 employees out of work. A number of non-manufacturing workers will be moved to a business unit of Tyco. Elo TouchSystems. (3/6)

RG&E – Rochester Gas & Electric plans on spending more than \$20 million to tear down a part of Beebee Station in High Falls and build a new substation to power the downtown area. RG&E still must obtain the necessary permits and site plan reviews before the plans can be finalized. The new substation is scheduled to go on-line in mid 2009. (3/10)

Residential

Brighton – St. John's Senior Communities is proposing an expansion to add a new complex west of the Meadows campus called Brickstone. Plans submitted to the Planning Board include 53 single-family cottages, nine townhouses, 40 apartments, and a 10,000 sq.ft. commercial building. Construction would take about 14 months to complete, but St. John's still needs various town boards approvals before it can begin. (3/5)

Farmington - Two development projects, which require rezoning, received Town Board approval. The Villas of Farmington, located on 37.4 acres at the northwest corner of Plaster Mill Rd and Gateway Dr, will be a 296-unit townhouse and apartment project by Morgan Plastermill LLC. An unnamed senior living complex on a 15.5 acre plot west of Route 332 and north of the end of Hathaway Drive, will include a 90-unit senior-citizens' home proposed by Farmington 332 LLC. The Town Board is pleased that both projects will have private streets, as opposed to town managed, and that the town as a whole would not incur any additional tax costs. (3/14)

Victor - The owners of Gypsum Mills Estates, a 170 acre mobile home park that holds about 510 mobile homes, will be assessed at almost \$56,000, an increase of 38% from \$40,600. The assessments will be based on each individual home, which is expected to more accurate. However, many Gypsum Mills residents are expected to contest the increase. (3/17)

East Rochester - ISLA Housing & Development of Rochester is proposing a project on East Linden Ave for a 25-unit condominium complex. Their most recent request is for rezoning of a 1.9 acre parcel from single-family to multi-family, along with the rest of the property that is already zoned appropriately. The 1,133 sq.ft., 2 bedroom, 2 ½ bath ranch-style townhouses would be marketed to people 55 and older, and the complex, consisting of 12 duplexes and one stand-alone unit, would be overseen by a condo association. At this time the matter is being referred to the Planning Board for review of site details and more information is needed. (4/16)

Naples - A senior housing complex that had been closed last summer due to disrepair has been purchased by Steven Richards of Naples Creek Properties LLC. His plans to reopen the apartment community in May include complete inside and outside renovations such as a new roof, landscaping, improved access, a handicapped-accessible walking trail, all new paint, a covered outdoor deck, barbecue area, putting green, carpet, cabinets, railings, and a solar-electric system.

Residents would need to be age 55 or over and meet maximum income requirements. The apartments will rent for \$505 per month, with separate utilities. (4/25)

Pittsford - Pittsford Canalside Properties LLC is proposing development on property near the Village's western edge along Monroe Ave, and have petitioned both the town and village to have 5.5 acres annexed from the town to the village. The property is the former Monoco asphalt plant that has had environmental issues dating back to the 1990's, and has been vacant since 2000. There are currently no set plans for what the development group would like to do with the property, but discussions indicate residential. Reasoning for the annexation of the land include simplifying the development process, increase in population and property taxes, design and visual character of a development would benefit one of the gateways into the village, and access to the village sewer system. (4/30)

Other

Henrietta – Planning board approval was given to a second Holy Sepulcher cemetery on 109 acres at the northeast corner of Pinnacle Rd near Williams Rd. The new cemetery is expected to open in about 2 years, and be a very attractive asset to the town. Opening a cemetery in Henrietta was decided due to the population growth of nearly 6,000 people having moved to the area since 2000. (2/20)

Canandaigua – The YMCA on Main St in Canandaigua announced a \$7 million renovation including a new aquatic center and expanded parking. The purchase and demolition of nine homes on Atwater Place will allow for the additional parking. (2/27)

Gates - Gates-Chili Superintendent made a recommendation to the school board to close Washington Irving Elementary School on Chili Ave. due to a \$1.6 million district loss, and declining enrollment. Irving has the second-lowest enrollment in the district, with 304 students. The 2008-09 budget is estimated to be up 3.3 percent from 07, and the amount to be raised by taxes up by 2.24 percent. (2/27) Washington Irving Elementary school, the oldest school in Gates, is scheduled to close. Beginning in the fall, Washington Irving Elementary School attendees will be split between Neil Armstrong and Paul Road elementary schools. There are discussions about keeping the building at 2400 Chili Ave. (3/27)

Greece – A \$250,000 grant will fund a permanent boat launch along the Erie Canal. A grand opening introducing the upgraded park is scheduled for July 4th. (3/10)

Rochester - Anticipating victory after the litigation process for building a parking garage, Highland Hospital is expected to move forward with their plans to build a \$7.2 million, 3 1/2 story parking garage, between Highland Manor apartments and the Greek Orthodox Church of Holy Spirit. Construction is scheduled to begin by the end of April. The project will be completed in 12 months. Highland still must go before the city for final site approval and obtain the necessary permits before actually starting the project. (3/11)

Pittsford - The Pittsford Planning Board gave approval last week for Nazareth College to renovate the school's Arts Center. The \$6 million project at Callahan Theater, on the East Ave campus is set to begin in the next few weeks, and will include a 16 feet height increase, a 900 sq.ft. patrons lounge, a 2,147 sq.ft. art gallery, increased wheelchair space, and staggered seating, as well as transformation of the stage. Renovations could be complete by January 2009. (3/5) President of Nazareth College, Daan Braverman, unveiled details and pictures of the Arts Center's \$9 million renovation plans. The project acquired \$4 million in state funds, and construction will begin by the end of the month. Architecture and construction will be handled by LaBella Associates and Wilmorite. (3/12)

East Bloomfield - Assessor Don Collins states that there appears to be a trend in farmland property values rising. Several big tracts of productive land in E. Bloomfield have sold for higher prices in the last two yrs. It appears to be a 29 percent jump in assessments on the best farmland, not only in the E. Bloomfield area, but in surrounding counties, as well. This is a much greater increase than home assessments, which are up 4 to 5 percent, and building lots, which are up around 8 to 10 percent. (3/14)

Brighton – Anthony Costello, CEO of Costello & Son Development, is proposing a 63 acre community project, known as "City Gate" in the town of Brighton. The plans consist of 800 housing units, over 21.6 acres in Brighton. 210,000 sq. ft. of retail space, as well as 180,000 sq. ft. of office and commercial space. City Gate will be constructed south of Westfall Road, between E. Henrietta and S. Clinton Avenue. The community portion is expected to add \$2.7 million on Brighton's tax roll. \$6.8 million would be added to Rochester's tax roll, since a portion of the project will be built over the city line. Costello would like to begin construction later this year or in early 2009. (3/19)

Brighton - Anthony Costello is proposing another big project for the town of Brighton. The second project consists of an 820,000 sq. ft. office park and a 168,000 sq. ft. retail space, west of Winton Road. The space would be constructed over 82 acres, which would include a hotel, restaurants, shops and a conference facility. The space would have to be rezoned from residential to an office park district and a height variance would be in order for several of the buildings. The planning board will hear more details about the project shortly. (3/19) Costello presented more information to the Town Board regarding his proposed project east of Buckland Park, which may include 88,000 sq.ft. of retail space between an Embassy Suites hotel, and Whole Foods Market, as well as 820,000 sq.ft. of office buildings, a 30,800 sq.ft. conference center, a 3-tier pond, and about 3,400 parking spaces. Costello states that this new development would bring up to \$6 million in taxes a year to the town of Brighton, as well as jobs and sales tax revenue. Local residents are voicing concerns regarding increased traffic, environmental impact, and the potential of increased flooding. To help address traffic concerns, the project will include extending Senator Keating Blvd by about a mile to S. Winton Rd. The project is pending Town approval with no specific timetable. (4/16)

Crown Hotel - Formally known as the Crown Hotel, The Rochester Plaza Hotel will invest \$3 million in renovations this summer. This upgrade will also mark the hotel's decision to become an independent operating hotel. (3/20)

Fairport - The Fairport Library Board of Trustees, has granted preliminary approval to hire SWBR Architects to design and potentially handle construction of a new Fairport Public Library building. The site of the new building has not yet been designated, but the Library Board is working with the Village Board and the Office of Community and Economic Development to secure land within the village. Approval of the project is also needed from the state Education Department because of the library's connection with the school district. The Library's lease at their current location at 1 Village Landing is up in 2012, so they expect plans to be presented sometime in 2009. (3/19)

Brighton - The Department of Environmental Conservation announced the discovery of a third toxic site in Brighton. 235 Metro Park tested positive for traces of tetrachloroethene (PCE) and trichloroethene (TCE). Speedy's cleaner located at 2150 Monroe Avenue and Carriage Cleaners across from the establishment also tested positive for PCE. PCE and TCE were found in the groundwater at the Metro Park. The DEC reports that the problem areas are contained. (3/26)

Chili - Restoration of the Stagecoach Inn could begin as early as late April. Built in 1814 as a tavern and 13 room inn, the two-story federal-style building was saved from demolition 2 years ago, by concerned citizens who decided to sue. Now that the project is finalized, those citizens will begin their fundraising campaign to raise money for improvements such as improving the front stoop, underground electrical service, new windows, chimneys, and rebuilding an arched entrance door. The 1,200 sq.ft. historical building is now owned by Plainview Collateral LLC, and when complete will be rented out as office space. (3/28)

Midtown Athletic Club - Ten houses on Gould Street that have been bought by Midtown Athletic Club since 1992, were demolished to allow for the club's \$7 million expansion. The project received a partial tax exemption for creating 25 jobs over three years. (4/1) The outdoor fitness facility that Midtown is looking to complete in May of 2009 will be unique to NY state. The \$7 million project will include 9 clay tennis courts, 4 swimming pools, a café, Adirondack-style lodge, and decks off of the existing club overlooking the tennis courts. Membership is expected to grow by about 200, and 60 seasonal workers will be hired, or the equivalent of about 25 full-time employees. The project received a \$700,000 COMIDA incentive package that includes exemption from sales taxes during construction, a one-time mortgage tax exemption, and an abatement of property taxes on the improvements over 10 years. (4/2)

County Parks - Over the next 4 years, Monroe County plans to spend over \$4 million on improvements to several Rochester suburban parks. First on the list is Ellison, which is in both Brighton and Penfield, followed by Tryon, Devil's Cove, Irondequoit Bay East & West, Greece Canal Park, Mendon Ponds, Black Creek, and Powder Mills Park. The majority of these parks have not had a master plan update since 1985. Funding for the projects is coming from the county's capital reserve, and work is scheduled to begin in 2010. (4/2)

Perinton - High Acres Landfill and Recycling Center was given approval to expand its landfill to the areas of Macedon and Wayne County. The current landfill, which covers about 200 acres in Perinton, will reach capacity in 10 years. After receiving the necessary approvals, the landfill would be able to expand 148 acres in Macedon. The expansion is expected to be completed by 2047. (3/24) The discussions continue regarding Waste Management's proposed expansion of the High Acres Landfill at 425 Perinton Parkway. The disposal company is seeking approval to expand the Perinton portion of the landfill, most of which is in Macedon, just over the Monroe County border into Wayne County. There has been continued public resistance from Perinton residents, who would like to have the process halted until long-range plans are developed, including maximum growth, and property-value protection, similar to the agreement the company has with Macedon. (4/2) The third of four necessary OKs was given by the Town Planning Board on the High Acres Landfill expansion project. Waste Management states that the expansion would hold 4 to 5 years of waste, and bring \$10 million

into Perinton as its share of a host agreement. A nearby homeowner and attorney has agreed to represent the group Preserve Scenic Perinton Alliance for free in bringing a lawsuit to challenge the environmental review process. The final approval needed is a special use permit from the Town Board. (4/9) Waste Management received the final approval needed from the Town Board to expand its landfill by 5.8 acres on the Perinton side. The company will also replace the wetlands on a 2-to-1 ratio, by recreating a 5-acre wetland on another portion of the property, as required by law. Conditions of the Town Board approval include annual reports on landscaping and wetland mitigation; annual meetings with the Conservation Board; enough money, to be determined by DEC, for the eventual closure of the landfill, and a bond with the town, initially \$225,000 for the landscaping plan. (4/16)

Chili - There has been mixed community reaction to the potential of chili getting its first hotel. Pittsford-based Indus Companies made a presentation before the Planning Board for a 65-70 room Microtel Inn & Suites on Chili Ave. Roberts Wesleyan College officials are greatly supporting the plan, due to lack of accommodations for special events. Community concerns include architectural design, and crime. Indus Companies intends to resubmit an improved package by June. If approved, the hotel would be ready in about seven months. (4/14)

Brighton - The University of Rochester hopes to break ground soon on a new facility focusing on outpatient orthopedic surgeries. Construction of the two-story, 79,740 sq.ft. building at 180 Sawgrass Dr, is being handled by Castle Office Group LLC, could begin this spring, and would take about a year to complete. About 52,000 sq.ft. of the building would be taken by the surgicenter, and the remaining space would be open for tenants. U of R Medical Center is supplying \$13 million toward construction and medical equipment, and Castle Office Group is seeking abatements from COMIDA. Surgical cases at Strong in 2006 totaled 24,301, with 49 percent of them being outpatient. The new center is expected to handle anywhere from 4,000 to 5,000 cases per year. (4/16)

Gates/Greece - New Jersey-based Verizon Wireless is looking to build a 145-foot cell tower at 80 Gates-Greece Town Line Rd. It would be a monopole structure, meaning it would have no disguise as a flagpole, etc. The towns sent letters to nearby property owners, and have not heard comment from any residents regarding the proposal. To move forward the project needs a special use permit and a variance regarding its distance from other property lines. (4/17)

RIT - RIT's College of Applied Science and Technology recently dedicated the first certifiably 'green' building on campus. The \$10.5 million, 33,600 sq.ft. building was executed with sustainable strategies to meet the needs of the present without compromising the future. These strategies include use of renewable and recyclable materials, improved designs for water and energy efficiency, as well as indoor air quality, 300 sq.ft. of grass planted on the roof tiles to protect from heat, and collection of rainwater from the roof to use in toilets and irrigation of indoor plants. Recently the State Assembly announced \$2 million in funding for the planning and design of a new facility for RIT's Golisano Institute for Sustainability. The new facility will house the world's first doctoral program in sustainability. (4/23)

Victor - Amid the construction of the new Town Hall on E. Main St, workers unearthed a fifth fuel tank buried in the property, and determined that some of the soil will not support the new building. The tank, that is believed to have once stored heating oil for the building, is empty, except for some ground water, and will be removed within the next few days. Any soil that may have been contaminated has been taken to a landfill. The issue with the soil not supporting the building will be remedied with reinforcements, and is not expected to affect the \$5.7 million budget for the project, or the completion date of November 2008. (4/25)

General

COMIDA – The County of Monroe Industrial Development Agency has approved tax breaks to aid in the creation of 120 new jobs through expansions of the following local companies; Datrose Inc., Adecco USA Inc., LogicalSolutions.net, FedEx, Pharma-Smart International Inc., Pride and Joy Quality Child Care Inc., Doodlebugs, and Sutherland Towing. (2/20)

Catholic Schools – Despite the Catholic community's efforts to raise funds to try to save their schools, the Bishop Matthew Clark will proceed with closing 13 of 24 Monroe County Catholic Schools. Closing these schools will allow the Diocese to focus resources on the 11 remaining schools and have a chance to stabilize finances to preserve future Catholic education. The closings are expected to begin in June. (2/20)

RDDC – The Rochester Downtown Development Corp. is coordinating meetings for the first-ever Downtown Residential Summit. Residents living in the center of the city are invited for a briefing on public safety, upcoming downtown development projects, and a way to alert residents when construction is under way and parking alternatives. (2/25)

Crime Lab – A task force established by Monroe County Executive Maggie Brooks has verified an urgent need for a new Public Safety Laboratory. The existing lab, which has been in the old Public Safety Building downtown since 1963, serves a total of 8 local counties, including Monroe, sees about 4,000 cases a year, and can take up to six months to return results. The county has currently raised only \$5.3 million toward the \$30 million proposal for an updated lab that would be more than twice the size of the existing, at a currently unselected location. Brooks hopes to get state and county funding, as well as financial assistance from the city, once the master plan is completed in the next 3 months. (3/3)

Rochester - The state will grant \$7.25 million for the brown-field clean up project. This project will assist several regions in the Rochester area with clean up of contaminated houses. Some local organizations designated to receive funds are the Genesee River Corridor, in the amount of \$215,100 and Rochester's Group 14621 Community Association, in the amount of \$90,000. (3/10)

Community College - Three local community colleges have big plans for expansion and renovation, but are having trouble securing the funding to move forward. Currently enrolling nearly half of all undergrads, community colleges train 80 percent of first-responders such as police and fire-fighters, as well as 50 percent of nurses and other health care workers. Two year schools will be playing an even more important role as half of new jobs created in the next 10 yrs will require some college education. In New York the average community college tuition and fees are above the national average. The cost of capital projects at community colleges are supposed to be split between state and local governments; however, contributions from Monroe County seem to be lacking. A recent report by the College Board called America's community colleges "the nations over-looked asset." (3/6)

Monroe County - The Monroe County Planning Board is reviewing comments on its proposed 2009-2014 Capital Improvement Plan. The plan outlines \$466.8 million in projects over the six included years, of which \$212 million will come from the county, \$146.5 million federal funds, \$47.2 million state funds, \$35.5 special districts, \$25 million enterprise and \$100,000 in private funds and user fees. Projects expected to be done or started in 2009 will require the largest portion, \$100.8 million. Projects in the proposal include work for Monroe Community College, Hospital and Library Systems, Aviation Department, solid waste, engineering and facilities management, parks, highways and bridges, and the sheriff's office. (3/19)

Ontario County - According to new population estimates from the US Census Bureau, Ontario is the only county in the six-county region that has gained population since 2002. Monroe County lost more residents than any other Rochester-area county since 2002, most likely due to the differences in property taxes. These estimates are not completely accurate, since there hasn't been an actual census taken since 2000. The next census will be done in 2010. (3/20)

Greece - Barnard Greece Public Library will be closed April 7 for renovations. About \$20,000 will be invested into the library for new furniture, carpets and painting. (3/24)

Area Firehouses - Several of our area firehouses are having trouble getting funding to upgrade facilities. There are 26 fire districts in Monroe County, which are a layer of independent government with their own budgets funded by property taxes. New facilities are often funded by the raising of property taxes, which often comes with a lot of resistance from residents, as well as the elected boards of commissioners. Tax revenue raised for fire services in the suburban Monroe County departments increased 78 percent between 1998 and 2005, to \$36.4 million. Departments are encouraged to save up over years to help fund their own facility upgrades. (4/2)

St. John Fisher College - State Funding of \$2.25 million has been granted to help St. John Fisher develop a new law school in downtown Rochester. The idea of this new law school has been discussed by college officials for over a year, and there is hope that obtaining this monetary support might draw additional contributors. The pledged funds are in the 2008-09 state budget as part of a \$350 million pot for capital projects. Fisher would need to raise between \$7 and \$9 million in funds to start the school. The dean of SUNY Buffalo Law School states that there is no need for another law school in the state. The state Labor Department projects a 12 percent increase in lawyer jobs by 2014. (4/9) St. John Fisher College's announcement to begin preliminary plans to open a law school in downtown Rochester is being met with support from the Monroe County Bar Association. The last new law school to open in NY state was 25 years ago in 1983, and it would be the 16th law school in the state. Talks about Fisher's law school project have gained interest due to the attraction to retaining undergraduate students who want to go onto law school, but must leave the area to do so. A feasibility study has been completed to show that there is a market in the area, and the next steps would be to secure more funding. Planning will continue for about 2 to 3 years before anything really gets started. (4/16)

Fairport - The mayor of Fairport has announced a special committee to suggest a plan for how the village of Fairport's main entranceway, at the intersection of Routes 250 and 31F, should be developed. The Southern Gateway Sub-Area Plan Committee will include 14 people, made up of representatives from the five businesses on that intersection, planning and zoning boards, Fairport Village Partnership, Office of Community and Economic Dev, Fairport-Perinton Merchants

Association, the historical society, and a couple of others. The group is expected to report to the Village Board in October. (4/23)

Hamlin - The Hamlin Town Board adopted a new law regulating wind farm development, with much opposition from town residents. The new law requires 1,200 feet between a wind turbine and the nearest dwelling, and 600 feet from the property line. Opponents were extremely vocal in stating a preference of a 1,700 foot buffer from dwellings, but the new guidelines were passed as presented. Also included in the law were a regulation that only allows turbines in low-density residential areas, requirements that developers obtain variances, special permits, and environmental studies, as well as noise restrictions. In Monroe County, Hamlin is the first town to attract wind power developers. (4/25)

Finger Lakes Community College - Officials at the Hopewell/Canandaigua based FLCC are considering two local developers proposals for a satellite center in Victor that they would like to have in place by August of 2009. DiFelice Development Inc. has proposed to build a campus center on 24-acres on Route 251, adjacent to Lehigh Crossing Park. MCA Group's proposal involves space in the 80-acre Omnitech Business Park on Phillips Rd. The college would like to lease 25,000 sq.ft. to start, with the possibility of expansion later. The cost of leasing the space will be a key factor in choosing the proposal. (4/25)

All information in this news summary has been taken from published reports as reported in the following list of sources. This information is assumed to be correct but is not guaranteed. Bruckner, Tillett, Rossi, Cahill & Associates assumes no responsibility for any incorrect information in this news summary.

News Sources:

- *Democrat and Chronicle*
- *Times-Union*
- *Wolfe Community Newspapers*
- *The Daily Record*
- *Rochester Business Journal*
- *Messenger-Post publications*
- *The Wall Street Journal*
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