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Construction projects under way in Hamden

By Ann DeMatteo
Assistant Metro Editor

HAMDEN — Some large construction projects are going up in Hamden, despite the struggling economy.

The projects should lead to more economic development in the future, according to Dale Kroop, the town's director of economic and community development.

Two projects being constructed by LaRosa Building Group of Meriden are less than a mile from each other in southern Hamden.

One, Highwood Square, at 943-953 Dixwell Ave., could be ready for occupancy around September. It will have 27 housing units for artists and 15,000 square feet of commercial space, as well as gallery space.

The \$8 million project is being headed by NeighborWorks New Horizons of New Haven, formerly the Mutual Housing Association of South Central Connecticut.

Kroop is hoping that the project will lead to more Highwood redevelopment. "I'm engaged in conversation with other property owners," he said.

Around the corner to the north, LaRosa is building a two-story apartment building with 17 one-room apartments for Leeway, a nonprofit agency that helps people living with HIV and AIDS, in the former Atlantic Film Works at 451 Putnam Ave.

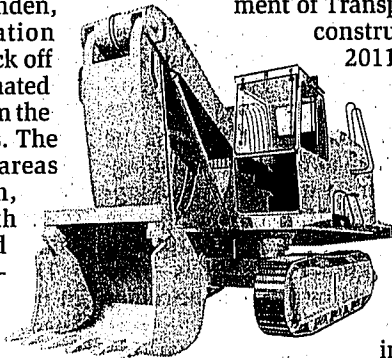
There also will be a two-story atrium and a community space with meeting rooms and offices. Residents are expected to move into the supportive living community later this year.

Also on Putnam Avenue, town officials soon expect to sign a contract to build a road through 11 undeveloped acres known as the Dadio farm, enabling the expansion of the Hamden Business Park.

Two companies already have purchased lots, another lot is for sale and the fourth is being reserved for a possible fire station. The town received a \$550,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce to build the infrastructure.

Also in southern Hamden, the Newhall remediation project is expected to kick off in April, when contaminated soil is to be removed from the yards of affected houses. The cleanup will start in areas bordered by Goodrich, Newhall, Morse, North Sheffield and Shepard streets, as well as Winchester Avenue and Prospect Lane.

Another remedia-



ABOVE and LEFT: Highwood Square is being built at 943-953 Dixwell Ave., Hamden, in the former Johnson building. The storefronts above will become commercial space, and 15,000 square feet of commercial space, as well as gallery space, will be in the building at left. The project also includes 27 housing units for artists on adjacent land.

tion project will take place at 400 Goodrich St. Kroop expects that the redevelopment of the Newhall neighborhood will trigger housing improvements in contiguous neighborhoods.

Moving to State Street, the state Department of Transportation bus garage is under construction and on schedule for a 2011 opening.

"It will have a major impact on the State Street corridor, and hopefully will drive development," said Kroop.

Whitney Center is clearing trees and doing site work on a project that is bringing 80 new apartments to the Leeder Hill Drive location. They will be completed in late 2012.

In northern Hamden, Quinnipiac University continues to build its York Hill campus off Sherman Avenue, and the state Department of Transportation is aligning the intersection of West Woods Road and Mount Carmel Avenue.

In the retail sector, the Hamden Mart is trying to sublease the former Toys R Us space. Lakeshore Learning now occupies part of the former Sears Hardware store in the Market Place at Skiff Street and Dixwell Avenue.

A men's clothing store will take up about 3,000 square feet of the building, and Petco is expected to move into 13,000 square feet, a spot smaller than what it now has at the Hamden Plaza.

Ann DeMatteo can be reached at 203-789-5716 or adematteo@newhavenregister.com.