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REAL ESTATE & DEVELOPMENT

Ridgefield growth continues with 330-acre mixed-use project

BY KENNEDY SMITH
Daily Journal of Commerce

After announcing several commercial and industrial projects totaling 335,000 square feet either under way or proposed – as well as predicting an influx of business growth complemented by a surge of residential development in the area – Ridgefield, Wash., has been steadily gaining a reputation as the next commercial and residential hub of Clark County.

Now, the town located 10 miles north of Vancouver has another development in the works, this time in the form of a 330-acre commercial and residential mixed-use project.

The Schuck Corp., a Colorado Springs, Colo.-based developer, is calling the Union Ridge development the largest in the region.

Schuck Corp. purchased the property now called Union Ridge in late 2000, and after a period of preparation with city officials and citizens, a site plan for the mixed-use concept including retail, commercial, office, industrial and housing was completed.

Dollar Tree Stores Inc. was the first to develop at Union Ridge. The nation's leading operator of discount variety stores completed construction of its $40 million distribution center in mid-2004 and currently employs more than 100 residents. The 650,000-square-foot center – the largest structure in Clark County – will now be open for tours.

"This is the next step for development at Union Ridge," said Bart Phillips, president of the Columbia River Economic Development Council, public/private partnership that encourages businesses to relocate or expand in Clark County. "(Union Ridge) is well on its way to becoming a significant economic engine for the region."

Other area projects that Ridgefield has recently announced include a 104,000-square-foot office, warehouse and production building for Pacific Power Products; a 35,640-square-foot educational training building on 29 acres for the Seventh Day Adventist Church North Pacific Union Conference; a three-building, 50,000-square-foot industrial condominium complex by Hinton Development Corp. of Vancouver; and a 19,000-square-foot office and retail building east of state Route 501 and south of 56th Place.

The city has been reviewing additional plans for subdivisions and other commercial development, the city reported.

Additionally, Ridgefield recently received $9 million in federal funding for the Pioneer Street/state Route-501 interchange replacement project in anticipation of population growth over the next 20 years.

During the next 20 years, Ridgefield is set to grow from a population of 2,900 to more than 25,000, with an employment base of more than 16,000 new jobs over the same amount of time, according to the city of Ridgefield's Web site.

To accommodate expected residential growth, the city has approved nearly 1,100 new residential lots with 400 more lots currently under review.

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