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Officials break ground for MH/MR building

By Paul Sunyak, Herald-Standard
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During Thursday's groundbreaking ceremony for a new \$3 million Fayette County Mental Health/Mental Retardation Agency building in the Fayette County Business Park, a top official announced that six prospective new tenants are showing interest in that location.

Raymond C. Polaski, executive director of the Fayette County Redevelopment Authority, said he could have a new announcement about the Route 40/New Salem Road park at his board's January meeting.

"We have at least six proposals from various firms that are interested in locating in the park," said Polaski, whose authority is developing the former county home property. "They're all predominantly local businesses that are expanding their operations in terms of employees."

Polaski said the interested tenants share two other characteristics: They want to move from rental to ownership status and they are all "service-oriented" businesses. Some of them intend to link up with out-of-county firms that would provide companion services, added Polaski, who used the hypothetical example of an accounting firm hooking up with a legal firm.

To some extent, Polaski's news overshadowed the purpose of the day, which was to break ground for the new MH/MR facility.

Commissioners Vincent A. Vicites and Sean M. Cavanagh offered brief comments on the importance to the community of

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the new MH/MR building, which will be built next to the new and existing CareerLink building. "This is a \$3 million project where we're using state and federal funds in Fayette County," said Cavanagh. "This is the latest in a long line of groundbreaking in the last four years. We need to make sure they (MH/MR) have a good environment for the employees and the patients."

Vicites said the recent developments, including the MH/MR building, prove the value of the commissioners' \$2 million investment of bond money into developing infrastructure in the 277-acre park.

"I think this is another example of the progress we're making in our county business park," said Vicites, who hailed the interest of "several other" interested parties as proof that the location is highly desirable. Vicites said it's his understanding that the potential park tenants are, in general terms, "spin-offs" of medical-related businesses.

He also noted that the county has a \$2 million request in the state's capital budget, money that if granted would go a long way toward speeding further development of the park.

Lisa Ferris-Kusniar, administrator and CEO of the MH/MR program, served as emcee of the ceremony, which took place under a tent that provided some protection from biting cold winds and pellets of rain. Refreshments were served in the CareerLink conference room immediately after the ceremony.

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