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MORE STORAGE -
Excavation for infrastructure at the future Storage Express - Palmdale is progressing behind the Ramada Inn at 300 West Palmdale Blvd. The 80,000-square-foot facility being built by Rob Martin

Properties is expected to be ready for business in early 2005.

GENE BRECKNER Valley Press

Developer plans storage, offices

Property in west Palmdale continues to draw interest

This story appeared in the Antelope Valley Press on Friday, August 20, 2004.

By ANN WISHART
Valley Press Business Editor

PALMDALE - The 5.7 acres being prepared for development behind the Ramada Inn on West Palmdale Boulevard is only the first part of Rob Martin's plan to cash in on the area's future growth.

Martin has cornered three parcels in the neighborhood that will become increasingly valuable as the date nears for construction of the Universal Health Service hospital at the intersection of Palmdale Boulevard and Tierra Subida Avenue.

Much of the infrastructure for Martin's first project - an 80,000-square-foot storage facility - is in place and he said he expects construction to start next week and be done early 2005. Storage Express - Palmdale should open in February, he said.

The self-storage project is to be modeled after Martin's Storage Express - Lancaster at Avenue J and the Antelope Valley Freeway, with 600 storage units including more than 100 covered spaces for recreational vehicles. Some of the units will have climate control and the business will have a retail store selling boxes and other moving and storage necessities, Martin said.

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He was motivated to find land for a second storage facility by the success of the Lancaster store, which has a 95% to 100% occupancy rate, he said, and also by the development of Anaverde, the 5,000-home planned community in southwestern Palmdale. The influx of new residents in that corner of the city should yield business for his project.

Martin, whose office is in West Lake Village, said he lived in the Valley from 1979 to 1994 and has continued developing properties in the area even when he moved his headquarters. The activity in Palmdale and Lancaster have given him incentive to expand here.

"Things are kind of happening fast now," he said. "I've seen the ups and downs in the Valley. This is probably the most dynamic I've seen it for quite some time," he said.

To take advantage of the location of the future hospital, he is expecting to break ground in the spring for a 100,000-square-foot office building on 8.5 acres fronting on Fifth Street West. He is negotiating with tenants now and hopes to have half of the facility, in what is to be called Challenger Business Park, leased by the time he starts, with the rest of it going in a spec space to be leased and customized after contracts are signed, Martin said. The doctors' offices and classrooms will be located near the proposed hospital, he said, making it convenient for staff and patients.

Plans for a two-acre property on Tierra Subida Avenue next door to the hospital site are still on the drawing board, he said.

Somewhat more concrete is the development of a retail shopping center in the triangle of land across from Sam's Club at the intersection of Avenue O-8 and 10th Street West. He is negotiating for a tenant for a 110-room hotel and also expects to build a financial institution at the site.

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