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SPECIALTY STORAGE — Rob Martin is building a 75,000 square-foot storage facility at Avenue J and the 14 Freeway. One entire row of units is climate-controlled to cater to items that can be affected by extreme temperatures. Cameras and alarms protect the facility.

Martin to offer rather special storage units

By ANN WISHART
Valley Press Business Editor

LANCASTER — While the narrow, deep sliver of land running along Highway 14 and fronting on Avenue J didn't hold much appeal for many retailers, Rob Martin of **Martin Properties Inc.**, saw an opportunity.

Two years ago, he started the wheels rolling; in October, he broke ground on a 75,000-square-foot storage facility.

When **Storage Express** opens in mid-April, it will boast 538 units from 25 square feet to 480 square feet, with some unique distinctions, Martin said.

"This is not just another one of those places where you put grandma's stuff," Martin said.

One entire row of units is climate controlled, catering to items that can be affected by cold weather or, more likely, exceptionally hot weather. The glue in some antiques will melt at about 110 degrees, Martin said. That won't be a problem in one of his units.

"In a conditioned space, you'll take that stuff out and it'll be just like when you put it in," he said.

The location of Storage Express in Lancaster's business district near the hospital and medical offices could be a real advantage. The climate controlled units may draw pharmaceutical firms that need to keep medicines and supplies safe from the heat or cold, Martin said.

"We anticipate serving the business clientele," he said.

Others who may be interested are owners of luxury recreational vehicles. Some of the units are 12 feet by 40 feet with an 18-foot clearance, offering a safe haven for RVs that might otherwise be at the mercy of the desert sun or vandals.

Every unit door is oversized and has an alarm. Cameras will video-tape the entire facility, so those half-million-dollar rigs, and anything smaller, can be parked securely, Martin said.

Prices for the smaller units start at \$39 a month, with a premium for the climate-controlled spaces.

Since he began advertising his storage facility, Martin estimated he has received 12 calls a day and is taking reservations.

Built into the retail sales store is a silo, which will effectively mark the facility's location.

The project has been financed by Valencia Bank & Trust to the tune of \$2.7 million, said Martin, who has been in business in the Antelope Valley since 1980, when he started in residential land sales and development.

When the economy changed in the 1990s, the firm began to focus on commercial real estate. Martin Properties Inc. and its affiliates own and manage more than \$20 million in real estate.

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