

Contact: Fred Ruder
MMI Hotel Group
(601) 326-8125
fruder@mmiemail.com

Bernadette Bruce
Silver Companies
(561) 981-5252
bbruce@silverco.com

WORK STARTING ON GERMANTOWN HYATT PLACE

11-11-07 Bids for 127-room hotel to be let this week.

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Work starts soon on G'town Hyatt Bids to be let next week on 127-room hotel with full service

By Kevin McKenzie

The earth moving and concrete pouring in Germantown at Forest Hill-Irene and Winchester are sure signs that a four-story hotel is slated to open there in the spring of 2009.

Bids are likely to be let next week for construction firms ready to build a 127-room Hyatt Place Hotel on the site, says the company developing it.

All of the action is taking place on the southeast corner of the intersection in Germantown, although fill dirt was scraped from property on the southwest corner, which is in Memphis annexation area.

Plans for a development on the future Memphis property have been placed on hold, said Charles Wurtzburger, the 81-year-old retired founder of Cleo Wrap and managing partner for owners of that land and more acreage on the Germantown side of Forest Hill-Irene.

On the Germantown corner, The Silver Cos., with offices in the Washington area and Boca Raton, Fla., announced a year ago its plans to build the \$22 million hotel.

So far, work on the site has included grading, a box culvert for drainage and other infrastructure work, said Marvin Bolinger, Silver Cos.' chief operating officer in Boca Raton.

The hotel will go out to bid next week, with construction slated to start in January or February and end 12 to 14 months later, Bolinger said.

"The Hyatt Place is a new concept developed by the Hyatt Corp. designed to compete with the Hilton Garden Inn and the (Marriott) Courtyards of the world," he said.

Designed for business people, it particularly targets post-Baby Boom younger generations X and Y, he said.

All rooms will be oversized and equipped with 42-inch flat-screen televisions capable of connecting with laptops and iPods.



Jim Weber/The Commercial Appeal

Workers install a drainage culvert Thursday afternoon at the corner of Winchester and Forest Hill-Irene where a 127 room Hyatt is planned to be built.

Food service will be offered 24 hours, seven days a week. And like ticket desks at an airport, customers at the hotel will be able to check in or out with the help of a human being or at a self-service kiosk, he said.

With 11 acres to work with, Silver Cos. also has four "out-parcels" for other future developments on the Germantown site. Another hotel, of the extended-stay variety, is among ideas being considered, Bolinger said. Meanwhile, previously announced plans for a high-end retail and entertainment development on a 70-acre site on the future Memphis corner have been dropped.

The developer linked with that proposal, Landmark Properties in Chicago, is no longer involved, Wurtzburger said.

He said he and partners have owned the property, and other acreage on the Germantown side of Forest Hill-Irene, for 40 years next year. They've been shopping for land buyers who will deliver upscale developments. "We want the right kind of thing for that area," Wurtzburger said.

-- Kevin McKenzie: 529-2348