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New restaurant, hotel planned for south side

By Seth Jovaag

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A big restaurant and an even bigger hotel are in the works on Oregon's suddenly resurgent southeast side.

On April 11, the former Valentine's Restaurant, 1150 Park St., was sold to the owner of J.T. Whitney's Pub and Brewery in Madison, who plans to re-open Oregon's largest eating spot in early June under the name "Hawthorn's Dining and Celebrations."

Meanwhile, local developer Paul Lynch confirmed Monday that he plans to bring a long-awaited hotel to Oregon, possibly just down the street from Hawthorn's.

Lynch plans to build a 70-room Holiday Inn Express Hotel and Suites, likely on vacant land between Krenz Engineering and D'Orazio Cleaning Supply, though he said his company has an option on another site in Oregon that could work, too (He would not specify where.)

Lynch said his company, PLH and Associates, will own the hotel and serve as general contractor during con-

struction. When complete, the franchise would be managed by DeForest-based Cornerstone Hotel Management, Inc.

There's no set timeline yet for the hotel's construction, though Lynch said, "We will be digging this year."

"Oregon as a community has needed a hotel for a long time," Lynch said. "We're capable of doing this... it's time to get it done."

The new hotel will have a pool and fitness center, said Brian Brandstetter, president of Cornerstone. Besides housing local overnight guests, Brandstetter said he hopes Oregon's only hotel will also draw lodgers from Madison because of its easy access to Hwy. 14.

"We think this is the right location, and the timing is great," he said.

A hotel would be a huge boost to the Oregon Area Chamber of Commerce, which could draw revenue from room taxes rather than just from events like Summer Fest or from



Paul Lynch

increasing membership dues, explained Chamber president Jason Johns.

And by boosting the Chamber's bottom line, room taxes could expand the Chamber's ability to market Oregon and promote local businesses, Johns continued.

"Getting a hotel was one of our goals when we hired (chamber director) Marechiel

(Santos-Lang)" last October, Johns said. "This has been a priority of ours for a long time."

A nice fit

The hotel would also fit nicely with plans for the former Valentine's Restaurant, which has sat empty since it closed suddenly last June – just 20 months after it opened in October 2005.

The new ownership is led by J.T. Whitney's owner David Bookstaff and his business partner Geoffrey Sandler,

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Up, up and...

Green Bay Packer wide receiver James Jones scores with authority during Monday night's charity basketball game at Oregon High School.

The event, sponsored by the Oregon DECA chapter, helped raised money for Gilda's Club Madison, part of a network of clubhouses where people living with cancer, and their friends and families, meet for mutual support.

Jeremy Jones photo

Public forum draws skeptics

At listening session, residents question village's flood plan

By Bill Livick

Observer Editor

The Oregon Village Board has held countless public discussions and listening sessions since last August, when a record rainfall of 8.13 inches in less than 48 hours caused flooding in several neighborhoods around town.

Despite many discussions and the passage of time, people's passions on the issue have not subsided. In fact, at another Village Board listening session Monday, two longtime residents of the west side – who had not participated earlier public discussions – said the village's stormwater management system appears to be broken. And, contradicting Oregon's engineering consultants' report, both men attributed much of the problem to west-side housing developments that have been built since 1999, when the village experienced another major flood.

Developer Jim Weber, who lived on Jefferson Street/Hwy. CC for many years before moving to South Fish Hatchery Road, said a small lake on his property west of the village is receiving stormwater runoff from the west side of the Bergamont development.

He said runoff that is diverted to a detention pond on the Bergamont golf course is not being held in the pond, but instead discharging west to the Phil Peterson farm and then across to his lake and property farther west. "The water is not being detained in that pond. You guys are being deceived," Weber said.

'These people are suffering because somehow, when these developments were going up, the stormwater rules weren't being followed.'

Jim Weber
Oregon property owner

"Now we have ditching all the way out by us. It's coming at us on two sides. The concern is, I'm getting sediment and pesticides off the golf course in my lake, which I've been trying to keep clean."

Weber brought photographs of flooding on and near his property, as well as pictures of detention ponds with open drain valves, allowing runoff to discharge each time there's a heavy rain. He discussed the problem with Dane County stormwater management officials and was told "those drains on those ponds are supposed to be closed," Weber said.

Oregon Public Works Director Mark Below confirmed that the drains exist to release water in order to work on the ponds, but most of the time they should be closed.

"They're open on every rain," Weber asserted. "I've gone over to check them."

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Brooklyn celebration

Railroad enthusiasts from throughout the Midwest will converge on Brooklyn this weekend for another Depot Days event. Scheduled for Saturday, 10 a.m.- 5 p.m. and Sunday, 10 a.m.- 4 p.m., Depot Days offers speeder car rides, amusement rides, local art and plenty of food. Miss Wisconsin, Christina Thompson, will be in the annual parade on Sunday at 1 p.m. For more information, call 455-1503.

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