

## New Villaggio development breaks ground

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By Jane Bokun

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With roaming opera singers, a sandwich buffet and carts reminiscent of Italy, the new community of Villaggio broke ground Friday morning.

"I like to think about what is needed and what can be done here," said John Good Jr., the developer of Villaggio.

His newest community will be an upscale 64-acre development on East Texas Street.

If Good's track record is any indication, the project should be a success. He also developed the Louisiana Boardwalk and the upscale Stonebridge community.

"What I like best about the new project is that he didn't ask Bossier City for a penny to produce it," said Lo Walker, the mayor of Bossier City and a guest at the groundbreaking.

Villaggio (Italian for village) will have shopping, dining, swimming and boating — all within a few minutes walk.

It will be on Highway 80 East, just east of Swan Lake Road and west of Bossier Parish Community College. In fact, the property will be within walking distance of BPCC. Phase 1 construction is slated to cost of \$80 million to \$90 million.

If John Good Jr. is worried, he's not showing it.

"My dad always knows when to do a new project," said Kristal Endris, owner of LeMode shop in the Louisiana Boardwalk and Good's daughter.

The development will feature a sandy-beached lake, 55,000 square feet of retail space, multifamily housing with two and three bedroom apartments, town homes, dining, office and commercial space, and a lakeside promenade with the property's trademark 45-foot clock tower. There also will be jogging/walking trails, swimming in designated areas, and paddle and sailboat rentals.

All this, Good said, for apartment rentals of about \$700 to \$1,300 per month.

"We're very reasonable," he said.

Lots also will be offered for sale for home building. Villaggio's retail space, called Buoni Negozi following the Italian-style theme, will showcase Main Street frontage and some will offer a view of the Promenade at Lake Villaggio. A special market area called "Carrelli" will utilize umbrella market carts offering everything from fresh flowers to Italian coffees. Good is anticipating a Summer 2008 phase one opening.

That may be why opera singers such as Tim Bostwick and Kirsten Chambers were singing Italian operettas by Puccini "O Mio Babbino Caro," and Mozart's Don Giovanni.

If this opening is any indication of the project, I can't wait until it's finished," said David Jones, a Bossier City Council member. "John has enhanced our quality of life."

When finished, Good said he anticipates the apartments may be rented by Bossier Parrish Community College students or people from Barksdale Air Force base.

During Phase II of building, Villaggio also will offer Casa Bella, one, two and three bedroom units which will incorporate a three-story design with wrought iron gates.

Good and his company, Villaggio Development Ltd. are developing the project.



Jane Bokun/The Times Local media interview developer John Good Jr. about his new project, Villaggio. The development broke ground Friday. (Jane Bokun/The Times)

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