

THE BUFFALO NEWS

Ceremony launches canal lofts project

Backers break ground at Remington Rand site

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NEWS NIAGARA REPORTER

April 17, 2009, 7:27 AM / [0 comments](#)

NORTH TONAWANDA—By the middle of next month, demolition crews will begin gutting much of a former downtown factory, one of the first visible steps in creating a mixed-use development including work/living loft space on the Erie Canal, developers said Thursday.

Under a bright spring sun outside the former Remington Rand building, elected leaders and business representatives gathered to mark the ceremonial ground-breaking for the redevelopment project a few years in the making.

"This is going to create a destination area for North Tonawanda right here," said Anthony M. Kissling, head of Kissling Interests, "and hopefully when we finish with this, we'll start momentum for other developers in this area."

Dubbed the "Remington Lofts on the Canal," the facility will have 81 work/living lofts, along with a restaurant and fitness facility.

The first phase of the project, the completion of 15 Mile, a venture by Scott and Virginia Rossi, as well as the health facil-

ity, should be open by Thanksgiving, Kissling said.

The building, 184 Sweeney St., also has about 10,000 square feet of unrented space, and Kissling said he is in negotiations with several parties for its use.

The project's costs are now pegged at \$20 million, up from \$15 million in September 2007. The developer has received a \$1 million state grant through the Restore New York program, as well as tax breaks through the Niagara County Industrial Development Agency, tax credits through the state Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, as well as incentives through the state brown-field cleanup program.

Mayor Lawrence V. Soos called Kissling's project "a piece of the puzzle" to improving the downtown area around Main and Webster streets.

Douglas P. Taylor, president of the Lumber City Development Corp., which also provided assistance for the project, described the plans as the "keystone" to the revitalization and growth of the downtown area.

The project is scheduled to be completed 18 months after demolition begins, said Scott Lacasse, Kissling's executive vice president.

In addition to exterior concrete work, the building is getting custom windows and some roof work, Lacasse said.

The Kissling Interests also has developed properties in Buffalo and New York City.

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