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Hampton Business District building starts

By MITCHELL FREEDMAN

The first of nine buildings that will become the Hampton Business District at Gabreski Airport — a new industrial center for Southampton Town — will be going up later this year, with a formal groundbreaking next month, the developer said.

For several years, the only work at the airport site was a new road and a traffic circle amid empty fields. But bulldozers recently have been leveling the ground, and signs have gone up saying the business district will be in operation this year.

Rechler Equity Partners of Plainview in 2005 gained zoning changes needed to proceed with the project after years of stalemate between the town and Suffolk County — which owns the airport — over how to develop the 58-acre site.

The change allowed the developer to build structures taller and larger than otherwise permitted by the town code. Town officials have said the project could create 600 to 900 new jobs when completed.

The first building, a 60,000-square-foot industrial structure, will be followed by two office and medical buildings, which will add 60,000 square feet of space, according to Rechler.

"The two state-of-the-art buildings will . . . cater to the region's growing health care sector," company officials said in a statement.

The plan for the complex includes offices ranging from 1,333 square feet to 100,000 square feet, as well as a 39,000-square-foot business center with a restaurant, health club and bank. A 145-room hotel will become the "signature project" of the business district, Rechler officials said in the statement. There are also plans for an on-site day care center.

When the project is completed — the Rechler lease runs 40 years — it is to have nine buildings with 485,000 square feet of office and industrial space.

In another development at the airport, the state Department of Environmental Conservation has started the process of taking the 106th Air National Guard base — which shares the runways at Gabreski and leases about 70 acres at the airport — off its list of inactive hazardous waste disposal sites.

That action will mean the base is no longer considered a potential danger to health.

The cleanup at the base began in 1994, after a site investigation by the Department of Defense found chlorinated solvents in sludge samples that had been collected from old septic tanks and cesspools. The work was finished in 2011, and the DEC concluded that "a significant threat to public health and the environment no longer exists at the site."

Public comments about the delisting can be made up to March 2 by writing to Project Manager Heather Bishop at the DEC's Division of Environmental Remediation, 625 Broadway, Albany, NY 12233-7015, or by calling 518-402-9620.