

Your hometown newspaper
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SUNDAY

August 15, 2004

75 cents

VOLUME 118 NUMBER 102

PLYMOUTH Observer



www.hometownlife.com

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Builder fuels Amoco property plan

BY TONY BRUSCATO
STAFF WRITER

Plans have been submitted to develop the old Amoco gas station site in downtown Plymouth into a \$3.5 million retail, office and condominium complex.

Jim Lawrence, of Development Resource Group in Brighton, is partnering with property owner Ed Dombrowski to build the three-story multi-use facility – to be called the 789 Building – at the corner of Ann Arbor Trail and Main Street.

“Ed is contributing the land and we are bringing our redevelopment and contaminated site experience to the project,” said Lawrence. “We appreciate

smaller cities with rejuvenated downtown areas, and we’re trying to create an affordable live-work facility in a vibrant area across from a beautiful park.”

The 789 Building will be much like the Mayflower Centre across the street, with retail or restaurant space at street level, office area on the middle floor, with four condos on the third floor that will have a mezzanine-level bedroom.

“We want the building to blend with the community,” said Lawrence. “The Box Bar and Mayflower Centre are neighbors, so we’re trying to make the building look like it’s been there for years and years.”

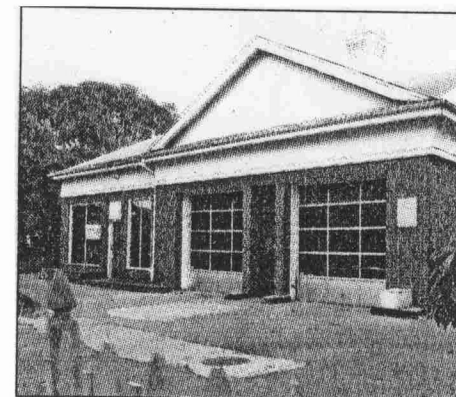
Lawrence said they’ve approached several banks to finance the project, and

he’s hopeful approval from the city’s planning commission will come in time to begin construction this year.

“We’re getting a really good response. We’ve talked to several restaurant people, and some who are interested in the office area,” Lawrence said. “We want to be 60 percent pre-leased before we break ground. It wouldn’t be fair to the community to have a vacant building constructed there.”

Because the site was previously a gas station, there will need to be environmental cleanup of the property before construction – which will include underground residential parking – can begin.

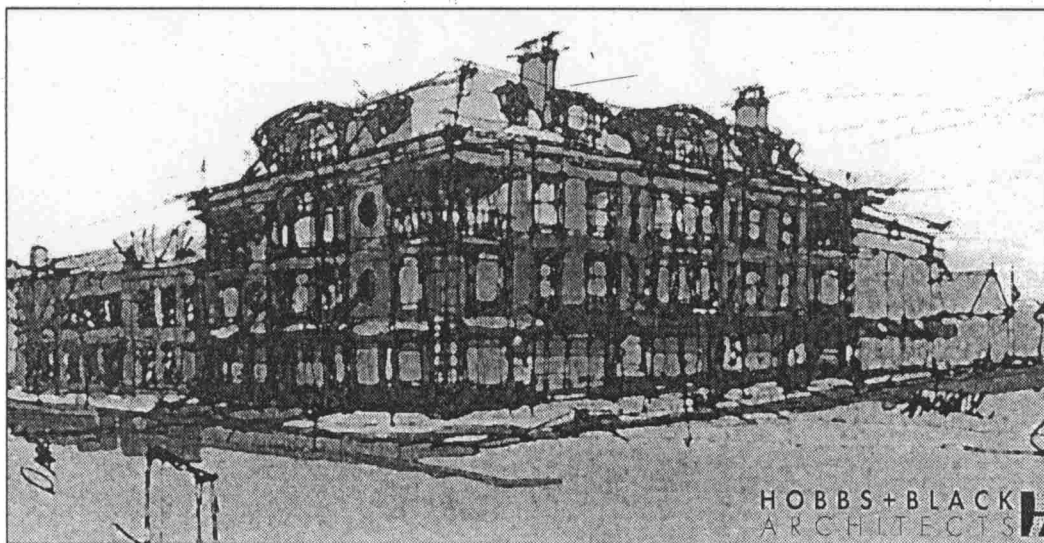
PLEASE SEE **AMOCO, A5**



TOM HAWLEY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

After years of being vacant, plans are finally in place for the old Amoco building downtown.

Ready for next time



An artists' rendering of what The 789 Building might look like on the site of the current Amoco property.

AMOCO

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"The big myth is that Amoco cleaned the site," said Nicholas Maloof with Associated Environmental Services of Bloomfield Hills, who has been hired as an environmental consultant. "There's still contamination in the soil and groundwater underneath the old gas station, the Box Bar and the Mayflower (Meeting House). "It's not necessarily dangerous as the levels aren't high enough to become a health concern issue," said Maloof,

"but enough to make it eligible for a brownfield."

The developers will petition the city commission to make the site a brownfield, which would give them tax breaks for cleaning the contamination.

Lawrence said the condominiums, ranging from 2,000 to 2,500 square feet, will sell in the neighborhood of \$300,000, which is about a third of what the condos across the street at the Mayflower Centre cost. At last check, none of the condos in the Mayflower have been sold.

"We want to make them

affordable so they're not priced out of the market," Lawrence said. "As for the other space, our facility is designed for smaller tenants, so we're confident about filling them, considering the early interest we've had."

Land cost, contamination cleanup and construction will push the project to about \$5 million, according to Lawrence.

"If all goes well, we could be looking at a grand opening in the fall of 2005," he said.

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Physician selected to Schoolcraft board

BY DAN WEST
STAFF WRITER

Northville Dr. Phillip Cascade will replace the late-Richard DeVries on the Schoolcraft College Board of Trustees.

Cascade was appointed to the board for a 10-month term.

The board selected the veteran physician after meeting 16 candidates for 20-minute interviews Monday and Tuesday.

He told the board he plans to run for election to the seat next June when voters will determine who will serve the remaining four years of DeVries' term, which was an important attribute sought board members, said Mary Breen, a Livonia resident who chairs the Schoolcraft board.

"In my 21 years on the board, we've never had a medical doctor on our board," Breen said. "It was hard because there were

so many good people, but Dr. Cascade had a strong academic background and has had a number of articles published."

Cascade works as a physician at University of Michigan Hospitals, campus professor at U-M and professional consultant. In his 38-year career, Cascade also practiced at Detroit's Sinai Hospital and Ann Arbor's VA Medical Center and taught at Wayne State University.

Cascade will be sworn-in and officially join the seven-member board Aug. 25.

The selection process concludes a painful six-week process for the Livonia college's board that started June 8 when DeVries, a retired Livonia Public Schools teacher and 11-year college board member, was found stabbed to death in his condominium.

In a written confession publi-

cized in Jamaal Ecorse DeVries. in Wayne on murdered armed role victim of will spend jail without parole.

"In our since it has portrait up but we felt down for the Breen, DeV friend and appointment sure for us."

To recognize of service to college place next to the c

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Biker 'toy run' aids underprivileged

BY DOUG JOHNSON
STAFF WRITER

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