

# 2006 new projects

## Farmland yields to crop of retail, homes, offices

James Doran Co.

It takes planning and vision to turn 155 acres of farmland into a thriving urban community. James Doran Co., a Charleston, S.C.-based development firm, is doing just that with Northshore Town Center, in Knoxville, Tenn. The project combines retail and office space and different types of residential — apartments, condos, single-family homes and town houses — to create a true urban community.

"This is the wave of the future," said Peter Harper, the firm's COO. The complex is being developed in two phases (the first major retail phase is scheduled to open in mid-2007, and James Doran expects to complete the project by 2010) at Interstate 140 (Pellissippi Parkway) and Northshore Drive, in southwest Knoxville. More than 23,000 people live within a three-mile radius, and 62,000-plus reside within five miles. The area's overall population exceeds 724,000, and the average household income is \$115,000. "This is where all the growth is," said Harper. "We're seeing the highest increases in population and average household income in the area."

When it is completed, the complex will incorporate over 500,000 square feet of retail, 300,000 square feet of office space and 700 residential units. "The residences have been selling out like crazy," Harper said. "Then, when the retail and offices are built, everything comes together to form a dynamic community."

Retailers at Northshore Town Center will include anchors such as a specialty grocer and possibly a cinema, plus national, regional and local upscale stores and restaurants.

The retail will form the centerpiece of an inclusive neighborhood that will offer housing at varying price points. Baltimore-based RTKL Associates designed the master plan. Roswell, Ga.-based Randall Paulson Architects handled the retail design. "This is a true urban environment," Harper said. "It just works."

The retail will boast pedestrian-friendly streets (parking will be located on the periphery to keep the main thoroughfare safe for walking) designed to emulate a historic urban downtown area. Many buildings will feature trellises, porches



Northshore Town Center, in Knoxville, Tenn., will comprise retail and office space plus several different types of housing to create a comprehensive urban community.

and rooftop decks, some of which will offer views of the nearby Tennessee River.

Amenities include a five-acre natural lake with fountains and a boardwalk, parks and plazas, a jogging/nature trail, and an outdoor amphitheater for live performances, flea markets and other special events. In true historic fashion, office space will be located above retail space. Yet, New Urbanist design trends will be obvious; for example, peripheral parking will be situated behind stores and offices.

"Everything is pedestrian-friendly, so there will be less reliance on the automobile," Harper said. "You're sharing uses, sharing parking."

Knoxville's industrial and warehouse feel is inspiring a look with relatively flat facades and a great deal of brick. The company is compiling a theme analysis for the overall architecture of the main street. "It will look like it has been built over time," Harper said.

The site's previous function as farmland means the company has spent the past year building infrastructure. Construction of a 33,000-square-foot building containing ground-floor retail with offices above begins this month. ■