

Movie complex with 8 to 10 screens coming to Norwalk

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The north side of Norwalk will see big changes next year.

Pride One Real Estate of Medina announced today the impending purchase and development of 93 acres of property located off Stower Lane, which is adjacent to the Industrial Parkway, east of the Smetzer plaza and also nearby the Tractor Supply Company and Batesville Casket Company.

"We're under contract to take ownership in the next week," said David Conwill, development director for Pride One and managing partner of Pride One Norwalk LLC.

Conwill said United Entertainment Corp. of St. Cloud, Minn. will build a movie theater on the property which will be the anchor tenant of the development.

"United Entertainment is a movie-theater company that focuses on the Midwest and smaller markets," Conwill said, adding the theaters United builds are "luxury theaters" with usually eight to 10 screens that show first-run movies.

Conwill said about 30 employees will be hired to man the theater with the slated opening targeted for fall 2005.

"We're actually further along than we may appear to be," Conwill said. "We've already began the engineer drawings and should have those submitted within a week or so. We should be moving dirt in the very near future."

The development will be called Norwalk Commons.

Conwill said recruiting a sit-down restaurant is also part of the development plan.

"The idea is for the people of Norwalk to have a place to go and sit down that is affordable," Conwill said. "A nice restaurant setting where they can have a beer and a \$10 steak."

"The whole point of this project is to spur economic development in Norwalk," Conwill added.

"We have found the Norwalk community to be very nice with lots of growth potential," Conwill said. "The leadership at the public level is very pro-growth. The city is putting themselves in the position to meet the demands of the Cleveland-area growth."

Conwill believes the theater will be very successful in Norwalk, attracting movie-goers from south of Norwalk and a bit north of Ashland and Mansfield and also those west of Lorain and east of Tiffin.

"We're a humble company," Conwill said of Pride One. "We want to come into a community and add value. We're known as a developer that works jointly with a community and develops products there is a demand for."

The property will have access from both Stower Lane and Industrial Parkway.

Conwill said the project would never have happened without the help of city officials.

"The city has been great to work with," he said. "The citizens of Norwalk have no idea how great it is to have leadership that understands economics and real-world business. Norwalk gave us an awesome welcoming."

Conwill said a small portion of the property will remain zoned multi-family, if both pre-annexation zoning changes are approved by city council.