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The Village at South County Commons is a popular southern Rhode Island lifestyle center

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The first and only lifestyle center in southern Rhode Island, The Village at South County Commons, looks to its future expansion with additional retail, restaurants, a specialty grocer, and medical offices. The center opened in 2003 as part of a 150-acre mixed-use development. It consists of more than 850,000 s/f of retail, restaurants, a cinema, a hotel, offices, services, and residences.

"It was the developers' vision to create this unique and beautiful property to serve the dining, entertainment, shopping, medical, and most of all the employment needs of the surrounding communities," said Thomas DiPrete, one of the principals of the development. "We perceive the life-style shopping center as the future of community development."

Alexander Petrucci, also a principal of the development group, said, "People enjoy living, working, dining, and seeking entertainment all in one place. This is the perfect location and now we are looking to expand what South County Commons offers."

Located on Rte. 1, Tower Hill Rd., an estimated 48,000 vehicles per day travel in front of the property. South Kingstown, home of the University of Rhode Island, the state's largest university, and white sandy beaches, is vibrant all year long. In the summer thousands of tourists and summer residents fill South County hotel rooms and rental properties, while the university population (15,000 students and 2,500 employees) stimulates added activity the rest of the year. The income and education level of area residents is amongst the state's highest.

The town of South Kingstown has a population of 31,000 and is one of the fastest growing areas in Rhode Island. The \$100 million development is credited with helping to drive positive growth in the area and has become a community center for those who live, work, and play for miles around.

Dennis DiPrete of DiPrete Engineering, who planned and provided all of the engineering services for the development, indicated that the project had its ground breaking in 2001 after six years of planning, design, and engineering, and over 60 meetings with the town and officials. He also said that the concept of South County Commons was carefully designed not to look like a traditional shopping center, or an overdesigned imitation village. The developers retained five different architectural firms to assure variety in the design and style. The architects included ADD, Inc. of Boston, Russell Sergeant of Mystic, Conn., and local architect Frank Karpowicz, to add their personal touches. The landscape design implementation was done under the direction of Rhode Island landscape architect John C. Carter & Company.

New England facades feature a mix of clapboard, shingle, brick, and stone on building exteriors along with wide white trimmed windows. To maintain the village look, first floor retail spaces have large storefront windows on the street and at-door parking. Second floor office space adds to the village atmosphere offering a wide range of medical and general office services, with space available.

The welcoming main entrance to South County Commons is lined with farm stone walls and trees, shrubs, and flowers. The plantings continue throughout the "main street," adding visual appeal along with the reproduction period lighting.

More than 750 residents live at The Village at South County Commons at either Harbor Village at the Commons, a 234 luxury apartment complex; The Preserve at the Commons, 64 luxury condominiums; and Brightview at the Commons, a 154-bed independent living facility.

The red brick-front Applebee's restaurant sits at the entrance. The 8-screen Entertainment Cinema features the latest releases. The 100-room Hampton Inn hotel and meeting facility opened its doors in 2008 providing lodging for tourists, business travelers, and URI visitors, including sport teams. Other popular businesses include: Trattoria Romana, an Italian restaurant; Shogun, a Japanese/Sushi restaurant; Brewed Awakenings, a coffee cafe/gathering spot; Spa Mosaic, a full-service spa; and Luxe Fitness Club, a health club. The Goddard School for Early Childhood Development is located in its own free standing building next to Westerly Community Credit Union. Retailers include Sears, Cardi's, Sleepy's, and a host of other independent stores.

South County Commons from the beginning has had an interest in giving back to the community. A summer outdoor concert series helps raise funds for various charities. In December Mr. and Mrs. Claus arrive by horse-drawn carriage.

The development is fully embraced by the South County community. The developers are now looking to what is next. "We are excited about the prospects for 2012 and beyond," said Jeffrey Saletin of Saletin Real Estate Group, the property's management firm. "We have the ability to construct an additional 50,000 s/f in several additional buildings to accommodate more restaurants, retail, services, and medical and general office users."

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