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Warwick still growing in spite of current economic concerns

February 08, 2008 - Rhode Island

With growing concerns about the state of the economy, it was heartening to examine various residential and commercial projects underway throughout the city last year and see the investment that homeowners, private companies and non-profit agencies continue to make in Warwick.

A review of the Building Department's listing of commercial projects, including new construction, renovations or additions to existing structures and hotels/motels, shows private developers' investment of over \$77.3 million in 2007. These figures don't take into account new or major improvements to residential buildings or other miscellaneous projects, which total nearly \$33 million.

Warwick's business base is a wide-ranging mix of small companies, retail, office parks and tourism-related enterprises. All of these are reflected in 2007 investments here, with projects ranging from a 4,250 s/f facility to two office buildings, totaling 200,000 s/f, near the Crowne Plaza Hotel. One of the buildings - at 120,000 s/f will be home to Davol Inc.'s world headquarters.

Warwick is also home to Kent Hospital, which serves residents in the greater Kent County region, and a growing need for medical office space is clearly evident. Roughly half a dozen facilities have either been completed or are under construction and are located not far from the hospital's complex.

On the Border and Chipotle's restaurants were completed last year, and work on a Texas Road House restaurant began on the Warwick/East Greenwich border before the New Year. Area residents are eagerly awaiting completion of the NYLO Hotel and other facilities at historic Pontiac Mills, as well as renovations to Warwick Mall, which will soon welcome Target as one of its anchor stores.

As 2008 progresses, there are a number of exciting projects in the planning stages, with developers working with a variety of municipal offices to secure the appropriate permits and approvals.

As always, our department of tourism, culture and development stands ready to assist new or existing businesses. Please do not hesitate to contact them at (401) 738-2000 x6404 or www.movetowarwickri.com.

Scott Avedisian is the mayor of Warwick.

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540