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The United Group's executive vice president and chief operating officer, John Ball, speaks at a news conference Wednesday. The company will accept applications starting today housing. The student apartment building with 397 private bedrooms, in 114 furnished suites, is located on Broad Street and will open fall 2009.
 Staff Photo/Kelli Catana /

Published October 01, 2008 11:30 pm - The Suites at Plattsburgh will open for the fall 2009 semester. There will be nearly 400 beds in a combination of four- and two-bedroom suites.

New student housing applications being accepted

Project at former St. John's Academy to house nearly 400

By DAN HEATH
 Staff Writer

PLATTSBURGH -- Applications are being accepted for a new student-housing project in Plattsburgh that is expected to open for the fall 2009 semester.

United Development Corp., part of the Troy-based United Group of Companies, is building the College Suites at Plattsburgh on the former St. John's Academy property on Broad Street.

It will feature 114 units, mainly with four bedrooms but some two-bedroom units.

United Group Executive Vice President and Chief Operations Officer John Ball said the units will be fully furnished.

"We want to make sure students know they have an option."

The complex will have a fitness center, cafe/student lounge, game room, study rooms and laundry facilities.

Cable television, wireless and wired Internet and all utilities are included.

College Suites will have an on-site manager and a maintenance person.

The building will be locked at all times, and students gain access via swipe cards. A security office will be staffed when the offices are closed, and residential advisers will be on site.

College Suites is open to juniors and seniors, as Plattsburgh State -- the main source of potential tenants -- requires freshmen and sophomores to live on campus.

Four-bedroom suites will cost each student \$7,200 per school year, and two-bedroom units will cost \$8,200 per student.

By comparison, a student in a four-bedroom suite at Plattsburgh State would pay \$5,350 for a school year.

Demolition of the former St. John's School building on the property is under way. The shell is expected to be in place by winter and the suites completed by late summer.

The construction company is United's American Construction Co., Ball said, but almost all of the work will be done by Luck Brothers.

Plattsburgh State Vice President for Student Affairs Bill Laundry said the project is a nice addition to the housing pool available to his students.

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Staff Photo/Kelli Catana /

"This is a real plus for recruitment. I visited their housing in Albany. They are first-class."

While it is difficult to say how many, Laundry said some students will likely move from Center City housing, which has been a focus of noise and vandalism complaints.

"I have to feel it's going to make a difference. It's a move in the right direction, at the very least."

Ball said United Group manages or is developing 7,500 beds of student housing in New York. That includes 3,000 occupied units as of Labor Day weekend.

Student and senior-citizen housing development remain strong despite the current turmoil in financial markets, Ball said. This type of project remains attractive to lenders even with the drop in the credit market, he said.

"They believe they will get a better rate of return, and they will."

Age demographic studies show swelled numbers for people approaching college age and those moving from their late 50s into their 60s.

"The industry sees that as a commanding demographic for the next four to five years," Ball said.

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