

IDAHO BUSINESS REVIEW

Ahlquist breaks ground on Meridian development

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Developer Gardner Ahlquist is finalizing plans for a Nampa business park and is about to break ground on Portico at Meridian, a retail, hotel and medical office complex. Ventana Business Park, near the Treasure Valley Marketplace in Nampa, has just opened to retail tenants, said Kari Davis, asset manager for the company. Until Jan. 22, Gardner Ahlquist couldn't sell or market the 35-acre development to retailers because it had bought the property from the developer of Treasure Valley Marketplace and Treasure Valley Crossing who didn't want Ventana competing for tenants with their developments. Ventana would have 8 acres fronting Midland Boulevard for retail, Davis said. Most of the remaining acreage would be used for medical office buildings. The first tenant would be a 30,000-square-foot building across from the 60 acres Mercy Medical Center has purchased near the new Karcher/Interstate 84 interchange. Gardner Ahlquist has leased the first floor to an urgent care center and a medical imaging center. Ventana, which means window in Spanish, would have seven retail lots and 13 or 14 office buildings, for a total of about 400,000 square feet of commercial space. Gardner Ahlquist plans to work on infrastructure for the development in the spring and break ground on the first medical building this summer. Gardner Ahlquist received building permits for Portico, a 26-acre development located at Franklin and Eagle roads, Davis said. It was trying to break ground last week despite the snow. Portico would have two 80,000-square-foot medical office buildings; 20,000 square feet of retail; a 134,000-square-foot, six-story, Silver Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, Class A office building; and a 12-story, 200-room hotel. Hotel Portico would be the only four-diamond hotel in the state of Idaho, and would include a 20,000-square-foot convention center plus a ballroom, according to Davis. Gardner Ahlquist is looking for a salon and spa to accompany the hotel. The planned Silver LEED building has already been partially leased to Engineered Structures Inc., Gardner Ahlquist's contractor. Retailers for the project may include a sports bar and a sushi restaurant. Tenants in the office building include an urgent care center, an imaging center and, possibly, a physician-owned surgery center. Gardner Ahlquist hopes to finish building the retail portion of Portico by July, the medical offices by December and the hotel and office building by fall 2009. Gardner Ahlquist is starting site work at a third development, Eagle Island Crossing, which would be anchored by Arts West Academy and Rivendell Music Academy. The company has received building permits for the school, two office buildings and three retail buildings. It also plans 12 acres of residential – about 30 high-density, high-finish homes, Davis said. The company plans to finish the school buildings in time to open for the school year in September.