

Office buildings popping up all over

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Watsonville is experiencing a minor boom in construction of office buildings, with more on the horizon.

A 23,000-square-foot building was recently completed on Penny Lane near the Green Valley Athletic Club, a complex of 22 offices on East Lake Avenue is virtually finished, and a two-building, 5,400-square-foot project is under way on Aspen Lane, near the athletic club.

Also in the works is a 6-building, 87,000-square-foot complex on Main Street across from Watsonville Square shopping center, and a 15,000-square-foot building on Loma Prieta Drive, near the athletic club.

"A lot of these are being built with clients already in mind," said Robert Ellenwood, city planning director. "They're not spec (built on speculation that somebody will buy)."

The 23,000-square-foot building on Penny Lane was built by Kit Lauer, owner of Green Valley Athletic Club. The building is full, with the exception of a proposed restaurant. The City Council will make a decision on the restaurant Oct. 23.

The offices on the ground floor are medical, including a dialysis center, dental office, and emergency care clinic. The upstairs includes professional offices and the proposed restaurant. (The restaurant, if approved, will be called Shell's and will be operated by a

former regional director for Charthouse restaurants.)

Lauer said he has a mix of tenants who have moved from other offices and those who have come from other areas, usually Santa Cruz. "You're getting the Santa Cruz expansion into Watsonville," he said.

Under construction near Lauer's building are office buildings of 3,400 square feet and 2,000 square feet, being built by John Fiorovich Construction.

Martha Fiorovich, an architect for the firm, said almost all the spaces in the building have been taken, even though the project won't be finished until early spring. (They're being sold as condominiums.) Most of them are for medical uses.

Fiorovich Construction is also planning a 15,000- to 16,000-square-foot office building at Loma Prieta Avenue and Holly Drive, also near the athletic club. It is now in the design review process with the city and if approved would be completed sometime after the first two buildings, Martha Fiorovich said.

Real estate agent Marty Sglav has developed a 22-office complex at 734 E. Lake Ave., which will be ready for occupancy in a matter of days.

The offices, which will be sold as condominiums, range from 770 square feet to 950 square feet. Some will be bought by investors, who will then lease out the offices.

Sglav said he expects a variety of professional firms to be



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in the complex. He said he would welcome medical offices, but doesn't expect a high percentage of them.

One of the largest office projects ever proposed for Watsonville is the 87,000-square-foot South County Professional Park, planned for the corner of Main Street and Green Valley Road, across from Watsonville Square shopping center. Appli-

cations for the complex are being processed by the city planning department.

Michael Helm, architect for the project, said plans call for development in three phases over two, to two and a half years.

Helm said the first phase will be about 30,000 square feet, with construction starting in the spring. The second and

third phases will be started as soon as there's enough demand for them.

"We've got a number of tenants lined up. It's 50 to 60 percent leased out," Helm said of the first phase. He expects nearly half of his tenants will be those with offices elsewhere in the Monterey Bay area who are opening an additional branch in Watsonville.

Helm said the location and an ample supply of parking will be key attractions for the complex. He expects one 10,000-square-foot building may be used for medical offices.

The South County Professional Park application is by a group of investors which includes George Couch, owner of Couch Distributing on Lee Road.

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