

Watsonville industrial sites are on the market

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WATSONVILLE — Two large developments proposed here by Heritage Development Corp. and Landmark Real Estate for sale, and a third is being postponed until spring.

Scott Johnson and Chuck Allen, partners in Heritage and Landmark, have run ads recently in the Wall Street Journal advertising for sale their proposed 156-acre Landmark Industrial Park and part of another project known as Heritage Ranch.

If built, the Landmark Industrial Park at Harkins Slough Road would be the county's largest industrial development. It has been in the planning for four years and is being advertised for sale at \$3 million.

"There's an old saying that goes everything's for sale except my wife," said Johnson. "If we can sell phase one (of the project), the whole thing, or go into a joint venture with someone and make a profit we'll do it."

Johnson said he runs an ad every six months or so in the Journal to try to attract new investors or possible buyers.

Johnson and Allen are also advertising part of a three-parcel property near Harkins Slough and Lee roads for sale. The land is in the county and zoned agricultural.

Johnson has long-term plans develop that area, called Heritage Ranch, into a golf course, housing, and two shopping centers, including one regional shopping center. The middle parcel of the 195-acre site has been advertised for sale.

A third project is being postponed. Johnson and Allen have City Council approval to build a Ramada Inn along Highway 1 at Beach Road, but Johnson said the city's lengthy plan-check process is pushing them up against a mid-October date, which means winter rains and no grading until drier weather comes along.

Johnson said he's anticipating a spring ground-breaking for the motel unless there is a

dry winter, in which case the construction could begin sooner. He had earlier predicted the motel would be started by last spring. The massive Landmark Industrial Park is not in any financial trouble, Johnson said.

"The ads are not based upon us not being able to meet our financial obligations or the investors being in a panic," he said. "It's been for sale since the day we started — for the right price."

The market is improving to try to sell such a project, because some of the vacant industrial space in Silicon Valley is filling up, Johnson said.

Although, he said, an ad in the Journal is expensive. "The buyers we're trying to attract wouldn't be local, so the ads are a chance for us to test the waters. If we get an offer at a price we'd accept, then we'd sell," Johnson said.

The city approved Landmark's tentative map in June 1984, according to Planning Director Bud Carney. Last year Johnson and Allen received approval to build phase one of the park — 26 acres of buildings.

Part of the approval hinges on their building a \$500,000 Landmark Parkway through an adjacent parcel of land known as the Console property, named for its owners, former Watsonville Canning owner Mort Console and his mother, Kathryn.