

building

BUILDER NOTES

North Branch senior community to allow for changing stages of life

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Shoreview-based Ecumen, Minnesota's largest nonprofit provider of senior housing and services, broke ground last week on a \$20.5 million senior living community in North Branch, about 45 miles north of the Twin Cities. The project is Ecumen's response to the need for communities in which people can remain through different stages of their lives. The project will be community-focused, with different neighborhoods encouraging interaction among residents and others in the surrounding communities.

"It takes away that institutional, long, cold-corridor feeling and creates a much smaller, better sense of community," said Eric Schubert, Ecumen's director of communications.

The 20-acre community will include a town center with a bakery, coffee shop, general store, community room and chapel. Residents will be able to choose among housing options so they can move within the community as their needs change.

A three-story building with 51 assisted-living residences will include garage parking and two memory-

care residences, each serving up to 10 people who need specialized care for neurological conditions.

An additional residence will be divided into four homes, each for 17 residents who require extra care. Residents will have more privacy and amenities than what Ecumen refers to as "yesterday's institutional nursing homes." For example, wireless technology will encourage greater independence for residents and each building will have its own kitchen and dining area.

Sixty of the units will be private. "I strongly feel that older adults should not be forced to share living spaces if they choose not to," said John Korzendorfer, Ecumen's director of operations.

The community will be located west of the Tanger Mall at Interstate Hwy. 35 in Chisago County. Ecumen also owns and operates the Parmley Community in Chisago County, a provider of senior housing and services. Completion is anticipated by summer 2007.

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Ecumen's senior-living community is to open on 20.8 acres in summer 2007. A variety of housing styles will allow people to remain as their abilities change.