

The party starts for Daytona Hard Rock condo sales

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DAYTONA BEACH — Rock 'n' roll, smiles and pictures of Daytona Beach's future filled a huge tent at Daytona International Speedway on Wednesday night as the head of the company planning to build a Hard Rock Hotel on the oceanfront announced he's starting to sell condos for the new development that has the city buzzing.

"This is a real celebration for us," Henry Wolfond, CEO of Canada-based Bayshore Capital Inc., told the 200 people packed inside a 3,000-square-foot tent that captured the Hard Rock spirit with glass cases holding guitars used by Duane Allman, Leon Wilkeson and Hughie Thomasson, and jackets worn by Jim Morrison, Tom Petty and Justin Timberlake.

"You guys are the people who realize Daytona has so much potential," Wolfond told the by-invite-only assembly of local VIPs. "We're going to be a part of it, and you're all going to be a part of it."

The condos are being built as part of the first phase of the Hard Rock development, located less than a mile south of the Daytona Beach Pier. The \$100-million-plus first phase, scheduled to be under construction later this year, will include 250 hotel rooms, 36,000 square feet of meeting space, a gift shop and a parking garage.

Phase I plans call for 99 luxury residences to be built on the 11 floors above the hotel, with the condo area beginning around the 16th floor, 176 feet above the sand. There will be nine one-, two- and three-bedroom residences per floor ranging from 515 square feet to 4,000 square feet that will all have unobstructed ocean views.

Orlando-based Balfour Beatty Construction, which built the News-Journal Center and more than 20,000 Orlando hotel rooms, has been chosen as the general contractor.

Above the 11 condo floors will be two more levels reserved for penthouses. Wolfond said he already has eight interested buyers who have put down deposits for the Hard Rock condos, which range in price from \$230,000 to more than \$2 million.

One of those buyers is former Mayor Glenn Ritchey, who said he might have been the first to commit to one of the units that will offer 24/7 room service, daily maid service and valet parking.



News-Journal/DAVID MASSEY

Bayshore Capital sales agent Brad Huffstetler, left, talks to Dr. Leslie Nixon and John Nixon about residence condos at the Hard Rock Daytona Beach during a VIP World Preview Launch Party at Daytona International Speedway Wednesday.

“Anything I can do to show support for the community,” Ritchey said at Wednesday's gala that included an open bar and uniformed waiters and waitresses circling the room with trays to offer guests sushi and other hors d'oeuvres.

“This will be a great linchpin,” Ritchey said.

Former County Chair Frank Bruno, also at the event, recalled how he and Ritchey first met with Wolfond a few years ago to nurture the project's beginnings.

“This is exciting for the community,” Bruno said. “This is something Volusia County desperately needs. Hopefully it'll be the catalyst for other projects.”

Tim Davis, vice president of investment sales for Coldwell Banker Commercial in Ormond Beach, said local residents who have been disappointed in the past by promised projects that never happened are eager to see construction begin.

“We really need a project to go vertical,” Davis said at Wednesday night's party.

Davis said some people interested in investing in Daytona have been checking with him over the past year to see how high-profile projects, including a planned hotel with condos near Oakridge Boulevard, are progressing. Those potential investors want to plan their developments around the anchor projects, Davis said.

Brian Leary is managing director for Atlanta-based Jacoby Development, whose company is heading up International Speedway Corp.'s \$289 million One Daytona, a planned complex of businesses and homes across from Daytona International Speedway. Leary, who was at Wednesday's event, said he thinks the Hard Rock project will be “very complimentary” to both One Daytona and the \$400 million overhaul in progress of the Speedway's frontstretch grandstands.

Hard Rock “is one of the most iconic brands on the planet that's pretty picky about where it goes,” Leary said. “Very few close so it's not done lightly and not short-term. That's a great sign where things are going with Daytona Beach and Volusia County.”

Wolfond said he chose to make his announcement during the Rolex 24 At Daytona race week because the event attracts affluent people from around the world who he suspects will be interested in top-notch and top-dollar condos.

“We're going to make this happen folks,” said Wolfond, whose company was founded in 1956 and has developed and purchased residential and commercial property in Canada and the United States. “I only have one question for Daytona Beach. Daytona, are you ready to rock?”

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