

## HERMITAGE

# Oct. 1 opening for tech center still expected

Sharon-Herald – Saturday, May 7, 2011

By Joe Pinchot, *Herald Staff Writer*

No matter the weather, some types of construction go on. So, even with a snowy winter and a wet spring, work on the Hermitage Technology Center of Excellence has continued. Assistant City Manager Gary M. Gulla said the weather has pushed back the completion date from August to September, but officials still believe they can make a planned Oct. 1 opening.

“I’m pushing the guys hard,” Gulla said of the contractors building what will be a business incubator and testing laboratory in LindenPointe technical business park. The contractors have responded without grumbling, officials said. “I’ve been in a lot of construction meetings and I’ve never seen five contractors get along so well,” said Paul Young, volunteer coordinator of the neighboring Hermitage Training and Workforce Development Center.

Gulla led a tour of the tech center Thursday for members of the Hermitage Community and Economic Development Center. Architectural features such as a rounded wall in the lobby and slanted wall panels in the hallway connecting the incubator suites are taking shape. There’s plenty of drywall yet to be hung, painting has only begun, and windows and the fireplace have yet to be built.

Meanwhile, city officials are working on the administrative tasks needed to make the Oct. 1 date. LindenPointe Development Corp., the nonprofit formed by city commissioners to run the tech center and the training building, has started meeting, and the business plan for the tech center is almost



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***Construction crews continue working at the Hermitage Technology Center of Excellence at LindenPointe. Originally scheduled to be completed in August, the building’s completion has been delayed to September because of the wet weather.***

finished, said LDC and HCEDC Chairman Rex W. Knisley. Still, officials have barely touched the list of about 70 tasks that must be accomplished, he said.

Gulla made a presentation about how far officials have come at LindenPointe, with the partnering of city, private, state and federal funding to create the park, attract tenants and build the tech and training centers.

Not counting the investment of developers and tenants, \$13.8 million has been put into the park for development and construction, with \$2.65 million of that from the city. "For every dollar we've invested, we've leveraged \$4.2 (in other investment)," Gulla said.

That investment has resulted in \$9 million in private construction investment from developers and tenants, and the current tenants have a payroll of about \$9 million, Gulla said. The city is realizing \$100,000 a year in earned income tax, and the city, school district and county are sharing another \$100,000 in property taxes.

There's plenty of open space available for development, both on the city's half of the park and Fred George's half, and it's what's yet to be done that has occupied city officials. "I really think the big wins are ahead of us," Gulla said.