

# I-25 retail center breaks ground



Tom Johnson/The Coloradoan

Developers and community leaders pretend to break ground Thursday on the Plaza at 2534, a retail center going up near Johnstown.

## The Plaza at 2534 will have variety of tenants

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JOHNSTOWN — Developers and community leaders symbolically broke ground Thursday on The Plaza at 2534, a large new retail center at the southeast corner of the intersection of Interstate 25 and U.S. Highway 34.

In reality, construction on the project has already begun, with several buildings scheduled for completion by year's end.

The Plaza will feature about 500,000 square feet of retail and restaurant space and another 100,000 square feet of what developers described as first-class office space.

In scale, the project is approximately the size of Fort Collins' Foothills Mall.

The Plaza is the retail portion of 2534, a 542-acre, mixed-use community that will include the Northern Colorado Rehabilitation Hospital, dozens of buildings, a light industrial center and nearly 170 luxury homes.

The project has been anticipated since the town of Johnstown annexed the land in a

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controversial move late in 2000.

The parcel is located approximately 7 miles from the small town's center.

"Johnstown was visionary in annexing the land in anticipation of the development," said Troy Mellon, mayor of Johnstown. "Once upon a time, people thought that if a small town annexed a large parcel of land, they did so at the expense of quality development. We've reversed that paradigm. We look at developers and development not as adversaries, but as partners."

Located across the street from the recently completed Promenade Shops at Centerra, the project underscores the role the busy interchange will play in Northern Colorado's future.

"The 2534 project will be a major component of the inter-

change and will become a regional hub for business, retail and employment for Northern Colorado," said Nick Christensen, managing principal of Chrisland Inc.

Chrisland is the primary developer of the project.

Christensen said he doesn't believe the area will replace existing town centers.

The 600,000-square-foot retail portion of The Plaza at 2534 is expected to be completed in three to five years. The building process will be phased over time.

Christensen said that, between tenants already announced and those soon to be revealed, about 200,000 square feet of space is already spoken for.

Projects under way at The Plaza at 2534 include:

■ The Bank of Colorado

Plaza, a four-story, nearly 50,000-square-foot office building that will house a full-service Bank of Colorado location, the LBN Insurance Agency and the new headquarters for Burns Marketing Communications.

■ The Eheart Flooring and Design building, a two-story, 30,000-square-foot showroom, office and warehouse.

■ The Northern Colorado showroom for Ethan Allen, a 20,000-square-foot facility that is double the size of the company's current location in Fort Collins.

Burns Marketing Communications president Mike Burns said the decision to move his headquarters to The Plaza at 2534 was based on company growth, as well as the need for proximity to his clients.

"We serve clients all over Northern Colorado," Burns said. "2534 was the best solution for the growth our company is experiencing."

"We'll have a fourth-floor office looking out at the mountains. The view alone should get the creative juices flowing."