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Senior community, mill refurb, new school planned for Allentown

By Rick Green Union Leader Correspondent
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Provided by Optimus Senior Living

Work is underway on a \$30 million, 118-unit senior community in Allentown, the first major construction project in decades for the town of 4,500 people.

Conversion of a historic textile mill into 150 upscale apartments and construction of a new K-8 school are also planned for the town.

Town Administrator Derik Goodine said economic development is needed to enlarge the property tax base. The town's property tax rate, \$29.30 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation, is higher than that of most municipalities in the state, and is set to increase by more than \$2.50 to help pay for the new school.

The town also needs jobs, Goodine said, and Hillsbrook Village should provide 50 full-time and 25 part-time positions.

Hillsbrook Village, which should be completed in time for a June 2022 opening, will include independent living, assisted living and a memory care unit.

"It will definitely be an asset to the community," Goodine said.

"It's bringing jobs, it's bringing tax dollars, it's bringing new residents to town, so I think that will benefit all the businesses in town and actually create spinoff businesses, too."

The town will gain about 500 residents in the next year with the opening of this facility and the repurposing of the China Mill, he said.

Southampton, Mass.-based Optimus Senior Living is developing Hillsbrook Village near the junction of Routes 3 and 28. It has built four similar projects, three in Connecticut and one in Ware, Mass., all managed by the company's affiliate, Everbrook Senior Living.

Allenstown granted the company a tax exemption, which will apply to the municipal and local school portion of property taxes, allowing a 50% reduction for the first and second year and a gradually decreasing percentage in subsequent years. The exemption ends after 10 years.

Rick Green