

# THE Business Report

## Communities meld resort-style living, care

THE BUSINESS REPORT / JAMES BAVENDAM

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**L**andmark on the Sound, a resort-style retirement living community in Des Moines, proclaims in its direct mail advertising that “70 is the new 50.”

“We’re attracting a very young senior that wants lifestyle amenities with a lot of variety and a lot of flexibility,” said Martha Brennan, marketing spokeswoman. “At Landmark on the Sound we couple the lifestyle with the care.”

Beautiful surroundings and a wide breadth of services and amenities exemplify what is available to seniors seeking retirement in South King County.

According to CHOICE Advisory, a regional referral service for seniors seeking healthcare and retirement living space, South King County offers approximately 30 independent and assisted living communities.

“Two-hundred plus residents move in each year over the 30 communities,” said Les Ostermeier, an elder care advisor and owner with CHOICE. “In today’s market when a new community opens and can fill within a year, that shows that there’s demand; these communities are filling within a year.”

Seniors also can find a wide selection of price tags. Independent living units range from \$2,000 to \$5,000 a month. Assisted living fees, depending on level of care, can go from \$300 to \$2,000 in addition to monthly rent.

Base rent frequently includes meals, activities, transportation and housekeeping. Monthly rental communities charge a move-in fee ranging from \$500 to \$5,000, while entrance fees for continuing care communities can exceed \$100,000.

### **Family nearby**

Landmark lives up to its name – the elegant 1926 building sits atop a bluff overlooking Puget Sound with views of Mount Rainier.

Sponsored by the Freemasons, it is governed by a local board of trustees.

“We’re attracting a lot of Des Moines and Burien residents and even up to Everett and east to Redmond,” said Brennan. “They come to be near family and for the beauty of the building and the 27-acre campus.”

Brennan said new construction will begin in mid-to-late 2009 with homes and apartments opening in late 2010 and into early 2011. Spread across the 27-acres will be 20 woodland homes and three new apartment buildings with 162 units. Services for ages 62 and older will include a continuum of care ranging from independent to assisted living and memory care.

Ostermeier said there is continually high demand for independent living and continuum care retirement. He cites **Chateau at Valley Center in Renton** as filling to capacity within its first year. Merrill Gardens, which opened in December 2006 at Renton Centre, has had its 154 units full for the past five months.

“The character of the community, our incredible staff, and our programs are highly valued for people looking for an alternative lifestyle,” said Shelley Thompson, Merrill Gardens general manager. “We’re very accessible in terms of shopping and are a close walk to the Renton Farmers Market.” Recently the community included as an extra amenity a concierge service.

“We have a beautiful new Lincoln town car, taking people places where they need to go,” Thompson said. “The concierge service is also a clearinghouse for all services, from organizing your apartment to coordinating a party.”

### **Green friendly**

Village Green Retirement Campus gets its name from a beautifully landscaped, 20-acre campus. When Powell Property Management opened the facility in 1999, it made a commitment to the environment by planting native vegetation, preserving habitat for natural wildlife, and recycling consumer products.

Village Green provides continuum of care, independent and assisted living apartments and independent living in two- to three-bedroom duplex-style cottages.

In December the campus will unveil phase one of 12 additional cottages with floor plans ranging from 1,579 square feet to 2,722 square feet.



**Executive Director Rebecca Kavan says Chateau has had a successful occupancy rate since the day they opened their doors.**

“They are green friendly in that we have energy efficient practices in the house, including energy efficient windows and appliances,” said Tammi Reeser, community consultant. “Each cottage has lots of natural light.”

Twenty-six other cottages will open in a year to 18 months, based on supply and demand, said Reeser.

“The section of cottages that are coming in are gated and focused on the younger senior getting rid of the lawn mower, cleaning supplies, but they still want a home,” she said. “They still want beautiful full-size stoves and stainless steel utensils.”

Despite the variety of offerings in independent living, Ostermeier with CHOICE said there is more need for memory or dementia care in South King County.

Helping to fill that need is **Chateau at Valley Center in Renton**. Beginning its third year, it is defying a tough economy with a 94 percent occupancy. Included in its 126 apartments are 11 memory care units.

“We constantly have people looking into it,” said Rebecca Kavan, executive director. “Half of our residents in memory care come from our assisted living. Memory care is a hot commodity to have at a community.”