

News Release

City of Danville, Virginia
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City Council eyes progress of River District Tower

City Council members on Tuesday toured the former Dan River Research Building on the corner of Patton and Bridge streets to see the progress in adapting the historic textile building into leasable medical and mixed retail space to be known as River District Tower.

Construction, which began on Oct. 2, is ahead of schedule, said Dr. Mark Hermann, the president and managing partner for the local development group that purchased the building in 2012.

"There is a lot of activity taking place inside that the public cannot see," Hermann said Tuesday as he led the tour.

That will change in three to four weeks when more than 200 windows arrive. Installation will require three months to complete.

Inside, construction crews have been busy cleaning and replacing, as needed, the original flooring, installing metal framing, and scraping multiple layers of peeling paint from the walls. "This is a historic rehabilitation effort," Hermann said. "Therefore, it (the rehabilitation process) is very specific in how it is done to maintain the structure and its character."

Crews also have been preparing to move the main entrance to the building to the former loading dock behind the building. The former loading dock is where the building's signature tower will be located — a modern glass structure that will be the main entrance and elevator location.

Once complete, the Danville Orthopedic Clinic will move its orthopedic surgical services and rheumatology, pain management, physical therapy and clinical research operations to the top two floors. Hermann said the move would take place in January.

Danville Regional Medical Center will occupy the second floor. The first floor will provide mixed retail leasable space to include a coffee shop, casual restaurant and general

office space, perhaps for a pharmacy and financial services providers. These spaces would be ready in the spring of 2017.

The River District Tower complex also will feature space for a yet unnamed upscale restaurant in the two-story building that adjoins the main structure.

A final component will be a small museum of Dan River Inc.'s history and will showcase memorabilia found in the building, including a room full of patents, spools and parts of some looms left attached to ceilings.

The building – best known today as the Dan River Research Building – is one of Danville's iconic buildings. It was the first textile mill building (No. 1 Mill) constructed for Riverside Cotton Mills, which later became Dan River Inc. Construction began in 1882 and was completed in 1883. Production began in April of that year.

Originally consisting of three stories, the building was expanded in 1886. The company converted the building for use by its research division sometime in the mid-1900s. It closed in 2006 along with the rest of the company.

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