

County & Region

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Developer: Eatery wants lease, license in W'boro

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WILLINGBORO — More than three years after voters approved a referendum allowing alcohol sales here, the township may finally be ready to sell its first liquor license.

The retail developer of Willingboro Town Center said he expects Ruby Tuesday, a chain restaurant which serves alcohol, to sign a lease within 10 days. The restaurant would be slated for one of three buildings on what was once the parking lot of Willingboro Plaza along Route 130.

"After they sign a lease, we'll negoti-

ate with the township for a liquor license," said Thomas Juliano, senior vice president of Delco Development LLC, the Mount Laurel firm that owns a portion of the Town Center.

For some towns, liquor licenses are big moneymakers. Evesham sold one for \$702,000 earlier this year, and Mount Laurel advertised an \$800,000 minimum bid for one of its licenses.

Mayor Eddie Campbell Jr. said he did not expect to auction a liquor license.

"We ... will work out some amicable deal with them," Campbell said.

Voters approved a referendum in November 2002 to create six liquor licenses here. Those licenses can only be ob-

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tained by restaurants and catering halls along Route 130, or by Rancocas Golf Club on Beverly-Rancocas Road.

Since then, the liquor licenses have attracted little interest. The township rejected one potential buyer, Fly'n Fishbone, in June 2004 because the restaurant is not along Route 130. Fly'n Fishbone is in Country Club Plaza on Beverly-Rancocas Road.

Ruby Tuesday is only part of Delco's redevelopment plans for its portion of the 56-acre Willingboro Town Center property.

Within two months, Juliano said, tenants should move into a 23,000-square-foot retail building under construction near Commerce Bank. Those tenants include Hollywood Video,

Rita's Water Ice, a Quiznos sandwich shop, a coin-operated laundry and a bagel shop, Juliano said.

There will also be a Starbucks coffee shop in a separate building, Juliano said. The Ruby Tuesday would also be in a separate building that originally was slated for a Bob Evans, Juliano said.

Delco also is hoping to renovate the 90,000-square-foot former Sears building for offices and retail use. The company is scheduled to appear before the township Planning Board in January.

Under development for five years, the Town Center was designed to be a mixture of retail, restaurant, light-industrial, office, educational and residential tenants.

The main tenant is a Medco Health Solutions pharmaceutical distribution plant.