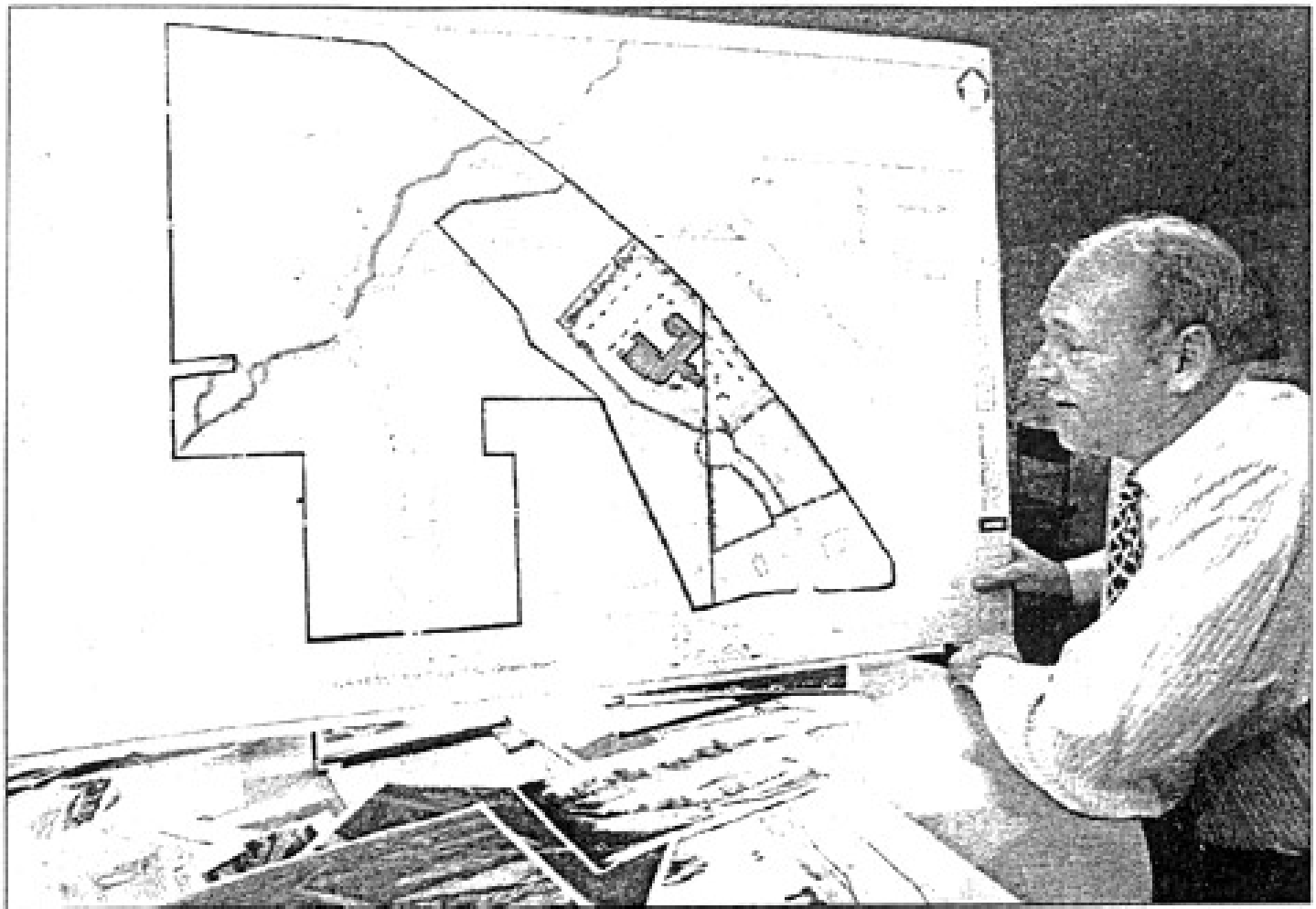


FULFILLING HIS DREAMS



PAUL TOFFLE/Summit Journal

The jewel of Robert Voelker's plans for development near state Route 82 and Interstate 480 is a three-story Hilton Garden Inn and Conference Center. Voelker, a former hotel executive, says it has been his dream to own and operate his own inn.

Hilton heads development

• Longtime hotel executive wants to bring new inn and conference center to Twinsburg's west side

BY CHERYL POWELL
Summit Journal business writer

TWINSBURG: Some big changes are down the road for land along the state Route 82-Interstate 480 interchange.

Robert Voelker, a longtime hotel executive and first-time developer, has launched a plan to bring an upscale hotel and conference center, four restaurants and an office park to the west side of Twinsburg.

Plans for the three-story Hilton Garden Inn and Conference Center in particular have attracted a lot of attention from the business community. The center would be the only one of its kind in the northern Summit County city.

"I hear all the time that there is a need for conference facili-

ties and meeting rooms," said Doug Johnson, president of the Twinsburg Chamber of Commerce. "This very much is addressing a community need."

For Voelker, the 65-acre, \$50 million development not only addresses a community need, but also fulfills his life dream.

Voelker, 49, an executive with Stouffer's for 18 years, has long wanted to build and operate his own hotel.

When the Stouffer hotel chain was sold last year for the second time in four years, Voelker, then senior vice president in charge of operations, decided it was time to pursue his dream.

"I just didn't want to go through another transition," he said.

In July, he formed RSV Hos-

pitality Enterprises and used his own money to buy eight acres along the Interstate. At that time, he planned to build a small hotel and sell some land to a few restaurant developers.

But when an additional 57 acres became available a few months later, he expanded his plans and bought that parcel, too.

A Cracker Barrel restaurant is under construction, and work is to begin soon on a Wendy's and Dinnor's. Voelker also is negotiating with another restaurant that might locate in the commercial development, known as Wilcox Place.

Plans for the hotel include a conference center with a ballroom and meeting facilities, 117 rooms geared toward the busi-



Summit Journal

ness traveler and a health spa. Voelker would own and operate the Hilton.

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PAUL TOPLE/Beacon Journal

A Cracker Barrel restaurant is under construction in Robert Voelker's Wilcox Place development along Interstate 480 and state Route 82.

HILTON

• Developer says he has interested investors

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The project is on hold until May, when Twinsburg voters will decide whether a portion of Voelker's land can be rezoned from industrial use to commercial use, as needed for the hotel. City zoning laws require all zoning changes be taken to the polls.

Although financing is not yet secured, Voelker said he has sev-

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DOUG JOHNSON
President of the Twinsburg Chamber of Commerce

eral potential investors lined up if the project gets official approval.

His plans have the support of many city officials.

Voelker and his wife, Sharron Burge-Voelker, own the Centre for Performing Arts studio, where she operates a dance studio. The Hudson couple is looking to build a house in Twinsburg.

"It's nice that one of our own is not only building it, but running it," Twinsburg Building Commissioner Bob Wrentmore said of the project. "The best thing about the hotel is that it's owner-managed."

Voelker also plans to build several office buildings and sell parcels to light industry in an adjacent, 32-acre industrial office

development called Falls Canyon.

The development comes at a time when industrial land is becoming scarce in the city, Wrentmore said. "Whenever we can find a place, people are willing to build."

The industrial development would include a seven-acre park, with hiking trails along a creek and three waterfalls. Voelker wants to open the park not only to businesses, but to the community as well.

That pleases Wrentmore.

"He understands how important it is to try to protect those things," Wrentmore said. "It's a first-class project all the way."