

Saugerties Post Star

THE OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF SAUGERTIES, NEW YORK

Thursday, June 29, 2006

Ribbon Cut And Seniors Welcomed

By Karin Yerry Post Star

After extraordinary efforts to facilitate seniors in the Saugerties area, Birchez Associates LLC, under founder Steve Aaron, has opened The Birches at Saugerties, allowing seniors and the frail elderly the opportunity to remain independent and to continue to reside in home for years.

On June 26th, at 10:00A.M., Aaron, along with Congressman Maurice Hinchey, Senator John Bonacic, and Regional Director for the New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal, Ms. Debra Devine, officially cut the ribbon opening the 60-unit senior housing facility on Rt. 9W near Glasco.

Ulster County officials attended the ceremony, including Town Board members, Ulster County Legislators, and members of the Ulster County Housing Department. The new facility also includes a Community Room in memory of former Village Board member and Ulster County Legislator, and long-time resident Joan Feldmann, whose commitment to seniors within Saugerties and Ulster County was inexhaustible. Feldmann passed away earlier this year after battling Cancer.

Al Spada, former Ulster County Clerk introduced each speaker during the 45-minute ceremony. U.S. Congressman Maurice Hinchey and Senator John Bonacic welcomed Mr. Peter King, a Community Investment

Officer from the Federal Home Loan Bank of New York and Mr. Steve Patton from Ulster Savings bank to present a check for \$1,175,000 from the Federal Home Loan Bank. In order for the loan to go through the project, a

local bank also had to participate. "Without this contribution (from the federal government) this would not be taking place today," Hinchey declared during his speech, and thanked Steve Aaron for his initiative in taking on this project. Bonacic also extended his appreciation to Aaron and congratulated him. This project is the third in Ulster County under the direction of Birchez Associates LLC. The Birches at



Senator John Bonacic, Steve Aaron, and Congressman Maurice Hinchey cut the ceremonial ribbon.

Chambers in the Town of Ulster facilitates seniors in the same way that The Birches at Saugerties will, and Birchwood Village in the City of Kingston is the 'first affordable Workforce family housing community in Ulster County.'

The garden style apartments available at The Birches at Saugerties will fulfill the necessities of many seniors in the area looking for safe, affordable housing in the community the reside in. Another 150 seniors are already on the waiting list for an apartment at The Birches at Saugerties. Bonacic claims that if he and Hinchey have anything to do with it, there will soon be more

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affordable senior housing in Ulster County to follow. The apartments in the complex are specially designed to meet the needs of seniors, while allowing them to “age in place.” Residents will have access to Ulster County Department for the Aging and the services they provide, as well as services from other organizations. Each unit is handicap accessible or adaptable and is equipped with remote monitoring systems, remote air conditioner and appliances. Aaron said that this program is “one of the first kind in the County, and will ensure that the frail elderly will not fall through the cracks.” During the ceremony, Aaron announced that former Ulster County Legislator, Alice Tipp, would be the on-site resident advocate for the residents at The Birches. Aaron further surprised Tipp by asking if she would be willing to do the same for The Birches at Chambers in the Town of Ulster. Tipp graciously accepted both positions. Tipp will work closely with the Ulster County Office of the Aging and the Ulster County Community Action to ensure all residents receive the individual care and services they need.

Tipp was pleased to present a plaque dedicating the Joan Feldmann Community Room, along with Feldmann’s daughter. The plaque stated that in recognition of her tireless efforts to the seniors in Ulster County, the community room is dedicated in memory of Joan Feldmann. Much was said in memory of Feldmann, and all her contributions to the Town of Saugerties and Ulster County. “She loved



Saugerties and worked very hard for us... She was right to the point, focused and sincere,” Hinchey said, adding with humor, “And I have to admit she made a very good point.” Bonacic said fondly, “Joan is looking down on all of us today and she has a big smile.” Aaron said the Feldmann “was always there for us on behalf of Senior Affordable Housing... I couldn’t have asked for a better ally and a closer friend.”

After the ceremony, lunch was served in the new Joan Feldmann Community Room, and tours of the apartments were given.



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