

Retail, healthcare and energy are all making moves

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The Grand Valley is seeing quite a bit of commercial activity, with two new grocery stores getting ready to open and plenty of other commercial moves. The first grocery store, Walmart Neighborhood Market, is set to open later this week. The Warrior Way store, across the street from Central High School and Long Family Park, is about one-fifth of the size of a typical Walmart Supercenter, and is intended to be a quick and convenient place for neighbors to shop.

The new City Market store, at Patterson and 12th, is on schedule to open in April. The City Market store will be about the same size as the store on 24 Road and will also have a gas station. Eventually, there will be other retail tenants in the shopping area, but construction of other retail spaces hasn't started yet.

Health care options are also expanding in Grand Junction, with Welbrook Transitional Care under construction near First and Patterson.

"We feel like Grand Junction is underserved for this type of high-quality, post-operative care," said Mark Guth, vice president of business development. The facility will provide rehabilitative services to patients who have had surgery or hospitalization and are well enough to be released from the hospital, but who need additional rehabilitation prior to going home.

"We broke ground several weeks ago," Guth said. "It will be a 10-month construction period."

The company hopes to open mid to late-2016, but understands that a severe winter could interfere with a schedule to pour concrete.

Other transitional care providers are also taking a serious look at the Grand Valley, although none have a facility under construction.

Gas and oil prices are down, but many experts in the industry believe it's a tem-

porary drop and are preparing for the coming rise in prices and activity. TOPS Well Service opened its Rocky Mountain District offices in Grand Junction about four weeks ago, moving into the building at 2250 Railroad Avenue where Key Energy Services used to be.

"The Grand Junction area is important," said Jon Konrad, chief operating officer, "this is where I want to build a base of operations."

From the Grand Junction office, Konrad plans to serve markets in Utah, Wyoming, New Mexico, as well as on the Front Range.

"There's enough work going on right now," Konrad said. "A small company can exist and be super-competitive."

The company has leased two buildings totaling about 29,000 square feet and has a workforce of about 20 people. Konrad plans to begin hiring additional personnel in the coming weeks.

Oil shale, the energy holy grail or perhaps the leprechaun's pot of gold at the end of the energy rainbow, is once again piquing the interest of scientists and entrepreneurs who think they're on the right track to pull oil from rock and want to do it from a base here in Grand Junction.

"We have the people, the backing and the connections to make it happen," said Dave Kanuch, vice-president of engineering with General Synfuels International (GSI), a company that had been dormant for four to five years but is ready to tackle oil shale with a new set of solutions.

"If this process works, we can make oil a lot cheaper, greener, and with no water consumption," said Kanuch, who added that the company already has surface rights and mineral rights and will be looking to hire office personnel as well as scientists and engineers for its facility on Colex Drive in Grand Junction. Kanuch, who has a track record and a pre-



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ABOVE: Walmart Neighborhood Market, which is a smaller concept store than the other two existing Walmart Supercenters in the Grand Valley, should open this week, just in time for the holidays. The new store is on Warrior Way, across the street from Central High School and the Long Family Memorial Park.

BELOW: This empty building on Colex Drive is the new home for General Synfuels International (GSI), a company that's hoping to develop a commercial technology for developing oil shale.



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