

Mady development moves into Barrie

By LANCE HOLDFORTH, Special to the Examiner

The Mady Development Corporation is making a name for itself after donating \$500,000 to Barrie's downtown theatre.

"We're very excited to have done it," said corporation owner, Charles Mady. "We're very supportive of the arts."

The theatre will officially be named the Mady Centre for the Performing Arts and is only the beginning of the corporation's involvement with the city, said Mady.

"We like the long term prospects for Barrie and we're looking to do a lot more business in that community," he said. "I think Barrie has a great future quite honestly."

The corporation is currently developing a 400,000 square-foot retail property and a 200-unit residential project at Cundles Road and Duckworth Street after five years of waiting to break ground.

"We're doing the site work on the site right now and have been for the last several months and we plan to start going vertical around Labour Day and maybe the end of September on the condos," Mady said. "I've met a number of people at the (city) administration, and they seem to want to guide the growth of the City of Barrie in the right direction and I think they are."

The family run corporation was established in 1974 in Windsor Ontario, but has since expanded with additional offices in Dallas, Texas and Toronto.

"We do business in a lot of the communities in the province of Ontario because we build everywhere," Mady said. "I can honestly say that this new Barrie council and mayor, from my experience, have been a pleasure to work with."

While under contract to build 18 Home Depots throughout the province, the big box company asked Mady to focus on land in Barrie's north end for an additional store location.

"We found this parcel of land that was owned by two different people up at Cundles and Duckworth and we started getting into it, and low and behold five years have gone by," Mady said. "Now we've come to Barrie."

Mady said the residential portion of the project is currently underway, but traffic congestion in the north-end area has stipulated what can be built first.

"We can't put any more traffic there until Duckworth is expanded," Mady said.

"We can do the residential portion of course, because that's not much traffic, but the commercial portion which is going to involve a Home Depot and a Loblaws store and a whole bunch of other smaller retail stores would be a traffic generator."

Ward 3 councilor Doug Shipley said traffic congestion may put a red light on the project if the MTO doesn't contribute to renovating the Duckworth overpass.

"We have a serious traffic problem in our end. The expansion of RVH and Georgian College is going to be adding to that problem," Shipley said. "With this additional development on Cundles and Duckworth, it's going to be worse."

New developments will help keep the corporation working with the city, and the proposed development of the Mulcaster Street Foodland is the next step, Mady said.

"We've looked around and we responded to a request for proposals for the Foodland site and we won that," he said. "We're hoping to get going on that Foodland site as early as the first quarter of next year."

The grocery store project is subject to council approval, but Mady said he feels confident the development of the Mulcaster Street store will go through.

"We're going to council on Aug. 15 to show exactly what we have planned there," he said. "I think it's more assessment and it's more growth and it's a better quality of life."