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BRUNSWICK LANDING CEREMONY



DOUGLAS MCINTIRE / THE TIMES RECORD

TOWN OFFICIALS AND OTHERS attend Thursday's groundbreaking ceremony for the new Avita memory care facility at Brunswick Landing.

Ground broken on care facility

Senior community
to open next fall

BY DOUGLAS MCINTIRE
Times Record Staff
BRUNSWICK

Hot cider and snacks served in a heated tent took the chill out of the air Thursday as Northbridge Companies, along with town officials, officially broke ground on the Avita memory care senior community at Brunswick Landing.

Northbridge was formed 11 years ago and, according to president and co-founder Wendy Nowokunski, the goal was to focus on the New England marketplace and address the

"Everything is very family-style — the meals, the programs, the way in which the apartments are set up within the community and the living spaces."

**Wendy Nowokunski,
Northbridge Companies**

need for a small, regional approach on quality of life for their residents. "Not just the quality of care — that should go without saying, but

our programs are very focused on involving the community at large," Nowokunski said.

Nowokunski said the \$18 million project will provide about 55 permanent jobs once the facility opens next fall. Those jobs will span from management to cooks, maintenance, activities personnel and a full range of nursing. The facility, built to accommodate 70 residents, will also be taxable, Nowokunski said, which will provide an extra benefit to the community.

Nowokunski said Avita Brunswick represents the 13th property the company has in New England, with Avita standing out as

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their brand for memory care communities like Avita Stroudwater in Westbrook. There are two other Avita care facilities in Massachusetts.

“What Avita is, is really a specialized assisted-living program for people with memory

impairment. All of our staff are highly trained on Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias and we’re very heavily focused on programming on the dietary needs and the specialized needs of people with certain dementias,” Nowokunski said.

Nowokunski said Avita has what they call the “eat fresh, eat local” program where they partner with

local farms to provide them with fresh meat, fruits and vegetables. She said the program not only ensures the best possible experience for their residents, but contributes to the local economy as well.

“Those are things we look at as an important part of being part of a community. We don’t see our properties as islands unto themselves.

We’re really very active in the communities which we serve,” she said.

It was the success of the Stroudwater community that drew Nowokunski’s attention further into Maine and, Brunswick specifically, since they were already drawing residents from the area. After talking with residents and their family members, Nowokunski found Brunswick Landing where the Midcoast Regional Redevelopment Authority helped provide what Nowokunski described as a perfect location.

She said that the buildings are divided into three neighborhoods, allowing for a high staff-to-resident ratio. The neighborhoods, she

said, also provide residents with a safe, home-like environment.

“Everything is very family-style — the meals, the programs, the way in which the apartments are set up within the community and the living spaces. It’s all to minimize the symptoms of the disease — agitation and wandering,” Nowokunski said.

The grounds of the neighborhoods are planned as well, offering secure, safe spaces where residents can walk freely. Nowokunski said the company has worked closely with the Alzheimer’s Association and groups like the Cure Alzheimer’s Foundation.

Nowokunski said residents will be kept active in

the community — going out to eat, attending local events or going to local farms to pick out the vegetables they want for the week. She said Avita keeps a social history on all of their residents, gathered from the residents and their families, so they can attend things they are interested in doing.

“With dementia it’s all about stepping into their lives and being on their agenda and not being on our own agenda. We recognize that, and we recognize the individual for who they are and really try and do our best in programming for that as a whole,” Nowokunski said.

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