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MAINE'S BUSINESS NEWS SOURCE

DECEMBER 21, 2015 | LAST UPDATED DECEMBER 21, 2015 9:13 AM

Northbridge Cos. continues Maine expansion with acquisition of Brunswick senior care facility



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Sunnybrook Village Senior Community

Sunnybrook Village Senior Community, a 51-unit independent and assisted-living facility in Brunswick, has been acquired by Northbridge Companies, a Burlington, Mass.-based company that plans to spend \$400,000 in improvements to the facility.

BY JAMES MCCARTHY

A Massachusetts company that has developed senior care communities focusing on memory care throughout New England has purchased the Sunnybrook Village Senior Community in Brunswick and plans to spend \$400,000 on improvements to the 12-year-old facility.

Northbridge Companies co-founder and President Wendy Nowokunski told MaineBiz the acquisition is part of the company's \$65 million investment in Maine, which includes building three new senior living communities in the state that are slated to open in late 2016 or early 2017. Construction has already begun on a 95-unit addition to its 60-unit Avita of Stroudwater memory care facility in Westbrook that opened in 2013, she said, as well as on the 60-unit facilities that will be built in Wells and Brunswick.

"Thank goodness for the mild weather, all three are ahead of schedule," she said, noting that the contractor for the three facilities, Scarborough-based Landry/French Construction Co., has poured the footings and foundations and is hoping to get the frames up before the snow and cold come on in force. Portland-based Sandy River Co., she added, is a project development consultant for the projects.

The Northbridge Cos. has a portfolio of 15 senior living communities in Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Maine serving more than 760 residents.

Nowokunski said the company already is introducing its "live well, love life" lifestyle programs — which include art, cooking, gardening, technology, music, a "brain gym" with touch-screen technology and locally sourced meals — to residents of the 51-unit Sunnybrook Village on Bath Road in Brunswick. The independent and assisted-living facility, which opened in June 2003, offers studio, one- and two-bedroom apartments. It's located near Mid Coast Hospital and is two miles from Northbridge's Avita of Brunswick senior memory care residence now under construction at 89 Admiral Fitch Ave. in Brunswick Landing.

She said the Sunnybrook acquisition gives Northbridge the opportunity to offer a full spectrum of senior living communities in the Brunswick region. "We see it as complementary to our Avita of Brunswick memory care residence."

Nowokunski said Northbridge's expansion into Maine is driven by the positive response the company received after opening its first memory care facility in the state in 2013, the 60-unit Avita of Stroudwater community in Westbrook. "We've always had a soft spot in our hearts for Maine," she said. "We saw an opportunity to bring our Avita memory care approach to Maine and we've had tremendous positive feedback from families since we opened our first property at Stroudwater. We filled that 60-unit community in nine months."

The company is already getting inquiries about openings at the facilities under construction in Wells and Brunswick, and its expansion in Westbrook, she added.

"My partners and I have been serving seniors in New England for over 25 years, [and] with the growing aging population, it became apparent to us that we needed a better environment for people with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias," she said. "Traditional assisted living often doesn't cater to the special needs of someone with memory loss and with lack of other options many times we saw those with memory loss going to a nursing home."