

# SAN FERNANDO VALLEY BUSINESS JOURNAL

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## Valley Area Keeps Incubating Bioscience Firms

**LIST:** Presence of Amgen and Al Mann spawned clusters.

Bioscience is not yet synonymous with the local economy. But it may be soon, thanks to the growth of the industry – particularly in the Santa Clarita and Conejo valleys.

There is even a trade association called the **Bioscience Alliance** in Westlake Village determined to boost the Valley area's profile as a hub for pharmaceuticals and medical devices.

"We may never be the Bay Area for life sciences, but we can be a very vibrant life science cluster as success stories keep happening and more companies come in," said **Brent Reinke**, who founded the alliance.

The cluster in Conejo Valley was spawned by the headquarters of Amgen Inc., a leading bioscience company. The company draws specialists from around the world, some of whom start new companies.

### THE LIST

BIOSCIENCE  
COMPANIES  
See page 11

Likewise, the Santa Clarita cluster is rooted in the history of the late Al Mann, a prolific entrepreneur who started several bioscience companies.

As a result, venture capital funding in area companies has increased over the past five years, a telling sign that the region's life science sector is being taken more seriously.

Please see page 10

## Houses Coming To Santa Paula

**DEVELOPMENT:** Project among biggest ever in Ventura County.

By **MICHAEL AUSHENKER** Staff Reporter

Santa Paula agribusiness **Limoneira Co.** is addressing Ventura County's housing shortage with a huge project – one that could add 1,500 residential units to the market.

The citrus grower, best known for producing lemons, has partnered with Inland Empire home builder **Lewis Group of Cos.** on the project named Harvest at Limoneira. They plan to have first move-ins next year and completion by 2027.

Phase one – with 632 residential units – broke ground in November. It will include single-family homes, condominiums, 100 public benefit housing units for community backbone residents (firefighters, police, hospital staff, school faculty, city

Please see DEVELOPMENT page 36

## Retailers Facing New Work Rules

**REGULATIONS:** Will 'predictive scheduling' be in stores' future?

By **ETHAN VARIAN** Staff Reporter

A local campaign pushing for regulations requiring retailers to schedule employee shifts further in advance stands to limit how employers can operate as well as levy new costs on them.

At issue are what labor advocates say are the erratic scheduling practices of many retailers, which they argue impose unnecessary hardships on employees. Fresh off a successful campaign to raise the minimum wage in Los Angeles, activists now have their sights set on requiring mid-to-large-sized retail companies in the city of Los Angeles to provide more predictable schedules for workers.

**Bill Dombrowski**, president of the **California Retailers Association**, sees the campaign, combined with the recent minimum wage hikes, as making the state an increasingly hostile place

77

Percent of retail workers who must change shifts with less than a week's notice

Please see REGULATIONS page 37

Latest Plan:  
Rendering  
of recently  
announced  
Q at DeSoto.



## THE VALLEY'S DOWNTOWN

Ambitious five-project plan will build up Warner Center

**W**arner Center in Woodland Hills has never quite lived up to its billing as the "downtown" of the Valley. But suddenly, that vision appears much closer.

Canoga Park-based **California Home Builders** and architecture firm **Newman Garrison + Partners** plan to build a five-building, interconnected network of live, work and play properties brand-

ed as "Q." They recently announced construction plans for Q at DeSoto, a complex that is No. 3 of that group.

The projects promise to deliver a plethora of housing, retail and office space filled with millennial-friendly amenities, from nocturnal outdoor movie theaters and yoga studios to electric car and bicycle transportation between the sites. The properties are due to start

opening next year.

"These projects are in line with the Warner Center 2035 Plan," said City Councilman **Bob Blumenfeld**, referring to the city-approved plan to make Warner Center a walkable downtown-like area. "In some ways, they are the manifestation of that plan."

Please see page 14



## REAL ESTATE



Quintet: Q West, pictured in this rendering, will be one of five Q buildings due in Woodland Hills by 2020.

# Warner Center Buildout

By **MICHAEL AUSHENKER** Staff Reporter

**W**arner Center will soon look and feel much more like what it has long been envisioned to be – the downtown of the San Fernando Valley.

Canoga Park-based design and build company **California Home Builders** and architecture and interior design firm **Newman Garrison + Partners**, are collaborating on an ambitious quintet of mixed-use sites, branded as “Q,” that will complement and interface with each other.

District 3 City Councilman **Bob Blumenfeld** told the Business Journal he’s very much anticipating Q’s debut.

“These projects are in line with the Warner Center 2035 Plan,” Blumenfeld said. “In some ways, they are the manifestation of that plan. What’s great is that we’re seeing this investment in our community.”

“We’re well versed in the Warner Center’s specific plan,” said Newman Garrison principal **Kevin Newman**. “Our intention is to follow those guidelines as close as possible but there’s a lot of creativity within those guidelines.”

“The reason we’re so bullish on the Warner Center,” said **Shawn Evenhaim**, founder and CEO of CHB (a division of **Evenhaim Industries Corp.**), “is because we do believe this will be the downtown of the Valley.”

The Warner Center plan, approved by the

Los Angeles City Council in 2103, is a development blueprint that essentially calls for urbanizing the suburban-oriented area. It emphasizes mixed-use and transit-oriented development along with walkability and sustainability.

## ‘Q’ Brand

Totalling about 1,400 residential units combined, CBH/Newman Garrison collaboration consists of five Woodland Hills live, work and play properties located mere blocks from one another, with completion dates in 2019-20.

The most recently announced component, Q at DeSoto — a seven-story, mixed-use property at 6109 De Soto Ave. near Erwin Street — offers 352 units, including all manner of apartments plus hotel rooms and 69,000 square feet of retail, restaurants and offices.

Q East (Q at Variel), with more than 46,000 square feet of retail and commercial space and 241 luxury apartments on 3.22 acres at Erwin Street and Variel Avenue, was the first development out of the gate, quickly followed by Q West, at Topanga Canyon Boulevard across from The Village at Westfield Topanga. It will have 347 units of luxury perched atop 2.73 acres of property; and nearly 20,000 square feet of office and retail space.

CHB/Newman Garrison also will cultivate and curate similar Q buildings at Canoga Avenue and at Califa Street, the latter of which is still in escrow.

Ambitious millennial-minded, multi-site projects contribute to create a walkable ‘downtown’ in Woodland Hills.

Amenities at the various buildings will include concierge, valet, rooftop lounges and indoor/outdoor poolside clubs, outdoor movie theater, fitness and yoga studios, and Q-branded electric car and bicycles.

“Our buildings will be smart. You can control your unit through your smartphone (and iPad,” Evenhaim said.

## Millennial-minded

CHB snapped up the DeSoto property in August when it hit the market for \$16.1 million (or \$163.81 per square foot). In a previous life, at the 1970-built Class B building, Procter & Gamble Co. occupied two floors through 2002.

All of the new developments — including Q West on Topanga across from the bustling Village — will bring much-needed housing to the area.

“The Village is great but there’s no residential,” Evenhaim said. “It’s going to help the Village and it’s going to help us.”

“We learned the market, we learned this generation of renters doesn’t exist in the Valley,” he said.

The generation Evenhaim alludes to is the demographic of young adults whose Internet Age upbringing makes them unlike prior consumers. Evenhaim has sought input from millennials in CHB’s fold, plus two of his three children are that age.

Actually, catering to this mercurial demo-

graphic has become commonplace. In a March 2017 interview at **East West Bancorp’s** website, **Jason Zhu**, chairman of Shenzhen-based **Gemdale Group’s** multifamily minded Gemdale USA, explained how millennials prefer renting over buying and walking over driving.

“This trend will inevitably reshape the city and urban areas by becoming more accessible and affordable for people,” Zhu said, with apartment buildings becoming amenities-laden and hotel-like.

“Lifestyles are changing,” Newman said. “Warner Center is still a very challenging area. You’re designing for millennials to take public transportation.”

## Developing, Post-Gentrification

The 2035 Plan flew into high gear shortly after Blumenfeld was elected in 2013, with Silicon Beach accelerating gentrification in L.A. proper.

“People are leaving L.A. and going to the Valley,” Evenhaim said. “Young couples, they’re getting pushed away from this market.”

Added Newman, “There’s also a lot of wealth in the Valley, a lot of people who would like to live in Shawn’s buildings.”

Recently, Evenhaim began embracing mixed-use with gusto following many contributions to Valley multifamily, including 135-units on Dronfield Avenue in Sylmar, and a two-building, 162-apartment complex on



Roscoe Boulevard in Northridge.

However, developing in Los Angeles has become problematic following the November 2016 passage of Measure JJJ, which requires developers to set aside affordable housing units and hire higher-wage contractors. JJJ caused CHB to pivot away from pure residential to multi-use to help support the now more-expensive residential.

"One (reason) we're shifting into the multi-use is because the ability to build (pure residential) is almost eliminated," Evenhaim said bluntly. "That measure, in my opinion, is a disaster to housing and the people of Los Angeles. We were one of the largest, if not the largest, creators of what we call 'workforce housing' — homes for nurses, teachers, firefighters, police. Yes, it's a business, but at the end of the day, we believe in our obligation to (better our community). We want to provide (affordable Valley housing)."

According to CHB's website, Evenhaim, an Israeli immigrant, has developed over 2 million square feet of residential since 1994.

The Valley has become the unlikely new frontier for development, Evenhaim said, and he has enlisted Newman Garrison to help articulate his vision. Founded in 1985 by Newman as an outpost of Houston-based firm Kaufman-Meeks, Costa Mesa-based Newman Garrison + Partners has designed projects in Spain, India and Russia. Closer to home, Newman and partner John Garrison's handiwork can be found at Elysian Park Lofts in Chino town; Lewis Community Builders' Chino planned community The Preserve; Valencia Town Center for Jim Backer's JSB Development; and West Hollywood sites The Dylan and The Huxley, both on La Brea Avenue.

Circa 2001, Newman Garrison had shifted from single-family to multifamily housing. Then the Great Recession hit and the company saw a 75-percent drop in projected revenue and the firm had to downsize from 65 to a staff of five. "Nothing was getting financed at the time.

(Then) we came up with a concept called New Block," Newman said of a stylish, contemporary type of mixed-use infill maximizing density on 2-acre sites.

That basically saved the company. It was the West Hollywood New Block towers, completed in 2011, that caught Evenhaim's eye, and the partnership was created.

What's interesting about Evenhaim's five-pronged Q-munity is that it wasn't originally conceived as a whole but evolved piecemeal.

"We weren't finished with the first two towers and Evenhaim gave us Topanga, then De Soto, Calif. — these projects came pretty fast and furious," Newman said, deeming this "a very unusual situation, which puts the onus to design different buildings. We're not one to cookie-cutter our projects."

"They understand our vision and they're creative," Evenhaim said of Newman Garrison.

Likewise, Newman views Evenhaim as a maverick "a tremendous visionary (who) knows what he wants. He'll travel the world and come back and say, 'I saw this in New York' or 'I saw this in Israel, can you incorporate this into the designs?'"

CHB/Newman Garrison's projects adhere to the larger 2035 Plan, which has a long

precedent.

"The idea for a downtown Warner Center precedes the Warner Center 2035 Plan by 20 years. It was put in place by (Los Angeles Mayor) Tom Bradley in the '70s," Blumenfeld said, describing the decks atop the Warner Center buildings, including the Warner Center Marriott hotel, originally intended for a monorail system. "It's always been the thought that this would be the downtown of the Warner Center or the Valley."

Blumenfeld's Director of Land Use & Planning Andrew Pennington said 2035 represents a third iteration of creating such a district.

The concept saw revival and stagnation for eight years before Blumenfeld's 2013 election. Upon taking office, Blumenfeld's attitude was "Let's get this over the finish line." So Blumenfeld shored up the support of West Valley-Warner Center Chamber of Commerce and Woodland Hills Homeowners Association and, within six months, "we got this plan approved in (Los Angeles City) Council. Not one voice of opposition, not even members of the public," Blumenfeld said; a rarity regarding "a plan as monumental as this."

Blumenfeld also succeeded in certifying

2035 as "the cleanest and greenest plan in the city."

In L.A. terms, he said, the 2035 Plan appears ironic: an about-face of the '70s mentality of a car-centric downtown to a more pedestrian-friendly, inhabited one that Blumenfeld believes will further galvanize the Orange line, which has climbed from 8,000 riders since the bus line's 2005 debut to 30,000 today.

There are larger 2035 components beyond the CHB/Newman Garrison construct, including overhauls of Westfield Promenade mall and Warner Center Corporate Park. United Technologies Corp. was grooming a parcel of formerly Rocketdyne-owned land for mixed-use.

"A conceptual plan was done by UTC back in 2011-2012, but it was just a concept and never went anywhere," said Blumenfeld Communications Director Jake Flynn, who views Rocketdyne land as "another opportunity site that will be master-planned and developed down the road."

Downtown L.A.-based Realty Advisory Group, Inc. recently listed the UTC property — 6,035,000 square feet at 6633 Canoga Ave. — for an undisclosed price. According to RAG agent James Abbott, the property is currently in escrow with an unnamed buyer after entertaining multiple offers. More information on this Uptown at Warner Center section will be available by mid-2018, Abbott said in a March 5 email. (UTC had no comment for the Business Journal.)

Evenhaim does not fear local housing competition such as Gelt-Udon's pending 254-unit Watermark in Reseda. He insists his Q edifices are not speculative as CHB keeps and manages its creations, and anticipates more tech companies coming to Northridge, Chatsworth, etc.

"We started in the Valley and we're based in the Valley so we've always believed in the Valley," Evenhaim said. "Even in the recession, we believed in the Valley and we kept building."



**'The reason we're so bullish on the Warner Center is because we do believe this will be the downtown of the Valley.'**

SHAWN EVENHAIM,  
California Home Builders



**Amenities:** Evenhaim's Q buildings, such as Q West at Topanga, shown in this rendering, will have indoor and outdoor lounges and outdoor theaters.