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Work to start on new houses

By Ramsey Al-Rikabi

Liberty – Twenty-five-year-old **Jeremy Gorelick** pointed to a plot of dirt behind a pile of freshly felled trees on Timber Wolf Road. There, he said, is where the first two buildings of this village's first housing development in recent memory will be.

Tomorrow **Gorelick** and his partners will break ground on a 68-unit complex called the **Schoolbell Townhouses**.

"The sales office officially opened today, and we're ready to get people in," **Gorelick** said.

He had just dropped off a box of freshly printed cards to his head of sales, Jill Kunowski of Warwick.

Gorelick, a former bond trader and a principal in his father's Long Island-based company Emanon Equities, has teamed up with developer Peter Belgard to build the town houses, priced between \$119,000 for a one bedroom to around \$140,000 for a three bedroom.

"That \$119,000 is a perfect number for someone starting out or a young couple looking for their first home," **Gorelick** said, adding the homes are aimed at people like teachers, police, fireman, government employees and nurses. That is, the backbone of the county that sometimes can't find a reasonable place to live. He said he's got some potential buyers lined up.

Gorelick, who also is heading the 575-unit Walden Pond development outside Woodbourne in Fallsburg, is tapping into the "priced out" market as well: commuters who can't afford a home in Rockland and Westchester or even Orange County.

"There's a big need," said Joe Czajka, community development and grant supervisor for Sullivan County's division of planning. "The commuter ring is getting bigger; corporations are opening up in Rockland and Orange County. That makes Sullivan County within distance to the larger New York metropolitan area, not just Manhattan itself."

Pam Winters, the village code enforcement officer, said there are only five new single-family homes for sale in the village.

"There's not a whole lot of ready built houses to choose from," Winters said.

Gorelick hopes to get the first folks in by late-August, and "by September of 2006 we should have our last tenants move in."

Liberty School District Superintendent Larry Clarke's office is down the hill from where the town houses will be. His schools are almost maxed out.

Conventional wisdom: more kids, more spending, more taxes.

"Obviously, any increase (in enrollment) would challenge us, to say the least," Clarke said.

"Everyone wants Sullivan County to grow and prosper," he said.

He added, laughing: "Be careful what you wish for."