

# Barkley Village's 2nd office building already has a tenant

BY SCOTT AYERS

Construction of a long-planned second office building near Barkley Village will begin later this month.

Talbot Investment Co., which owns the village, has signed a deal with Olympic Health Management Systems Inc., which will occupy at least three of the office building's four stories.

Barkley Village is located just along Woburn Street in Bellingham's eastside Mount Baker neighborhood. Covering 250 acres, the area already boasts a strip mall anchored by a Haggen Inc. grocery store and one four-story office building.

A lot of growth is going on around the village, with a new InterWest Bank opening across Woburn Street April 22 and a Horizon Bank under construction. The Bellingham Hexcel Corp. aerospace manufacturing facility is also nearby and recently has added to its workforce as orders for its airplane interior parts jump.

Up Barkley Boulevard from the village, new homes and condominiums are under construction, with the number of residents growing at a rapid pace since Barkley Boulevard opened up the area for development less than five years ago.

The area's growth, coupled with the Olympic Health signing, is lifting



spirits at Talbot, where owners have long dreamed the village would serve as a sort of downtown for east Bellingham.

"The second office building is an important part of the urban village plan," said Jim Talbot, owner of Talbot Real Estate, the real estate development arm of Talbot Investment Co.

The second office building will be similar to the first one built by the company in 1992. That building houses the corporate headquarters of Haggen Inc. as well as several other smaller businesses. Talbot originally planned to have the second building open by 1995.

Like the first building, the new one will be brick and four stories tall. A third office building has been

proposed, but Talbot officials said there are no plans to build it any time soon.

Whatcom County bought the company's current home, the Civic Center Building at 332 N. Commercial St., in June 1997 for \$3.26 million. The county plans on converting the building, just a block from the County Courthouse, into the headquarters for its Health and Human Service Department. Olympic's lease is up May 31, 2000.

Olympic Health workers will move into the new Barkley Village building when it is completed in the spring of next year.

Olympic Health helps businesses and the insurance industry create health care programs, especially in

programs, especially in dealing with Medicare.

The company was founded in 1989 and was purchased by Aon Corp. in September 1998, for which it operates as a subsidiary.

Talbot Investment Co. is a group of companies that includes the real estate division which owns Barkley Village and Bellingham Cold Storage on the Bellingham Bay waterfront, one of the largest public cold storage operations on the West Coast.