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Homes for special-needs residents go up in Allendale

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The Record

**What's happening:** The construction of six affordable housing units at Orchard Commons in Allendale is on schedule. Interviews of potential occupants are expected to occur in the next two weeks.

**Background:** A half-acre of the 3-acre property, on Franklin Turnpike near West Orchard Street, is being built upon to help Allendale satisfy its Council on Affordable Housing requirements. Four two-bedroom and two one-bedroom units will house 10 developmentally disabled adults.

**COAH credits:** Allendale will get two credits per bed &mdash; or 20 COAH credits &mdash; for the 10 bedrooms since the units will be used by people with special needs. To be eligible, the adults must have been born with a developmental disability or suffered one shortly after birth.

**Construction:** Groundbreaking was in September. A ribbon-cutting is expected to take place in mid-June.

**Funding:** The \$2.17 million development will be paid for primarily with grants from the state's Housing and Mortgage Financing Agency. HMFA will contribute \$500,000 toward the acquisition of the property and an additional \$1.6 million that will go toward construction. Allendale also received a \$300,000 grant from **Bergen County's** Home Grant Program to cover architects, engineers and developer's fees.

**Occupants:** Twenty-five applications were submitted by potential tenants. The **Bergen County United Way**, a partner in the project, is sifting through the applications and will conduct interviews. The state Department of Community Affairs will make the final decision about who gets to move into the apartments.

**Background:** The 3-acre Orchard Commons property was acquired by the borough in December 2007 for \$4.8 million after several months of tense negotiations with a developer who had Planning Board approval to build 24 town homes. The developer clear-cut the wooded land before the sale price could be reached. Two-and-a-half acres of the site have been turned into a passive recreation park. The other half-acre was transferred to Allendale Housing Inc., a non-profit set up by the borough that will manage the apartments.

&mdash; Allison Pries