

THE HERALD WEEKLY

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Print Page

Monday, January 5, 2009

Last modified Monday, January 5, 2009 11:51 AM EST

Rector in training

By Heather Somerville

The next three years will be, in many ways, a battle for Bromont Development Group. The road to garnering all the necessary approvals for Augustalee will likely be riddled with land mines and include more than a couple of surprise attacks.

But if Bromont founder and principal Walt Rector is the general in this struggle for large-scale development victory, Josh Rector, his son, is the infantryman on the front line, winning another inch of ground for Augustalee every day.

Josh Rector is senior vice president of Bromont and project manager of the 2.3 million-square-foot, \$515 million mega-center planned for southern Cornelius. The responsibility of day-to-day management of the many moving parts and people involved in a project the size and scale of Augustalee is, Rector said, "a tremendous investment." Nevertheless, it would seem the young Rector is up to the job.

"Every day is a different challenge," said Rector, "and that's what I love."

The younger Rector has been catapulted into the all-consuming task of finding the best path -- or, as he called it, the best 10 or 15 paths -- to gain the many approvals from the many agencies required for Augustalee to develop as envisioned. Rector, who spends five days a week at the Charlotte offices of Cornelius Bromont and weekends at home in Arizona, is responsible for leading negotiations with the North Carolina Department of Transportation for approval of the \$80 million of road improvements that are tied to Augustalee; negotiations with Mecklenburg County for funding of the proposed I-77 interchange at mile 27; and discussions with local transportation and environmental groups that also must sign off on the development. He also oversees and manages the design, leasing, engineering and construction teams that are involved.

"I'm spending a lot of my time and especially a good part of my career on this project, and almost all of my hours of every day are spent on this," said Rector. "A project like this, nearly every waking hour it's in the back of your mind somewhere. The investment is almost unquantifiable."

Fortunately for Rector, he is, well, a Rector. At 27 years of age, Josh Rector appears to be a chip off the old

block, possessing his father's approachability, smooth congeniality and easy patience. Those traits served him well during the grueling, three-month public hearing process before the Cornelius Town Board of Commissioners for approval of what was then called The Village at Lake Norman, and should continue to do so in the perhaps more difficult negotiations that lie ahead.

Although he's at the start of his career, Rector said, prior to Augustalee he was involved with the design of large developments on the West Coast. Rector, a graduate of Trinity University in San Antonio, worked for a few years in residential development in northern California before his father invited him to join Bromont.

Rector's move to Bromont will be a long-term, if not permanent, one. He will remain the project manager of Augustalee until the development's build-out, which is scheduled for 10 years. And although he claimed his father, now 60, will never retire, the younger Rector does anticipate taking on more responsibility at Bromont when his father does slow down.

"Most family business are challenges, and a lot of people gave me advice not to (work for his father) and a lot of people gave me advice to do it, so it was definitely an emotional and mental struggle as to whether or not it would be the right choice to make," said Rector. "In the end he convinced me to come work for him and I appreciate the opportunity and challenges that it has provided me with." q