

Boch dealership drives excitement in Westford

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Westford Town Manager Jodi Ross shakes hands with Ernie Boch Jr. at the groundbreaking of Boch Honda West on Route 110 yesterday. Looking on are Kelly Ross, left, chairman of the Board of Selectmen, and Town Engineer Paul Starratt. SUN / TORY GERMANN

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WESTFORD -- Slamming the brakes on the economic downturn, Ernie Boch Jr. is driving forward with plans to open a Honda dealership on Route 110.

The Norwood-based auto giant broke ground yesterday afternoon on a 55,000-square-foot Littleton Road project.

Westford officials said they are thrilled with the development, which will bring tax revenue and employment opportunities to the town. It's estimated the opening of Boch Honda West will create about 100 jobs when it opens in October.

"We're excited Boch has decided to choose Westford as a location for one of their dealerships," said Town Manager Jodi Ross.

Ross picked up a shovel painted in the car company's signature blue and put on a hard hat emblazoned with a gold Honda logo along with Boch, state Rep. James Arciero, Selectman Kelly Ross and Honda officials. The car conglomerate presented the town with a \$100,000 check that will be used to fund major traffic improvements at Minot's Corner.



Boch Automotive Vice President Michael Clemmey, left, directs the groundbreaking of Boch Honda West on Route 110 in Westford yesterday. With him, from left, are contractor Francis Madigan, architect Lou Allevato, Honda manager Bill Bergmann, Kelsey Boch, 9, Ernie Boch Jr., president and CEO of Boch Enterprises, Selectman Kelly Ross, Town Manager Jodi Ross, state Rep. James Arciero, and Honda representatives Christan Miller-Young and Patrick Hoover. SUN / TORY GERMANN

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"In this economy, it's jobs, jobs, jobs," said Arciero. "This is a win-win for the town of Westford." Minot's Corner, the busy intersection where Boston Road, Carlisle Road and Route 110 converge, is about two miles from the future Honda dealership. The intersection is a "failure," said Town Engineer Paul Starratt, and rebuilding it will be one of the biggest projects in recent town history. It will involve the reconstruction and widening of the intersection, addition of traffic lanes, installation of sidewalks and synchronized traffic lights with I-495 exit ramps.

"This will be a commercial corridor and the construction of Honda will attract more businesses to the area," Starratt said.

Business is booming on the commercial artery, which connects Chelmsford to Littleton through Westford. Littleton Road (Route 110) is the new generation of Main Street U.S.A., with restaurants, retailers, supermarkets, technology companies, independent boutiques, hotels and conference centers.

The Lowell Regional Transit Authority recently expanded its bus service to include stops on Littleton Road.

Boch Honda West will be the town's first dealership and will be in the middle of the bus route at 283-383 Littleton Road.

It will be built to maintain a suburban look and charm, rather than a generic car dealership.

"The selectmen made sure we would fit nicely into the area," said Boch, president and CEO of Boch Enterprises. "It's a great market out here. The demographic in Westford is fantastic. In the last six months, I have heard a lot of customers say they're happy they don't have to come all the way down to Norwood anymore."

W.R. "Roddy" Palmer Jr. and his business partner, Richard Lewis, own nearly 20 acres around the post office next door to where the dealership will be built.

"We were approached by a few different businesses, but when Boch came calling, we felt they're a solid organization," Palmer said about finding the right tenant to lease his property.

The Planning Board approved the project last September. The dealership will occupy about 55,000 square feet and have 478 parking spaces, mostly for new car inventory.

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