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New assisted-living facility on way



An artist's rendering shows an Autumn Leaves facility. Courtesy art/The LaSalle Group Inc.

By Karina Ramírez / Staff Writer

A new assisted-living senior residence facility specializing in the care of patients suffering from Alzheimer's disease and dementia is coming to Denton.

Owned and operated by the LaSalle Group Inc., Autumn Leaves of Denton will have a groundbreaking event at 10 a.m. Friday at 2505 Brinker Road.

"Denton is expanding, and it is a good thing to be part of that growth," said Mitchell Warren, president of the LaSalle Group.

The 37-unit, single-story facility will be about 26,000 square feet and will feature two outdoor courtyards. It will be the LaSalle Group's eighth assisted-living facility in North Texas, joining others operating in cities such as Arlington, Flower Mound and McKinney.

"We are family-owned and operated and offer a flat rate and private pay — something hardly anyone is doing in that market," Warren said.

Cost for development will be between \$7 million and \$8 million, which includes land fees and construction, Warren said. Construction for the development will be headed by Lake Superior Contracting, a subsidiary of LaSalle Group.

LaSalle Group, with its headquarters in Irving, has developed residential, commercial and senior citizen facilities since 1990. According to its Web site, its Autumn Leaves brand has become the company's main focus, targeting individuals who require specialized care due to Alzheimer's and dementia-related conditions.

"All of us have a parent or a loved one with these types of needs," Warren said.

Autumn Leaves residences feature licensed staff on call 24 hours a day to provide such services as daily living assistance, house-keeping services and medication administration and monitoring. The facilities are designed with extra-high ceilings, wide hallways,

emergency response systems in each bedroom, and baths designed to create a secure and nurturing environment.

"This will be the first for Denton," Linda Ratliff, director of economic development for the city, said about the specialized facility for patients with Alzheimer's disease. "You hear so much about it — how baby boomers have to deal with parents during this time — that I believe this will be something that Denton will need."

Because the senior care industry is need-based and is growing in the North Texas area, Warren said, his business is flourishing.

"We had 95 percent occupancy rate in all of the facilities throughout the past year," he said.

In spite of the global economic downturn, LaSalle Group's construction of residence facilities has remained steady during the past year.

"We have not expanded as much, but we have remained pretty strong," Warren said. "But as lending opens up and as the economy improves, we will continue to grow."

Ratliff said that although there are centers in the city that offer care for patients with Alzheimer's, places such as Autumn Leaves require a special accreditation to present themselves as Alzheimer's-centered facilities.

Ratliff said she had talked to someone who is interested in developing a similar concept at Rayzor Ranch, but those plans were still uncertain.

"It [Autumn Leaves] will add one more specialty to our area, setting Denton as a medical destination," she said.

Autumn Leaves of Denton is expected to open in March. The facility will bring about 35 full- and part-time jobs to Denton and serve as many as 50 residents, Warren said.

The facility will be managed by Constant Care Management, a LaSalle affiliate.