

Developers, Orange talk on plans for 4,000 acres

By Jack Snyder

OF THE SENTINEL STAFF

Local and Canadian developers have optioned 4,000 acres in south Orange County for a massive residential/commercial development.

The project is just one of several huge developments which are projected to add thousands of housing units and millions of square feet of office, warehouse and retail space to the area.

Neal Harris, of Planned Recreation Communities Ltd., an Orlando developer of recreational properties, said talks with Orange County on the project are under way.

The Canadian partner in the venture is Genstar Development Inc., a subsidiary of Genstar Corp. Harris said Genstar is one of the largest developers in North America with projects in Texas, California, Arizona and Oregon in addition to Florida.

Plans call for construction of golf courses, a resort hotel, an undetermined number of housing units and commercial buildings. Harris said a full spectrum of housing stock is planned for the project.

Harris said exact figures on numbers of housing units and such will be worked out in the next few weeks in discussions with county officials.

After talks with the county, the project will be reviewed by the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council as a development of regional impact.

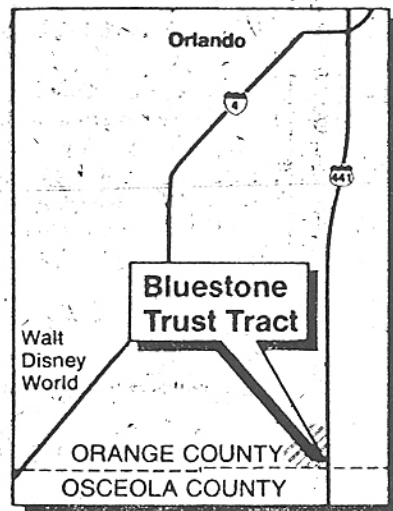
The property, known as the Bluestone Trust Tract, is west of U.S. 441 near Gatorland Zoo and Tupperware. The south boundary of the tract, which has about two miles of frontage on 441, is Osceola County.

Harris said Genstar currently is developing a 1,100-acre planned unit development in Miami called The Hammocks.

Local brokers involved in the land sale were Dr. Robert O'Brien, of Maury Carter and Associates, and Reliance Properties, represented by Harris and Ron Willeford.

Willeford and Harris are general partners in Planned Recreation Communities Inc.

The Bluestone tract is only a few miles west of Meadow Woods, a 3,000-acre development now under construction. The project is being developed by an investment group that includes



backers of Buenaventura Lakes, a 2,500-acre planned unit development in Osceola County that has been under construction for several years.

Other major residential/commercial developments recently announced in Orange County include Project Debra, a 2,000-acre development west of Orlando, and Lake Nona, a 6,750-acre project off State Road 15A southeast of Orlando International Airport.

Project Debra, reportedly bankrolled by Saudi Arabian interests, is currently undergoing review by the regional planning council.

The Lake Nona development is being backed by two British companies: Sunley Holdings Ltd. and Crowngap Ltd.