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GoggleWorks Apartments on schedule

Construction to continue through winter

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Crews working on the GoggleWorks Apartments are finishing the fifth floor of the six-floor, 59-unit building at Second and Washington streets.

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Construction work is on schedule, despite hitting hard rock in digging the foundation, said Eric E. Burkey, president of Reading-based Burkey Construction Co. that's got the building contract.

The crews are crane-lifting prefabricated panels to assemble the parts of the five apartment floors.

Burkey said crews will top off the building by the end of the month and then erect scaffolding, enclose the entire building in a tent and pump in heat so crews can work the entire winter.

"Winter is challenging; we're taking all the necessary steps to work through it," he said.

That tent won't come down until March, but Burkey said there won't be an "Extreme Makeover"-style big reveal.

"We're not doing anything that dramatic," he said.

The \$16.7 million project was put together by retailer Albert R. Boscov's nonprofit Our City Reading. The cost included clearing two buildings from the site and relocating a company.

The building is expected to be finished on time by early summer, he said. It will be called the Sen. Michael A. O'Pake GoggleWorks Apartments, to honor the late Berks legislator.

"We could have had major, major delays with the rock, but we pulled it back to schedule," Burkey said.

Excavation crews hit more and harder rock than expected. That takes time and money to deal with, but makes a great foundation.

"That building is not going anywhere," Burkey said.

There are 47 market-rate apartments and 12 low- to moderate-income apartments, the latter necessary to get a federal housing loan that makes the total financing package work.

The Reading Housing Authority will manage the building. Boscov and Our City Reading will market it.

Officials said the formal lease agreements are not yet available, but Our City Reading has a list of interested tenants.

The apartment building will complete Entertainment Square at Second and Washington, joining the GoggleWorks Center for the Arts, the Reading Movies 11 IMAX theater and the newer parking garage with Panevino's Italian restaurant that opened this year.

Boscov has said he hopes those developments, as well as a new convention center hotel planned for the 700

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Construction continues at The GoggleWorks Apartments at Second and Washington streets.

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block of Penn Street, will help spur future growth in the city.

Boscov and the city are seeking the final parts of the financing package for the hotel and hope to break ground next year.

Contact Don Spatz: 610-371-5027 or dspatz@readingeagle.com.

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The advertisement features a collage of newspaper front pages from the Reading Eagle, including sections for 'Berks', 'Sports', 'Life', and 'Vote 2010'. The text 'READING EAGLE' and 'READER REWARDS CLUB' is prominently displayed in white and red on a black background.

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