

Cardwell always developing something new

Cardwell Companies

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When you see John Cardwell on the street, his smile might indicate he's just closed another deal that will create jobs and revenue in Decatur. In the past two years, more than \$20 million has been spent on construction, development and renovation to existing buildings in Decatur and Macon County by Cardwell Companies and John's various partnerships.

Fairview Plaza was the jewel of the West End when it opened in 1955. By 2000, it was dated and half-empty. Look at the renamed Fairview Park Plaza now. Millions of dollars in renovations have returned the shopping center to its former position as a premier place to browse and buy in the West End. Faced with the problem of filling the massive 40,000-square-foot former Goldblatt's store, John was instrumental in recruiting StarTek to Decatur and committing to a substantial investment. The old

department store now houses 500 employees in new jobs created by the call center's decision to come to Decatur.

Downtown Decatur has changed greatly, due to John's creative energies: A tire store becomes a mini-mall. A 19th century hotel finds new life as an upscale office building. A tattered office building gets a glass facelift. A building that once was the headquarters for a utility company now is home to downtown's newest Italian eatery.

On the east end, an estimated \$6 million will be spent in the near future. This development will include construction for a national chain restaurant on 44th Street and U.S. 36 and a 24-unit condominium /townhouse project in Mount Zion on Spittler Park Drive, which will be available for occupancy this fall.

The indoor water park — adjacent to the Holiday Inn Select Hotel and Conference Center — will move from the drawing board to the construction phase by the end of this year, provided the hotel reaches its pre-9/11 performance. The hotel and conference center was purchased in 2000 and immediately was given extensive upgrades

to the physical plant and renovation of all the guest rooms and public areas with two new restaurants, a nightclub and sports bar.

Construction will begin soon on a senior housing development in the newly designated Cardwell Crossings Development overlooking Scovill Golf Course. Several national restaurant chains have expressed interest in the West End development that will be anchored by the park.

"Even with the financial setbacks created by 9/11 in my hospitality, travel and restaurant businesses," said Cardwell, "I will continue to develop new projects that will enhance the quality of life in Decatur and Macon County."

Cardwell Companies, and its affiliates, started by John more than 25 years ago, and owned by him and his wife, Donna, employ more than 300 in a mix of businesses. They include Nova Gallery, Nichols Advertising, Carlson Wagonlit Travel, Commercial Realty One, Service One, Jimmy Ryan's, The Village Apartments, Donna Cardwell Realty, Holiday Inn Select, Ramada Inn, and Country Inn and Suites hotels.