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business

Chopra center, spa gain space

The ayurvedic wellness center in Westminster will grow by 4,000 square feet, and the Myananda residences will have 68 condominiums instead of 60.

By Julie Dunn
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The developer of the Myananda residential community and spa adjacent to the Westin Westminster Hotel & Conference Center is expanding the scope and size of his project by \$10 million.

The \$50 million development will now consist of 68 wholly owned condominiums instead of 60, said Tim O'Byrne, president and chief executive of the Westminster Promenade Development Co.

And the project's anchor, the Rocky Mountain Chopra Center & Spa - an ayurvedic wellness center under the supervision of famous spiritualist Deepak Chopra - will grow in size from 17,000 square feet to 21,000 square feet because of an increased focus on medical treatments.

"It has been phenomenal the number of people coming out of the woodwork and showing support for this center," O'Byrne said. "This is going to be a regional epicenter for wellness."

O'Byrne and Chopra will be in Westminster on Wednesday for the project's official dedication. Beginning today, Chopra will lead a sold-out six-day meditation seminar for 180 people at the Westin.

"A lot of people are flying into town" for the event, which costs up to \$1,775 a person, said Dr. David Simon, co-founder of the Chopra Center. "Denver is so convenient to fly into, we believe this center will draw from several different markets."

Thirteen of the 68 Myananda condos are under contract, including the two \$1.9 million, three-bedroom penthouses. The remaining units range in size from 500 square feet to 2,000 square feet. They're priced from \$240,000 to \$950,000, or roughly \$475 a square foot.

The project will also have 16,000 square feet of retail. Possible tenants include a bookstore, a plastic surgeon's office and a salon.

Ananda means "joyful bliss" in ancient Sanskrit.

O'Byrne also announced plans to partner with the Chopra group to open at least five more wellness centers across the U.S. in the next three years. Some will include a residential component modeled after Westminster, with Oregon, Florida and central California all possible locations.

Chopra opened his first center, the Chopra Center for Wellbeing, at the La Costa Resort & Spa in Carlsbad, Calif., in 1996.

In the past year, the prolific author has begun to expand the concept, opening a spa at Dream hotel in New York and announcing plans for a Chopra Center & Spa at Porta Fortuna in Punta Mita, Mexico.

But Simon said the group was being careful to maintain the integrity of the Chopra brand.

"We have no plans for McChopras," he said. "More than anything, we're just responding to demand from around the world."

Dr. John Douillard, who practices ayurvedic medicine in Boulder, said the new Chopra Center should help raise local awareness of the 5,000-year-old healing tradition of India.

But he questioned whether the spa can command high prices without Chopra himself on-site full time.

"He's got a big following, but I wonder, without him really being there, will it have the same magic?" said Douillard, who ran the California Chopra Center for eight years. "And I'm curious if people will buy these condos. They're pretty expensive."

The Myananda project is scheduled to be completed by late fall 2007.

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