

Pagoda Village taking shape

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Published Oct. 30, 2013

EVERETT - Downtown's year-round farmers market and apartment complex should be open by 2015, and a Hampton Inn hotel should open by next spring.

The five-story project at Grand Avenue and Wall Street is called Pagoda Village and is the latest big development from entrepreneur Lobsang Dargey. Like Dargey's nearby Potala Village at Pacific and Rucker avenues, Pagoda Village encompasses almost a whole city block.

Snohomish County agriculture representatives are pinning hope on the year-round farmers market boosting the local agriculture economy by giving farmers a place to prepare and sell their produce every day.

Dargey's company says the 44,000-square-foot indoor market will be the largest in the Western U.S.

Above the farmers market, there will be 220 market-rate apartments capped by a rooftop garden with ocean views.

Three stories of parking will be located underground. The Snohomish County Grower's Alliance, which will be operating the farmers market, hopes farmers will fill all 90 market stalls. As of this spring, 20 have signed up.

The market will have a commercial kitchen which could offer fresh, locally made food on the go.

Project representatives gave the city's historical commission a project update last week focused on how Pagoda Village will look and feel.

The architecture features reclaimed metal and wood and is meant to remind people of agriculture, said Penny Hungle from Seattle-based Studio19 Architects.

Inside Pagoda Village there will

be large seating areas and a giant fountain. The building's entryway will have a 54-foot-long entry with a glass canopy, Hungle said with excitement in her voice.

Project representatives see the building as a community destination. The building's 4,000-square-foot atrium could feature trade shows and performances, Hungle said.

One of the few vocal critics of the year-round farmers market is Karen Erickson, who co-owns the seasonal Everett Farmers Market. The market concluded its 30th year earlier this month.

Erickson spent much of this past summer talking up the Everett Farmers Market by drawing stark differences to the year-round market. Seasonal markets give buyers fresh produce right after harvest, she

said. She suggested the year-round farmers market won't be able to offer fresh items during the winter.

Company representatives and county agriculture officials argue that some farmers currently drive to Seattle's Pike Place Market to sell their goods in the off-season, which is why the Everett project is important.

Pagoda Village is primarily financed through a federally run foreign investment program called EB-5.

Dargey, a former Tibetan monk, frequently traveled to China to make investment contacts.

EB-5 entices foreigners to invest at least \$500,000 toward a qualifying U.S. project and in exchange they can buy their way into the country by receiving a U.S. visa.

Foreign funding is the key financing mechanism for Dar-

gey's aptly named company PathAmerica, which specializes in these business arrangements.

Company officials say Pagoda Village will create 952 jobs overall.

Dargey's work already graces Everett's skyline. He built the multi-colored Potala Village, a mixed-use development about a block away at Rucker and Pacific avenues.