

Ward 8 Cheers Pavilion Groundbreaking

By James Wright
WI Staff Writer

A sense of excitement permeated the air as District officials and community leaders in Ward 8 broke ground for the construction of a facility on St. Elizabeths East campus in Southeast.

D.C. Mayor Vincent Gray, along with D.C. Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton, D.C. Council members Marion Barry (D-Ward 8) and Anita Bonds (D-At Large) and a host of advisory neighborhood commissioners and other

community leaders attended the groundbreaking for the St. Elizabeths East Campus Gateway Pavilion on May 29. Mary Cuthbert, a 29-year Ward 8 advisory neighborhood commissioner, smiled.

"This has been a long time coming," Cuthbert said. "This process started in 2000 and we determined that we were going to develop this land. I don't have to go to Virginia to shop because I can spend money in my own community."

The \$5 million pavilion is being built by the design-and-con-



D.C. officials break ground on St. Elizabeths East Gateway Pavilion on May 29. The pavilion is scheduled to open in two and a half months. /Photo by Khalid Naji-Allah

struction team of Davis Brody Bond of Bethesda, KADCON Corporation in Northwest and Robert Silman and Associ-

ates also located in Northwest. The pavilion will have a 16,300 square-foot open air market, a 3,300 square-foot enclosed area and a pedestrian walkway to the St. Elizabeths West campus.

It will offer space for casual dining, fresh food markets, pop-up retailers, and meeting spaces for community, cultural and arts events. Some vendors are eligible to set up in the pavilion for \$1 a month for the first six months, Victor Hoskins, the District's deputy mayor for Planning and Economic Development said, to determine how economically feasible it is to continue to conduct business [at that location] and in the ward.

The pavilion is scheduled to be completed by late August, which coincides with the opening of the new headquarters of the U.S. Coast Guard on the St. Elizabeths West campus.

Gray, 70, said that the pavilion is the beginning of the total redevelopment of eastern Washington.

"Today is a day that I have long anticipated, along with many other District government officials, business leaders and everyday residents," the mayor said. "This groundbreaking ceremony marks the start of the implementation of a vision we've shared for St. Elizabeths East, Ward 8 and the entire east end of our city and I'm thrilled that we are on track to have this facility completed by fall."

Barry, the former mayor of the District, brokered the deal in 1984.

"Sen. Thomas Eagleton called me up one day and asked me would I like for the city to own the whole St. Elizabeths campus," Barry, 76, told the crowd. "I got back with him a few days later and said that the District will take the east and you, the feds, can keep the west. It seems

like things have worked out well."

Norton, 75, told the group of approximately 60, who attended the event, that the Coast Guard's arrival is just the beginning. Homeland Security Department Secretary Janet Napolitano and her 14,000 employees will be coming to St. Elizabeths West shortly, she said. The delegate said that she worked hard to ensure that the Coast Guard's cafeteria will only accommodate 300 patrons for a workforce of 3,700 and noted that the agency insists upon a 30-minute lunch break for employees.

"I want those Coast Guard employees to go out and interact with Ward 8," Norton said.

Brian Hanlon, the director of the D.C. Department of General Services said that certified business enterprises (CBEs) will have a significant role in the St. Elizabeths East project's construction.

"We have had four outreach events for CBEs," Hanlon said. "We will keep pushing the envelope on this and we have a 10 percent target for Ward 8 subcontractors."

James Bunn, the chairman of the Ward 8 Business Council in Southeast, had reservations but now supports the pavilion.

"I'm on board," said Bunn, 71. "We got some of what we wanted which was to [enclose] half of the pavilion. Ward 8 is finally getting its share of economic development in the city and I think it is going to work."WI



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