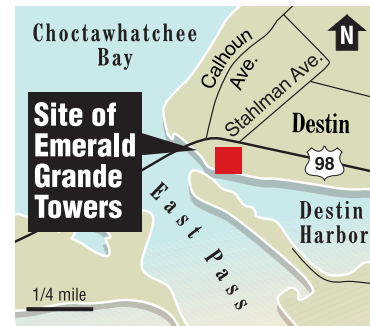


DEVELOPERS PROMISE Grande LIVING



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Above, Emerald Grande at HarborWalk Village rises high above Destin's East Pass as contractors work to finish the two 13-story towers. Legendary Inc.'s \$170 million project will also feature shops and restaurants. **Below**, Norriego Point and East Pass are visible from the west tower of Emerald Grande. Developers are worried that waves crashing against the point will eventually damage Destin Harbor's waterfront.

The first condo sales at Emerald Grande are expected to begin closing by the end of April, says Legendary executive



By KARI C. BARLOW

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DESTIN — There's no getting around it — Emerald Grande at HarborWalk Village looms large.

Whether you're in stop-and-roll traffic at the top of the Destin Bridge, boating in East Pass or pedaling down U.S. Highway 98, the high-rise condominiums command full attention.

After nearly 13 months of construction, the twin towers are taking distinctive shape with towering peaks, muted coastal shades of taupe and green and

ON THE NET

To watch a photo slideshow of the Emerald Grande, go to nwfailynews.com

nautical touches from lobby to rooftop.

"From about 10 miles out (in the gulf), you can see the beautiful building," said Ed McMullen, executive vice president at Legendary Inc., the company behind the \$170 million project. "But that's all good because it gives people a sense of place."

McMullen said Emerald Grande is on track to revive Destin Harbor,

offering upscale living, shops and restaurants.

Marcia Green, who owns the nearby Another Broken Egg café, is counting on that.

"It's going to bring attention back to this side of town," she said. "I think the concept is a good one."

Like most folks, her biggest worry is traffic — how much and where it will all go.

"The fact is, there's only four lanes," Green said. "I wish somebody could

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come up with a solution.”

The 13-story condo towers also put a major squeeze on the view from the upstairs deck at McGuire's Irish Pub.

“I did lose the pass, but that's progress,” said Billy Martin, who runs the popular restaurant. “I've still got a beautiful view, so I'm not worried. We're going to get a lot of business from (Emerald Grande).”

Martin plans to open his upstairs deck this weekend and is eager to see what customers think of the Emerald Grande.

McMullen says the condo's sales are brisk and should pick up.

“We're coming into the season,” he said. “They're working seven days a week. We have over 800 men and women working here.”

So far, 79 percent, or 99 of the 125 condos in the west tower have been sold. In the east tower, 15 of 144 condos have been sold.

The units come with two, three and four bedrooms. The average sale price is about \$1.5 million.

McMullen said fractional ownership, which allows up to eight people to buy shares of a single unit, has been brisk in both towers. Fractional share prices range from \$100,000 to



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Construction workers lay a hardwood floor Wednesday in the lobby of Emerald Grande. The condominium buildings are designed with a nautical theme.

\$300,000.

The first units are expected to begin closing by the end of April.

McMullen said Legendary is not worried about the sluggish condo market because Emerald Grande targets consumers who aren't looking to turn a quick profit.

“They're users. They're not going anywhere,” he said. “(Emerald Grande) has a lifestyle. It has a history. It has a design quality that is wind tunnel-tested at 144 mph. We're

lection of retail shops and restaurants — like Pat O'Brien's — that will wind around the waterfront.

However, McMullen said that waterfront is threatened by waves continually battering the sea wall and much of Norriego Point.

“The city needs to do something,” he said. “The jetty needs to be repaired. The dredging needs to happen in the channel. Ultimately, the whole boardwalk is jeopardized.”

City Manager Greg Kisela said the city is concerned but sees no quick fixes.

“It's pretty bad. We're losing a foot (of sand) a day,” said Destin City Manager Greg Kisela. “What we have here is a situation where Mother Nature is doing something we haven't seen before.”

Kisela said the City Council will discuss the issue Monday night with the Destin Harbor Business Association.

“We have made preliminary contact with the DEP (state Department of Environmental Protection) about what tools are in the tool box,” he said.

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