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## Business Tuesday

### Five-story hotel being constructed behind Westlake Shopping Center

By VALERIE LILLEY

*of the Journal Star*

**PEORIA** — Cohen Development and First Hospitality Group Inc. of Chicago are building a five-story AmeriSuites Hotel on West Lake Avenue behind the Westlake Shopping Center.

The hotel, expected to open early next year, will feature 124 suites that are a third larger than typical rooms, a small kitchen and eating area, and a work area. It will cater to the upper-market business class.

First Hospitality chose Peoria for business growth — particularly in the telemarketing, health care and retail — and the stable economy, said Bob Habeeb, president of First Hospitality.

He said the area's room-occupancy rate was high enough that he felt the area could support another hotel.

The Westlake location is prime for a hotel because of its accessibility to most of the parts of the city and Interstate

74. It is within 5 minutes of Wildlife Prairie Park, Weaver Ridge Golf Course, Northwoods Mall, the central business and riverboat districts, Pete Vonachen Stadium, the Peoria Civic Center, the Peoria Art Guld and Symphony and many more.

The Westlake area are has a cluster of hotels and a large number of restaurants, he said. "Hotels typically benefit from a cluster of hotels," he said.

First Hospitality, a hotel management firm based in Chicago, has 94 properties in the nation with six in suburban Chicago and plans to open another in downtown Chicago.

In a written release, Cohen Development Co. did not report the total value of the property but said it would provide \$3.4 million in annual economic impacts to the community. Habeeb deferred comment on its value to Les Cohen of Cohen Development. Cohen, owner of Westlake Shopping Plaza, could not be reached for comment.