OSU’s MBA students get housing option

By Mike Pramik
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For the past four years, Columbus developer and Ohio State University graduate Pete Edwards has donated use of dozens of his companies’ apartments to the Fisher College of Business. The college uses the apartments, situated around the city, to recruit students. While that arrangement will end with the coming academic year, Edwards’ involvement with student housing will not.

Edwards Communities is building Fisher Commons, a 116-unit apartment complex designed for graduate business students at Fisher College. Located at the southeast corner of Kenny Road and Lane Avenue, the apartments are a mile west of Fisher College, 2100 Neil Ave.

MBA students will be given priority to rent the apartments when they open in the summer, said Jim Miller, executive director of development and external affairs for the college.

A model and leasing center will open in April.

“The issue is being able to have another high-quality option for our students to consider in the available housing supply,” Miller said. “We see a lot of our students living farther away from campus. This reduces commute times and gives a better opportunity to be part of the graduate program.”

Miller said the project benefits the university because it’s privately financed. Further, Edwards Communities will pay a land lease to operate the units, which it has agreed to donate to OSU after about 30 years.

Debbie Rurik-Goodwin, vice president for Edwards Communities, said the units will rent for below-market rates. They’ll go for $700 per month for a 650-square-foot apartment and $1,200 for a 1,050-square-foot, two-bedroom space.

Each unit has an alarm tied to a system that alerts campus security in an emergency. Tenants also will gain access to the Barn, Edwards’ upscale health club and lounge at Haven Run Road.

But the signature amenities of the six three-story buildings are the ones designed for MBA students, who do a lot of group work. One building will include a conference center with cyber cafe providing wireless Internet access. Flat-screen televisions will highlight a separate conference area and lounge.

“This is to be a living-and-learning environment,” Rurik-Goodwin said.

Edwards Communities, a longtime apartment developer in central Ohio, has been expanding its portfolio in recent years to include student apartments.

The company has developed apartment complexes at the University of Kentucky, University of Toledo and Eastern Michigan University.

Another is under construction at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, and one is about to start at the University of Tennessee, Rurik-Goodwin said.

Arches in lights — soon

After several agonizing years of darkness there finally is light at the end of the tunnel for the Short North arches.

Work was completed last week to remove the fiber-optic lighting system from the 17 arches that span High Street in the Short North. Young Electric Sign Co. of Las Vegas, which presumably should know a thing or two about outdoor lighting, did the work.

The fiber optics are being replaced with a light-emitting diode system that will illuminate the arches in multiple colors. Workers are installing the LED system inside all 859 globes in the arches, said Tim Wagner, president of the Short North Special Improvement District.

The arches were a disaster pretty much from the beginning of their installation in early 2004. Updating the system is costing the city and the district more than a quarter of a million dollars in overruns alone.

Wagner said the district expects to flip the switch on the new system in May.