

Building starts soon on 'Westpark Village'



'WESTPARK VILLAGE'—Signing the papers closing its construction loan with First Guaranty Bank are Westpark Village shopping center developers Rocky and Barbara Robin, Lafayette, seated at left. Also seated is the bank's senior loan officer, David Dabdoub. Looking on are, from left, bank attorney Andrew Rinier, local architect Andrew Gasaway, project architect Larry Hammill Case of

New Orleans, Tommy Wulff of general contractor Carl E. Woodward Inc., also of New Orleans, Robin & Associates Vice President Lou Boemia and his wife, LaNell, Robin & Associates attorney Stanley Blackstone, and First Guaranty President Ralph Ross. (Staff Photo by Claude Level)

By **BILL ROBERTSON**
Staff Writer

Construction is scheduled to begin Monday on the planned \$4 million "Westpark Village" shopping center by Lafayette developer Roland "Rocky" Robin on U.S. 51 Bypass.

Plans for the three-phase development call for a mix of retail shops, offices and restaurants housed in a mix of storefronts modeled after French Quarter and historic Hammond, said Robin.

The Carl E. Woodward firm of New Orleans will build the center according to plans by architect Larry Hammill Case, Robin said.

Westpark Village will be located on highway frontage in Robin's 28-acre Hammond Park subdivision. Other developments there include the new doctors' building by local physicians and American Medical International, the Audubon Nursing Center (recently sold and renamed Montclair Nursing Center) and the APAL building housing Realtor Pat Tucker and others.

Robin said he has commitments in phase one for Longrocks, a hamburger restaurant chain; Jacqueline's Fine Apparel, a women's clothing store

now in nearby Villa Roma Plaza; a Haagen Dazs ice-cream store; a jewelry store; an optical center and a men's clothing.

Phases two and three are partially committed, and construction is anticipated to start in coming months, Robin said.

The Lafayette developer said he believes the uniqueness of the center's architecture and his plans to offer business space by lease or sale will lure tenants into Westpark Village.

Market studies done for Robin show that office and retail developments can work in Hammond "if they're different," he said.

Robin also said the "high-end" shops of Westpark Village will attract Hammond residents who now shop for special items in New Orleans or Baton Rouge.

"Our stores and restaurants will be destinations for shoppers; they won't need an anchor," Robin said, referring to the practice of building a shopping center around a large department store or grocery.

Construction financing for the project is by First Guaranty Bank. Its president, Ralph Ross, said the bank is confident of Robin's track record as a developer.