



Photos by Kathy Mitchell

## Candler Point: a colorful spot on South Rainbow

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Those who have not recently driven along South Rainbow Drive, a short street that connects Rainbow Drive and Candler Road in the Gallery at South DeKalb mall area, may be in for a surprise the next time they travel that way. In an area that not so long ago was mostly rundown buildings and empty lots is a row of new brightly colored buildings waiting to be occupied.

The new mixed-use business community had its ribbon cutting and grand opening July 16 with many county officials celebrating with key project personnel. The project was the first to be constructed under the new zoning in the Candler Road Overlay District.

The development's 54 "commercial condominiums," are being offered for sale rather than for rent. Developer **Sabi Varon** noted in brief remarks just prior to the ribbon cutting that he envisioned occupants who could have "the commitment and pride that can only come from ownership." Units range from 1,080 square feet to 2,061 square feet, with the possibility of combining units as a single business.

Representing DeKalb County CEO **Burrell Ellis**, Deputy Chief of Staff **Bettye Davis** said of the development, "It's unique," adding that through innovative government initiatives the county was able to "tear down the barriers" to such a project. Speaking on behalf of Ellis she said he considers the project "a prime example of innovative government initiatives spurring economic growth," adding that the CEO vowed that improvements in the area would "move at the speed of business, not at the speed of government."

The challenge, many involved in the project admit, will be getting business owners to see the area as one suitable for an upscale business. Even with such incentives as a low down payment, in-house or Small Business Administration financing and free conceptual design plans, the units may not be snapped up quickly in a slow economy.



Sabi Varon, above with oversized scissors, officially opens the new development. At left, he addresses the crowd. DeKalb County Chamber of Commerce President Leonardo McClarty visits one of the suites with Bettye Davis, center, and Tammy Bryant, a sales associate at Candler Point.

