

Hotel to break ground at convention center site

By FERNANDO DEL VALLE Staff Writer | Posted: Monday, February 4, 2019 8:30 am

HARLINGEN — The city's biggest upscale hotel is finally on its way.

In about two weeks, BC Lynd Hospitality plans to break ground on its \$25 million Hilton Garden Inn, which will be attached to the city's convention center.

As part of an agreement, BC Lynd is building the 150-room, five-story hotel while the city's funds construction of its \$17.6 million convention center, which has a pushed-back completion date of March 6.

BC Lynd, which is expected to close the sale of \$32 million in bonds Feb. 15 to help fund the hotel's construction, plans to break ground a day or two after, Assistant City Manager Carlos Sanchez said.

The hotel, which was expected to break ground about the same time as the convention center, has fallen about 18 months behind schedule.

In November, Brandon Raney, BC Lynd's chief executive officer, said the company searched for the "right" financing plan for 18 months.

Under an agreement, the Arizona Industrial Development Authority, an economic arm of the state of Arizona, is issuing \$32 million in tax-exempt revenue bonds to Provident Group-Harlingen Properties to finance the hotel's construction.

City Manager Dan Serna has described the select hotel as critical to the convention center's success in helping draw events.

Under that agreement, BC Lynd will operate, manage and staff the convention center while splitting any profits or deficits with the city.

Time to make bookings

Meanwhile, BC Lynd has hired Jeff Hamel as the convention center's operations manager, Sanchez said.

"They have been busy trying to get events booked," Serna told commissioners.



Convention Center

Harlingen Convention Center

So far in 2019, BC Lynd has booked events for five corporations and a school.

Meanwhile, religious events have been booked for 38 Sundays while one quinceañera and four weddings have also been booked.

For 2020, BC Lynd has booked six corporate events.

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley also wants to book an event, Mayor Chris Boswell said.

“ We are going to get a lot of business,” Serna said. “We are going to be the newest facility in town and we’re going to be nice-looking.”

At the eight-acre construction site at Teege and Harlingen Heights roads off Interstate 69, the building’s completion date has been pushed back again — this time from Feb. 15 to March 6.

After Feb. 15, contractor Killian Construction of Springfield, Mo., could face penalties of as much as \$1,000 every day until the project’s completion, Sanchez said

“ At this point, we haven’t started discussing that,” Sanchez said. “The focus, at this point, is to complete the project.”

Construction has picked up speed, Serna said.

“ Things are picking up quicker,” he said. “They’ve got a lot more people out there — a lot of subcontractors. The look of the building is going to be changing very rapidly.”

fdelvalle@valleystar.com