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Aug, 27, 2008

ECONOMY

## Drug manufacturer plans big Blaine facility

JOHN STARK

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BLAINE - A Canadian pharmaceutical firm is almost ready to break ground on a 200,000-square-foot manufacturing and research facility in the U.S. at 1265 Odell Road.

If the project goes according to plan, the Viva Pharmaceutical Inc. plant would be operating by the end of 2009 with 150 or more employees, and would pay hundreds of thousands of dollars in property tax revenues each year to the city and the Blaine School District.

"This is the kind of business that every community dreams of," said Terry Galvin, Blaine's community development director. "We've done everything we can to move them along quickly."

Jessica Chen, spokeswoman for the Richmond, B.C.-based company, said the complex will include manufacturing facilities, research and development and quality control labs. Some technical and management staff may be transferred from Canada, but most of the hiring will be done locally, she said.

The company's investment in the new plant will be upwards of \$10 million, Chen said.

Viva chose Blaine as a good location for improving the growing company's access to markets in the United States and overseas, Chen said.

Credo Construction Inc. of Bellingham has contracted to build a complex of three structures for Viva - one for manufacturing, one for research and one for offices.

Credo President Todd Lapinsky said he has tentatively planned a groundbreaking for Sept. 15. He expects to get the manufacturing and research buildings completed first. He expressed excitement at being a part of a project with significant economic impact.

"They are well-paying jobs," Lapinsky said.

*Reach John Stark at 715-2274 or [john.stark@bellinghamherald.com](mailto:john.stark@bellinghamherald.com)*