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## Korean companies sign on for high-rise construction

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DULUTH - Two Korean-based companies have signed on for the construction phase of Gwinnett's first residential high-rise towers.

Hyundai Engineering and Construction Co. will handle the construction and Kubo Design will be in charge of the interior design aspects of La Belle Verde, a high-rise project near Gwinnett Place Mall.

The two companies signed memos of understanding with Yamasaki Development at a ceremony at the Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce in Duluth on Thursday.

Yamasaki Development chose to team with Hyundai because of its past work in high-rise developments.

"They have 50 years experience in high-rises," said Kelly Hong, president of Yamasaki Development. "As you know, everything in Korea is very land-limited so everything has to go vertical. They have tons of experience."

Hong said Yamasaki Development expects to close on the 4.7 acres of land it's purchasing on Steve Reynolds Boulevard today.

Hong said the project should break ground early this summer and it will take 20 to 22 months to complete the 25-story towers.

"I think once they do break ground and it goes up, this is going to be the spark that ignites redevelopment around Gwinnett Place," said Joe Allen, executive director of the Gwinnett Place Community Improvement District. Keith Kim, vice president at Yamasaki Development, said both Hyundai and Kubo will join his company in setting up Gwinnett offices for this project. Andy Kim, the chamber's newly hired Global Consultant, said he thinks Hyundai will stay around Gwinnett once the project is finished and the company starts on more projects across the United States.

"Once they station here, why keep moving around?" he said.

The addition of Hyundai and Kubo to the project follows the departure of Yamasaki Architecture two weeks ago. Yamasaki Architecture is an internationally renowned firm that designed New York's World Trade Center. Hong, a former partner at Yamasaki Architecture, split from that company to create Yamasaki Development.