



An RK Visualization headset gives a great virtual reality tour of the proposed West Campus development at the University of Calgary.

## AROUND TOWN

# RKV technology offers virtual tours of planned developments



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I used to find it difficult to picture how a finished building would look when wading through page after page of architectural plans.

Schematic designs helped, but I was happy when some developers went to the expense of providing a coloured rendering by fine architectural illustrators like Nelson Macdonald.

The advance of computer-generated illustrations helped developers and buyers see how a project would turn out, but they lacked the feeling of a creative artist. The advance of 3-D design was a huge step, showing all sides of a buildings and walk-throughs of interiors.

An investment in even more advanced software has seen Riddell Kurczaba Architecture spin off a division called RKVisualization. Spearheaded by Dan Chomiak, it provides animated renderings like a video promotion for Seton that gave a guided tour of how its retail, office and residential areas would look once completed.

Another of its helpful presentations was a video that showed the route for the west LRT, including animation of the trains travelling under tunnel structures.

Calgary Municipal Land Corp.

contracted RKV to animate the master plan for the East Village, giving viewers a tour through all of the proposed buildings, including a look at the National Music Centre, the open spaces and its relationship to Fort Calgary and Inglewood. The Calgary Public Library website shows a terrific animated experience of what the project will offer.

RKV has now gone a big step further in its offerings with the addition of a new virtual reality tool.

On my visit I admired the colourful renderings of the West Campus Development Trust's plans for its proposed community on University of Calgary lands bordering Shaganappi Trail, between 16th and 32nd Avenues N.W.

The images were projected on a large screen, making it easy to imagine how the development will build out. Then I was given a headset that had been downloaded with those same images. Suddenly I was standing in the street watching a young man strumming a guitar while seated on a bench.

By moving my head I could take in the full scene, a 360-degree tour peering around buildings and looking up to the tops of towers. It was so real I was tempted to say 'Hi' to the virtual people I encountered.

The virtual reality tool will help developers and architects with community engagement. Like my experience I'm sure many people attending open houses to discuss

new developments in their area have problems grasping exactly what's proposed.

Looking through a pair of goggles they will be able to have a reality experience.

News and notes

Calgary-based Windmill Golf Group and Radium Golf Group have announced a strategic partnership that will bring together their strengths in the golf business.

Gary Goetsch, managing director of the Radium company, said the new partnership, "provides the opportunity for continuing revitalization of the Springs course, the completion of the changes and the feel of the Radium course, and ongoing improvement throughout all aspects of operations."

"We are very excited about this strategic partnership," says Barry Ehlert of the Windmill Golf Group. "The Springs and Radium courses are world class facilities with wonderful operators."

Ehlert is owner and managing partner of The Hamptons, Springbank Links, Boulder Creek, Silverwing Links and the under construction Mickelson National Golf Club in Calgary as well as The Wilderness Club in Montana, Northern Bear in Edmonton and Wildstone Golf Course in Cranbrook, B.C.

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