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Developers reach deal with Local 32BJ

A festive atmosphere prevailed yesterday among business parties usually cast as rivals.

The developers of three major projects on the drawing boards in Yonkers and New Rochelle said they have a deal that would provide a leg up for a prominent labor union to organize employees after the projects are built.

The announcement was made at the Yonkers Public Library by officials of Struever Fidelco Cappelli LLC, who plan to develop Palisades Point and River Center

Park in the city; Cappelli Enterprises, the developer of the Le Count Square project in New Rochelle; and Local 32BJ of the Service Employees International Union.

About two dozen union members wearing their signature purple coats and shirts also were on hand, as well as officials from Yonkers and New Rochelle government.

The projects combine commercial and residential development. Hundreds of new building service jobs — superintendents, janitors, doormen, and others — are expected to be created once the projects are completed. The projects are under review by government officials in both cities, and developers are hopeful for approval this year.

Yesterday's deal was not a union contract, given that there are no new employees to represent. The deal recognizes Local



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32BJ as the exclusive bargaining agent for new workers if a majority of them choose to join it through a card check process.

Local 32BJ now has about 4,500 members in Westchester, and 85,000 in total. Developers said they welcomed the arrangement as part of a growing relationship with labor.

"This is a good thing for all parties," said Joseph V. Apicella, executive vice president for a division of Cappelli Enterprises. "We were paying prevailing wages anyway, so it was really a no-brainer ... We're going to continue to have organized labor as a partner."

Yonkers City Councilman Dennis M. Robertson and New Rochelle Mayor Noam Bramson both received standing ovations from local members. Government officials said their communities benefit when residents can obtain

jobs that provide good wages and benefits.

