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Hotel fulfills a vision of 25 years

■ **Glen House:** The fifth building on the site has a longtime connection to the Libby family.

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Glen House

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Washington Summit Road Company, which itself is owned by four families, with the Libby family being the majority owner.

While overseeing the finishing touches at the hotel last week, Howie Wemyss, who is the Auto Road's longtime general manager, said the Glen House is the culmination of a process that began in the 1990s. It was then the Libby family, who are the descendants of Elihu Libby, initiated a master plan for the extensive Auto Road property.

At the turn of the 20th century, Elihu Libby bought the Glen House and in 1906, he also purchased the Auto Road. Since that time, Wemyss said the ownership group led by the Libbys has worked to develop a com-

prehensive vision for what is called the oldest manmade attraction in America.

Beginning in the 1990s, that vision became a master plan which included building the Great Glen Trails Outdoor Center in 1994 and a new Glen House. The Auto Road's proposal to build the hotel in 2007 was stymied by the 2008 recession but brought back in 2015 when it was approved by the Coos County Planning Board.

Ground was broken on the hotel in April 2017. Despite some weather-related delays, the structure, which was estimated to cost upward of \$14 million, is now ready for guests, said Wemyss.

As they come into the hotel, guests will immediately be drawn to the first

and most significant of the "wow" elements built into it: a lounge at the back of which is a soaring wall of glass. It offers unparalleled views of Mounts Washington, Jefferson, Adams and Madison. About half of the hotel's rooms have balconies.

Moving back from the glass wall, visitors can visit the bar or sink into a cozy seat in the lounge, which features a fireplace topped by a faux moose head. "It's made of cloth," explained Wemyss, and is intended to be a conversation starter.

Also on the hotel's first floor is The Notch Grille, a full-service restaurant that will be open to guests and the public seven days a week for breakfast, lunch and dinner. It offers cuisine billed

GREEN'S GRANT — When it opens this week, the fifth Glen House will become the newest lodging establishment in the White Mountains and will fulfill a 25-year master plan for the Mount Washington Auto Road.

The 68-room, three-story structure is on the site of the former Great Glen Ski Lodge on the western side of New Hampshire Route 16, north and across from the Base Lodge of the Mount Washington Auto Road.

In addition to meeting a need for rooms in the Mount Washington Valley, the Glen House will also boost the economy with the hiring of up to 40 full- and part-time employees.

In 1861, when what was then known as the Carriage Road opened, the first Glen House in the area of the current Base Lodge was already nine years old. That Glen House was destroyed by fire, as were the next three after it.

In 2001, fire also claimed the Great Glen Ski Lodge, a fact not lost on Auto Road officials in the construction of the new Glen House, which is outfitted with sprinklers and other safety measures.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Glen House will be held at the hotel at 11 a.m. Wednesday, followed by a soft opening soon thereafter and a grand opening sometime in October.

The year-round hotel will be operated by Olympia Hotel Management and is owned by the Mt.

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as "North Country favorites with a modern twist;" a pool; a thoroughly wired multi-purpose conference room; and a fitness center.

Wemyss concedes that the pool is small. And given the number of trails just outside the hotel, the adjacent fitness center filled with high-tech work-out machines seems a bit redundant.

Sustainability

Nonetheless, all the amenities, as well as Wi-Fi both inside and outside the hotel, have been provided to enhance the overall guest experience, said Wemyss, who added he is equally proud of some of things that are less visible.

For starters, the Glen House is built with sustainability in mind. It is be-

lieved to be the only hotel in New Hampshire to have a geo-thermal system for heating and cooling, said Wemyss, adding that part of the hotel's current energy needs are being met partially from an existing hydro project at the Auto Road Base Lodge.

In several years, once the hotel's energy consumption has been clearly defined, Wemyss said a solar array would be built to augment the power coming from across the street.

The hotel's Otis elevators are also kind of neat, he said, because not only are they fast and quiet, they regenerate electricity in going up and down. He noted that waste heat that is generated in the hotel's kitchen by walk-in refrigerators is cap-

tured and put back into the geo-thermal system.

That system reflects the Auto Road's commitment to stewardship, said Wemyss. He noted that such a system, because of the larger upfront cost and longer break-even time, has often deterred other hotels in northern New England from using it.

"If you want to break even in seven years, you don't go geo-thermal," he said, but the Auto Road and the Libby family are firmly behind it.

"Everyone wants it (the new Glen House) to be profitable," said Wemyss, "but after 112 years of family ownership, they (the Libbys) have the luxury of taking a longer view on the investment."