

# **Brodart housing plan hopefully starts trend**

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Plans to raze the vacant Brodart Co. warehouse at Memorial Avenue and Oliver Street to create space for housing are encouraging on a number of levels.

First of all, not much good can happen with a vacant warehouse, so reuse of such properties is almost always a good thing.

Secondly, housing in this particular neighborhood will restore that area to a much greater degree than a commercial or retail development. It's a place where people should live rather than work or shop.

And finally, of course, market rate housing 48 units of apartments, nine townhouses and two single-family homes is what is needed to help bring under control the rental pricing in Williamsport.

The only minus in this whole equation is that the project won't be completed for a couple years. The city needs more rental housing now. But that's no one's fault.

In coming months, our hope is that this development will spur a movement to reuse every available housing opportunity in the city and outlying areas.

With the presence of new rental prospects due to the employment opportunity spurred by the Marcellus Shale natural gas drilling boom, rental demand has outpaced available housing.

When that happens, it is inevitable that rental costs will go up.

That's just the way a free market, supply-and-demand economy works.

The only way to bring those costs under control is to increase the supply. Let's hope the Brodart plan is just the start.