



ANDREA FLEXHAUG/Special to the Herald

From Jamaica to Osoyoos, construction worker Kenrick Lennon has come a long way to the work-site of the Watermark Beach Resort development.

# Jamaicans in Valley to work construction trades

By ANDREA FLEXHAUG

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**OSOYOOS** — For the next two years, Kenrick Lennon and a group of his fellow Jamaicans will be working in the booming Okanagan construction trade.

Penticton-based Greyback Construction had gone to Jamaica to seek out much-needed workers, and in September Lennon along with 10 others landed in Kelowna. Six of the men joined the construction crew at the William R. Bennett Bridge in Kelowna; and Lennon and the five others came to Osoyoos to work on the multi-million-dollar Watermark Beach Resort development on prime beachfront property at the south end of Main Street.

For Lennon, it was the first time the 29-year-old had travelled overseas, and he didn't know much about Canada except for hearing it had "lots of trees."

His command of the English language is good, as English is learned in Jamaican schools.

Like the other Jamaican construction workers, Lennon had attended a carpentry program after high school.

Although he worked in the building industry in Jamaica, Lennon said it is "not so difficult here."

He ascribes this to the greater technology, hence more sophisticated equipment used in the building trade here.

"We like the work," commented Lennon. "I'm glad for the experience."

Although Lennon is used to the hustle and bustle of his hometown of Thompson Town, he is enjoying the quiet atmosphere of Osoyoos. He is also glad for the chance to meet some of the locals.

"They're very friendly," he observed. "They make us welcome."

The \$75-million Watermark Beach Resort consists of 30 townhomes and 123 units, plus commercial space on 4.3 acres of lakeshore property on the site of the former Osoyoos packing house.

The development will feature a main four-storey horseshoe-shaped building, with beachfront townhouse units on the south side of the 1.7-hectare property. The resort also includes a 200-seat convention centre, a health club/spa, retail boutiques and an upscale restaurant.

The former packing house property had been eyed for development for years. Public access to the entire 300-metre stretch of waterfront directly in front of the property will be maintained. Construction is expected to be completed by September 2008.