

Americana mall starts with bang

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GLENDALE — In a ceremony complete with confetti and fireworks, officials and community members broke ground Thursday on the \$324 million Americana at Brand project.

The outdoor mall is expected to open in March 2008 on 15½ acres next to the Glendale Galleria.

“Folks, you’re standing on ground zero of the resurgence and the renaissance of Glendale,” City Councilman Ara Najarian said.

Americana at Brand will feature retail, restaurants and a movie theater, plus 338 apartments and condominiums. Caruso Affiliated expects to start pouring the foundation and installing utilities late this summer.

The project’s budget is \$324 million, developer Rick Caruso said. That’s more than the previously disclosed figure of \$265 million, the result of both increased construction costs and the fact that the new budget factors in building the condos instead of selling off those building rights to another developer.

During the ceremony, officials and community members sat under a white tent as a jazz ensemble played off stage. At one point, Caruso pushed down on a detonator to ignite fireworks in a makeshift wooden building, and the roughly 10-foot structure collapsed as audience members cheered.