

April 12, 2007

Dallas rail hub might spell competition for Alliance

By Robert Francis

The official grand opening of the Dallas Logistics Hub last week could mean additional competition for the Alliance development in north Fort Worth.

The Allen Group, a California developer of commercial properties, plans to open the new 6,000-acre logistics park consisting of a warehouse and distribution center next to the Union Pacific railroad terminal in Wilmer, south of Dallas. According to the Allen Group, the Dallas Logistics Hub will be the first inland port in North America to be served by terminals of two competing rail lines – Union Pacific and BNSF. The developer is still in negotiations with BNSF for the second intermodal terminal designed to link truck, train and oceangoing containers, according to a company release. BNSF's intermodal terminal is one of the major components in the Alliance development and helped ensure the success of that project when it opened in 1995.

Hillwood Properties, which owns and operates the 17,000-acre Alliance Airport and business development along Interstate 35W in northern Tarrant County, has used the intermodal facility to lure companies with shipping needs to this area.

Alliance is 25 percent developed, with the developed areas at 97 percent occupancy.

During a speech at TCU late last year, Ross Perot Jr., chairman and founder of Hillwood Development Co., said his company continues to watch development at a southeast Dallas industrial park, an area he once referred to as a threat.

“We certainly have competition in the marketplace,” Perot said. “The South Dallas airport is certainly one we watch.”

At a meeting of the 35W Coalition last week, officials there said any threat from the south Dallas facility will be several years in the future because building the infrastructure for that type of development won't happen overnight.

Speaking to the group, Mayor Mike Moncrief said the area must keep its focus on handling transportation issues.

“The challenge is to keep the message on the front-burner,” he said.