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Intermodal Pushes Wilmer Growth

By Sherry Long

With 10,000 acres available for commercial development Wilmer has become a developer's dream since the Union Pacific Railport was opened late last summer.

In recent months, three developers have bought almost 7,000 acres planning to turn them into distribution centers to serve Fortune 500 companies like Wal-Mart, Target and others. Prime Rail Developer Mike Rader was responsible for securing the land along Interstate 45 in Wilmer and Hutchins where the intermodal facility was constructed. "All the developers needed a push and the push came from the intermodal facility," Rader said. "Prior to the intermodal there was no reason for them to come here."

Developers envision the southern Dallas County region booming with commercial, office and retail growth. The California-based Allen Group purchased 4,500 acres of prime real estate and are negotiating the purchase of 1,500 more acres along Interstates 20, 45 and 35 in Wilmer, Hutchins, Lancaster and Dallas for their Dallas Logistics Hub.

"Our park can be reached by all these major highways," Marketing Director John Cross said. Development of their property in the southern Dallas County area could take 40 years while bringing 35,000 jobs to an estimated 60 million square feet of property including a high-end hotel, office and retail space on Interstate 20.

Specializing in constructing facilities near intermodal sites on the west coast, much of the company's Interstate 45 property will be developed for multi-million distribution centers.

Cross said Dallas is the ideal spot for new commercial growth because Asian importers want to get their merchandise to consumers faster by passing California's backlogged loading docks.

Houston's port has become increasingly busy as ships unpack shipping containers onto the railways sending their merchandise to the intermodal facility on Interstate 45. The containers are then loaded onto flatbed 18-wheelers to be driven across the United States to distribution centers and retailers. "Dallas literally becomes the hub of transportation," Cross said.

Rader purchased another 430 acres along Pleasant Run Rd. for his Sunridge Business Park which he said could easily become eight million square feet of distribution center space creating 2,500 jobs within seven years. It is not known at this time how another 190 acres he purchased will be utilized, but Rader said he does plan to clean up the gravel pit.

Dallas' Argent Group has purchased 300 acres for their Dalport Business Park and has been annexed into Wilmer, according to Wilmer City Administrator Thom Lauer.

www.allengroup.com

