

Focus

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Mr. Carl Williams and Mr. Thomas Bush were recently recognized by Mayor Michael Hurtt and the DEDC Board of Directors for their dedicated years of service on the DEDC Board. Standing from left to right are Mr. Ernie Roberts, DEDC Board Secretary/Treasurer, Mr. Carl Williams, DEDC Board President, Mayor Michael Hurtt, Mr. Thomas Bush, former DEDC Board Director and current Councilman of District #6 of the City of DeSoto, Mr. Gail Douglas, DEDC Board Vice President, and Mr. Victor Upton, DEDC Board Director.

The DeSoto EDC Celebrates a Year of Growth!

By Scott D. Livingston

Director of Marketing and Business Development
DeSoto Economic Development Corporation

The DeSoto Economic Development Corporation (DEDC) recently celebrated another year of growth for the City of DeSoto and recognized two of its board members, Mr. Carl Williams and Mr. Thomas Bush. DEDC Board President, Mr. Carl Williams has faithfully served on the DEDC Board for six years. His second, three-year term will expire December 31, 2003.

Mr. Williams has also served as the President of Concerned DeSoto Citizens and on numerous committees for the DeSoto School Board and City of DeSoto, including the City Charter Review Commission. Mr. Williams

is also a member of the Rotary Club of DeSoto.

Mr. Thomas Bush served on the DEDC Board for two years before being elected to the DeSoto City Council. Mr. Bush has served on the DeSoto ISD Strategic Planning Action Committee, and he is a past Chairman of the Planning & Zoning Commission. He is also a member of the DeSoto Chamber of Commerce and Rotary Club of DeSoto.

2003 has been a successful year with respect to economic development for the City of DeSoto, and the future is brighter for new projects in the upcoming year!

This past year, the DEDC successfully attracted Starbucks Coffee, Texas Air Manufacturing, and Hillwood Investment Properties to the community. In addition, the DEDC

constructed a 20,000 square foot building and a new road called Peregrine Way in the Eagle Business and Industrial Park to attract new businesses to DeSoto. In March, the DEDC gave Texas Air Manufacturing an incentive grant in the amount of \$65,000 to completely change the electrical wiring in an existing facility in the industrial park and attract the new, growing industry to DeSoto, TX. Texas Air Manufacturing brought 15 new jobs to our community, and they plan to triple their employee base within the next few years. In June, the DEDC committed \$30,000 to Starbucks Coffee to defray the costs associated with renovating the former Arby's facility and attract Starbucks Coffee to our community.

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This past summer, Hillwood Investment Properties completed their incentives negotiations with the City of DeSoto and completed their plans to build a proposed, 1,800,000 square foot distribution center on 113 acres of land in the Eagle Business and Industrial Park over the next five years. Hillwood's development will bring new jobs to the community and add additional tax to the tax rolls through the applicable inventory tax. Hillwood's successful development in DeSoto is also important because it communicates a favorable message to other industrial developers that DeSoto, TX, is a business-friendly community.

This past spring, the DEDC finished constructing a 20,000 square foot speculative industrial/commercial building to provide needed industrial and commercial space in the industrial park, foster the creation of new jobs, stimulate development along Hampton Road in the northern sector of the city, and draw new money into the local economy. Several companies are currently considering the facility as the new location for their businesses. This fall, the DEDC also finished constructing Peregrine Way, the newest road in the Eagle Business and Industrial Park. The DEDC built this road in partnership with Solar Turbines, Inc. to facilitate their recent \$10 million expansion, open up 90 acres of land for four separate tracts of land in the Eagle Business and Industrial Park, improve the traffic circulation for all the companies in the industrial park, and attract new business to the community.

Many new projects, including an Exxon, Goodyear Tire Center, and upscale bakery have been in progress this year, and these new businesses are planning to open in 2004. The new Exxon station, which is currently under construction on the southeast corner of Belt Line Road and N. Hampton Road, is projected to open the end of January, 2004. It will feature a Quizno's Sub shop, Tiger

Mart Convenience Store, touch-free car wash, and filling station. Mr. Allen Shipman, owner of the proposed Goodyear Tire Center on the northwest corner of N. Hampton Road and Embassy Park, plans to start construction on his new store immediately. He anticipates that his new 5,800 square foot store will open sometime in April, 2004. In order to facilitate the new store construction and further encourage development of the 20 additional acres of commercially zoned property on Embassy Park, the DEDC committed to reimburse Mr. Shipman up to \$33,687 for the cost to construct the necessary left-turn lane from N. Hampton Road onto Embassy Park. Mrs. Gay Schroeder, owner and operator of the Christmas Remembered shop, approached the DEDC with plans to build a new, 1,500 square foot, upscale bakery that will make specialty cakes. The new bakery is currently under construction next to the Christmas Remembered shop at 307 N. Hampton Road, and it is projected to open sometime next year. In order to defray the infrastructure costs associated with building this new business, the DEDC offered Mrs. Schroeder a grant for \$15,000.

By the end of 2005, the reconstruction of Belt Line Road, Interstate 35E, and Polk Street from Centre Park Blvd to Daniieldale Road will be completed. The new construction on Belt Line Road and Interstate 35E is anticipated to foster new retail development in DeSoto, TX, and the new construction on Polk Street will improve the circulation of traffic for DeSoto citizens through the industrial park. Although the construction of Belt Line Road from Cedar Hill, TX, to N. Hampton Road will not be completed until the summer of 2005, brokers and developers are already looking for new store sites and hustling for business on all four corners of the intersection of Belt Line Road and Westmoreland Road. While 30 acres of land are available on the northwest corner, 17 acres are available on the southwest corner, 15 acres are available on the southeast corner, and 4 1/2 acres are available on the northeast corner.

In addition to marketing all four of these corners for commercial retail development, the DEDC is also exploring ways to redevelop the 2 acres of property on the southwest corner of Belt Line Road and N. Hampton Road and revitalize DeSoto's historic town center. According to Hal Stanford, Area Engineer for TXDOT in Waxahachie, TX, the construction on Interstate 35E is scheduled to be completed in January, 2005. However, the DEDC is not wasting a single minute, and it has already been working for over a year to market the interstate frontage and attract restaurants and other retail development. Last spring, the DEDC developed a scaled, conceptual rendering, which is a technical picture with measurements on top of multiple aerial photos, of the location of each of the entrance and exit ramps along Interstate 35E. The DEDC is using this rendering to market the interstate frontage before the interstate construction is ever even finished! The DEDC has been able to use this rendering to work with developers and attract several potential restaurants to DeSoto. "All of these prospective restaurants are still very tentative," says Mr. Layne Ballard, "but I'm hopeful that all of our hard work will pay off when the time is right". The DEDC has also committed \$2 million dollars to reconstruct Polk Street from Centre Park Blvd to Daniieldale Road, which will expedite access for both industrial and residential traffic to Interstate 20. The construction project, scheduled to begin after the first of the year, will include reconstructing Polk Street from two lanes of asphalt to two lanes of concrete, adding a signal light to the intersection of Polk Street and Daniieldale Road, and reconstructing the intersection to accommodate additional traffic. Plans have been tentatively discussed to later add two additional lanes of concrete to ultimately make Polk Street a four lane, divided, concrete roadway from Daniieldale Road to Centre Park Blvd.

Please contact the DeSoto Economic Development Corporation at 972-780-9915 for additional information.