
Gladewater Economic Development

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Business Beat: Investors eye development on Texas 42

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By Jo Lee Ferguson Special to the News-Journal

Two Longview business owners have invested in property along Texas 42 with plans to possibly construct buildings to lease out.

Brothers Tracey and Jeff Davis own East Texas Truck Equipment in Longview and Tyler Truck Accessories. Their Longview business also has a leasing division that owns buildings on East Loop 281 that are leased to oil field companies, said Tracey Davis. They created a new entity, 42 Group Investments, to purchase almost 64 acres on Texas 42, north of Interstate 20 and FM 1252.

The economy will dictate what happens with the land and when, Davis said. They plan to build a driveway, clear part of the property and advertise it as “build to suit.”

42 Group Investments purchased the property from Converium LLC, which includes Frank Chaney, Noah Yoder and Scott Zhorne. Property records show 42 Group Investments financed \$275,000 toward the land purchase through Austin Bank.

AT&T expansion

AT&T announced this past week that Longview, Marshall and Tyler customers will have access to its 4G LTE network by the end of the year.

The network's expansion to this area will bring customers the "latest generation of wireless network technology and faster mobile Internet speeds," the company said in a statement.

More than 225 million people are covered by AT&T 4G LTE, and coverage is expected to expand to almost 270 million people and more than 400 markets by the end of the year, AT&T said.

The expansion is part of AT&T's Project Velocity IP (VIP), a three-year plan the company announced about a year ago to grow and enhance IP broadband networks.

"As part of Project VIP, AT&T plans to add more than 10,000 macro cell sites nationwide by year-end 2015, as well as deploy more than 40,000 small cells and add more than 1,000 Distributed Antenna Systems to increase the density of its wireless network," a company statement said.

An AT&T spokeswoman said she didn't have specific information about how much the company would spend on expansion in East Texas. However, city of Longview building permits show the company has invested at least \$40,000 in recent weeks in new antennas and other equipment at existing towers.

Bling it on

Scott Averitt's and Brette Dunlap's new boutique, Bling N Things, offers customized embroidered "bling" to ladies clothing and school sports wear.

The business opened about a month ago at 1426 McCann Road, in Brookwood Village. (The shopping center also is home to El Sombrero restaurant and The Cook's Nook.)

The store sells bling on jeans — including LA Idol, Grace, Tru, JZ and Nina Rossi, T-shirts, jewelry, caps, sandals and cell phone cases. Screen print and monogram services are available, and the store offers custom T-shirts, uniforms and school spirit wear.

"We carry trendy and fashionable clothing for women in regular and plus sizes at reasonable prices, and our inventory is always changing," Averitt said in a prepared statement.

The pair spent several years selling their customized embroidery at trade shows, markets and private parties before opening the store. Dunlap also is a seventh grade teacher at Hallsville Middle School.

Bling N Things is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday.

Property return

The Gladewater Economic Development Corp. once again owns almost 9 acres of land previously given to Southwest Plastic and Fiber Recycling.

Robert Johnson, who has been executive director of the economic development corporation for about two years, said his organization previously entered into performance contracts with Southwest Plastic and its owner, John Thompson. However, the Gladewater plant was destroyed by a fire in 2011, and Thompson died about a year ago.

The fire made it impossible for Thompson to meet the performance contract's requirements, Johnson said. His organization had been in discussions with Thompson before his death about possibly extending the terms of the contract so he could revive the business. After his death, though, the Gladewater Economic Development Corp. worked with the family to return the land to his organization.

"We'd like to use it as an incentive to attract another business to Gladewater or multiple businesses," Johnson said. The property is in the Gladewater Industrial Park.

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