

Outlook for jobs growing in Missouri City

By Natalie Harms | December 4, 2012

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Photo By Jerry Baker/Freelance

Roxie Vaughn takes a photo of her daughter, Sydnee, 11, a fifth-grader at Sienna Crossing Elementary, with former Houston Rocket and NBA Hall of Famer Clyde Drexler, center, who signed autographs and posed for photos with fans at Wal-Mart Store 5449 at 9929 Texas 6 in Missouri City. The store has sponsored special events since its September opening. Sydnee was at the store to get Drexler's autograph for her brother Dylan, 8, a third-grader at Sienna Crossing Elementary. Roxie Vaughn takes a photo of her daughter, Sydnee, 11, a fifth-grader at Sienna Crossing Elementary, with former Houston Rocket and NBA Hall of Famer Clyde Drexler, center, who signed autographs and posed for photos with fans at Wal-Mart Store 5449 at 9929 Texas 6 in Missouri City. The store has sponsored special events since its September opening. Sydnee was at the store to get Drexler's autograph for her brother Dylan, 8, a third-grader at Sienna Crossing Elementary. Roxie Vaughn takes a photo of her daughter, Sydnee, 11, a fifth-grader at Sienna Crossing Elementary, with former Houston Rocket and NBA Hall of Famer Clyde Drexler, center, who signed autographs and posed for photos with fans at Wal-Mart Store 5449 at 9929 Texas 6 in Missouri City. The store has sponsored special events since its September opening. Sydnee was at the store to get Drexler's autograph for her brother Dylan, 8, a third-grader at Sienna Crossing Elementary.

commercial and industrial growth in Missouri City soon will produce hundreds of new jobs.

"A lot of the things that have been happening over the past two to three years are all coming together at one time," said Missouri City economic development coordinator **Bob Graf**.

"We talk about jobs and wanting to have jobs here, we haven't really seen them, yet. But, I'd say within the next six months we will probably have pretty close to 750-1,000 new jobs in Missouri City."

The source of some of those jobs is the 168-acre Lakeview Business Park. Four years ago, the city teamed up with Trammel Crow Co., a commercial developer with projects across the United States. Trammel Crow converted the site from a failed golf course, added roads and infrastructure, and is being reimbursed by the city, said Graf.

The biggest company to come to Lakeview will be **Niagara Bottling Co.**, which is the second largest private water bottling company in the United States. Construction is under way on a 356,000-square-foot facility, which is set to open on March 1. On site, the company will manufacture plastic bottles, which it will package and distribute.

Another business area has developed in the Beltway Crossing area. **Ben E. Keith Co.**, which is the ninth largest food service distributor in the nation, is planning to open next spring a 500,000-square-foot distribution center, making it the largest employer in Missouri City, according to Graf.

This is the ninth distribution center to be opened by the company and will create around 400 jobs.

In addition, Twin Star Bakery, a start-up company owned by some of the former owners of Camelot Desserts, opened its 226,000-square-foot facility in November. It initially planned to hire 100 employees.

Wal-Mart opened in September near Fort Bend Parkway at 9929 Texas 6. The store hired about 300 employees at the chain's second location in Missouri City.

These projects are among new businesses opening in Missouri City and joining existing companies, such as Global Geophysical, that have consistently expanded their workforce.

Due to an increase in residential building and infrastructure improvements, the area around Texas 6 has seen retail growth and is welcoming the city's second hotel next fall, which will be a **Hampton Inn**.

"Highway 6 was expanded and widened a few years ago," Graf said. "Because of the number of new planned developments out there, like Riverstone and Sienna Plantation, it's added a lot of need of retail. Once the rooftops come up, the retailers are not far behind."

While new jobs are enough of a positive addition in the current economy, an increase in commercial business could long range decrease homeowners' property taxes.

"The larger our commercial tax base is, the lower our property tax will be over time," said **Stacie Walker**, the city's public information manager. "I think the more commercial tax we have here is better for our citizens."

Graf said new developments have doubled the city's commercial business base without taking over the city as a whole.

"You want a balance somewhere with your commercial development and your residential development, and we didn't have that before," Graf said. "We were at 10 percent to 13 percent commercial and now we're at around 24 percent."

Mayor **Allen Owen** agrees with this lower tax-rate possibility and compares it to nearby Stafford, which has no property tax rate due to its commercial prosperity.

Owen is excited for all the new development, yet he knew it was inevitable.

"It's something we've been waiting on for a long time," he said. "We've had the land available for a while and just needed a little push."

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