

Boom town for Copperas Cove - 3/11/2007

(Killeen-Temple-Fort Hood: Retail)

(Copperas Cove) - Copperas Cove Chamber of Commerce President Marty Smith and Copperas Cove Economic Development Corp. Marketing Director Monica Hull, are pleased with the recent emphasis of civic leaders on retail development in Copperas Cove. Copperas Cove officials are supporting the growth of hotels and new retail centers as well as renovating large areas that had fallen into disuse, such as the building Wal-Mart vacated near the intersection of Avenue D and U.S. Highway 190, to erect a new facility farther west. Tecon Inc. of Lampasas has bought the old building to turn it into storage, and plans call for pad sites in the former parking lot for restaurants and stores. The Frontier Hills shopping center on west 190 is rapidly filling up in three buildings - one with 77,000 square feet, one with 54,000 square feet and one with 14,000. Mattress Sleep Center recently moved there. Walgreen's drug store is planned to open in October at the intersection of Robertson Avenue and 190. The city provided Walgreen's Inc. with incentives including sanitary sewer relocation and fiber optic lines. Three new hotels are coming; a 67-unit Comfort Suites nearing completion, a 62-unit Days Inn with an interior corridor and another, yet to be named, with 55 to 60 rooms. The hotels will bring badly-needed meeting space as well as local hospitality facilities. The shining star in local development is a planned 668,000-square-foot retail complex planned for 125 acres on the south side of 190 at the east end of the city. The beginnings of that are about a year away because the land belongs to Fort Hood, which has agreed to swap it for 110 acres at Clear Creek and Ammo Road along Mohawk Drive. The land would serve as a buffer for Robert Gray Army Airfield, now a component of the Killeen-Fort Hood Regional Airport. Army and civilian officials expect the swap to be approved. With all the new development comes traffic growth, and it's been getting thick lately. Everywhere it's been measured in the city, about 1,000 more vehicles per day have been counted this year than the same time last year. But much of the traffic on 190 will have the option of bypasses now under construction on the north and south side of the city. A great deal of new residential development has been springing up to the north, and several new apartment complexes are planned. Fort Hood is the economic hub of the region. Soldiers are stationed at posts for longer periods than they've ever been, and parents and grandparents are moving to where they are, Smith said.

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