

More people, more growth heading our way

Pleasanton's economy is on the uptick thanks to population and business growth. Laura Olson, executive director of the Pleasanton Downtown Association, told a Chamber of Commerce forum Wednesday that retail and restaurant businesses are "standing in line" for available space on Main Street. Shopping centers along Hopyard Road are also filled to capacity and businesses are now filling up the available space at the new Safeway Gateway Center at Valley and Bernal avenues. Bagel Street Cafe and Baja Fresh opened this week, following last month's opening of the popular Habit Burger Grill and Panda Express' third outlet in Pleasanton. Stoneridge Shopping Center also is thriving with new stores and restaurants.

Over on Staples Ranch at the city's eastern edge, work will begin Monday on a bridge over the arroyo that will complete the extension of Stoneridge Drive to El Charro Road. Stoneridge and Jack London Boulevard on the Livermore side should be opened to traffic by year's end. Also on Staples, construction has started on more than 650 homes and apartment units in the Stoneridge Creek retirement community, with the first homes scheduled to be ready for their new owners in mid-2013.

Work is continuing, too, on the new Clorox research and office center off Hopyard Road and Johnson Drive that will bring more than 700 more employees to Pleasanton from their current work sites in Oakland. Kaiser Permanente also is adding more employees at its Information Technology center here.

At 875 acres, Hacienda Business Park is the largest development of its kind in Northern California with over 10 million square feet of existing, mixed-use space occupied by some 475 companies that locally employ 17,000 people. New firms locating in the park last year included Pacific Office Automation, Re/Max Accord, Aplegen and Met Life Home Loan, with Maddie's Fund moving this year into an office building it has purchased in Hacienda.

Sizeable population increases will also add to the demand for more retail shops and service businesses. Construction will start shortly on 840 housing units in two-, three- and four-story apartment buildings in Hacienda, adding to the 1,530 residential units already there. Early this year, the City Council ended more than a decade of slow growth policies by rezoning nine separate sites totaling 73 acres throughout the city for high-density housing. Together with the new Hacienda apartments, the city's population, when those high-density units are built, could total well over 80,000, up from our current population of about 68,000. That means more business for downtown and Stoneridge mall and more tax revenue for the city. ■



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