

# SUMMIT: Much ado at Hutto intersection



IKEA - Round Rock

## Business hot spots reviewed in Summit

Avery family rewarded for economic impact on Round Rock

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"More than a decade ago, Williamson County's proximity to Austin was the driver of its growth. Today the county is built on much more."

Former Round Rock mayor Nyle Maxwell, quoted above, addressed business and civic leaders from the rapidly developing county - which includes the cities of Cedar Park, Georgetown, Hutto, Leander, Pflugerville, Round Rock and Taylor - at the Williamson County Growth Summit Nov. 3 at the Hilton Austin Hotel.

The annual event, with attendance that has outgrown venues in Williamson County, offered an in-depth look at the hot spots for business within the area and honored those who have made a significant economic impact on its cities.

"These aren't generalities. These aren't things we want to do in the future. These aren't hopes and dreams," Maxwell said. "These are actual projects and products that are being planned - that are planned, that are on the ground."

### ROUND ROCK

Round Rock Mayor Alan McGraw identified the intersection of Interstate 35 and state Highway 45 as one of

the hot spots in the city, recently listed seventh in CNNMoney's list of America's Best Small Cities.

In addition to retail and restaurant development, McGraw said the intersection is now home to something Round Rock has been needing for quite some time - Class A office space.

"From the freeway you can see Frontera Vista, a headquarter-style campus by Simmons Vedder with two 135,000-square-foot buildings that meet national Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design council green building standards," McGraw said. "On the southwest corner of I-35 and state Highway 45 is a 162,000-square-foot project called Frontera Crossing. They spent more than \$2 million making this top of the line office space with upgrades such as natural stone and wood paneling and, again, the location is impeccable."

Rapid growth is also occurring along Round Rock's University Blvd., both where the road intersects with I-35 near IKEA and Round Rock Premium Outlets as well as farther east where it meets FM 1460 near the Round Rock Higher Education Center.

University Oaks shopping center is home to not only the Swedish furniture giant but also JC Penny and REI's second green prototype store in the nation. And at the northeast corner of the

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intersection is the University Commons, a 37-acre specialty retail and restaurant development with plans for a second phase including an H-E-B grocery store and 75,000 square feet of retail and restaurant opportunities.

"Ideally situated between I-35 and state Highway 130, I think it's fair to say Avery Center is one of the most exciting developments and exciting opportunities within not only the state but also the country," McGraw said.

Round Rock's historic Avery family plans to develop 900 acres of its property into a premier mixed-use development incorporating a variety of housing options as well as retail, restaurant and office space. Anticipated to take 10 to 15 years to complete, the development will be surrounded by Seton Medical Center Williamson, the expanding branch of Texas State University-San Marcos and future Austin Community College and Texas A&M Health Science Center campuses.

"This project will include everything from colleges to housing to hospitals to amenities, including a beautiful lake in the center and possibly even a rail stop," McGraw said.

For their influential role in the growth of the city, the Avery family - A. Nelson Avery, Beth Avery, Charles N. Avery III, John S. Avery Sr., Judy Avery, Christina Avery Fell and Douglas Fell - were presented the Round Rock Economic Impact Award.

The family's donations of money and land played a major role in creating Seton Medical Center Williamson and the Round Rock Higher Education Center. Most recently the family donated 15 acres for the Texas A&M Health Science Center and sold another 10 acres for less than half its estimated market value.

"One of the most influential and civic-minded landowners and families around, the Avery family - descending from one of the founding Swiss settlers in Williamson County with a family farm dating back to the 1860s - has made a generational impact on Round Rock and Williamson County."

### HUTTO

"Hutto as a whole is a hot spot, but perhaps the hottest spot in Hutto is the intersection of state Highway 130 and Highway 79," Scott Martinez, president of the Hutto Economic Development Corporation, said of the fastest growing city in Texas. "The reason it is a hot spot is simply the opening of state Highway 130."

"Toll roads have been discussed and cussed over the last several years in Central Texas but from my perspective it has opened a world of opportunity in our community."

The southeast and southwest quadrants of the intersection are owned by Jacksonville, Fla.-based Atlantic Coast Developers LLC and will be the future home of the 468-acre Crossings of Carmel Creek development - the largest mixed-use development in Central Texas.

Plans for The Crossings include a community shopping area as well as shop-lined streets with residential and office space located above the retail - an estimated 6 million square feet of commercial build-out over a 20 year period. The development will also add 2,100 units of multi-family housing as well as additional row houses to Hutto's landscape, which is now primarily comprised of single-family homes.

Hutto has also had a rash of new national retailers open near the hot spot, including Home Depot, Lowe's, Chili's and Walgreens, and was recently named one of the top 100 places in major markets to locate a company.

"Keep in perspective that not too long ago this was a town known mostly for having a unique high school mascot," Martinez said.

Bob Castle and Randy Russ of Castle Russ Development were awarded the Hutto Economic Impact Award for their development of the city's North Town Commons Business Park at the intersection of Limmer Loop and FM 1460.

"Until this business park came online in May 2008 there were few industrial sites in Hutto with utilities in place," Maxwell said. "Bob and Randy took the lead and moved their primary company, Texas Future Interiors - which does commercial mill work and cabinetry in 28 states - to a new 30,000-square-foot building in the business park as its lead tenant."

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