



Photos by Cuate Santos | Laredo Morning Times

Concrete, landscape and construction work takes place Friday at the Pioneer Wireline Services building at the Las Lomas Industrial Park off Texas 359.

Gas will bring more companies to park

By JJ VELASQUEZ
LAREDO MORNING TIMES

Phase II of development at Las Lomas Industrial Park is underway, and the man at the helm of the project predicts South Texas's gas boom will help bring more companies to the park.

And more companies mean more jobs.

"When you look at the companies that are expanding their operations or bringing businesses down to Laredo, I think it'll create a lot of jobs," said Cliff Hurd, president of Hurd Urban Development.

Hurd saw the need for an industrial park in Laredo that was tailored to the needs of the oil and gas service, distribution and light manufacturing industries. Many of the existing parks cater mainly to the international trading sectors.

In 2009, phase I of the project was complete, and businesses began moving into the 30 acres of development. It wasn't until a year or so later that Laredo and South Texas began to see an uptick of oil and gas activity, which is being driven by the promise of harvestable natural gas situated below the earth and encased in a massive rock formation known as the Eagle Ford Shale.

Joseph Mendiola, acting executive director of the Laredo Development Foundation, works to attract industry to Laredo, and already he has seen prospective clients who are looking to move into Las Lomas Industrial because of its proximity to the activity in the Eagle Ford.

"Laredo seems to be in a prime geographic location to service these oil and gas providers," Mendiola said.

That's not to say that all the businesses moving in

are oilfield service providers. Blue Bell Creameries set up a distribution center in the industrial park to better serve the Laredo community. The nearest facility had been more than 300 miles away in Brenham.

Whereas many of Laredo's other industrial parks are close to the bridge to better convenience the many import-export companies, Hurd said Blue Bell felt Las Lomas's location two miles east of Bob Bullock Loop on Texas 359 was ideal for the company.

In addition to attracting clients with the park's location, the team at Hurd Urban Development emphasizes the park's easy access to Bob Bullock Loop, streets maintained by the City of Laredo, public water and sewage and its remoteness from residential areas.

Hurd said some companies moved into the area

and had to entitle and develop the lots themselves in addition to setting up the utilities independently. With the industrial park, Hurd said, the lots come equipped with all of that, and companies are granted their construction permits the next day.

Other companies to purchase lots in the park include Guardian Wellhead Protection, HOLT CAT, and Pioneer Wireline Services. The park is 450 acres.

Mendiola and Hurd both anticipate that as the boom in Eagle Ford activity continues, so will the number of companies purchasing lots.

"I think the City of Laredo needs to capitalize on the Eagle Ford Shale, which, in my opinion, will bring a new era of economic growth in Webb County," Mendiola said. "Laredo would become one of the fastest growing areas in terms of creating jobs."



The Pioneer Wireline Services site under construction can be seen in the background at the Las Lomas Industrial Park off Texas 359.

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