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BUSINESS online print edition



Amazon plans hub in Valley

Online retailer's proposed processing center in southwest Phoenix could bring 1,000 jobs

Andrew Johnson

The Arizona Republic

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Amazon.com Inc. plans to turn a huge distribution building in southwest Phoenix into a processing center for online orders, a move that could potentially create 1,000 jobs and bolster the Valley's growing presence as a distribution center hub.

An Amazon.com spokesperson would not confirm that the Seattle-based company is locating here, but the company that owns the building said the online retailer has signed a lease for the property, located at the southwestern corner of Buckeye Road and 67th Avenue.

Mike Freret, vice president of development and leasing for Duke Realty Corp. - which bought the 604,500-square-foot building earlier this month - said Amazon.com is locating there but would not disclose details of the lease agreement.

Phoenix Councilman Doug Linger, whose district includes the area where the building is located, said city economic development officials informed him Thursday morning that Amazon.com's plan to come to Phoenix "was a solid deal."

Officials told him Amazon.com would likely hire 950 workers for the facility, expanding to as many as 1,400 workers during the company's busy season.

"They're good paying jobs, and it's a wonderful opportunity for the people in Phoenix and in the West Valley," Linger said.

Duke Realty paid Skokie, Ill.-based developer the Alter Group \$27.5 million for the building, according to Maricopa County land records.

"It's one of the . . . most attractive and most functional warehouse industrial buildings in the market," Freret said.

A distribution hub

Amazon.com is the latest national retailer to decide to make the Valley one of its distribution hubs.

Earlier this year, Federated Department Stores Inc., which owns Macy's, decided on Goodyear as the site for a 603,000-square-foot online fulfillment center.

That center, currently under construction, is expected to employ 500 full-time workers and more than 300 seasonal workers.

"It used to be Phoenix was really a market that catered to the smaller users, and now you see much, much bigger buildings being built," Freret said. "I think that speaks to the availability of the employment base (and) the sophistication of our employment base."

A Phoenix spokeswoman said city economic development officials could not comment on the deal.

Phoenix Mayor Phil Gordon's office declined to comment as well.

Messages and e-mails sent to the Greater Phoenix Economic Council seeking comment were not returned.

Reach the reporter at andrew.johnson@arizonarepublic.com or (602) 444-8280.

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