

Building booms near Glendale sports venues

Projects look to change city's image into economic hub

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Zanjero Falls, cbd 101, Main Street, 91 Glendale.

Most are still unfamiliar names to residents in Glendale and the Valley. But, they are some of the projects that aspire to reshape west Glendale from farmland to economic hub.

More than a dozen restaurants and hotels race to open by February's Super Bowl at Glendale's University of Phoenix Stadium. Others are just being announced such as Hyatt Place and Ruth's Chris Steak House at the Districts at Zanjero.

And word is surfacing on two more major mixed-use developments that would eat up 120 acres near the football stadium. Both projects are expected to submit applications to the city this fall, Glendale planning director Jon Froke said.

The city has issued permits for nearly 1.8 million square-feet of office space since 2004, according to Froke. About a third is underway today along the city's stretch of Loop 101.

"I've never seen anything like it," said Froke, who has spent 21 years handling development in the city.

Froke and developers say the boom stems from proximity to freeways, sports venues and the Valley's westward migration.

Valley economist Elliott Pollack couldn't name another Valley city that had so rapidly remarketed itself.

"What they're doing is changing the nature of Glendale," Pollack said. "They've changed it into a commercial hub by taking some risks that panned out."

Officials in the city, long marked as a place to buy a moderately priced home, invested \$180 million into Jobing.com Arena, a concert and hockey venue that opened in 2003. The stadium followed.

Pollack said the quality of amenities coming on board is causing company executives to consider Glendale.

Among the latest two developments is Bella-Villagio, a 44-acre project being planned south of the stadium with a half-mile of freeway frontage on the west side of the Loop 101.

Early plans call for two residential towers, high-end retail with residential lofts, offices and an upscale hotel, said Brent Langbehn of Stadium Holdings.

The project could break ground in 2008, he said.

The development will feature Tuscan-style architecture with cobblestone accents. "This is my trophy piece," Langbehn said.

The other, yet unnamed project, is being planned on 80 acres east of the loop that is owned by the

Pendergast family, who provided much of the land for the football stadium.

The family's plans are still being firmed up, said zoning attorney Nick Wood, who is working with developers for both projects.

"We won't file anything until we meet with our neighbors to the south," said Wood, referring to a county island of residents in Pendergast Estates.

The Pendergast project would be east of the Bidwill family's 77-acre mixed-use development called cbd101.

Pendergast Estates residents, riled over plans to open their neighborhood streets to cbd 101, are meeting with the Bidwill's representatives to seek a resolution.