

## Buckeye plans industrial hub

by **Eric Graf** - Oct. 21, 2008 12:00 AM

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A newly proposed industrial development in southwest Buckeye could bring more than 17,000 jobs to the town, officials said.

The Buckeye Logistics Transportation Center would stretch over 11,000 acres near Arizona 85 and Old Highway 80, along the Union Pacific Railroad corridor. A rail switching yard would be a major component of the center, making it a hub of industrial activity.

"It's going to make a significant impact on the town," said Lori Gary, director of Buckeye's Economic Development Department. "It will guarantee huge gains in employment and the tax base."

The focus of the project is rail-served distribution, said Eddie Gutzman, manager of Nevada-based Benessere Land Holdings LLC, the developer behind the project.

"The current economy is creating demand for rail-served industrial sites as fuel costs rise," Gutzman said. "Rail freight is much cheaper than trucking freight."

The area, a collection of 14 parcels, was initially slated to be a housing development. But the real-estate market has weakened and the town has shifted its focus to drawing employers. About 40,000 people live in Buckeye, up from roughly 6,000 in 2000.

"We've had very rapid housing growth and employment has not grown at the same rapid rate," Gary said.

"There is an ample workforce to tap into."

The number of jobs the center could create is an estimate that could change as the project moves forward, Gary said.

Most jobs would be at or above the state's median income of \$17 an hour, according to Cheryl Covert, management assistant for the Economic Development Department.

"The jobs will include all levels, from dock workers to haulers, account managers to executives in every sector, including industrial and housing," Gutzman said.