



Diamond in the industrial rough: The one-of-a-kind offering hidden along the Texas border

BY BRANDI SMITH

When you boil down real estate, it really just comes down to three factors: demand, supply, and location. The TexAmericas Center in Texarkana can claim two of those and this summer, when its new 150,000-square-foot spec building is complete, it will hit the trifecta.

Location

Texarkana, which is nestled at the cross section of Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana and Oklahoma, is an often-overlooked distributor's dream. Nearly 54 million people live within 500 miles, almost 10 million more than are reachable from the Dallas market.

"If your goal is to access a large market, we're a better fit because we are closer to the population center, as well as the geographic center, of the United States," says Eric Voyles, Executive Vice President and Chief Economic Development Officer at TexAmericas Center. "Plus, you get to stay in Texas if you operate from here."

TexAmericas Center is a special purpose district of the State of Texas with the mission of redeveloping former military property in Bowie County, including portions of the Red River Army Depot, with the purpose of creating quality jobs for the region

"We act as a not-for-profit industrial development and management company," Voyles explains.

Created by the Texas Legislature in 1997 and fully operational by 2000, the organization just marked its 20th year of operation.



"What Texarkana needed was product," says Voyles. "This city is in a great location. It has an available workforce. Our taxes, labor, and utility rates are all well below the rest of the state."

Demand

TexAmericas Center delivered that product, becoming a high-quality, value-driven solution for the industrial real estate market.

"There's been demand in the market, and we're about the only place that can fulfill that demand with existing buildings," Voyles says. "We have just about



the only available industrial space in the Texarkana area, so any time someone is looking at Texarkana, we get a phone call.”

When he started with the organization in 2014, the center had only leased about 580,000 square feet of its 3.5-million-square-foot footprint. It has now leased just under 1.1 million square feet, an 86 percent increase. The demand has not eased up.

“We reached a point at which we had to choose between continuing to invest in smaller existing buildings, which are less attractive to companies, or build what people have been asking for,” says Voyles. I can't tell you how many times I've been asked for 50,000 square feet, 75,000 square feet, 125,000 square feet. We just had to say no because we didn't have it all under one roof.”

Supply

The solution to TexAmericas Center's space supply issue is slated for completion in July 2021. The first new building at the industrial park in 15 years, the spec building reflects the growing momentum and confidence in opportunities available at the TexAmericas Center and in the greater Texarkana region, according to Voyles.

“We decided to build a multi-tenant structure capable of handling warehouse distribution, but also light manufacturing,” he says. “We had to put our money where our mouth was.”

The mixed-use facility features 32-foot clear height ceilings, one dock door per 5,000 square feet, and two drive-in doors. It is also equipped with thicker floors to accommodate any manufacturing, including transportation, food,



wood and paper, tactical vehicle, as well as weapons and specialty systems.

“If a company thinks that it would like to be in a low-cost rural location, where employees build a long-term relationship with their employer, that company should contact us,” says Voyles. “We'd love to talk with them about our spec building or a build-to-suit project on the property adjacent to it.”

Singularity

TexAmericas Center ticks all the standard boxes, but it also offers up some exceedingly rare features. Because it is a former military property, it has a number of bunkers that can hold division 1.1 explosives. Many of the old production lines are still on site, available to be repurposed by tenants. There is also a helicopter pad with all vectors still in place.

“We had a drone manufacturer contact us and the site we threw at them just blew their minds,” Voyles laughs. “We have a 24-acre site that crews used to repair Huey and Bell helicopters during the Vietnam War.”

Additionally, TexAmericas Center owns 36 miles of rail on its footprint, along with a transload facility. That translates to 3,000 acres of directly rail-served property.

“When a potential business wants to locate here, we help manage upfront investment and become their partners,” says Voyles. “They can feel confident in taking that next step because we have skin in the game too.”

If you're interested in learning more about opportunities available at TexAmericas Center, visit TexAmericaCenter.com or contact Eric Voyles at Eric.Voyles@TexAm