

Who's next? Amazon selects La Marque for delivery station

BY BRANDI SMITH



During a year that was a struggle for so many Texas communities, La Marque saw the light at the end of the tunnel earlier than most.

"We had quite a bit of behind-the-scenes work that happened, as you can imagine, before we could finally make the announcement," says Alex Getty, Executive Director of the La Marque Economic Development Corporation.

That announcement? Amazon chose La Marque as the site of a 180,000-square-foot delivery station, which will power the company's last-mile capabilities to speed up deliveries for people in and around Galveston County.

"We know location is a very important factor when sites are selected for projects like this. Since La Marque is the hub of the mainland, I think it helped Amazon ultimately choose us," Getty says.

The facility is expected to directly contribute about 400 jobs, which pay a minimum of \$15 per hour -- everything from drivers, to primary management positions, to team leads. But projects show it will also contribute to 150 more, such as janitorial suppliers or employees in restaurants built to accommodate the expanded workforce. Another 230 construction workers are needed just to get the building off the ground.

"We are excited to continue to invest in Texas with a new delivery station in La Marque that will create hundreds of new job opportunities and provide faster and more efficient delivery for customers," said Daniel Martin, a spokesman for Amazon. "We look forward to continuing our growth in Texas and want to thank local and state leaders for their support in making this project possible."



In total, La Marque EDC anticipates the annual economic impact of Amazon's facility to be more than \$56 million to the region.

"I think La Marque was able to demonstrate that we are pro-business and will help navigate developmental challenges that arise during the process," says Getty. "City staff can work through them efficiently and effectively."

The EDC demonstrated its proactive efforts at the beginning of the pandemic, when it provided COVID-19 grants to 124 La Marque businesses via its Emergency Business Retention Program.

"That totaled almost \$1 million, which was significant, but it helped save a lot of La Marque businesses," Getty says. "La Marque did more per capita at the local level than any city I'm aware of."

Along with being responsive to the pandemic, the city also has protections in place for the severe weather for which the Texas Gulf Coast is known.

"The hurricane flood levee system is a huge asset for La Marque," says Getty. "During Hurricane Ike, it kept the storm surge out. Then during Hurricane Harvey, the county pumped the rainwater to the bay side of the levee, so we didn't have mass flooding."

Another of La Marque's assets is its freeway frontage, with large tracts available along I-45.

"If visibility matters to a corporation or company that is looking to relocate to our area, then La Marque is where it's at," adds Getty.

The city's real estate market was already heating up before the Amazon announcement. Now it's red hot.

"The phone rings all day almost every day. We're answering questions from folks who have big ideas and small ideas. We're here to talk to them about what our resources are and how we might help them through the process," Getty says. "I think people are starting to recognize that La Marque really is the place to be if you want to live on the coast and have some protection. For corporations, this city is also where employees can take advantage of all the different assets in our region."

For those investors, developers and businesses interested in La Marque, the EDC is also unique in offering pre-development meetings. Bringing together Getty and city officials, such as the city attorney, engineer fire marshal, and code enforcement allows the group to run through ideas and what it will take to make them happen.

"That way, there are no surprises. When someone makes an investment in La Marque, we want them to know exactly what the process looks like so they can make a sound business decision," says Getty. "Our pipeline is filling up. It's a wonderful time to be working in La Marque."

For more information about making the move to La Marque, call Alex Getty at (409) 938-9258.

