

HOMECENTER Neighborhood Profiles

Prosper riding a wave of homes

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DAWN COBB/Special Contributor

Prosper, named for its abundant crops in the early 1900s, is now experiencing a different kind of growth.

Near the Denton-Collin county line, the town sits directly in the path of the northward extension of the Dallas North Tollway. As commuters begin traversing the new portion between U.S. Highway 380 and State Highway 121, they will spur a wave of construction projects in early 2008, bringing shopping centers, office complexes and more to the community's doorstep.

In anticipation of the additional traffic and commercial interests, homebuilders flocked to Prosper to start new housing projects — so many that new Town Manager Mike Land finds it difficult to list them all. As of June, 17 developments were under construction, with at least 29 homebuilders.

“There is a tremendous amount of activity in terms of development, retail along 380 and the tollway,” Mr. Land said. “Our challenge is making sure our infrastructure is in place.”

In the month since the former Gainesville city manager started his new job, Mr. Land says he has discovered a close-knit community that is working together to keep a small-town spirit in spite of 28 percent growth.

“There's a lot of pride in the community,” he said. “With that comes a great discussion on how do you preserve or maintain the small-town feel in a high-growth community.”

What has captured his attention are small details — parents taking turns getting elementary students safely out of cars and a recent mile-long homecoming parade.

“I've never seen anything like it,” he said. “Community involvement is a central theme here.”

Bob Luckock first saw Prosper five years ago while visiting his son.

“I fell in love with Prosper,” he said. “It's the kind of community where you drive down the street, see a car and you wave.”

Since moving to the town of almost 6,000 with his wife, Carol, Mr. Luckock has become involved with planning the town's future. As secretary of the Prosper Economic Development Corporation board, he says officials are following a 40-year plan designed to keep the historic Prosper with its old flour mill visible in the skyline while welcoming development. The plan calls for parks and trails amid new businesses and homes.

With build-out expected at 70,000 to 80,000 in 10 to 15 years, planning is key, Mr. Luckock said.

“If you plan ahead, it's not the mishmash you see in some communities,” he said.

Jean Beaty is excited about both possibilities.

“I like the growth because I think it gives the town flavor,” said the 20-year resident, who also works in Prosper. “I think we're planning well for the next 10 years.”

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NATALIE CAUDILL/Staff
Photographer

“I like the growth because I think it gives the town flavor,” said Jean Beaty, who has lived in Prosper for 20 years. She is shown with her dogs Good Charlotte and Tela.