

BRYAN COUNTY NOW

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Bryan bucks business trends

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Bryan County is bucking the trend of sagging real estate sales and a struggling climate for banking and industry.

Housing sales during June were on a par with a year ago. During that same month, neighboring counties were markedly down from 2007.

Nationally, banks are announcing billion dollar losses, yet two Bryan County banks were recently cited for achievement.

And industrial growth in the county is growing at a steady pace.

Angus McLeod, who has been selling real estate in Bryan County since 1985, says there are several reasons for strong home

sales. "It's the quality of life and it's the economic conditions," he said. "We've got lower taxes than much of the surrounding areas. We've got a great school system. We don't have any slums. We have a strong chamber of commerce and we have a wonderful natural environment."



McLeod

"This is the type of place people want to live. I don't think we're going to see the record numbers we did in 2006 again soon, but Bryan County is going to remain an attractive place for people to move to."

Sean Register, chairman of the Bryan County Industrial Development Authority, credits its growth at the Georgia Ports Authority as a key factor in continued industrial development in the county.

"The ports do a wonderful



Courtesy of Oracal USA

This artist's rendering depicts the additional warehouse space to be added in Oracal USA's second-phase expansion.

job; they are a major draw for business and industry in this area," he said. "If we were 200 miles further inland, we probably wouldn't be seeing the type of growth we are. When you combine the draw of the ports with everything we have to offer here in Bryan County, you get a mixture of assets many businesses are interested in."



Register

"And a real indicator to me that things are going well industrially in the county is Technology Park/Atlanta's commitment to build a 600,000-square-foot spec building at the industrial

park. Nobody's doing that sort of thing these days," he said.

Bryan Bank and Trust President Dell Keith said the county workforce has something to do with it as well.

"Since Bryan County has developed as such an inviting place to live, we tend to attract the type of resident, a lot of them military dependants, who make our workforce even more attractive to businesses and industries."

Bryan County Commission Chairman Jimmy Burnsed said a unique combination of things keeps the county above the average economically.

"It's the port, our schools, our natural environment and our citizens," Burnsed said. "All these things work together to

our advantage. "What I think this means to our county is that, while we certainly are not immune to economic downturns, we are fortunate to have some things in

BRYAN COUNTY BUSINESS REPORT

Real estate

• In June 2008, the number of residential housing units sold (65 each year) in Bryan County remained even with June of 2007, while Chatham County showed a 27 percent decrease and Effingham County sales fell by 47 percent, according to the Savannah Multi-List Corp.

Banking

• Bryan Bank and Trust was named the top bank in Georgia for the first quarter of 2008 by Financial Management Corp. of Louisville, Ky., and recently opened a second branch office in Richmond Hill.

• In July, First Bank of Coastal Georgia received Bauer Financial Inc's. Five-Star rating, Bauer's highest ranking indicating "the absolute highest level of banking performance."

• Savannah Bancorp has moved its operations center to Richmond Hill from Savannah.

Industry

• Dicon Technologies LLC, which develops, manufactures and distributes products for advanced wound care, skin care, diabetic foot care and agricultural markets, has begun construction of a new facility at the Interstate Centre Park just outside Pembroke, creating 88 new jobs immediately and more within five years.

• Oracal USA announced in July plans for a \$20 million expansion of their facility at the Interstate Centre.

• Technology Park/Atlanta's is expected to start construction on a 600,000 square-foot spec building at the Interstate Center Park within 30-60 days.

• Daniel Defense Systems is slated to start construction before the end of the year at the Interstate Centre Park.

• Development of a light industrial building related industrial park is slated to begin soon on a 40-acre site on U.S. 17 south of Richmond Hill.

our advantage.

place here that may make those downturns when they occur a little less harsh here."

See pages 2 and 6 for related business stories.