

# Target Corp. chooses Denton site

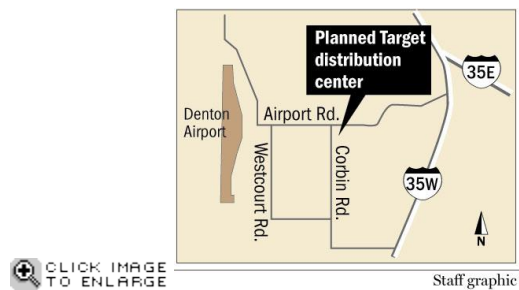
Planned distribution center a boon to area economy, officials say

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By Dawn Cobb / Staff Writer

Denton could soon be home to a 450,000-square-foot Target distribution center, which would bring about 100 to 150 jobs to the city.

The project, worth an estimated \$100 million, is expected to feature an automated food distribution system to serve nine states, city officials say.



Target Corp. has a 50-acre property west of Interstate 35 at the southeast corner of Corbin and Airport roads under contract with the Rayzor Co. for the proposed facility, officials confirmed Thursday.

The company is currently doing due diligence before the sale is complete, officials said.

Construction is expected to start by the first quarter of next year. An opening date is slated for March 2012, said Jenna Reck, spokeswoman with Target Corp.

Last year, officials considered 42 possible locations for the distribution center — known in local economic development circles as “Project Tea Cup.” Four of the 42 were in Denton, said Karen Dickson, vice president of economic development for the Denton Chamber of Commerce.

After some time in Denton spent visiting local companies — such as Sally Beauty Holdings Inc., Anderson Merchandisers, Peterbilt Motors Co. and Fastenal — Target Corp. officials whittled the 42 sites to seven, then two.

With Denton and Dallas competing for the distribution center, Denton won, Dickson said, based on its workforce and quality of life.

“We were competing with Dallas for this for quite awhile,” she said, adding that site visits to existing companies proved beneficial.

“We are very fortunate to have such great partners who step up to the plate,” she said of the companies that opened their facilities and answered questions on quick notice. “Businesses have no idea how much we depend on them.”

The yearlong effort will likely produce a multistory building to accommodate a new robotic system debuting at the Denton plant, officials said.

“It’s going to be a new concept for them on their cold distribution facility — a state-of-the-art building,” said Marty Rivers, president of the Denton Economic Development Partnership board. “That will be a neat aspect.”

The building’s proposed height of 125 feet was too tall to comply with the land’s industrial zoning district, so the city’s Planning and Zoning Commission voted Wednesday night to endorse a city code amendment to allow the taller structure.

The initial project outlined more jobs originally, Dickson said. The changes with new automation, however, might mean fewer jobs, but the remaining will likely require a higher level of skills and offer more pay.

The project started with a telephone call from a New Jersey agent, Dickson said, adding that the economic development division often receives initial queries by phone.

In recent years, Denton has tucked several distribution centers into its economic fold, including Aldi Inc. and Fastenal. Both distribution centers sit near the Denton Airport west of I-35.

“We’re not actively pursuing distribution centers,” Dickson said. “It’s naturally happening because of Denton’s location [at the apex of I-35E and I-35W]. It’s [the word is] out there in the industry.”

Rivers agreed: “It’s a huge deal for Denton just to have the name brand, Target, a top Fortune 50 company, to join some of the other companies we have. It helps people to realize Denton’s a great place to have your company.”

Target Corp., which operates an estimated 1,740 stores in 49 states, reported earlier this month that its net retail sales for the five weeks that ended July 3 were about \$5.92 billion, an increase of 4 percent from \$5.69 billion for the five weeks that ended July 4, 2009.

*Staff writer Lowell Brown contributed to this report.*

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