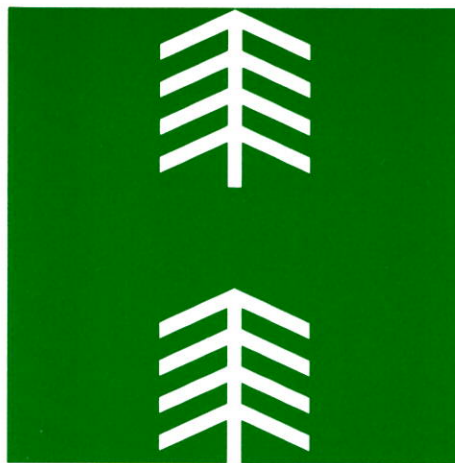


Association gets \$200,000 grant for mobility study

A grant of \$200,000 has been received jointly by the North Houston Association and the West Houston Association from the Urban Mass Transportation Administration. The grant was awarded to enable both organizations to study the work destination routes of its residents.

According to David Hightower of the Wolff Companies, chairman of the Transportation Committee, the two groups have decided to hire one consultant to assemble and review the data base.

To assist the as-yet-unnamed consultant, members of the Transportation Committee of both Associations will be attempting to gather work-trip data from the major employers in the region. It was decided that, because of the sensitivity of the information required (home addresses, etc.), a survey of employees in this area may be an appropriate alternative approach. Members of the committee will be meeting with major employers in the activity centers to begin collecting the necessary data.



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ASSOCIATION

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The data base, when completed, will allow the consultant to project in greater depth the mobility needs of both areas. Based on the study, an evaluation of current and future improvements will be made and a priority list of projects suggested.

It is also hoped that the findings will serve as a pilot program which will generate another project down the road. The final report is expected to be ready by the end of 1990. ■

1989 Showcase a success

Seven North Houston chambers of commerce and the North Houston Association coordinated the successful North Houston 1989 Economic Development Showcase at the Wyndham Hotel-Greenspoint. These groups banded together to give cohesion to the diverse north Houston area and to highlight its quality of life.

The Showcase began in 1988 in order to let the rest of the world know what was already prevalent - North Houston was leading the rest of Houston into the recovery. Today, North Houston is continuing to stabilize and the Showcase is being used to bring interested parties into the area to see all the amenities North Houston has to offer.

The 1989 Showcase brought media people from London, Hong Kong, Tokyo, Chicago, Florida, New York, and Los Angeles as well as *Texas Monthly*, and other local publications which resulted in many positive articles on North Houston.

The 1990 Showcase will introduce the world to the international flair common to North Houston. One of the highlights of the Showcase will be the addition of the International Airlines Building at Houston Intercontinental Airport. The terminal will have its grand opening in May, 1990. ■

New board

Michael Richmond of The Woodlands Corporation has been elected by the board of directors of the North Houston Association as its new chairman of the board. Richmond officially took the gavel at the October board meeting. Others named as officers for 1989-90 include Gary Montgomery of Montgomery Engineering, vice chairman and Jim Royer of Turner, Collie & Braden Inc., secretary/treasurer.

Serving as directors are Sam Ashmore, Continental Airlines; James C. Box, The Mischer Corporation; Dan Daniels, Champion Realty Corporation; Sue Darcy, The Darcy Land Company; W.J. Farrell, Kingsley Group, Inc.; David Hightower, Wolff Companies; Jack Linville, Pierce Goodwin Alexander & Linville; Tom W. Masterson, Masterson Moreland Sauer & Whisman, Inc.; Robert Randolph, Vinson & Elkins; Richard Stromatt, Wilma Southwest, Inc.; E.D. Wulfe, Wulfe & Co.; and T. R. Wussow, Friendswood Development Company. ■



Jeffrey N. Shane, Assistant Secretary for Policy and International Affairs, presents a check for \$200,000 from the Urban Mass Transportation Administration at the North Houston 1989 Economic Development Showcase.

North Houston creating image

An image study of North Houston has been completed for the North Houston Association by Gelb Consulting Group, Inc.

It indicates that while residents and corporate CEOs enjoy the high quality of life in North Houston, the lack of a 'cohesive fabric' to pull the many communities together is the area's main disadvantage.

Using focus groups of residents, professionals, corporate CEOs, and light manufacturing executives, the Gelb Study revealed that both business people and residents believe that quality of life factors (a relaxed lifestyle, the abundance of trees, lakes, golf courses, quality schools, sophisticated shopping malls and planned communities) are North Houston's primary strengths.

Special pluses for business include access to Houston Intercontinental Airport, high-level employee labor pool, low-cost labor and office rental space, railroad access, and lower housing and land costs.

Residents cited traffic congestion, visual pol-

lution (billboards) along I-45, and the lack of available jobs, cultural events, and a central business core as disadvantages. Also cited as a negative was a 'lack of business synergy.'

The Gelb study recommends a five-point strategic plan to overcome the perceived weaknesses of the area. It is a strategy that the Association's Image Committee has already started to implement.

The five points are:

- Developing a business campaign targeted to commercial real estate brokers and CEOs, possibly built around a theme unique to the region.
- Positioning North Houston as it truly is - a fast-growing region marked by an appealing, highly-wooded environment with Houston Intercontinental Airport as its centerpiece.
- Consider a name change for the region which conveys the superior lifestyle and has the potential of being used by the citizens.
- Harness the power of the local population to help organize major festival-type events in North Houston on the level of Mardi Gras in Galveston.
- Create an umbrella organization to tackle region-wide issues such as mobility, beautification and North Houston's image.

The North Houston Association is already implementing programs regarding two of the five points. One concerning the positioning of North Houston is being carried out by such events as the Economic Development Showcase and the placement of feature articles and advertisements in publications including *Texas Monthly*, *Expansion Management*, *Profiles, Inc.*, *National Real Estate Investor*, *Houston Business Journal*, and *Plants Sites & Parks*.

Secondly, the North Houston Association has become the umbrella organization regarding the coordination and promotion of beautification efforts along major roadways and the creation of scenic districts or corridors on new road projects. The Association has published a comprehensive fact book on the area, as well as secured a grant from the Urban Mass Transportation Administration to study the work destination routes of North Houston residents.

Besides improving quality of life, the Association leaders have been featured speakers at the local chambers of commerce and civic organizations in an effort to create this image through organized cooperation between the area businesses and residents. ■

CHAIRMAN'S PERSPECTIVE

Focusing on North Houston issues

by Michael H. Richmond

As Chairman of the North Houston Association, I am privileged to have the responsibility of setting the tone for the organization. During my two years as chairman, you can be sure that the major issues important to the members are discussed and a plan to accomplish these goals is developed and implemented. In order to make the best use of all our time, we must prioritize these issues and focus on those which will have the most significant affect on North Houston.

It is no secret that the image, education, continued infrastructural improvements, and quality of life of North Houston are at the top of my priority list. Currently, when someone is asked where North Houston is located, they respond by saying inside the Loop, The Champions/FM 1960 area, Humble, Kingwood or The Woodlands; it depends on one's point of view. I would like to create a readily identifiable area which would be recognized whenever North Houston is discussed.

I will be working with the Association members to develop a strategy for creating this new image. In order to make this plan a success, the

entire community has to support its creation. I hope that the Association members will work with me to provide the feedback and support this endeavor will demand.

Education is a major factor for companies considering relocation, in the elimination of drug use and crime, and for the general quality of an area. The Association will be working with the North Harris County College, University of Houston, and other interests to ensure that our area offers courses comparable to other areas. A long-term goal of the Association is to house a four-year college campus in the area. A positive indication of this need is the University of Houston North Houston Institute's ever-increasing enrollment.

North Houston has seen tremendous mobility improvements over the past several years. In July of 1990, the North Houston Association will host the opening of the Sam Houston Tollway from U.S. 290 to Interstate 45. The completion of this roadway will improve access to and from the west side of Houston. In addition,

the \$200,000 grant from the Urban Mass Transportation Administration to undergo a suburban mobility study in North and West Houston will continue to identify the transportation needs of the community into the future.

In order to improve quality of life in North Houston, we will focus on issues such as flood control, park land acquisition, transportation, sign control, and beautification of the area. I encourage you to become involved or continue your involvement in these areas through the Association's committees.

We have seen marked improvements in our area over the past decade. 1990 brings with it the challenges of the first year of the last decade in this century. I hope you will join me in meeting these challenges head on and continue to make North Houston the premier area for both living and working. ■

North Houston mobility improvements

Reports from both county and state officials indicate a heavier than usual work schedule has been established for the major thoroughfares in North Houston, with many projects set to begin immediately.

FM 1960 - The orange barriers and construction cones between Hafer Road and Willowbrook Mall were removed in November—in time to make the holiday shopping season not nearly so hectic. But plans are already in the works for the start of a similar widening project from I-45 east to Lee Road. That project should be through the design and bid letting process by this time next year, with construction to begin in early 1991.

FM 2920 - Work has already begun to widen FM 2920 to four lanes between Tomball and I-45. The estimated completion date is early 1992.

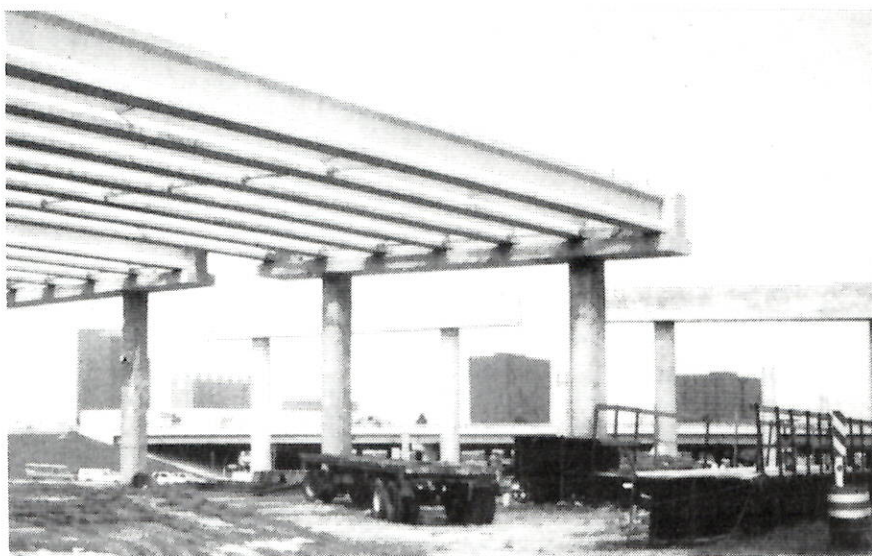
FM 525 - This is another important North Houston project. The letting date for the stretch between John F. Kennedy Blvd. and U.S. 59 has been scheduled for April 1991. Bid letting for the widening to six lanes of the section from I-45 to John F. Kennedy Blvd. will be November 1992.

Louetta Road - Commissioner E.A. "Squatty" Lyons has agreed that now is the right time to consider construction of a Louetta Road overpass at I-45. County engineers are reviewing three alternative overpass sites. Though one of the sites has been determined best, no final decisions have been reached. This project, though popular with residents and businesses in the area, may take some time to finally get on the work schedule.

Cypresswood Drive - This long-awaited east-west thoroughfare is becoming a reality. Work has begun to connect all segments of Cypresswood Drive from Enchanted Oaks (at I-45) to S. H. 249. The route will intersect with several other major thoroughfares: Ella Blvd., Kuykendahl Road, Stuebner-Airline and Champion Forest Drive. Cypresswood will provide much needed relief to FM 1960.

Kuykendahl Road - It was anticipated that METRO would construct an overpass at FM 1960, but that project has been cancelled. METRO instead is researching alternatives to relieve congestion. One road most likely to be extended is T.C. Jester (between Richey Rd. and FM 1960).

Highway 242 - The first leg (a six-mile segment between U.S. 59 and FM 1485) of this east-west connector between U.S. 59 and I-45 is set to begin this month. Other segments of the 17-mile project will go out for bid by summer or early fall of 1990. Also, the interchange at I-45 is under reconstruction following damage done several months ago when an 18-wheeler hit the Needham Road overpass.



Sam Houston Parkway/I-45 interchange will be completed in July, 1990

Treschwig Road - The Texas Turnpike Authority has agreed to sponsor a feasibility study for the extension of Treschwig Road from U.S. 59 to Cypresswood Drive near FM 1960. METRO is also looking at the project and the possibility of further extension of the roadway to FM 1960 and beyond to the nearby Hardy Toll Road. That extension would make use of the Hardy Toll Road, a viable alternative for residents of Kingwood.

Grand Parkway - Ground was broken earlier this year on the west side of the Grand Parkway. Segment G (in Montgomery County) is also a possibility for an early start. The 13-mile stretch runs from I-45 to U.S. 59. Cooperation of the property owners in this area has resulted in a strong optimism for an ahead-of-schedule construction date.

U.S. 59 - Construction has begun on this massive multi-phase project which will widen both the freeway and frontage lanes and provide additional ramp connectors. The first leg to see the earthmovers is on the southbound frontage roads between Parker and Crosstimbers. There are nine projects between Sam Houston Parkway and Kingwood totaling \$157.3 million. The last segment will take three-and-one-half years, from 1993 to the end of 1996. ■

In brief

NEW TENANT IN CENTRAL GREEN

Wilma Southwest, Inc. is welcoming Houston Refrigerated Services, a project of CEGF USA Inc., a Paris-based company to a 14-acre site in its Central Green project, located near the Hardy Toll Road and Greens Road overpass. The company is building a \$7 million, 2.1 million-cubic-ft. cold storage facility. Houston

Refrigerated Services is expected to employ 20 people and generate \$2 million in annual sales, according to CEGF USA Inc. general manager Jake Easterling.

IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS

Legislation was passed in Austin before the close of the regular session authorizing the creation of improvement districts. A special task force of the North Houston Association is now looking into the possibility of creating such an improvement district for the Greenspoint area. If created, the district will be managed by an elected Board of Directors. The district would enable the area to provide general improvements above those provided by other municipalities, such as landscaping, signage, security, seasonal decorations, etc.

ROADWAY LANDSCAPING

LAN, HOK, and SWA are working together along with the State Highway Department to develop architectural and landscape designs for the Sam Houston Parkway/I-45 interchange. This innovative planning effort is being coordinated by Friendswood Development Company.

FACT BOOK COMPLETED

The *North Houston Association 1989 Fact Book* is now available at the Association office.

The document contains nine chapters including population and demographics; economic outlook, employment, and major employers; education; transportation; housing inventory; commercial activity; political jurisdictions and taxing authorities; lodging and conference facilities; and life styles and quality of life.

Copies of the document are available at \$35 for members/\$50 for non-members. ■

New Members

America West Airlines, based in Phoenix, Arizona, serves destinations throughout the United States and western Canada. America West Airlines will begin service from Houston Intercontinental Airport to Phoenix and Las Vegas in January, 1990.

Gulf States Utilities Company is an investor-owned electric utility company. GSUC distributes electricity to about 558,000 customers in a 28,000 square mile area of southeast Texas and south Louisiana.

KLM Royal Dutch Airlines is the world's first commercial airline, celebrating 70 years of continuous service. KLM offers daily 747 non-stop service from Houston and five other gateway cities in the USA to over 138 destinations worldwide.

Texas Commerce Bank-Houston North Area Commercial Group provides comprehensive banking services throughout Houston's North Area from 6 branches located in Kingwood, Cypress Station, Greens Crossing, The Woodlands, Champions Park, and Cy-Fair.

Tomball Regional Hospital is a non-profit, 250-bed general acute care hospital which houses the Surgery Center at Tomball, the Skilled Nursing Unit at Tomball, and the free-standing Texas Sports Medicine Center.

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Northeast Medical Center Hospital
Parkway Hospital
Tomball Regional Hospital

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White Petrov McHone

Publications:

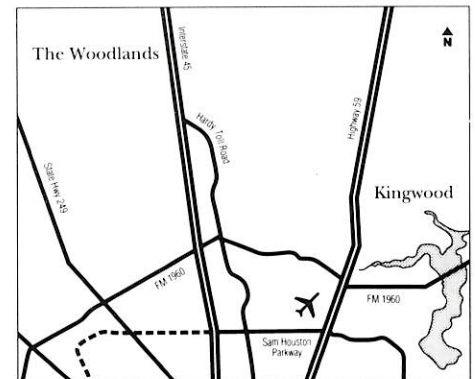
Houston Business Journal
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Real Estate/Development:

Century Plaza Venture
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Coldwell Banker Commercial Brokerage
Friendswood Development Company
Hendricks Interests
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