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Gilbert breaks ground on Rivulon development

Gilbert's Rivulon project will create 6,500 jobs, double the town's office space, and establish an employment hub.

By John Lewis, Special for The Republic, azcentral.com

Gilbert recently celebrated a significant milestone in our evolution from "hay capital" to "high-wage haven."

We gathered at Gilbert Road and Loop 202 to break ground on the planned \$750 million Rivulon development.

It's an enormous project that will add 6,500 high-wage jobs, double our office space and firmly establish our section of the Loop 202 Corridor as a Valley employment hub that will attract high-quality companies in targeted sectors, including technology, biomedical, health care and aerospace.

The symbolism of the Nov. 12 event wasn't lost on me.

Dozens of business and community leaders, project partners, elected officials, and others enthusiastically gathered to break ground and embrace our future.

But it wasn't the first time that the ground under the future Rivulon development had been broken.

Parts of the site used to be hay fields. In fact, Gilbert was once known as the "Hay Capital of the World."

As much as I love our history, I also love our future.

Our transformation has been remarkable: As one of the fastest-growing communities in the United States, we've gone from an agricultural-based town to a thriving residential community and an economically diverse hot spot that is a haven for high-wage jobs.

As Arizona's fifth-largest community, we are on pace to see 10,000 new quality jobs created in the next five years.

And Rivulon will help us get there.



Representatives of Gilbert, Nationwide Realty and others gathered for the Rivulon Groundbreaking on Wednesday, Nov. 12, 2014. Construction on the \$750 million investment is well underway, with an LA Fitness branch that is set to open in March 2015.

The project was made possible, in part, by the town's vision that aligned with a great partner in Nationwide Realty Investors, a company that has a long-standing history of high-quality, sustainable developments.

But we also must acknowledge that Rivulon simply would not have happened without Loop 202.

The freeway literally paved the way for our emerging employment corridor.

So, it made perfect sense to have the Arizona Department of Transportation director, John Halikowski, attend the Rivulon ceremony to highlight the importance of transportation infrastructure on our economic development.

In Gilbert, we are always thinking about the future. It's in our DNA.

That's why we will continue to have discussions with our state-elected and business leaders on future infrastructure opportunities, such as a Lindsay Road/Loop 202 inter-

change that would be an access point on the eastern edge of the Rivulon development.

We believe this interchange will be a critical piece of the future development of the site and the surrounding area.

In fact, an interchange could mean an additional 1 million square feet of Class A office space at Rivulon.

In short, transportation infrastructure equals economic development.

And that is certainly beginning to take shape here in Gilbert, now and for the future.

As Rivulon comes to life over the years and brings new life to the entire southeast Valley, we will revel in the sustained excitement that comes along with it.

These high-tech companies, high-end hotel rooms and high-quality office space will be home to the entrepreneurs and job creators of tomorrow. ■