

Last remaining land tracts in West Houston park to be sold

By the end of the year, every large parcel of available land at **Oak Park at Westchase** will have been sold for development, leaving just a handful of small sites in the west Houston business park, according to **Douglas Knaus**, principal of land development firm **Means-Knaus**.

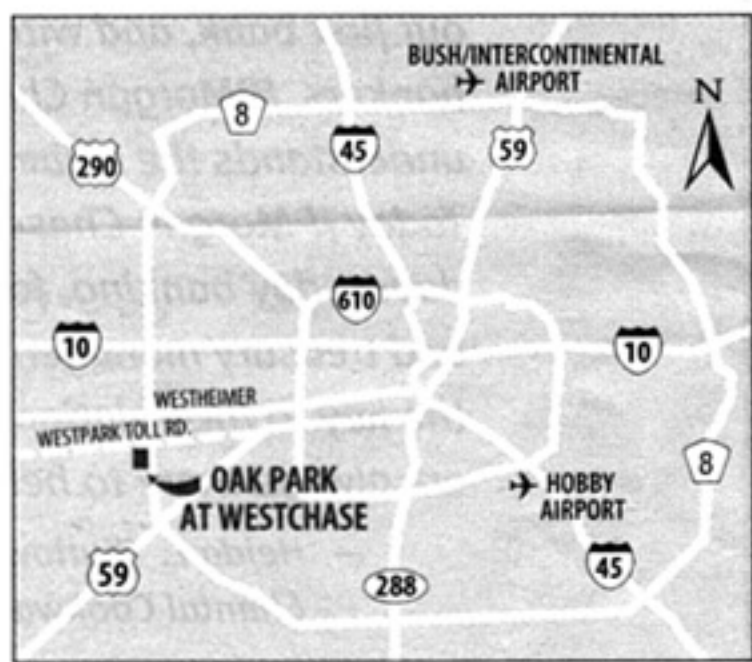
The 75-acre corporate office development, located on the West Belt Tollroad between the Westpark Corridor and Bellaire Boulevard, was purchased two years ago by Means-Knaus and Florida partner **The St. Joe Co.** The property is part of a 220-acre site that originally was developed by **Halliburton** and **The Staubach Co.**

Means-Knaus is currently negotiating the sale of the last remaining large tracts of land in the park, totaling more than 30 acres, for the development of two new build-to-suit office buildings.

The company attributes the project's success to its location, esthetics and amenities.

"Tenants have entry signage, good egress and ingress and wide roads," says **Cynthia Rogers**, senior vice president of Means-Knaus. "But it's not so over-developed that (tenants) can't have versatility of what they want to do."

Since the partners acquired the proj-



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ect in 1999, several high-profile companies have built headquarters in the park.

Vertias DGC, **Jacobs Engineering**, **United Recovery Systems** and **M-I Drilling Fluids** have purchased large tracts of land for new facilities in the park. M-I recently broke ground on a 100,000-square-foot addition to its building. And Halliburton is planning a new 2 million-square-foot campus in Oak Park.

In addition, Houston developer **Myers & Crow**, which owns more than seven acres of land in the park, is constructing a 175,000-square-foot speculative office building.

"We think the business park formula is something that works well because you have control of the land," says Knaus. "And having a strategic site is key for a successful development."

Means-Knaus also owns the **Westchase Corporate Center**, a six-story, 185,000-square-foot Class A office building located on a 5.4-acre site at 10111 Richmond Avenue, just two blocks east of the West Belt. Completed in the fall of 1999, the building is 85 percent leased.

Knaus and **Steven Means** created Means-Knaus three years ago to develop, acquire and manage real estate assets and operating companies.

With offices in Houston and Dallas,

the firm has interests in \$200 million worth of office and land development.

Now the company is expanding to Denver, where it recently negotiated a deal with Boston-based **Beacon Capital Strategic Partners**



to take over management, leasing and construction operations for a 537,000-square-foot downtown office complex.

REAL ESTATE ROUNDUP

REAL ESTATE BEAT

NANCY SARNOFF

Sugar Land has lured another corporate headquarters to its growing commercial district.

Prince Plastics will relocate its operations to the **Sugar Land Business Park**. A 50,000-square-foot

manufacturing and warehouse facility will be constructed on a 6.5-acre tract at the corner of Corporate and Julie Rivers Drive.

The company manufactures high-density plastic bags used for food and retail items.

The new location will allow for future expansion needs. Initially, 20 new jobs will be added. The firm expects to double that over the next few years.

Dinesh Shah of **Business Diversified** represented Prince Plastics in the land transaction. **Don Janssen** represented the land owner, **Sugarland Properties Inc.**

Over the past 15 years, Fort Bend County has attracted more than 100 companies to the area, adding 14,700 new jobs and an additional \$1.3 billion in tax valuations.

EastGroup Properties has begun construction on three industrial facilities in the **World Houston International Business Center**, adding to its already large portfolio of properties located near **George Bush Intercontinental Airport**.

The three properties include the 58,900-square-foot **World Houston 12**, the 50,400-square-foot **World Houston 13** and the 77,400-square-foot **World Houston 14** buildings. The 186,700 square feet of new space has an estimated value of \$9.3 million. It is 83 percent pre-leased.

EastGroup already owns 949,000 square feet of space in the World Houston industrial complex and has enough land to develop another 675,000 square feet of space.

The company purchased roughly 15 acres of land at the site in March 1998.

EastGroup President and CEO **David Hoster II**, says an additional three buildings are in the planning stages, one of which could break ground before year-end.

The Jackson, Miss.-based company is a real estate investment trust focused on acquiring and developing industrial properties in major Sunbelt markets. The firm's portfolio includes 17.3 million square feet, with an additional 1.03 million square feet under development near major transportation centers. ■