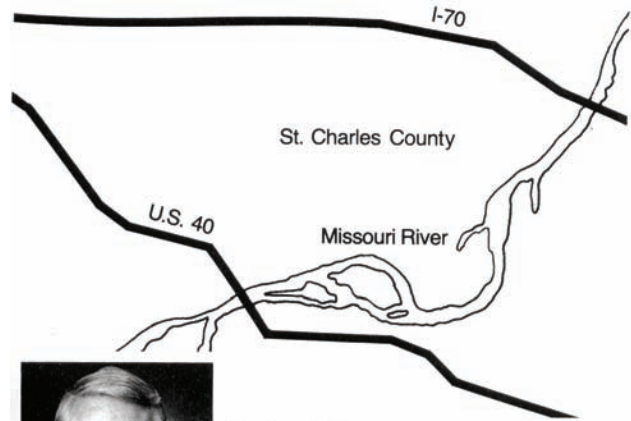


St. Charles County among U.S.'s fastest growing



Aerial view west from Cave Springs Exit of I-70 shows Venture store (foreground), shopping center, hotel, and hospital.



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ST. CHARLES COUNTY'S growth rate has become a point of local pride. Just as "Gateway to the West" naturally goes with the Arch, the term "one of the ten fastest-growing counties in the United States" has become associated with St. Charles County. Recently, the rate of growth for office buildings and parks in St. Charles County has begun to keep pace with the rest of its progress.

For years, St. Charles County could boast of only a few sizable office sites: Westbury Square and Three Flags Center in the city of St. Charles, and Lake Saint Louis Office Building near the intersection of Interstate 70 and Highway 40/61. The County has always had smaller offices, in which the day-to-day business of a suburban community is generated, organized and managed. But in the last five years, the business community has begun to recognize and accommodate the ever-increasing number of families and businesses moving to St. Charles County.

From the St. Charles city hall at the east end of the County to 70 Corporate Plaza at the far west, the County is now seeing buildings as large as 74,240 square feet and office parks as large as 125-acres being developed.

Retail/office areas such as Cave Springs, Centre Pointe and Heritage Landing are quickly filling up with doctors, dentists, lawyers, real estate agents, travel agents, and other service-oriented businesses. Currently under construction, Vatterott's Pointe West office park and Baur's Horizon Business Center in Arrowhead Industrial Park represent the confidence in St. Charles County now being shown by companies that, until recently were primarily developers in St. Louis. Both firms took advantage of the industrial revenue bond program offered by the Industrial Development Authority of St. Charles County.

PIC Investment Corporation, another St. Louis County developer, opened 70 Corporate Plaza, a 125-acre planned development at I-70 and Highway 40/61 at Wentzville, just 18 months ago. It is already over one-third sold or leased and includes the Belz Factory Outlet Mall, Sheraton Inn, office/warehouses, and restaurants.

Venture Stores just completed the move into its corporate headquarters and warehouse space, totaling over 200,000 square feet, in St. Charles County Business and Industrial Park in O'Fallon.

Office buildings are becoming as plentiful in the County as office parks. Community Federal erected the first multi-level office building in the Cave Springs area. Bob McKelvey, whose family has been a developer in St. Charles County since 1898, built the first major office building in the Mid Rivers area of St. Peters.

Both St. Charles County's office buildings and parks are fairly evenly dispersed throughout the County's five major cities — St. Charles, St. Peters, O'Fallon, Lake Saint Louis, and Wentzville. Nearly all declare vacancy rates of less than five percent.

That St. Charles County's business localities are so well occupied is consistent with the area's aggressive attitude toward planned growth. The ball is rolling in St. Charles County — and it's looking more and more like a snowball. One development breeds another, and another.

The residents of St. Charles County welcome the numerous service businesses that are coming to fill in the office space. With their high county-area income level, St. Charles County residents are patronizing their business neighbors; for too many years, local residents had to travel outside the County for many services they can now find at home. While the people who live in St. Charles County are enjoying new-found services, the businesses that are moving here are finding it a convenient place to operate. With three major highways outlining "The Golden Triangle" Highway 94, Interstate 70 and Highway 40/61 — and Lambert-St. Louis International Airport just ten minutes from the county line, St. Charles County is easy to get to. The manufacturing and industrial businesses locating in the County's business and industrial parks enjoy excellent rail service. Some 45 percent of the nation's industries are within a 500-mile radius of St. Charles County.

Employers also find skilled, educated workers in St. Charles County. What was once a commuter suburb is rapidly becoming a total business center in its own right.

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