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## Home furnishing, decorating showroom district to be developed in South County

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*Special to The Daily Transcript*

South County residents soon will have more reasons to stay put when the EastLake Design District is completed at the EastLake Business Center in eastern Chula Vista.

"South County residents are used to having to travel north of Interstate 8 to visit home furnishing and decorating showrooms such as those on Miramar Road, Morena Boulevard and Cedros in Solana Beach, so this project answers that need," explained Mike Vogt of VTS Development LLC, developer of the EastLake Design District. "With the thousands of new homes being built here, they need a destination where they can park their cars, walk from showroom to showroom and take care of all their home furnishing and decorating needs in one spot."

When completed, the EastLake Design District will include furniture, flooring, window covering, appliance and other home improvement showrooms in one location totaling 450,000 square feet.

Phase I of the project is scheduled to open in late spring 2005 and will include between 15 to 20 showrooms that homeowners can visit to see products in an actual home-like setting. The site also will include a variety of small restaurants where shoppers can relax while discussing their home improvement options.

"The entire project will incorporate the pedestrian friendly atmosphere of a Cedros Design District while having the drawing power of several larger and more prominent names in the home furnishing and decorat-



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ing industry," Vogt said.

Escrow just closed on the property, and already some of the nation's largest home furnishing and decorating companies are considering the location.

"We do a lot of retail leasing in EastLake and we've always had interest from home-improvement companies looking to get into the area. This serves their needs," said Mike Seiber, senior vice president of Flocke & Avoyer, leasing agents for the EastLake Design District. "Roughly 10,000 people per year are moving into the area between 805 and EastLake and these homebuyers will need window coverings, flooring, furniture, appliances and other items, which makes this a very attractive location for these companies."

According to Seiber, all of the retail projects Flocke & Avoyer represents that are either

recently built or under construction in Eastern Chula Vista are 100 percent leased or pre-leased.

"There is pent-up demand for several different uses, one of which we feel is the home improvement category," he added. "Nothing like this exists in San Diego County because the other home furnishing and decorating showroom areas are spread out and shoppers have to drive from one building to another in order to visit the various tenants."

"Having the showrooms in one location creates synergy between the tenants and gives them a larger population base from which to pull."

There also is a healthy population to provide a solid customer base. Demographics reveal that more than 1.2 million people live south of Interstate 8, and housing prices in the area show hidden

pockets of wealth.

"People don't understand the wealth that's in the Eastern Chula Vista area," Seiber explained. "There's a perception that income in the area is much lower than other areas but the opposite is true. Once prospective tenants actually visit the area and see what's there, they realize that there actually is more wealth than they anticipated."

Seiber also cited the fact that State Route 125 is proposed to be completed in the fall of 2006, making the EastLake Design District even more accessible.

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