



POISED FOR GROWTH

A ready workforce and an ideal location fuel local industry

By Chris Worthy
Contributing Writer

With a ready workforce and an ideal location for business transport, Simpsonville is poised to continue its economic growth, providing jobs and opportunities to residents and substantial benefits to business and industry.

Gary Drews, director of operations, USA, for FitesaFiberweb, said his company's long relationship with the community is ongoing.

"Fiberweb merged with a company in Brazil — Fitesa — in the summer of 2009," Drews said.

The company, which makes fabric used in disposable diapers, furniture and

bedding products, and medical applications, has added a building and installed a new production line since that time.

"We created 45 new upper end paying jobs for this area," he said. "This was a \$65 million investment, so we plan to be here. We've been in the area for 25 years."

Drews said Simpsonville is a prime area for businesses.

"We are strategically located," he said. "Infrastructure from a rail and road standpoint is available. We can get good employees."

Other non-retail businesses and industries are benefiting from the same economic factors.

Nanette Dendy, a physician with Cypress Internal Medicine, said the area's

growth and its diverse population played a role into her practice's late 2010 move to Simpsonville's West Georgia Road.

"I grew up in Hendersonville, Tenn., which is a suburb of Nashville," Dendy said. "Simpsonville is very similar. I am excited to be in Simpsonville because it reminds me of home."

Patients have responded positively to the location of the practice.

"The biggest feedback we've heard is that we're right around the corner," she said. "The convenience of being on West Georgia Road — in the middle of neighborhoods where people live — has been good. Our office is in the heart of the community. We want to focus on

“We are strategically located. Infrastructure from a rail and road standpoint is available. We can get good employees.”

— Gary Drews, *FitesaFiberweb*

people who are healthy and want to stay healthy. For me, internal medicine does a lot of that preventive focus, but for sicker patients who don't want to drive 15 or 20 minutes, we are here in the community.”

Darryl Halbert, a dentist with Tylan Creek Family Dentistry, said good leadership has resulted in positive growth for Simpsonville, which benefits residents, business and industry.

“We still do our dining and our shopping in Simpsonville,” he said. “Our health care is in Simpsonville. A lot of that has to do with how the city has grown and how it has managed its growth. While we don't want to get stuck in the past, we don't want to ignore it either. It is obvious being here that our city is growing — you still see construction — but it seems like they are going about it in a way that is less hindering to businesses. We've got new families coming in and it's a steady influx of people.”

Halbert moved to his current location in 2003.

“A lot of the growth has occurred since we've been here and it has all been positive,” he said. “The leadership at the Chamber and the sense of communication among businesses is a huge positive. The whole environment is so conducive to that.”

Drews said the benefits of locating a company in Simpsonville run both ways. His employees give back through service with many organizations including United Way, the Simpsonville Area Chamber of Commerce, The Peace Center, local youth sports and more.

“We've got people touching all parts of the community,” he said.

And he expects that relationship to continue to build as business increases and new residents arrive.

“It's a reasonably priced area to live in,” Drews said. “We have the opportunity for expansion depending on what the market does in the future.”



Theater finds great success in Simpsonville

*By Chris Worthy
Contributing Writer*

In its first year in business, the Great Escape Simpsonville 14 has made its mark on the Upstate.

The theater opened with a week of free movies, accepting donations to benefit Make-A-Wish Foundation. Great Escape spokesperson Brook Hollis said the charity kick-off is part of every grand opening.

“We get to do something for the community and that is extremely important to us,” she said.

Because IMAX theaters are typically at least 50 miles apart, Hollis said the big screen shows are a regional draw. Viewers come not only for blockbuster movies, but for the many educational IMAX shows. Individuals and groups from across the Upstate come for movies about African wildlife, space exploration, Great Lakes ecosystems and more. Large group showings are available at reduced rates.

“Bringing an IMAX in and offering educational movies at a very discounted price — for teachers, home-schoolers, church groups, it's priceless,” Hollis said.

And because the theater is a destination, visitors often turn the trip into a night on the town.

“People come from 50 to 100 miles,” Hollis said. “They are going to go shopping and go to dinner.”