

Lowdown on some business rumors

Back in September of 1997 when our column debuted, we promised to keep you informed about local happenings on the planning and economic development front. We also hinted that we would touch on “development rumors” that crossed our path.

As we promised almost ten years ago, we have continually provided regular snippets of information about local businesses and government, planned business expansions, new development projects and new firms interested in moving to Fairfield. We have however, been a little light on the rumor mill according to some of our readers. So this week, Economic Notes lets you in on some of the rumor we have been hearing.

We keep hearing rumors about hardware stores having an interest in locating in Fairfield. Last year the City held a “Retail Summit” wherein City staff met with retail brokers and a consultant to discuss the retail strengths and weaknesses in our community.

One of the conclusions at the Summit was that the Fairfield marketplace was strong in auto sales and dealerships and weak in hardware sales. It seems that someone must have been listening to prayers to the hardware gods because we are hearing that two national users are discussing deals in town and a third is scouting the area. We have had past requests from a few of our readers desiring to see more selection in hardware stores so we know this rumor will make people smile.

Another item in the rumor mill is restaurants planned for adjacent cities are also scouting Fairfield. We were handed a message this week asking if Panera Bread and/or Tossed Restaurant planned to open in Fairfield. We have no knowledge of any deals, but it is common for smaller national restaurant chains to locate in adjacent cities to aid their focused market penetration and product distribution.

The City’s former Fire Station on Auto Mall Parkway and Serrano Drive has also been the subject of inquires and rumors. Rumor has it that the State has been looking at the two new, vacant buildings behind the fire station for government use. In one of the few questions we can definitively answer, we can confirm that the former station or the adjacent buildings are not currently under contract for State government office use.

Rumors continue to swirl around the former Yardbirds’ Shopping Center on Oliver Road. The latest concept is converting the space to a multi-tenant retail center, but other ideas have been suggested (including unique ideas by our readers for indoor recreational uses). Stay tuned for breaking news on this highly visible site.

Beyond a rumor, the former Ford Dealership on Oliver Road may not remain vacant for very long. Staples, the business supply company, now have their application in for planning review. They have been interested in the Fairfield market for some time, so we hope that this highly visible freeway frontage site will have a new viable commercial center soon. We also expect the former Subaru/Mazda dealership across the road to become an active commercial property soon, as rumor has it an auto-related user is eyeing the site.

We promise to keep our ears to the ground listening for more reader-pleasing rumors. You can also watch our television version of Economic Notes on Channel 26 at 6:30 p.m. (Fairfield Living Show) to see additional snippets of information.

Economic Notes is an update from Fairfield City Hall written by Brian Miller and Karl Dumas of the Fairfield Community Development Department. They can be contacted at 428-7461 or e-mail at kdumas@ci.fairfield.ca.us or bkmliller@ci.fairfield.ca.us.