

Minority small businesses find new home

■ New development in east Fort Worth is bringing a wave of professional services to an area seeing redevelopment.

By **ANDREA AHLES**
STAR-TELEGRAM STAFF WRITER

A bevy of successful small businesses have opened locations in east Fort Worth recently, creating an instant professional services center and business incubator of sorts.

Austin Plaza, the former American Heart Association building near Interstate 30 and Beach Street, is the new home for minority-owned businesses like Wise Business Services and CRC Information Technology.

The 16,200-square-foot building also includes conference rooms and a large auditorium that the building's tenants can use as common space.

"When you get the small business fiber growing, especially in an area like southeast Fort Worth, there is an opportunity for employment for business professionals," said Fort Worth Metropolitan Black Chamber of Commerce President Devoyd Jennings. "It really creates a 'hand up' attitude versus a 'hand-out.'"

There are about 25 million small businesses in the United States, and they employ half of all private-sector workers, according to the U.S. Small Business Administration. National Small Business Week began Sunday and runs through Saturday.

More on DEVELOPMENT on 9C

Development: Austin Plaza new home to minority-owned small businesses

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Here's a look at the new businesses calling east Fort Worth home:

Company: Brunson Technical Associates



BRUNSON

Owner: Al Brunson
What they do: Since 1997, Brunson has provided transportation consulting, construction

and design work to cities considering light rail and mass transit.

Why is it important for your company to be part of the east Fort Worth community? "We have to lower the boundaries at the county line. There are certain areas of Fort Worth being considered to tie into the TRE. I want to be available to share in the expertise I've gained." Brunson has worked for DART, the Texas Transportation Department and the Houston Metropolitan Transit Authority.

What is the biggest challenge facing small businesses like yours? "That we identify each of our expertise and attempt to integrate that

expertise to satisfy our needs." For example, Brunson used CRC to set up technology networks in his new Fort Worth office and his existing Dallas office.

Company: CRC Information Technology

Owner: Anthony Hunt
What they do: His two-year-old company offers computer network solutions and support.

Why is it important for your company to be part of the east Fort Worth community? "As a minority business, I needed the exposure to other successful minority businesses and secondly an opportunity to be part of building a minority business center," Hunt said.

What is the biggest challenge facing small businesses like yours? "Sales and marketing solutions for their industry that bring success," Hunt said.

Company: K Strategies Group

Owner: Katrina Keyes



KEYES

What they do: Public relations and minority/women business enterprise coordinator for projects like the new

Dallas Cowboys stadium.

Why is it important for your company to be part of the east Fort Worth community? "We wanted to have a presence in Fort Worth because we've been doing a lot of work in Fort Worth," Keyes said, referring to the Cowboys contract.

What is the biggest challenge facing small businesses like yours? "Probably just out there trying to get business," Keyes said. "It takes a lot of work in getting business and then just having the overhead to run your business until that big contract comes in."

Company: TinMan Enterprises

Owner: Tracy and Tim Delce

What they do: Started in 2000, TinMan makes fencing, works on structural steel and



TIM DELCE AND TRACY DELCE

performs welding jobs.

Why is it important for your company to be part of the east Fort Worth community? "It's a great opportunity. There are so many connections that we can make through the companies within this facility as well as their existing customer base," President Tracy Delce said.

What is the biggest challenge facing small businesses like yours? "With all the construction and opportunities going on, there are plenty of companies within this marketplace that can provide the quality of work at a competitive price, so just getting the message out about TinMan," Tracy Delce said.

Company: Triune

Owner: Vince Fudzie
What they do: For 11 years, the defense contractor has provided fuel for the military



TRAVER HILL AND VINCE FUDZIE

and been a general contractor for several government projects.

Why is it important for your company to be part of the east Fort Worth community? "What we want to be as a company is to be a catalyst to creating a burgeoning black business community. As such we thought it was prudent for us to establish a presence in Fort Worth," Fudzie said.

What is the biggest challenge facing small businesses like yours? "One is financing ... the second is human resources because that makes or breaks your business. The impediment to our growth as a company is directly correlated to our ability to hire good people," Fudzie said.

Company: Wise Business Services

Owner: Demetria L. Wise
What they do: Wise is a 10-



WISE

year-old document scanning and data management company.

Why is it important for your

company to be part of the east Fort Worth community? "I think Fort Worth needs the presence of minority and women owned businesses," said Wise, who moved her office from Dallas.

What is the biggest challenge facing small businesses like yours? "I would say the appropriate resources. Capital. Financing. And I think it's just really finding good employees," she said.

Andrea Ahles, 817-548-5323
aahles@star-telegram.com