

# Making a town bloom

Flower Mound hopes new hire lures business to suburb

12:00 AM CDT on Sunday, July 30, 2006

By JEREMY ROEBUCK / Special Contributor to The Dallas Morning News

Melissa Glasgow has made a career out of luring developers to places she has never lived. Now, the 39-year-old Flower Mound resident hopes to sell them on her adopted home.



JUAN GUAJARDO/DMN

**Melissa Glasgow, the new economic development director in Flower Mound, says the town's central location will be one of its greatest assets as the suburb - looking to expand its tax base - tries to attract developers to an area once averse to growth.**

As the town's new economic development director, Mrs. Glasgow must attract business to a suburb known for its reluctance to growth. But she thinks she knows why companies will eventually come to Flower Mound – the same reasons that drew her five years ago.

"When my husband and I moved, we wanted to be some place central to both of our work locations," she said. "And I think that central location is probably one of the town's strongest assets."

Over the past decade, the cities north of Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport have watched their populations boom. Denton County has seen its numbers more than double since 1990, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Flower Mound has increased its size by more than 300 percent during the same period.

But while cities such as Lewisville and Carrollton have capitalized upon this growth, Flower Mound has struggled to attract corporate and retail development while maintaining the feel of a bedroom community.

"I think for a while, Flower Mound was perceived as closed to growth," Mayor Pro Tem Joel Lindsey said. "It was kind of a misperception. I think we just had different priorities."

But over the past several years, town leaders have implemented a plan they call "smart growth." By attracting business development to the town's perimeter, Flower Mound hopes to expand its tax base without changing its character.

To meet this goal, the town has focused its attention on the Lakeside Business District bordering Grapevine Lake. Town leaders have poured nearly \$30 million into infrastructure and roadwork around its borders.

"Developers have looked at 'smart growth' as an attitude that was anti-development," Mr. Lindsey said. "But it would have hurt businesses to come here before we had that infrastructure ready. Now, it's really full steam forward."

Since striking a deal with Hines Development this year to build the town's first hotel, interest in the lakeside district has peaked, Mr. Lindsey said.

Mayor Jody Smith made development a central issue in her most recent campaign. Running against Jim Lang, the town's former economic development director, Mrs. Smith promised to make development a priority for the council.

And now with the mayor's backing, Mrs. Glasgow plans to pursue progress on the lakeside district while emphasizing tourist attractions such as the lake and neighboring golf courses.

Mrs. Glasgow believes her work in cities across North Texas, Utah and Michigan will give her a unique perspective in how to approach the transition.

"Having worked all over the country, I can see what assets are of value in different areas," she said.

But from Mr. Lindsey's perspective, the fact that Mrs. Glasgow lives in the town she now works for gives her a head start.

"She already knows the concerns of our citizens," he said. "She has the professional background and the sense of community to make development a priority."

*Jeremy Roebuck is a Dallas-based freelance writer.*

E-mail [jeremy.roebuck@gmail.com](mailto:jeremy.roebuck@gmail.com)