

## Panel examines effect of Landfall neighborhood

By Vicky Janowski, posted Nov 15, 2012 on WilmingtonBiz.com

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Landfall still has room for more houses, and the business district that has grown outside the neighborhood over the years does not show signs of slowing down, industry officials said Thursday.

“Commercial growth is directly related to residential growth,” said David Swain, who developed The Forum center, a mix of stores, restaurants and other services on Military Cutoff Road.

Swain spoke Thursday at the Country Club of Landfall on a panel that also included Wilmington Mayor Bill Saffo; Landfall Realty’s broker in charge Alison Bernhart; and Lumina Station developer Joel Tomaselli.

The group discussed what impact the residential community has had on the area surrounding Military Cutoff and Eastwood roads as well as future projections for the district.

The panel, organized by the Greater Wilmington Business Journal, coincided with the 25th anniversary of the opening of Landfall’s first golf course as the development was in its early stages.

Swain first bought a lot in Landfall in 1987 just as the first homes were being built.

Back then, he said, Military Cutoff Road was largely undeveloped, with two lanes of traffic and limited sewer access.

Swain built The Forum on land he purchased from Raeford Trask. He said the idea was to create a lifestyle center that would cater to residents of Landfall, Wrightsville Beach and Figure Eight Island.

“People kept telling me, ‘We want something close by,’” Swain said.

Since then, both The Forum and the surrounding area has grown significantly.

“Landfall was what sparked everything,” Swain said. “... There’s no telling what will happen if our economy gets back in order.”

Looking ahead, Tomaselli said he predicts more growth in the area catering specifically to retirees and retirement communities, pointing to projects such as the Autumn Hall development being built on Eastwood Road.

In the 2,200-acre Landfall community where more than 1,500 homes already have been built, there are still 450 more home sites left, Bernhart said.

Saffo said the Landfall planned approach set an example for future similar mixed-use developments such as Mayfaire Town Center, which Saffo described as the catalyst for turning that part of Wilmington from a local draw to a regional one.

Saffo credited Landfall's initial developer, J.P. Goforth, with setting the wheels in motion for the neighborhood decades ago.

"We've had a lot of folks who copied that vision," said Saffo, pointing to Porters Neck and Brunswick Forest as examples of similar residential communities. "Landfall has transformed all of southeastern North Carolina."

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