

## **Wal-Mart Supercenter ushers in Greenwood building boom**



Jennie Runevitch/Eyewitness News

The south side Wal-Mart that nobody wanted has ushered in a building boom in Greenwood. Amid community protest, the store twice unsuccessfully tried to locate along I-35. Now a Wal-Mart Supercenter will open Wednesday at Emerson and County Line Road and its location is a catalyst for development on the Indianapolis south side.

What was once home to farm fields is now hot property harvested by developers. "With I-65 and the growth of residential east of here, it's really taken off. If you come here three to four years from now, you won't recognize this intersection," said Tony Alderson, Allen Commercial Group.

The catalyst for construction along Emerson and County Line is a 200,000 square foot Wal-Mart Supercenter set to open Wednesday.

"When it got out on the street these guys were coming, at least from a retail standpoint, then there was interest," Alderson said.

Wal-Mart ushered in non-stop development of new retail, office space, banks, medical buildings and restaurants. City planners expect a couple million square feet of construction to go up in the next few years.

"We think it's gonna be the gateway to Greenwood and the southern gateway to the Indianapolis metro area. It's kind of the last virgin interchange, so to speak, with a lot of undeveloped land available," said Ed Ferguson, Greenwood planning director.

The Allen Commercial Group owns 260 acres. Phase one of Emerson Point should open this summer. Their goal is a master-planned mix of retail, office space and even townhomes. But don't expect Dollar Stores. This developer is going high-end. "To name a few, LePeeps, would love to. There's not a LePeep on the south side anywhere," said Alderson.

After Emerson, the next frontier is east of I-65. A \$16 million sewer system opened up 6,000 acres there, with hundreds of homes and more high-end development already in the works.

"I think that's what Greenwood's missing and this is an opportunity at I-65 and county line for us to do something spectacular," said Alderson.

Because the area is part of a TIF district for Greenwood, all of the money from the development goes back into building infrastructure. A fire station is being built east of I-65 with funds gleaned from the development that started with the Wal-Mart Supercenter.