

Businesses benefiting from Southern Nevada's evolution into a medical region

The evolution of Southern Nevada into an emerging major medical region is helping to assure the continued growth of the area's economy for years to come.

In the past five years alone, five hospitals have opened to serve the booming Las Vegas Valley population – which is rapidly approaching 1.6 million people – and two more hospitals are scheduled to open in the valley within the next two years.

But it's not just doctors, nurses and other trained healthcare providers who are reaping the benefits from the area's growth. Companies focusing on pharmaceutical, research, software, administration and other medical-related product/support services are finding Southern Nevada is the place to be to succeed in business.

Susan Chandler is the vice president of Lexon Medical, a national physicians billing company based in Henderson, Nev. With clients as far away as New York, Wyoming and Washington, she said Henderson's location is a perfect fit for her business.

"We're very efficient and convenient for our clients," said Chandler, referring to the easy travel to Southern Nevada via Las Vegas' McCarran International Airport. "It's very affordable for our clients to come in and there are a lot of things for them to do here when they are here and not working."

Located adjacent to Las Vegas and minutes from the airport via freeway, Henderson made a name for itself in the 1990s as being the fastest-growing city in the nation. In fact, Henderson – known for its master-planned communities and high-quality of living – has been at the front of Nevada's growth spurt, growing from just 60,000 people in 1990 to currently over 240,000. That population would make Henderson the 14th largest city in the state of California – larger than such cities at Irvine, Glendale and San Bernardino.

"I like Henderson because it's a great growing community," said Chandler, who also lives in Nevada's second-largest city. "You can ride your bike to work down bike paths. There aren't many places that you can do that."

Chandler said the quality of life factor is crucial for business leaders.

"Environment and convenience is everything," she said. "No matter where you are in the valley, it is easy to get to [our offices in Henderson]. I tell people – clients and physicians – if you want to come to this town, it is the best place to live and work."

Sharon Allen, the director of business development for TWC Construction, has found working with the city staff and elected officials of the City of Henderson makes doing business in the city easy as well.

"We enjoy our relationship with everyone in the city," Allen said. "They

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understand the needs of business and they bend over backwards to help us."

And TWC Construction has been busy. The company is the construction arm of YourVitamins, one of the leading vitamin manufacturers and suppliers in the world.

Despite a decline in the vitamin industry after a decade of spectacular growth, Henderson-based YourVitamins continues to see a rapidly escalating demand for its products. In fact, YourVitamins – which is best-known for its owner Andrew Lessman and his success on the Home Shopping Network – grew so rapidly that less than four years after moving into its 125,000-square-foot headquarters building in Henderson in 2000, the company effectively doubled its size with a 125,000-square-foot expansion adjacent to its existing facilities.

And at the front of that expansion was TWC Construction, which is also building the new Southern Nevada Dolisos plant. Dolisos America Inc., is the U.S. division of Dolisos Laboratoires, a French homeopathic

manufacturing giant. Dolisos Laboratoires is a subsidiary of the Pierre Fabre Group, a French pharmaceutical conglomerate specializing in plant based medicines.

"What we are finding is the growth of Henderson and Las Vegas as a medical region is opening up so many opportunities for businesses in so many different areas," said Bob Cooper, manager of the City of Henderson's Economic Development Division.

So much so that in 2003, Cooper helped lead the charge to establish the Southern Nevada Medical Industry Coalition, which is designed to have a collective voice that ensures improved access and delivery of quality healthcare in Southern Nevada. (www.snmic.com)

Over 200 volunteers have since joined the collation – from doctors and educators to insurance professionals and non-profit leaders – making the coalition one of the rising organizations of its kind in the valley.

"The success of the coalition is two-fold," Cooper said. "Number one, people want to take care of people. We are a rapidly growing community and we are working hard and smart to provide cutting-edge healthcare for our residents. Our volunteers truly have the future of the community in focus as we are working together to build Southern Nevada into a major medical region.

"And, number two, is opportunity. We know our evolution into a major medical region is positively impacting our economy and it will for a long-time to come. It assures good quality jobs in the medical industry itself and the opportunity to support the industry in such fields and manufacturing, construction and support services. At the end of the day, everyone benefits – our businesses and, most importantly, our residents."

Residents have also benefited from the emergence of institutions providing medical education in Henderson.

In 2003, Touro University Osteopathic School of Medicine expanded into Nevada with a Henderson campus. Michael Harter, vice president of Touro University-Nevada, said educating physicians in southern

HENDERSON ECONOMIC NEWS REPORT

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CON'T – MEDICAL REGION

Nevada – and developing residency programs – means the physicians are more likely to stay in the area.

“Historically, the place where a physician does a residency is the place where he or she stays to practice,” Harter said. “We want to keep medical students in Nevada to serve their residencies because we know we will keep a good portion of them in the valley. The same philosophy holds true for educating such professionals as pharmacists and nurses.

The University of Southern Nevada, which opened Nevada’s first school of pharmacy five years ago, accepted 125 students out of 1,200 applicants for its most recent pharmacy program and also established a nursing program earlier this year to serve the growing demand in the valley.

“Virtually every corner has a new drugstore on it and each one of them needs a pharmacist,” said Dr. Harry Rosenberg, founder of the University of Southern Nevada. “The growth is incredible and there is opportunity because of that growth.”

Cooper said such institutions will have

positive long-term effects on the community.

“What these schools do is allow us to continue to build our workforce strengths and create opportunities for collaboration with businesses conducting medical, biomedical, and pharmaceutical research and development,” he said.

And that’s good news for those businesses already here – and those on their way.

For more information on the City of Henderson’s Economic Development Division, call (702) 267-1650.

