

Local

Flour Bluff site of 2nd giant H-E-B

New H-E-B Plus! scheduled to open in summer of '07

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Flour Bluff will receive the city's second H-E-B Plus! store this summer - more than twice the size of the store it will replace across Waldron Road.

Construction began last month on the 142,410-square-foot store, expected to open in July.

About 500 employees will work at the new store, about 200 more than work at the current one at 10241 South Padre Island Drive.

H-E-B would not disclose how much it will spend to build the store, at 1145 Waldron Road, but building permits filed with the city show site preparation and construction costs exceeding \$12 million. The 24-acre site's value on the tax rolls was unavailable. Nueces County Appraisal District officials could not be reached late Wednesday and the appraisal district Web site was inaccessible.

Similar to the Plus store on Saratoga Boulevard, the Flour Bluff store will have sushi, entertainment and beer and wine centers. Unlike the Saratoga store, the new one will not have a nursery but will have a gas station across the street, said Shelley Parks, a regional spokeswoman for H-E-B. The Saratoga store, opened in 2005, was H-E-B's first Plus store.

"The population growth of Flour Bluff and Padre Island promoted the decision to build one out there," Parks said. "The company did the research and we found it was a very good fit. People want a one-stop shop."

The 69,000-square-foot H-E-B building that is being replaced was built in 1982 and is listed for sale at \$4.8 million, according to Lynann Pinkham, a broker with NAI Cravey Real Estate Services, Inc. It will join other H-E-B properties left vacant after the company opened new, larger stores.

The 45,000-square-foot building on Everhart Road and Saratoga Boulevard, built in 1995 and replaced by the Plus store on Saratoga, is listed for lease, with an asking price of \$10 a square foot, Pinkham said.

The former H-E-B building between Ayers Street and Port Avenue was sold in June and remains empty. The building at Baldwin Boulevard near Morgan Avenue was sold about three years ago, Pinkham added. It is now a discount store.

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