

Times-Herald BREAKING NEWS

Continued job growth on Mare Island, developer says

By Rachel Raskin-Zrihen

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Lennar Mare Island is about a third of the way to its goal of creating nearly 7,000 jobs on the island, after adding more than 130 new full-time positions in the past six months, a company spokesman said. LMI's June 2014 jobs survey indicates there are now more than 2,200 full-time jobs on Mare Island, ranging from maritime to manufacturing, industrial to professional, spokesman Jason Keadjian said in an announcement.

"These jobs numbers reflect the increasing business activity that has taken place on Mare Island over the past year," Keadjian said. "We are excited to see Mare Island fostering a thriving business community and stimulating economic development for Vallejo and Solano County."

The original projection for LMI's portion of Mare Island at full build-out, including the Touro area, was about 6,800, spokesman Edward Moser said. There are now more than 2,200 full-time jobs, plus about 1,500 Touro students, he said.

In February, 2012, the Times-Herald reported there was the equivalent of 2,041 full-time employees on the island, up from 1,852 during the same period in 2010.

"Original projections were based on numerous factors including the final Specific Plan, build-out of the North Island, the nature and extent of the environmental cleanup and normal economic cycles," Moser said. "All of these factors have affected business growth on Mare Island: the national economy experienced a severe recession,

the scope and complexity of the environmental cleanup has grown, and the development of the North Island has not occurred."

LMI has made what it describes as significant progress on the reuse effort, despite these challenges, "and we continue to invest in such things as building rehabilitation, historic preservation and infrastructure, which facilitate continued job growth and economic development activity," Moser said.

The latest jobs survey showed consistent jobs growth for the seventh straight reporting period, and the highest rate of growth on the island since 2008, Keadjian said.

"More than 20 new and existing businesses have absorbed more than 200,000 square feet of space over the past year," he added. "There are now more than 100 businesses on Mare Island."

"With the city having approved funding for building demolition on North Mare Island, and LMI fostering consistent year-over-year job growth, Mare Island continues to be a hub of economic development activity in Vallejo," Mayor Osby Davis said in the LMI announcement. "This is the result of LMI's sustained investment and the city's ongoing commitment to economic development on Mare Island."

Most of the recent job growth was in marine-related industries and Blu Homes, the "green" manufactured homes firm that relocated its headquarters to Mare Island, Keadjian said. Other businesses new to Mare Island this year include LifeGear, a company that designs and produces outdoor/travel lifestyle products, and Americ Machinery, which supplies and services construction equipment, he said.

Keadjian said LMI supports job growth on the island "by investing in vacant space to expedite occupancy, conducting aggressive business retention and expansion practices," and by creating new space "through ongoing environmental cleanup work."

For more information, visit www.discovermareisland.com.

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