

ESKO BUSINESS PARK, ALONG I-35 NEAR DULUTH, IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS

The Town of Thomson Minn., commonly known as Esko, and surrounding area can be summed up in three words - untapped economic potential.

Fortunately, Thomson Township officials have made tapping into that potential very attractive with the recent completion of the 59-acre Esko Business Park just 15 miles southwest of Duluth along Interstate 35. "We understand that the Esko Business Park is an investment in Esko's future," said Terry Hill, Thomson Township Chairperson. "We believe in it."

Esko has a thriving business community with a diversity of commercial stores including the Schwan Food Distribution Facility, Stitch-It Designs Embroidery and Gifts, Eskomo Pizza Pies restaurant, and a variety of professional and retail businesses. But, the community saw a need for more commercial development more than a decade ago and took action. The Thomson Township Board secured legislative help to obtain more than \$500,000 in state and local grants to get the project rolling. Today the busi-

ness park is zoned for light industrial/commercial business, according to Carlton County Economic Development Director Pat Oman.

"This park can handle diverse businesses from any type of manufacturing with a retail component to those in the plumbing and heating industry or lumber companies," he said. "It's made for fairly clean manufacturing so professional buildings have a fit here as well."

The park is already attracting interest, but one reason stands above the rest. "The biggest draw is its visibility from Interstate 35," Oman said. "The entire park can be seen by the numerous motorists passing through on a daily basis." More than 27,000 motorists drive by daily and access to the park from two different freeway exits makes it convenient for customers as well as businesses needing to move product. It's also close to rail and Duluth's shipping port.

Duluth Developer Ted Stocke already knows the site near the business park is a gem. He purchased land nearby several years ago, built

and opened a liquor store and is creating a private retail development on 50 acres. "We're not competing, but complimenting each other," Stocke said about the business park. "I see this area as the front entrance to Esko." Hill agreed. "Our community offers the benefits of rural living near a metropolitan center," Hill said. Additionally, the park is accessible from Highway 61, which sees 5,400 motorists per day and is the main artery traveled by the majority of Esko's nearly 5,000 residents.

And with the Esko public schools sitting along Highway 61, many consider the buildings the central focus of the town. Perhaps because of that, Esko residents can also boast of their students' success as they excel in academics, athletics and the arts. Aaron Fischer, Esko Schools Superintendent, said he was amazed by the community support for the schools when he relocated.

"All you need to do is attend a youth sporting event, holiday concert or parent/teacher conference night to witness the phenomenal commit-

ment of Esko community members, parents, and teachers to our students and schools," he said.

The Willard Munger State Trail and Jay Cooke State Park also touch township borders, creating a wide variety of recreational opportunities just outside people's front doors.

Officials with the Esko Business Park know the economy has people thinking harder about where to put their dollars. So they are offering some incentives to further attract business. In addition to funding mechanisms such as JOB-Z, Tax Increment Financing (TIF), Tax Abatement, and a below market revolving loan fund, Thomson Township officials are offering a 6 percent commission to any broker whose services directly result in a lease or sale of Esko Business Park property.

In other words, they mean business. "Significant backing from the state and Carlton County shows this park is worthwhile," said Terry Hill, Thomson Township chairperson. "It is ready for the first business to sign on the dotted line."

Esko

INDUSTRIAL/BUSINESS PARK



Visibility from Interstate 35

Only 10 minutes south of Duluth (Duluth & Superior Ports)

Funding Mechanisms:

- Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Opportunities
- JOBZ Land Grant
- Below Market Rate Financing
- Tax Abatement



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*Thomson Township is located
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15 miles Southwest of Duluth*



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